



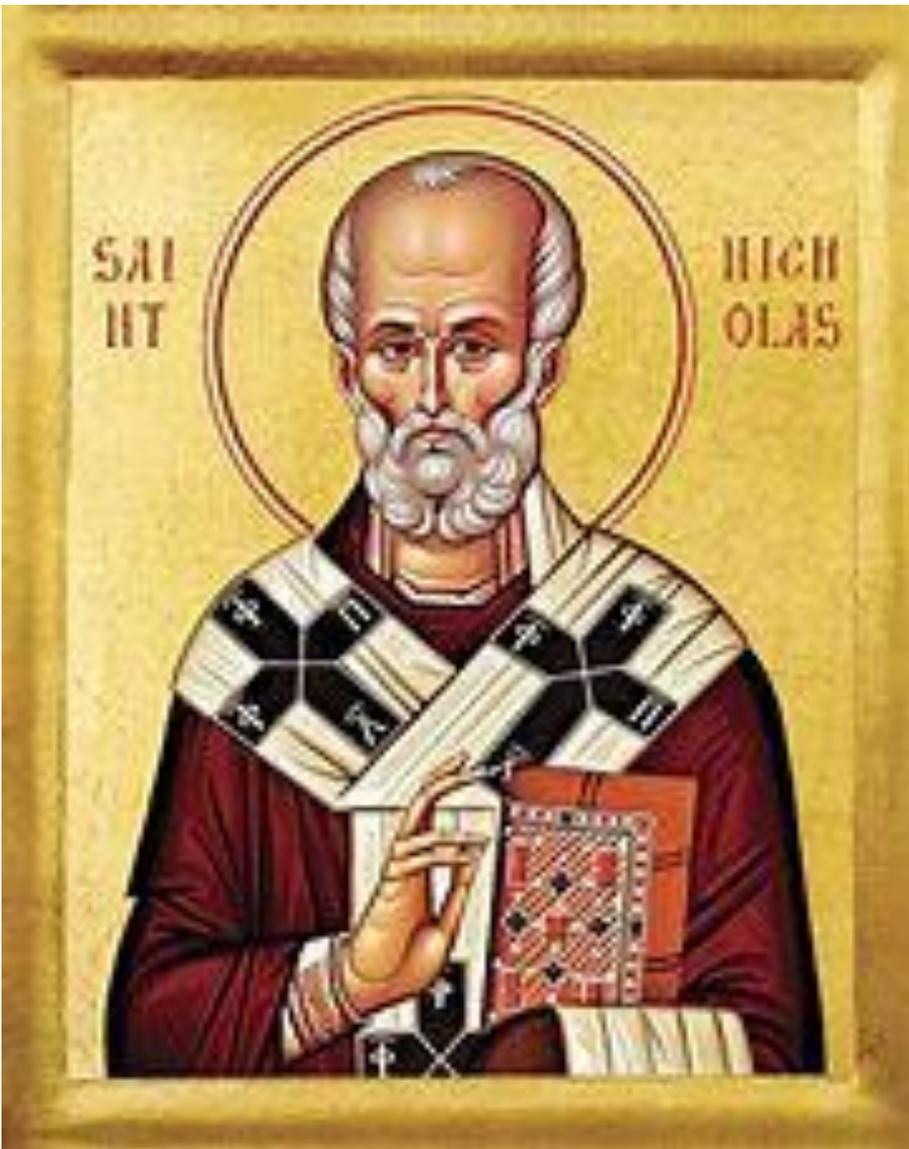
St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh

WORSHIPPING AT HOME

St Nicolas' Day

Sunday 6th December 2020

WELCOME to our Worshipping at Home resources for this week, provided for us by The Rector, Canon Roy Woodhams and the Bishop of Dorking, Rt Revd Jo Bailey-Wells.



TODAY . . . we celebrate St Nicolas Day and 850 years of Church and Faith here in this place. In 1170 the ownership of the Vachery Estate passed to Roger de Tonbridge, who saw the need to build a church, to serve the many estate workers who lived on his land. The central Nave area of today's church is the original site of that church and some of the pillars and arches we see today may well date back to that original

building. We give thanks today for all who have ministered, worshipped and cared for our ancient building, and pray for those who continue that line, and for those who will follow in centuries to come. It is a special joy to welcome Bishop Jo with us at 10am on Zoom and 11am in Church.

At the 11am service she will also bless and dedicate a new cushion for the Bishop's seat, which has been lovingly and painstakingly made by Sue Dobbin, and dedicated to the memory of her late Mother, Doris 'Darkie' Haymer.

A Big thank you to everyone who has worked so hard for today, with special thanks to Katherine and Richard Tuck, and Margie Nursey for the Christmas Tree decoration and 'Cranleigh Shines' Star, and to Valerie Watts, who has been working all through the week to produce the amazing floral decorations, both inside and outside the Church.

RULES AND REGULATIONS in connection with COVID-19 are changing fast at the moment – we will make every effort to keep you up to date with what's happening, but there may be times when the information we have given you has gone out of date before it happens!

THIS WEEK (*Events in red will be online events*)

Sunday 6th December – St Nicolas:

8.00: Holy Communion (CW) (Also Livestreamed to Youtube)

10.00 (Zoom): Church at Home (with Bishop Jo)

11.00: Holy Communion (CW) (Also Livestreamed to Youtube): We Celebrate 850 years of St Nicolas Church, when the President and Preacher will be Bishop Jo Bailey Wells (Bishop of Dorking).

11.15 (Zoom): SEA Church (for young people)

(the Zoom joining code is ID: 148-785-166)

Thursday 10th December

10am: Advent Reflection: 'Joy'

(Words and Music as we prepare for Christmas)

Sunday 13th December – Advent 3:

8.00: Holy Communion (CW).

10.00 (Zoom): Church at Home.

11.00: Holy Communion (CW). Also livestreamed.

11.15 (Zoom): SEA Church (for young people)

(the Zoom joining code is ID: 148-785-166)

16.00: Virtual Christingle Service (Livestreamed).

If you know of anyone who does not have internet, and who would like a written communication from us each week, please email:

nicola@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk or call the Parish Office on 01483

273620. I am aware that this is going to be another very challenging and difficult time for everybody, so please feel free to contact either Nicola, or myself (roy@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk 01483800655), if you have, or are aware of, any particular pastoral or practical needs during this time.

ST NICOLAS' DAY:

COLLECT *for St. Nicolas:*

Almighty Father, lover of souls,
Who chose your servant Nicolas to be a Bishop in the church,
That he might give freely out of the treasures of your grace:
Make us mindful of the needs of others and,
as we have received, so teach us also to give;
Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
Who is alive and reigns with you,
One God, now and forever.

OLD TESTAMENT READING: *Isaiah 61:1-3*

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory

NEW TESTAMENT READING: *1 Timothy 6:6-11*

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness.

GOSPEL READING: *Mark 10:13-16*

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

SERMON – 8am Eucharist (written by The Rector):

An old friend, who was a priest in Canterbury Diocese, liked to tell a story of when he had been invited to tea at Lambeth Palace. As he clumsily tried to put two lumps of sugar into his cup, the sugar tongs snapped in two!

The horrified, butler exclaimed *“Oh, Sir, those were made in 1752!”* To which my friend responded, *“Well, thank goodness, you hadn’t got the new ones out!”*

I find, both bad news and good news in that story - the bad news is that my friend had a frivolous lack of understanding, or respect for, ancient and beautiful things, while the good news is that, at least Lambeth Palace had the good sense to make use of their ancient artefacts, rather than putting them away in a glass case, or museum!

And I think we have something to learn from that, as we celebrate 850 years of Church and faith in Cranleigh!

Today is a coming together of past, present and future - we give thanks for the past, enjoy the present, and anticipate the future.

Our whole faith is a pilgrim faith – a journey in which we gather strands from the past, use them in the present and let them point us towards the future – and that is what I hope, that together, we are constantly striving to do as a Church.

So, very briefly, I am going to talk this morning about those three things – past, present and future:

The past – Today we celebrate 850 years of Christian life in this place, and we give thanks

- for those who built this place of worship and developed it over the years.
- for all who have ministered here.
- for how, from generation to generation, the Scriptures have been read and the Gospel proclaimed.
- for a place where generations of Cranleigh residents have come to give thanks or to seek solace at the great moments of life; at Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals.
- for a place where the Risen Christ has indeed stood amongst, and spoken to, his people.

Which brings us to **the present** –

We, the people of St Nicolas, Cranleigh today, are a people who appreciate ancient, lovely and holy things, but we need to be aware of the lessons of the sugar tongs!

Firstly, that ancient things need to be treated with love and care, and if we don't, there's always the risk of metaphorically breaking the tongs!

And secondly, the lesson that these ancient things are here, not just to be looked at, but to be used! 'Use it, or lose it' was the one-time motto of the Village Post Office!

This building is a living place, and as such it will always need to be evolving, growing and adapting to the needs of the day, and to the events and circumstances around it!

This is the challenge which faces our parish, and every other Christian Church in the land in a twenty-first century, and largely secular, world! And it will never be easy!

Which brings me to **the future** – this is, I believe, by far the most important of the three – those who spend too much time dwelling on the past, become detached from reality, while those who are too concerned with the present become self-centred. We are pilgrims, journeying forward, and all journeys lead to the future! I don't know what the future holds for Cranleigh, and for our Church and Parish. There may be glorious times ahead, or there may be trouble ahead, who knows? But

- as long as, in prayer, we listen to God speaking to us
- as long as we open the doors of our Church and our lives to the needs of the poor, marginalized and lost
- as long as we have a vision for a better world
- as long as we are filled with the spirit
- as long as we dance the resurrection story
- and, as long there are songs of love in this place

Then, whatever the world may throw at us, this place will continue to be a haven of peace and a light of hope, shining in a dark world! It will continue to do all of those things that the Prophet Isaiah spoke of in this morning's Old Testament Reading:

To “. . . .bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor”

It will continue to be a place that welcomes little children and blesses them, as Jesus did in the Gospel Reading.

And it will continue to point future generations towards the coming Christ! Amen.

SERMON – 11am Eucharist (written by the Bishop of Dorking):

I wonder if you remember discovering that Santa Claus did not exist. For me, the youngest of 3 siblings, it was a slow dawning to put 2 and 2 together and make 5. Early one Christmas morning I was alone, inspecting what had landed in the night before anyone else was awake and before we gathered to open them, when I recognised some of the handwriting on a tag. There was a long pause when I asked how come... while my brothers looked at Mum and Mum eventually declared that Santa was in a hurry and asked her to write the tags. It was that dutiful silence of my brothers that avoided eye contact that did it – obediently they were trying not to ruin it for their little sis. Because I couldn't stand to be patronised I could smell all conspiracy a mile off. For some people that discovery is devastating. For me it was just fine (as long, of course,

that didn't end the tradition and pressies continued to drop from heaven each Christmas Eve).

But today I dare to proclaim that Santa Claus did exist. Of course, in a parish that has been honouring their patron saint of Sinterklaas or Sint-Nicolaas for at least 850 years, I think you know this better than I do. He was a fourth century bishop in Myra, present day Turkey. You can even visit his remains, now in Bari, Italy. The legends about this man are simply wonderful, even though none of them involve a single elf or flying reindeer.

The most well-known story—and the one that most relates to his later transformation into Santa Claus—has to do with a poor man and his three daughters. This man couldn't afford a dowry for the marriage of his daughters, and eventually he became so desperate he planned to sell them into slavery as prostitutes. (Let me just note, since I'm preaching in the midst of a 10 day campaign against GBV which the fantastic 100-strong Mothers Union in Cranleigh will know all about, that this still happens today). When Nicholas heard of this, he sold some of his own possessions, took the money, and went late at night to the man's house. He threw three bags of gold in through an open upstairs window, and so saved the girls from their fate by providing the money needed for their dowries. This was meant to be an anonymous act of charity, but it somehow became known, and Nicholas was soon revered as the benefactor of children in need. And from that we eventually get the tradition of presents coming down the chimney from an anonymous source!

Our Gospel reading, with its famous image of Jesus blessing the children, explains the inspiration behind the life of St. Nicholas. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these

that the Kingdom of God belongs.” And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.’

Our own culture is so sentimental and child-centered that it is hard for us to imagine how unusual and radical these words and actions of Jesus were. Childhood was not valued in the ancient world. Children were seen only as potential adults, a burden to be borne until they were old enough to be put to work and produce more children. That’s why the disciples were trying to keep them away from Jesus - don’t bother the Master with babies! But then the Master says, ‘Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.’ Jesus was one of the first people to place a value not just on children but on childhood itself, on the basic openness, trust, simplicity, and love of a child. And Nicholas has become associated with that aspect of Jesus’ life and teaching.

Now Jesus doesn’t mean, of course, that you can only become a Christian at a young age; though it is true that most people who enter the Church do so before the age of 18. I know this is why you put so much investment into children’s ministry here in Cranleigh and why, when the bishop is due to visit, you persuade her that it is essential to play the ‘pie, no pie’ game on Zoom and be the loser from the very start. (Fool for Christ, I am. I do hope Gabrielle knows what she’s in for...). No, Jesus is telling us that we must be like children: we must have that openness, trust, simplicity, and love. Otherwise, we will refuse the gift. We will spurn God’s generosity. We will turn away. We will think ourselves intellectually superior or socially superior or morally superior. We will think we grow out of the goodness of Jesus the way that children grow out of believing in Santa Claus. We will spurn God’s generosity.

So, people of St Nicolas, you have been established here in Cranleigh for 850 years, witnessing to the generosity of God to all who are child-like, not least through the example of one of his remarkable saints. And I understand you're reupholstering the bishop's chair for the next 850 to ensure that there continues to be someone to hang out with any child who wants to play 'pie, no pie' going forwards.

I want you to recognise today that your dedication to St Nicolas means you're associated with, arguably, one of the greatest and best known icons in the world. We've haven't always known what to do with him. For many they can't see beyond the red suit and the big white beard (the red suit began, by the way, as a red chasuble and mitre). But here's someone who took Jesus at his word and lived it out through his acts of love and generosity, through his recognition of the dignity of three vulnerable girls.

I urge you to reclaim him, to welcome back Santa Claus, to redeem him from those who think he's not religious. We've become accustomed to limiting our stories of Christmas to Bethlehem: to the baby, Mary & Joseph, the shepherds and the star. Not any more. The story, of course, is simply (and has always been) **bigger** than Bethlehem.

How are you going to do that? By explaining what it is that inspired Sinterklaas to be that generous soul, that anonymous donor, that bringer of justice, the one who recognised the worth of every child and didn't mind what it cost. Why was that? How come he was like that? He was like that because he knew Jesus. And he took Jesus at his word, seeking to turn every day into Christmas Day.

And how are we going to explain how it was that St Nicolas was inspired by Jesus? There's only one way to be utterly convincing. It's no good

depending on St Nicolas. You can't get someone else to sign the tags. You can't lay on a conspiracy in the hope of convincing at least children, those who are open and trusting and simple, that Jesus is alive and worthy of our lives. No, the only way is to live it ourselves. To show through our lives that Jesus welcomes children like you and me, and him and her. To proclaim by our example that Jesus is the never-ending giver and the secret to the dignity of every human soul. To be icons of God through our own lives, mirrors of Jesus. How, when we value every child of God, we discover ever more deeply the extent of God's love. And when we give - anonymously, without seeking credit - we discover afresh how much we are given. If you're feeling dry, if this pandemic brings you to feel like you might run out of goodness and generosity, there's only one place, in the end, to go. To the source of all giving. Yes, climb up onto Jesus' knee in openness and simplicity and trust, just like those children in the gospel, just like children like to climb onto Santa's knee. To one who gave to St Nicolas. Who will give to you just the same - so through you others can discover for themselves the One whom we will never grow out of: Jesus our Lord. Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER *for St. Nicolas:*

God, shepherd of your people,
whose servant Nicolas revealed the loving service of Christ
in his ministry as a pastor of your people:
By this eucharist in which we share
awaken within us the love of Christ
and keep us faithful to our Christian calling:
through him who laid down his life for us,
but is alive and reigns with you,
now and forever.

SEASONAL PROVISION (to be used at the Live-streamed Communion)

ADVENT CANDLE LITURGY

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT: Preparing for Peace

SCRIPTURE: “A voice cries out in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

LITANY:

Leader: Our response is “O God, give us your peace.”

Leader: We speak our hope in whispers; restore us again, O God of our salvation. R

Leader: In anticipation we prepare for your coming; Breathe life into us once again, that we may rejoice in you. R

Leader: Amidst rising hopes we turn to you, O God; Show us your steadfast love. R

Leader: Lord, let us hear your words to us in our time and place; Speak peace to your people. R

Leader: Faithful God, prepare our hearts to receive your joy; may peace and justice kiss in our time. R

(The second Advent Candle is lit)

PRAYER: Faithful God, help us prepare our heart and home for the birth of the Saviour. Show us how to make the path of our lives and our world peace-filled, so that we can joyfully receive the Messiah. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Invitation to Confession:

A voice cries out in the wilderness, 'make straight the way of the Lord.'
So, let us listen and turn to the Lord in penitence and faith.

Introduction to the Peace:

God will speak peace to his people, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

Extended Preface for use with the Eucharistic Prayer:

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.

For when he humbled himself to come among us in human flesh,
he fulfilled the plan you formed before the foundation of the world
to open for us the way of salvation.

Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,

we now watch for the day

when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.

And so we join our voices with angels and archangels

and with all the company of heaven

to proclaim your glory,

for ever praising you and *saying:*

Blessing:

May God himself, the God of peace, make you perfect and holy,

and keep you safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and body,

for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;

and the blessing.....

WEEKLY PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:

Church and Christian Ministry:

- For all churches in the United Kingdom, as we prepare for Christmas, in these unusual and unsettling times, we pray that we may bring hope to those who are suffering, and the Light of Christ to the dark places of our communities.
- For Bishop Jo: her work in our Diocese, and nationally and internationally for the whole Church of England.
- For our own church as we celebrate 850 years of faith in this place and for the future of ministry here, as we seek to be a church which is Caring, Sharing and Daring.

National and World Affairs:

- For our government and for guidance in the making of difficult decisions.
- For research scientists working on vaccines, and for all affected by Coronavirus, and those whose livelihoods are at risk.

Community and Family:

- For those who live in Hitherwood.
- For the work of U3A.
- For all the businesses in our High Street, struggling as a result of COVID.

The Sick and those in Need:

- Jane Bloss, Ray Corver, Mike Ford, Stefan Godier, Stella Goldsmith, Michael Hart, George Hill, Amy and Dennis Loveless, Libby O'Brien, Brian Pettyfer, Jean Quallington, Jean Sandow, Jack Sieber, Bert and Eileen Steed, Maureen Steele, Dennis and Rosemary Talbot, Marion

Tomkins, Mac Walker, Frances Webb, Angela Wild, Henry Young and Nicholas (*and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Amanda and Hugh, Tim Bailey, Michael Burt, Barbara Crabb, William Mason, Sally Rivett, Sue Simper, Jacky Williams, Bill and Tracy Wood, Alli, Judy Bolt, Sue and Dennis Evans, Lorna Thompson, Sami Bennewith, Dru Ridley*).

The Departed:

- All we have known and loved, and especially Peter Hoad. (*and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Ann Lilley, Roger Styles*).

WEEKLY NOTICES:

THIS SUNDAY We are back in Church together, and the Preacher and President at 11am is Bishop Jo Bailey-Wells, the Bishop of Dorking, who is joining us to celebrate **St Nicolas Day** and especially this year the **850th Anniversary of the foundation of St Nicolas Church!** As usual for St Nicolas Day we will be collecting new, unwrapped toys for Eagle Radio's Toy Appeal. If you are unable to come to church but will still like to leave a toy, they can be left in The Rectory porch at any time this week!

ST NICOLAS ADVENT CALENDAR Our 'virtual' Advent Calendar started on 1st December, on our the church website. You can see familiar faces and hear familiar carols along with beautiful pictures and verses to help you prepare for Christmas. There is something to be found for all ages as the days of December unfold! www.stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

COMING TO CHURCH As we re-open again, we will be operating a more stringent entrance and exit routine to minimize the risk of passing on COVID-19. Please be prepared for this when you come to church, and please do not arrive more than 20 minutes before the due start time!

For the following services you will need to book a place in advance The cut off date for doing this will be 12noon on Tuesday 22nd December:

24th December, 11pm 'Midnight' Communion

25th December, 8am Holy Communion

25th December, 11am Holy Communion

CRANLEIGH SHINES This wonderful initiative has 'taken off' gloriously, and it amazing to travel around the village and see so many stars! If you haven't put a star in your window yet, it's not too late to join in!

ADVENT REFLECTIONS With Church re-opening for worship, we are going to turn the Thursday morning prayer sessions into a series of Advent Reflections, with words and music to help us prepare for Christmas. Sessions, still to follow:

10th December at 10am: 'Joy' *(presented by Revd Tim Clifford Hill)*

17th December at 10am: 'Peace' *(presented by The Rector)*

24th December at 10am: 'Hope' *(presented by Revd Tim Clifford Hill)*

CHURCHYARD ANNUAL TIDY-UP - Saturday 12 December

The mowing team has done a terrific job this year, keeping the churchyard looking good all summer. ***To maintain this for winter, the tidy-up is planned for 12 December - the second Saturday as in the past.*** Hopefully lockdown will be well over by then, although we must stick to social distancing rules.

The priorities are making sure the grass is short enough for the winter, the car park is tidy and as usual, gathering up as many leaves as possible between 9am and 1pm. Please bring your own equipment.

We hope to have some form of refreshment available, although we are not permitted to gather together for our usual half way break and the church will not be open, so you might want to bring your own.

Looking forward to seeing as many as possible on the 12th

FACE MASKS FOR CHRISTMAS – We are making two different styles of face masks in Christmas designs.

Please let us know your choice of style either A or J. (Shown by the pictures.) and place your orders to Jane (01483 274319) All donations to St Nicolas Church.



DID YOU KNOW YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WATCH OUR LIVESTREAMED SERVICES ON YOUR TV? *Please note: this will only work if you have an internet TV or similar, OR a TV satellite box, such as Sky or Virgin: If you have a 'Smart TV': Once the recording starts on the YouTube screen, hover the mouse over the picture. Some controls come up at the bottom*

of the screen. One looks like a square with three quarter circles in the bottom left-hand corner of the square: that is the 'play on TV' button. Click on that, and any available and compatible internet TV's will be listed. Many do not have one such. BUT many people have a satellite box, such as Sky or other internet service. *These also will come up on the list.* So, select a device, TV, or satellite box connected to your TV, and that sends the recording and sound (also called 'casting') straight to your TV. Normal TV or satellite remote controls should then work. Try it! And enjoy our services on your regular TV.

CRANLEIGH LIONS: Do visit the newly established Cranleigh Lions weekly market stall, where you will find a wide selection of donated items that are being sold to raise funds to help those in need in our community. They have new additions every week and some great present ideas, ranging from Bird Boxes to Books and Bikes and Beyond!

TRAI DCRAFT: Sue Knight is offering Traidcraft goods for sale by appointment or would be willing to deliver to Cranleigh on receipt of an order. She will have catalogues or you can go on line at traidcraftshop.co.uk to see the whole range and if she has to order it in, this usually takes about a week. You can pay for any orders by BACS or she will accept cheques. Call Sue on 275032 or 07950 025137.

PAYING MONEY TO THE CHURCH: If you wish to pay any monies to St Nicolas, cheques should be made payable to 'Cranleigh PCC.'

Please send notices for next week to Margie Nursey at
1, Elm Cottages, Smithwood Common (01483 273693)
notices@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk by **7pm on Tuesday**

KEEP IN TOUCH:

The Rector - Revd Canon Roy Woodhams

(Day off: Monday)

Tel: 01483 800655. Email: roy@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

The Curate - Revd Tim Clifford Hill

(Day off: Monday)

Tel: 01483 276267. Email: tim@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

The Part time Curate - Revd Rutton Viccajee

(Works Wednesday, Friday, Sunday)

Tel: 01252 910212. Email: rutton@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Interim Administrator - Nicola Craven-Smith

(Works Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.30-2.30)

Tel: 01483 273620. Email: nicola@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Young People's Minister - Gabrielle Clarke

Tel: 07427 748408. Email: gabrielle@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Church Website: www.stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

and on Facebook.