

Diocesan Fellowship of Evangelists

Christmas 2007

A Christmas Angel

It was a bright Christmas morning and after travelling all through the night my exhausted family and I pulled in to a small diner for breakfast. My husband and son were the only family in the place.

I heard my 18-month-old Sammy shout with glee, "Hi there ..." His fat baby hands banged the back of his chair. "Hi there." His face was alive with excitement and he grinned from ear to ear.

I stretched my neck to see what was causing my son so much joy and I could scarce take it in.

There he stood, filthy, greasy and worn, with a wrinkled, weathered face.

"Hi there, baby boy."



My husband and I exchanged a look that was a cross between "What do we do?" and "Poor soul".

Our meal arrived and we tried to settle Sammy, but he fussed as the street person shouted across the room, "Do you know peek a boo ... PEEK A BOO, little boy."

Sammy kept laughing and trying to talk to the man.

Nobody thought this was cute. The guy was obviously drunk and an embarrassment. My husband wolfed down his food, headed for the door and then said tensely, "Let's get out of here."

As I grabbed my son and tried to get out of the restaurant without having any eye contact with the old man, Sammy was wriggling and leaned over me with his arms outstretched. All of a sudden Sammy propelled himself from my arms to his.

It all happened in a split second, and suddenly a very old man and a very young baby met. As Sammy put his head on the old man's ragged shoulder the man's eyes closed and tears welled around his lashes. His aged hands, full of grime and pain and hard labour, gently ever so gently cradled my baby. I was awestruck.

The old man rocked the baby back and forth, then opened both eyes and looked seriously into mine: "You take good care of this baby, now."

"I will," I muttered awkwardly.

He prised Sammy from his chest and placed him in my arms and addressed us: "God bless you, ma'am. You've given me my Christmas gift."

I think I muttered "Thanks."

With Sammy in my arms I ran for the car. My husband was wondering why I was crying and holding Sammy so tightly, and why I was saying "My God, please forgive me ..."

Taken from: A Stocking Full of Christmas by Mark Stibbe ISBN 13:9781-85424-723-0



So what is the gift you will give this Christmas? We will all have the 'delights' of buying gifts: and whether we are heading for an M and S 'gorgeous' style or an Amazon on-line shopping style, we will have that mixture of delight in giving and frustration in getting caught up in the rush and hype of the High Street Christmas. Yet we carry within us the knowing that the celebration we are coming to was

after all the greatest bursting forth of the divine into humanity that our world will ever know. What gift will you give this Christmas?

John 4:10

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

I want to encourage us this Christmas, among all the other gifts we will give to not neglect to offer the greatest gift that God has given us. To take time to seek God and seek out with expectancy those people who we can offer Christ to. Go about in this Advent season looking for people to offer Christ to. Have a suitable leaflet ready to hand, a welcome leaflet for your church, in fact anything that will be useful in offering Christ. Don't let this year go by without at least one bold step, fuelled by the Holy Spirit, to give one person the gift of Christmas.

The weekend at West Wickham was great, we saw the power of God and the huge giftings that He has given you all – just let's use them together for his glory.

With the love of Christ



News

I am thrilled to tell you that Kathy Van Straaten is working with me in the area of training both on core modules and in the area of specific training. Kathy has experience in the field of overseas mission and being married to the vicar of Aylesford also in parish mission. She is such a wonderful person with the same heart commitment and sense of humour. She is a delight to have around. Kathy is a volunteer (God given none the less) but her parish will have a Service Level Agreement as part of the one day a week secondment strategy. Please pray for Kathy as she gets to grip with the new courses and puts up with my creative chaos. Thank God that prayers have been answered again.

Enclosed (1): the next Preaching course for evangelists - please note that you must be commissioned already and have incumbent and PCC permission. I am most grateful for Geoff organising and managing this course.

Enclosed (2): Report Forms. The last one that we sent of these was prior to the three year re-commissioning. This one will be for the half way slot. Please fill in and send back on line if you like, just place in your incumbent's initials when you have seen them. This is not meant to be hard work or a check up but to pick up issues and to arrange further training opportunities. Please return so we don't have to chase. Thanks.

For information: from Ministry and Training - Marriage Matters 2 Conference. Details (and booking form) are on the diocesan website or from your incumbent.

In January you will also receive from Ministry and Training a booklet outlining Continuing Ministerial Education courses please use them wisely. Note any you attend on your next report form.

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To access the evangelist 'bit' on the website click on Mission & Unity (under departments):-
Evangelists (our thanks to Veronica for overseeing this).