

## ***St. Anne's Church East Wittering 11<sup>th</sup> Christmas Festival Weekend 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> December, 2017***

The 11<sup>th</sup> Christmas Festival Weekend took place at St. Anne's Church from 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> December. Throughout the weekend the church was adorned to beautiful effect with 53 Christmas trees uniquely decorated by local families, organizations, businesses and charities. There also was a Christmas tree trail for children, a bran tub and hamper raffle prizes.

On Friday evening, by popular request, Chi Jazz, a quartet of some of the finest jazz musicians in the South, returned to St. Anne's and entertained an enthusiastic audience to a programme ranging from jazz standards to more modern tunes played in a soulful jazz style. Drinks were served and a raffle of fine wines and spirits ended a very enjoyable evening.

The ever popular annual Christmas Fair held on Saturday in East Wittering Village Hall attracted visitors keen to make a start to festive preparations, to enjoy all that was on display – stalls offering local crafts, home-made produce, books, bric a brac, tombolas and raffles – as well as good company. Delicious refreshments were on offer throughout and the talented Bracklesham Bay Ukulele Group provided cheering entertainment.

St. Anne's Church was packed on Sunday for the Christingle and Toy Service for families. Fr. Steve explained the symbolism of the Christingle and families were each given one. The Salvation Army Band played carols. One member told the congregation how the sacks full of generously donated toys will be distributed to 150 families in need in the Chichester area, an increase on last year. Another member brought a special 'guest,' her 'Pet As Therapy' dog Evie who offers comfort and cheer to those likely to benefit from her company such as those in care homes, a stroke ward, a centre for adults with learning difficulties and a school for children with special needs. The collection taken at the service will be donated to the Children's Society.

Yet again this Christmas Festival Weekend has been an immensely popular, very well-attended and profitable event. The Family of St. Anne's Church would like to offer most grateful thanks to all who came or supported in any way, to those who worked incredibly hard behind the scenes – hopefully they know who they are and how very much their generous and unstinting efforts are appreciated – and to the many organizations who gave the Festival publicity including magazines, radio, websites and publications both locally and in the Chichester area.

Such invaluable teamwork and effort have provided St. Anne's Church with much-needed funds as well as engendering considerable community spirit and festive cheer.

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