

News & Views From St Mary's Church Ecclesfield



Church Magazine December - January 2022

stmarysecclesfield.org.uk

Price 60p

First Words

As always December is busy with Carol services and other special events, while January begins quietly with the post-Christmas lull.

Our Christingle Service is Sunday 19th December at 4pm, when we celebrate the light of Christ at Christmas and help raising funds for the Children's Society.

Christmas services are back to normal, on Christmas Eve at 4pm we have our Crib Service for our young members, followed at 6.30pm by Carols by Candlelight.

For Christmas Day at 10am there is an All-Age Eucharist and On Boxing Day - Sunday 26th December at 10am there will be a simple Eucharist celebrated. Please note no evening service on that day.

I hope that you will find time to come along, worship and reflect on the meaning of this wonderful and exhausting season. Please spare a thought and a prayer for those who are alone over this Christmas season.

There are lots of things happening over Christmas and the New Year, I hope that we will all find time to relax and celebrate with family and friends,

Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year,

God bless,

Tim



Be kind

Try to be kind to each other this Christmas: many of us could do with some gentle encouragement. Depression and anxiety have risen by more than a quarter since the pandemic, according to the first global estimate of Covid's impact on mental health last year. The reduced interaction of people, the increase in isolation, coupled by high infection rates, were the cause of more than 125 million extra cases of depression and anxiety disorders in 2020.

The findings, published in the Lancet, reported that globally, depressive disorders have increased by 28 per cent, and anxiety by 26 per cent.



Clicking on images and links in the online magazine may tell you more...

Front Cover – Hand-Blown cut-glass baubles

Back Cover – Lych Gate

Andrew Jones

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A prayer for Christmas

*Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God. Amen.*

Every year, as we approach Advent and Christmas, I am amazed at the central miracle of the Christian faith: that God, the One who spoke this wonderful and vast universe into being; the One who holds all things in creation in existence, became a vulnerable child and was born as one of us.

For me, the great miracle is not **that** God became a man; it is **reason why** God became a man.

God meets us in Jesus for the simple reason that God loves us. It would be wonderful enough for God simply to notice us; but at the heart of the Bible is the remarkable and almost unbelievable claim that God loves us.

God loves us not only when we are at our best, but also when we are at our worst. God's love is not reserved for the holiest and the most selfless of people; it extends to the broken and the fallen, the sinful and the spiteful.

Every Christmas I marvel at the truth asserted time and time again in the pages of the New Testament that nothing I can do will make God love me any less. The reason for this is that God's love does not depend on me, on whether or not I deserve it or am worthy of it. God's love depends on God; and God is perfect love.

Christmas reminds us that God's love is free and universal and eternal. In Jesus Eternal love reaches out to each one of us, as we are and where we are. That is the reason why, for two thousand years, we have gathered at Christmas time to celebrate and rejoice.

Tim

The Christmas Caterpillar

Sometimes, upon a Christmas day
I wonder if there's any way
That Christmas might be quite a treat
For those who have a few more feet!

I really love my Christmas socks
That fill, each year, my Christmas box
O Santa, festive stocking filler,
I wish I were a caterpillar

By Nigel Beeton

A Prayer Poem

A new life...
A new life stands in my doorstep
ready to enter my life's journey.

Something in me welcomes this visitor
the hope of bountiful blessings,
the joy of a new beginning,
the freshness of unclaimed surprises.

Something in me rebuffs this new visitor
The swiftness of the coming,
The boldness of the entrance,
The challenge of so many new ways of
doing things.

Something in me fears this visitor:
The unnamed events of future days,
The wisdom needed to walk love well,

The demands of giving up and growing
away.

A new challenge stands on my doorstep:
With fragile caution I move
To open the door for its entrance.
My heart leaps with surprise,
Joy jumps in my eyes,
For there, beside this brand new opening
Stands my God with outstretched hand!
He smiles and gently asks of me ...
"Can we walk this new phase together?"

And I, so overwhelmed with goodness
can barely
whisper my reply:
"Welcome in."

"Adapted from the poem [Welcoming a New Year](#) by Joyce Rupp circa 2014

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'Let our family look after yours'

God in The Arts

Editor: The Revd Michael Burgess continues his series on God in the Arts with 'The Annunciation to the Shepherds' by Sano di Pietro. It now hangs in the Vatican. It can be found at:

https://www.wikigallery.org/wiki/painting_232130/Sano-Di-Pietro/The-Annunciation-to-the-Shepherds

'In that region there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock'

In the Old Testament shepherds were greatly valued and treated with respect. Patriarchs, prophets and kings had all tended sheep. Job, a rich man, owned 14,000 sheep. David was tending sheep when he was called by God and anointed by Samuel.

But as the Israelites settled in towns and cities and turned to farming, attitudes towards the shepherds changed. As the New Testament opens, shepherding had become a dirty, lonely life, away from civilisation. Shepherds could not observe the daily rituals of their faith, and so they had a low status in society, looked down upon by orthodox Jews.



But out in the countryside with just the hills and the plains and the open air, St Luke tells us that it was there that God's message was proclaimed and heard. Cities and towns had walls and barriers, as Bethlehem has today. But in the fields at night, there were shepherds, watching and alert, ready for any eventuality. And so, they were the first to hear of the birth of a Saviour.

'The Annunciation to the Shepherds' is this month's painting by Sano di Pietro. We know little about this Italian artist apart from some dates. He was born in Siena in 1406 and died there in 1481. But he has left us a legacy of beautiful and sensitive paintings. As we look at this scene, we see the human details: two shepherds huddled by the fireside with their dog, all three looking up to see the angel, and a spear by the side to ward off thieves and predators. The sheep are safely in their pen, black and white fleeces huddled together for warmth. In the sky the angel appears, bearing an olive branch in one hand and with the other pointing to Bethlehem in the distance.

Luke has already told us of another annunciation, with Gabriel visiting Mary. Artists loved to portray this scene and often showed a lily, the symbol of purity, in their paintings. Here there is the olive sprig, a symbol of peace to reinforce the angelic message of peace in the birth of the Saviour. Luke goes on to tell us how Jesus brought new meaning and peace to all those like the shepherds who were nobody in the eyes of people, but everything to the eyes and heart of God.

Jesus in His teaching often turned to the theme of sheep and shepherds, with parables about lost sheep, gates to the fold, and hiring shepherds. Just as the faithful shepherds were prepared to give their lives to protect the flock, so Jesus the Good Shepherd gave His life for the world – a death that would bring the peace and reconciliation shown in that olive branch held by the angel. At this Christmas time we rejoice with the heavenly host to proclaim the birth of this Prince of Peace and we commit ourselves to that work of peace and shepherding. Howard Thurman wrote these words:

'When the song of the angels is stilled...
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost, to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.'

St James the Least of All

Editor: The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'...

On the peril of choosing new kneelers

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren.

After all these years, I now understand why the non-conformist denominations sit down, rather than kneel, to say their prayers. That way, no decisions have to be taken over the number, size, shape, colour, material and design of kneelers in church.

Our present set was donated by a retired Major-General in 1899 to celebrate the Relief of Mafeking, and after more than a century of use by the pious and not-so-devout has taken its toll. Like certain members of our congregation, they now look a little worse for wear. Many have sprung leaks, so that when used, a jet of flocking is emitted all over the clothes of their neighbour, who then leaves Mattins looking like a Yeti.

Other kneelers have been occupied by grateful mice, who find them most congenial for nesting and who leave in high umbrage, creating chaos as Miss Mapp chases them down the aisle with her umbrella; that this provides her with the perfect excuse to leave before the sermon is, I am sure, entirely coincidental. The final straw came when my own, by some quirk in its design, now sounds like a whoopee cushion every time I kneel. It may cause the choirboys much amusement, but it lends nothing to the dignity of our worship.

So, we have decided to have a completely new set – and therein lies the problem. Who makes them? What will be the designs? Who co-ordinates the whole project? There is enough here to occupy the combined minds of our Church Council for the next Millennium and there will be enough scheming, manoeuvring, signing of non-aggression pacts and formation of tactical truces to make the United Nations look like amateurs. Unfortunately, we do not have the ecclesiastical equivalents of the blue berets to enforce peace.

The more patriotic members of the congregation have suggested they all show the Union Jack – presumably so they can be waved at appropriate moments in our services; one belligerent individual wants to see depictions of St Michael slaughtering the dragon, John the Baptist's head on a platter and other such tasteful scenes; on the other hand, dear Miss Timmins wants them all to depict doves or small fluffy creatures, which would make the church look more like pets corner.

Cutting through these vital issues, I have suggested that the entire congregation converts to Roman Catholicism.... and then we could stand for our prayers and do without kneelers entirely.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



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Thought for the Month

As I write it will be December next week. I am in the middle of planning Christmas Services, thinking about trees and presents, wondering if I will get round to writing any Christmas Cards before New Year, and in the middle of it all trying to keep my focus on **why** we celebrate Christmas.

This is where Advent comes in. It is a short season, which increasingly gets eaten into by the Christmas celebrations. But Advent is an important season in the Church year.

In Advent we wait - something that we are not very good at today! We wait for God to fulfil the promises made centuries before the birth of Jesus.

When I look at a Bible, the last book of the Old Testament, the prophet Malachi promises both the coming of a Saviour - Messiah, and one who will 'prepare the way' for the coming of the Saviour. We turn over a few pages in our Bibles and find the Gospel of Matthew; and before the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, we read about John, who was sent by the Holy Spirit to prepare the way of the Lord. Malachi and John the Baptist are separated by only three pages in my Bible; but those three pages represent about four hundred years.

Those four hundred years were largely silent. People prayed and worshiped, they hoped and they trusted - despite God's seeming silence. They held onto the promise of the coming Saviour. In those four hundred years the nation suffered defeat and humiliation, some said that God had abandoned them, others that God was deaf or asleep.

And then in the most unexpected way, God showed that he had heard the cries of the people. He didn't send a Saviour, not the Saviour that the people expected. Instead God came in person. Doing more than He had promised; fulfilling His word in a most mysterious and unexpected way.

God came to our world, became part of His creation. He became a member of a people who had suffered at the hands of the world's powerful empires.

In Jesus God came in weakness and in vulnerability; in Jesus God came as a victim of the injustice and evil of this world. In Jesus God draws the pain and the suffering and the brokenness of creation to Himself, and in doing so heals and redeems it.

We celebrate Christmas, because in Christ we discover that we are not alone; that God is with us in all things.

I hope that you have a joyful Christmas 2022, with family and friends, and I pray that the peace of Christ will fill all of our hearts and homes.

God bless,

Tim

How to beat the internet

Editor: By the Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the C of E.

Churches across are now squaring up to the same challenges – and opportunities – that local shops and businesses have faced for years. It's all about the internet, and how that changes everything.

In the pre-Covid world, services were held in churches, and people went to them. Or not. Throughout the lockdowns, most churches went online. Services were recorded or streamed from church buildings, kitchens, lounges or even, sheds. Some looked amazingly slick and professional. Most simply reflected the gifts and technical skills that the church could muster. The move online brought other changes. Local people dropped in online to high-profile churches in the UK or overseas. Worshippers from around the world started 'attending' services across Britain.

People who had not attended church for years, or not at all, came across services online and were surprised at the variety on offer. They joined online services at different times to when they had been available live – and some watched while drinking coffee in bed. Those who through disability had not been able to attend services could now join online alongside those who used to go, physically, each week.

But now, as post-Covid normality largely returns, many churches are facing tough decisions about their online offerings. Do we go back to services only being held in church? Or do we continue with online offerings as well? Where technically possible, the answer must be yes – to keep going both online and in church.

Yet if churches want to encourage more people to come through our doors – and we do – we need to look at what's on offer. That means working on the warmth of welcome and the quality of worship and practical teaching. More importantly, it's about bringing people into the presence of a God who loves them, affirms them and wants the best for them. It's about being part of a community of people who are seeking to follow God, who fail, but go on trying.

It's about church as a place where people can feel welcomed, at home, safe, and valued. A place where they are known and loved. And, when all that is in place, it beats anything the internet can offer.

Grenoside Singers



The choir is disappointed to announce that the traditional Grenoside Carol Concert in the Community Centre, due to be on Monday 13th December, will not go ahead. This is due to insufficient rehearsal time following a gap of 18 months due to COVID and also safety concerns with the infection rates continuing at a higher level than had been hoped for. Let's hope this popular concert will be back in 2022.

Andrew Robinson

From the Registers

Baptisms:

Sunday 31st October	Gemma Elaine Margaret Devlin
Sunday 7th November	Annabelle Rose Robinson
Sunday 7th November	Phoebe Ann Rose Townsend-Hyde

May they know the love of God in their life and may all things of the Spirit live and grow in them

Marriages

Saturday 6th November	Adam Kenny & Courtney Weston
Friday 19th November	Brian Pemberton & Christine Ambler

May each be to the other strength in need a comfort in sorrow and a companion in joy

Funerals

Tuesday 2nd November	Betty Mitchell	88
Thursday 4th November	Dorothy Booth	93
Wednesday 17th November	Kenneth Renshaw.	

Grant them, O Lord, refreshment, light and peace.

Covid Lockdown Memories

In March it will be two years since Covid-19 lockdown was declared.

What did that time mean for you? - How did you cope? - Would you care to share your memories?

The Church is hoping to mark this devastating time with a display of local people's memories: paintings, drawings, photos, videos, anecdotes, stories, poems, jokes, cartoons, craftwork, etc. Find out more at a Tuesday or Friday Coffee Morning 10am to 12pm and ask for Sue, Rose, or Julie. All creative ideas are welcome!

Or email covid.ecclesfield@gmail.com subject 'Covid Memories', and we'll get back to you.

Tearfund campaigns for Covid

The coronavirus pandemic has pushed an estimated 120 million people into poverty. Most of these will have to wait until at least 2022 to receive their vaccine.

Tearfund says: "The only way out of this pandemic is to recover together – no country is safe until all countries are safe. People who are going hungry now can't wait; they need urgent practical assistance. As well as providing this, Tearfund is campaigning for everyone in every country to have access to an approved Covid-19 vaccine.

"Our local partners are advocating for governments around the world to include vulnerable groups, such as refugees, in their vaccination programmes. And we are asking the UK government to do even more to support lower-income countries." Tearfund is also helping to prepare communities for the rollout of a vaccine, including equipping church leaders to share accurate information about Covid-19 vaccines. If you would like to support this, please go to:

<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/recover-together>



**Come and celebrate
Christingle with us**



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God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

Meditation on the Incarnation

This extract from Luci Shaw's poem *Made Flesh* captures something of the wonder of the moment when the second person of the Trinity became an embryo.

How does a single cell turn into an infant, and what does that process say about us – and God? These are the questions that Professor Jeff Hardin, a developmental biologist, asks himself. Having studied theology as well as science, he has a unique perspective on embryonic development.

*After the bright beam of
annunciation
fused heaven with dark earth
His searing sharply-focused light
went out for a while
eclipsed in amniotic gloom:
His cool immensity of splendour
His universal grace
small-folded in a warm dim
female space*

A new-born baby is made of around five trillion cells. These cells come in hundreds of different types, each of which must be in the correct place for the child's body to function properly. Every new life is the result of intricate and highly ordered processes. Three things must happen as an embryo develops.

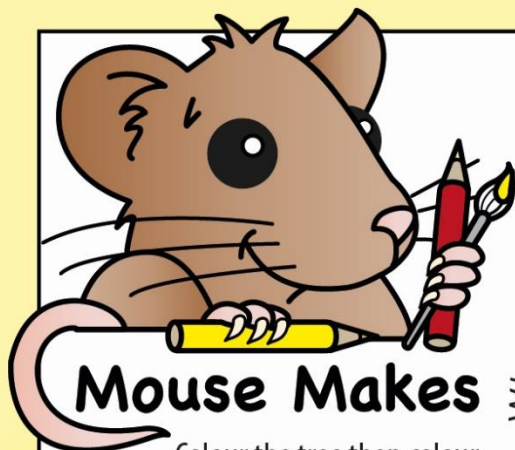
The first important process is for cells to take on their identity as types of muscle, bone, nerves, and so on. The second is when each cell learns which part of the body it belongs to. Third, those cells are moved around to form the different tissues and organs. These three are not discrete stages, but they all happen at around the same time, building up gradually like the different aspects of a picture coming into focus.

All three of these processes are driven forward by the movement of cells, the connections between them, and the signals they pass to each other. Jeff studies a sort of cellular glue which is involved in joining cells together. Making and breaking these adhesions can affect how cells move and signal to each other, their identity in the body, how they are organised as groups, and ultimately their survival. This glue is found on the surface of cells throughout the animal kingdom, including the small worms Jeff's lab studies.

For Jeff, peering down a microscope at tiny worm embryos can be an act of worship. It is also an exercise in art appreciation, as he learns to appreciate the created order. Understanding the complexities of development, while also being aware that God knows that process intimately both as Creator and created, fills Jeff with a profound sense of awe, wonder and worship.

Does the minute scale of our early development, compared to the incomprehensibly vast and ancient universe, give us a sense of insignificance? Psalm 8 says, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"

For Jeff and the Psalmist, such feelings can be a positive experience if they serve as a reminder to be humble in the face of a universe that is vastly complicated but also deeply meaningful, made by a God who loves each one of us.



Colour the tree then colour
in one star each day until Christmas.
Leave the large star at the top of the
tree to colour in on Christmas day!

What's on the Christmas Tree?



A STAR
shows the way
to Jesus
Read
Matthew 2:1-12



ANGELS
bring messages from God

Read about
Gabriel's message in
Luke 1:26-38

Read the
shepherd's story in
Luke 1:26-38

**LIGHTS
AND CANDLES**
remind us that Jesus
lights our way to God
Read *Luke 2:29-32*



PRESENTS
remind us of God's
special gift to us ... **JESUS!**

"For God loved the world so much that He
gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes
in him may not die but have eternal life." *John 3:16*

Presents at Christmas
under the tree,
A red Christmas stocking
waiting for me,
But what really is Christmas,
What is it about?
Just look and the Bible
and you will find out!
It's about **JESUS**
- the best present of all,
JESUS our **Saviour**,
God's gift to us all!



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Editor's ~~Lookdown~~ Humour

don't forget to click on the pictures and links to learn more!

I've learned so much from my mistakes, that I'm thinking of making a few more

One of my best childhood memories is falling asleep on the settee and waking up in bed...

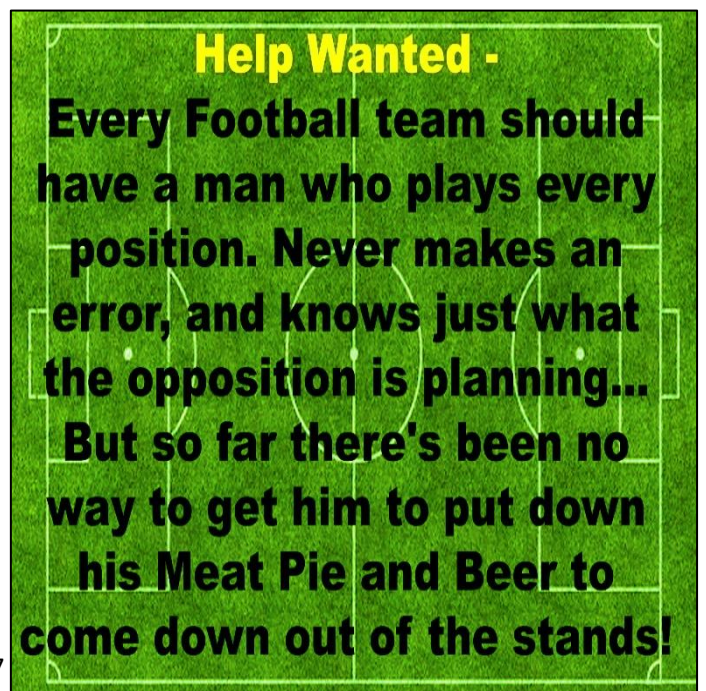
I miss [teleporting](#), it never happens to me anymore

[Tablets](#) were replaced by scrolls; [Scrolls](#) were replaced by [books](#). Now we scroll through books on [tablets](#)...

I said to the baker, "How come all your cakes are 50p and that one costs £1?". He said, "That's [Madeira Cake](#)!".

"Said Hamlet to Ophelia, I'll draw a sketch of thee. What kind of pencil shall I use? 2B or not 2B?" — [Spike Milligan](#).

For those of you who don't want [Alexa](#) listening in on your conversations, Amazon are making a male version... it doesn't listen to anything.



Local Carol Singing

Last year, the very popular singing of local carols in the Black Bull was suspended as the Black Bull was shut and COVID restrictions prevented indoor singing. We did however arrange successful Zoom sessions and two sessions outside around the Christmas Tree in the churchyard.

The Black Bull remains closed, but the singing has resumed. We are happy to be returning to pub sings and also to the traditional pattern of the six Thursdays before Christmas.



The plans for 2021 are as follows: -

The Stocks – on the six Thursdays before Christmas, starting November 18th.

8:30pm on November 18, then 8pm on subsequent weeks (November 25, December 2, 9, 16 & 23).

The Stocks (formerly known as the Old Tankard), is just one minute's walk from the Black Bull, and is on Stocks Hill, Ecclesfield, Sheffield S35 9YT.

We will take the following Covid precautions:

1. We would recommend that you are at least double vaccinated for Covid and that you obtain a negative result from a lateral flow test on the day of each sing. Masks will be optionable!
2. We shall sing in "The Barn" area of the pub which has a high ceiling and windows will be open.
3. If the room is likely to get too full, we will restrict numbers, so please bear this in mind if you intend to make more than a short journey.

Zoom session – 8pm on Monday 13th December

This proved exceptionally popular last year and included several people from not just around Britain but around the world too, who really valued following the carols in this way. So, we are doing it again this year. Zoom details nearer the date will be sent to all on our mailing list – if you are not on the local carols e-mail list, please press [link](#) or contact me on the e-mail below.

Ecclesfield Churchyard, around the Christmas tree, 7pm on Tuesday 21st December followed by singing in the Church at 7.45

Singing around the Christmas tree in the churchyard for half an hour followed by an informal sing in the ancient parish church of St. Mary. You are invited to bring your own beer or other drinks. Tea and coffee will also be available.

Happy Singing

David Robinson ecclesfieldcarols@gmail.com

Diary December 2021

Thursday 2 Dec	9:30am	HC Service
Friday 3 Dec	10:00am	Coffee Shop
	3:00pm	Choir Practice
Saturday 4 Dec	11:00pm	Christmas Open Church
Sunday 5 Dec	10:00am	Parish Eucharist
	12:00pm	Baptism
	6:30pm	Evening Service
Tuesday 7 Dec	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Thursday 9 Dec	9:30am	HC Service
Friday 10 Dec	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Sunday 12 Dec	10:00am	Parish Eucharist
	4:00pm	Community Carols
	6:30pm	Evening Service
Monday 13 Dec	2:00pm	Wedding
Tuesday 14 Dec	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Thursday 16 Dec	9:30am	HC Service
	10:30pm	Visiting Bell ringers
Friday 17 Dec	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Sunday 19 Dec	10:00am	Parish Eucharist
	4:00pm	Christingle Service
	6:30pm	Evening Service
Tuesday 21 Dec	10:00am	Coffee Shop
	7:00pm	Ecclesfield Local Carols
Wednesday 22 Dec	1:30pm	Wedding
	7:30pm	Finance Team Meeting
Thursday 23 Dec	9:30am	HC Service
	2:00pm	Wedding
Friday 24 Dec	No	Coffee Shop
	4:00pm	Crib Service
	6:30pm	Lessons and Carols
Saturday 25 Dec	10:00am	All Age Christmas Eucharist
Sunday 26 Dec	10:00am	Parish Eucharist
Monday 27 Dec	2:0pm	Wedding
Tuesday 28 Dec	No	Coffee Shop
Thursday 30 Dec	9:30am	HC Service
Friday 31 Dec	No	Coffee Shop

Please note that these diaries are correct as of November 2021

And are subject to change without notice due to Covid19

Please check the website for any changes

<https://stmarysecclesfield.org.uk/>

Diary January 2022

Sunday 2 Jan	10:00am	Parish Eucharist
	6:30pm	Evening Service
Tuesday 4 Jan	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Thursday 6 Jan	9:30am	HC Service
Friday 7 Jan	10:00am	Coffee Shop
	3:00pm	Choir Practice
Sunday 9 Jan	10:00am	Parish Eucharist
	6:30pm	Evening Service
Monday 10 Jan	7:30pm	PCC Meeting
Tuesday 11 Jan	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Thursday 13 Jan	9:30am	HC Service
Friday 14 Jan	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Saturday 15 Jan	1:00pm	Wedding
Sunday 16 Jan	10:00am	Parish Eucharist
	6:30pm	Evening Service
Monday 17 Jan	7:00pm	Fabric Team Meeting
Tuesday 18 Jan	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Thursday 20 Jan	9:30am	HC Service
Friday 21 Jan	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Sunday 23 Jan	10:00am	Parish Eucharist
	12:00pm	Baptism
	6:30pm	Evening Service
Monday 24 Jan	7:00pm	Wedding Preparation
Tuesday 25 Jan	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Thursday 27 Jan	9:30am	HC Service
Friday 28 Jan	10:00am	Coffee Shop
Sunday 30 Jan	10:00am	Parish Eucharist
	6:30pm	Evening Service
Monday 31 Jan	7:00pm	Baptism Preparation



On behalf of Tim and the finance team we would like to thank you all for your generous giving and donations during the year. This has helped greatly both for the upkeep and running of the church and towards the disabled access project.

Wishing you all a Happy and Peaceful Christmas Time and all the very best for 2022



A prayer for the New Year

*God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
whose years never fail
and whose mercies are new each returning day:
let the radiance of your Spirit renew our lives,
warming our hearts and giving light to our minds;
that we may pass the coming year in joyful obedience and firm faith;
through him who is the beginning and the end,
your Son, Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

If 2020 was the year of Covid and 2021 was the year of the vaccine, what will 2022 bring? The answer, of course, is that we do not know.

Every one of us has hopes for the coming year; every one of us has fears. There will be unexpected joys and un-looked-for troubles. We will all make plans for the coming year, but we do not know which of our plans will be fruitful and which will be fallow.

What we can be sure of, whatever we may face in the coming year, is that we are not alone; that God is with us; that we are held through all of our days by the God who meets us in Jesus. We can be confident that God's mercies and gifts will meet us every day of our lives.

And so we pray that in 2022 our hearts will be warmed by God's love - that we may love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and that we may love our neighbour - whoever that neighbour proves to be - as we love ourselves.

We also pray that God will enlighten our minds in the coming year; giving us light to shine on our path ahead guiding us; and shining light through us to bring His light to others.

May God bless you with joy this Christmas and with the assurance of His presence in the New Year. Amen.

Tim

Editor - New Year - It took quite a long time before January 1 again became the universal or standard start of the civil year. By 1752 most European countries had adopted it. Some of the late comers include Japan 1873, China 1912, Greece 1923, Turkey 1926, Thailand 1941. Many cultures and countries still retain their own dates for their New Year, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Year to learn more

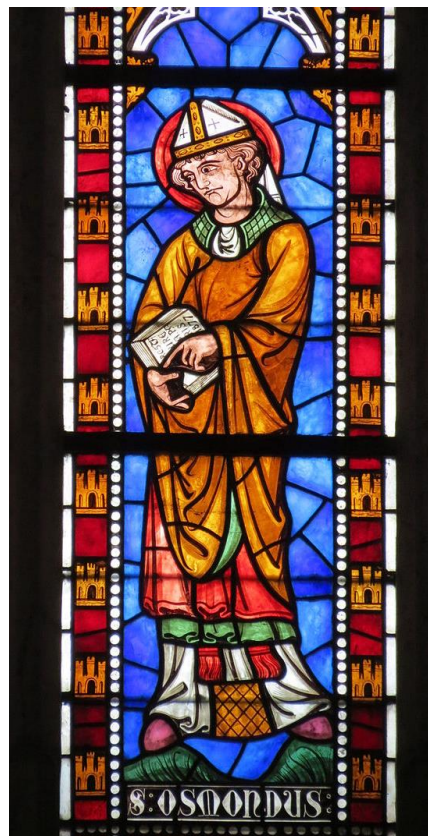
Saint Osmond – an immigrant before Brexit

Osmond is the saint for you if you regret Brexit, and believe that immigrants can bring good to Britain. Osmond came to England from France back in the days before EU regulations. It was shortly after 1066, and he was a Norman, following William the Conqueror.

Osmond himself was no soldier, but a gifted and godly man, with a great gift of administration. He became royal chaplain, and then chancellor in 1072, producing numerous royal letters and charters for the king. In 1078 he was made bishop of Salisbury. As such, he completed and consecrated the cathedral, and formed such an outstanding chapter and constitution that it later became a model for other English cathedrals.

Osmond took part in the preparation of the Domesday Book and was present when it was presented to William in April 1086. He died in 1099, well respected for his purity and learning, and his lack of avarice and ambition.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Osmund



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Christmas throughout the Christian world - 25th Dec

For nearly four weeks leading up to Christmas Christians recognise a period called Advent. It means 'coming'. It is a time of spiritual preparation. 'Coming' refers to Jesus' first coming as a baby, but it also looks forward to a day when Jesus is expected to return in triumph at His 'second coming' to establish perfect justice and a new order of peace.

Originally Christians marked Advent as a time when they refrained from excessive eating and drinking. Then Christmas Day reintroduced them to the joys of feasting. Christmas celebrations lasted for 12 days, with gifts exchanged as a climax at Epiphany (6th January). Today, however, Advent is more likely to be associated with accelerating festivity, with the days following Christmas something of an anti-climax until 'twelfth night', on which decorations are removed. Many Christians worldwide are trying to revive the spirit of Advent by setting aside time to pray and address global poverty.

Christmas Day is celebrated as the anniversary of Jesus' birth, although the actual date is not known. Most Christians celebrate it on 25th December. However, the Orthodox Church (the ancient churches in Eastern Europe and parts of Asia) follows a different calendar and celebrates on 7th January. Christians make a point of taking communion on Christmas Day. Many make it the first thing they do as the clock strikes midnight.

On 6th January the Christmas festival continues with a celebration of Epiphany, which means 'the appearance'. Christians remember the visit of wise men (magi) to Jesus, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Christmas tradition of exchanging gifts originally honoured these men, who were the first non-Jews (Gentiles) to worship Jesus. It forms a reminder that in Jesus God was giving Himself for the benefit of the entire world.

Orthodox Christians use this day to recall the baptism of Jesus as a grown man. The significance of Jesus being baptised was that He identified Himself with human beings in all their need. They mark the day by praying for God's blessing on rivers, wells and water sources.

Christmas has never been just an escapist festival for Christians. Those who treat it seriously recognise that not all the world is able to face the days with frivolity or joy. The day after Christmas, Boxing Day, was historically marked as the feast of St Stephen. He was the first man to be put to death rather than give up his belief that Jesus was God.

And two days later a day remembering the Massacre of the Innocents recalls Herod's attempt to destroy Jesus by killing all male babies in Bethlehem. Although not so widely marked as Christmas Day, it gives Christians the opportunity to pray for children in today's world who suffer as a result of the actions of adults.

This is from:

https://christianity.org.uk/christmas-throughout-the-christian-world/#.W9LI_xNKhsM

Lucy, Martyr at Syracuse – 13th December

Lucy was a Christian girl who got caught up in the fierce and widespread Diocletian persecutions of 303-4. She refused to give up her Christian faith, and so was put to death. Her tomb can still be found in a Catacomb in Syracuse (Sicily), and there are early fourth-century inscriptions bearing her name (Euskia).

Lucy's full story has been lost in the mists of time, but a romantic legend of her martyrdom grew up after her death. According to the legend, Lucy was arrested while giving to the poor at the height of the persecution. Her own fiancé had betrayed her, telling the authorities about her faith. The judge ordered that she be raped in a brothel and then burned, but all attempts to inflict such punishment on her went amiss, because God protected her. At last, Lucy was killed by the sword.



Lucy's legend was written in the 5th century, and she was honoured in Rome from the 6th century. The name Lucy means 'light', and so in time she became the patron saint for those with eye diseases. Her feast day is close to the shortest day of the year, so it is celebrated in Sweden as a festival of light.

As the full details of Lucy's martyrdom will never be known, she can represent all the young women who have been willing to die for Christ, and whose full stories will also never be known to us.

Mothers Union

Subscriptions for 2022 are due in January 2022 and will be the same as last year £23.00.

I would appreciate cheques please made payable to Ecclesfield St Mary's Mothers' Union. If anyone has any difficulties with either cheques or paying the full amount in one go, please speak to me.

Also, I would be very grateful if everyone can make sure this message is passed on to all.

Thank you. Jennifer Armeson - Tel Mob 07944 195906



The 2022 Programme of meetings is now available on the church website at:

<https://stmarysecclesfield.org.uk/mothers-union>

Or visit

<https://www.mothersunion.org/>

The Gardening Year – December & January

Be prepared, it helps to be aware of when you'll be busy throughout the year. weather varies around the world, but the basic gardening year remains the same, wherever you are, just like nature you will have busy and restful periods too. The times between spring and Autumn are the busiest where you will be sowing, tending and harvesting. During the winter months your garden will be mainly dormant and that's a good time to do preparations and clearing, ready for the next season.

Spring - is a wonderful time of the year, new shoots push their way through the soil, and the first spring flowers or blossoms are always a joy to see. spring can be one of the busiest times in your garden, especially if you haven't done all your maintenance and planning during the winter. During the spring you'll be sowing seeds indoors and out, and you will need to take Control of any weeds before they take Control of your containers.

Summer - during the summer your crops will be established and will need a lot of attention, particularly those in small containers. You'll need to establish regular watering and feeding patters. Keep on top of weeding and carry out successive sowing if you want a continual crop. You will be able to harvest some herbs for use during winter and you'll need to be vigilant about Pest and diseases.

Autumn - if you had a successful growing season, autumn can be a busy time of harvesting. Although plants will be dying back, there will still be jobs for you to do. Regular picking can extend the growing season, dead plant growth will need to be removed and composted, you'll need to keep an eye on the weather .an early frost can kill plants, so you might have to protect or move more tender crops.

Winter - during the winter there is little to do in terms of care and feeding of plants. Most of the harvest will be over but you might still be enjoying winter crops such as kale or some herbs, Winter is a great time to reflect on your year ,work out what was successful or not, tidy up your plot and clean things ready for next year .You can look at seed catalogues, workout if there are any new supplies you need and hopefully be enjoying some of the preserved fruits of your labour.

Finally, I would like to wish all at St Marys and all your readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. **Colin Williams**

Eat the Seasons – December & January

Vegetables - Beetroot, Brussels Sprouts, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Celery, Chicory, Horseradish, Jerusalem Artichoke, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Parsnips, Potatoes (Maincrop), Salsify, Shallots, Swede, Truffles (Black), Truffles (White), Turnips, Wild Mushrooms

Fruit - Apples, Clementines, Cranberries, Passion Fruit, Pears, Pineapple, Pomegranate, Tangerines, Satsumas

Herbs - Almonds, Brazil Nuts, Chestnuts, Hazelnuts, Walnuts

Meat – Duck, Goose, Grouse, Guinea Fowl, Hare, Mallard, Partridge, Pheasant, Rabbit, Turkey, Venison

Fish – Clams, Cod, Coley, Dab, Dover Sole, Gurnard, Haddock, Halibut, Hake, Langoustine, Lemon Sole, Lobster, Mackerel, Monkfish, Mussels, Oysters, Plaice, Red Mullet, Scallops (Queen), Sea Bass (Wild), Sea Bream, Skate, Turbot, Winkles

Visit - www.eattheseasons.co.uk

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Help needed in the church garden

If you can, mow, weed, strim, sweep, pickup sticks, rake leaves or drive a sit on mower, we need you. If you can spare just one or two hours a week it would be a great help. Not only will the church look good, but you might even feel your spiritual and physical well-being improve and in our small way help the environment. We come to the churchyard every Tuesday and Friday afternoon (weather permitting) followed by a drinks and biscuits, sometimes even a cake.

Any help most welcome. Thank you. Pat Wood

The day Mikhail Gorbachev resigned

Just 30 years ago, on 25th December 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev resigned as President of the Soviet Union, and the next day the Soviet Union was officially dissolved. The remaining Soviet republics became independent states.

Mr Gorbachev had wanted to keep the Soviet Union together, and his policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* had been part of this, together with his friendship with Western leaders. He later accused the West of "provoking Russia" and said the USSR collapsed in 1991 because of "treachery" from within.

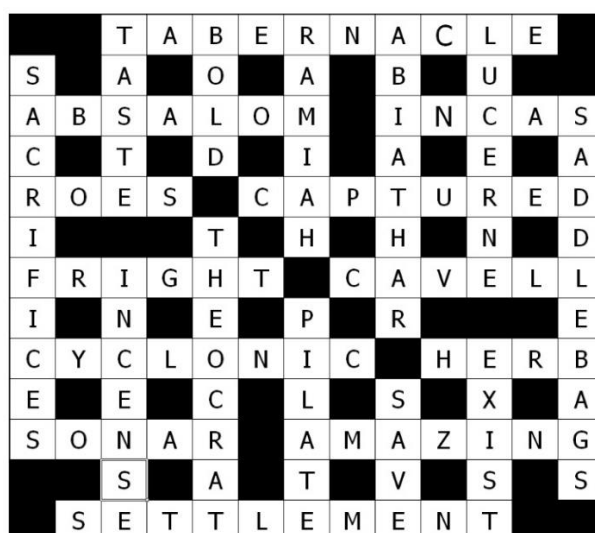
He said: "We were well on the way to a civil war, and I wanted to avoid that. A split in society and a struggle in a country like ours, overflowing with weapons, including nuclear ones, could have left so many people dead and caused such destruction. I could not let that happen just to cling on to power. Stepping down was my victory."

The former superpower – an empire described as “over in the blink of an eye” compared to the longevity of earlier empires, such as the Roman and Persian – was replaced by 15 independent countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Earlier, a coup by hardliners had been resisted, thanks to Mr Gorbachev's refusal to submit and the failure of the army and police to take orders from the coup leaders. Parliament leader Boris Yeltsin had appealed to the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church to condemn the coup, and he responded by anathematising those involved in the plot. (Anathema is an extreme form of excommunication.)

Since then, Orthodox Christianity has been thriving. In 1991 about two-thirds of Russians claimed no religious affiliation. Today, 71 per cent of Russians identify as Orthodox, and President Vladimir Putin appears to support this.

Crossword Puzzle - Solution is here



ERIC EYRE

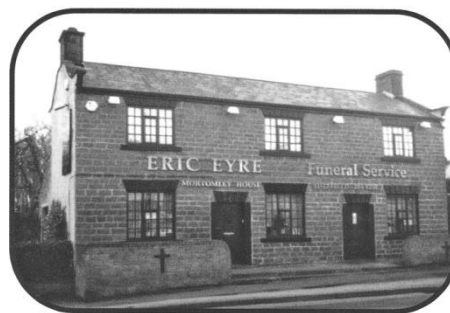
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1989 - 1990



It is time to eat Guinea Fowl

Guinea fowl makes a great alternative to chicken for a warming dinner on a cold night. It has a lovely flavour that is slightly gamey but very subtle (much less assertive than pheasant or grouse). It can be magnificent when cooked simply or when combined with more robust flavours.



The guinea fowl is native to West Africa and is known to have been a part of the diet of the ancient Egyptians. It appears in Roman mosaics but did not become widely eaten in Europe until the Portuguese began importing the birds from Guinea (their colony) in the sixteenth century. Guinea fowl then spread quickly across western and northern Europe and have been reared for the table in this country since Elizabethan times.

Guinea fowl are an important food throughout much of Africa, south of the Sahara, and are found in every region of the world. France, Belgium and Italy are amongst the largest producers in Europe.

Guinea fowl is a small bird related to the chicken and partridge, guinea fowl include four or five species, the most common being *Numida meleagris*. They are hardy birds that forage for food and so are often farmed in free-range or semi-wild facilities where they also perform a valuable pest control function. They have an acute awareness of predators and so are valued for their role as a 'watchdog', alerting farmers to any henhouse intrusions. It is reported that they have the ability to distinguish between farmers' family members and strangers. The name of the common species of guinea fowl, *meleagris*, comes from a story in Greek mythology. Meleager, prince of Macedon, was killed by his mother after murdering his uncles. Meleager's sisters, weeping in grief, are turned into guinea-hens and their tears form the pearl-shaped markings found on the bird's feathers.

Buying - Look for free-range guinea fowl, rather than intensively-reared birds. Many butchers sell free-range guinea fowl imported from France. Guinea fowl eggs are excellent and worth buying if you see some. With giblets removed, a whole guinea fowl will keep in the fridge for 3 or 4 days.

Cooking – Guinea fowl is prepared in much the same way as chicken. As it is generally a smaller bird, cooking methods that help retain moistness are recommended (e.g. pot roasting or casseroles). Barding or regular basting are advisable when roasting guinea fowl. Legs and wings are also excellent if marinated for a few hours before grilling. Guinea fowl meat is high in protein and low in cholesterol. It is a good source of vitamin B6, selenium and niacin.

Roast guinea fowl with chestnut, sage & lemon stuffing (see image at top)

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/roast-guinea-fowl-chestnut-sage-lemon-stuffing>

Pot-roast guinea fowl with lentils, sherry & bacon

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/pot-roast-guinea-fowl-lentils-sherry-bacon>

Tandoori roast guinea fowl

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/tandoori-roast-guinea-fowl>

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Chapeltown & District Probus Club



The club enjoyed an excellent Annual Dinner at Wortley Hall on 2nd November where we were entertained by North East band Fools Gold. At the November meeting we welcomed back Stephen Gay who presented an extremely interesting talk, illustrated by excellent slides, covering all things to do with Cornwall. Around 20 members had lunch after the meeting at Wortley Hall. We have booked Wortley Hall in advance for lunch after future meetings and also for the 2022 Annual Dinner which will return to its summer date and the quarterly seasonal lunches.

In December, we welcome back Geoff Marston, a recognised expert on the story of Sheffield and steel, and he will continue the history which started with his previous presentation in January 2019. The December meeting will be followed by Christmas lunch at Wortley Hall.

We welcome all new members and, If you are interested or would like to join a meeting as a guest, please make contact with the Secretary, Trevor Winslow (see below).

Upcoming meetings:-

8th December – Geoff Marston “Part 2 of the Story of Sheffield Steel” followed by Christmas lunch at Wortley Hall

12th January – Ian Morgan “Footpads, Kings and Highmaymen”

9th February – Paul Adey “History of the Motor Industry – Part 1”

9th March – Annual General Meeting

Contact details: E-Mail chapeltown.probus@gmail.com,

Website <https://chapeltown-probus.org.uk/> .

Andrew Robinson

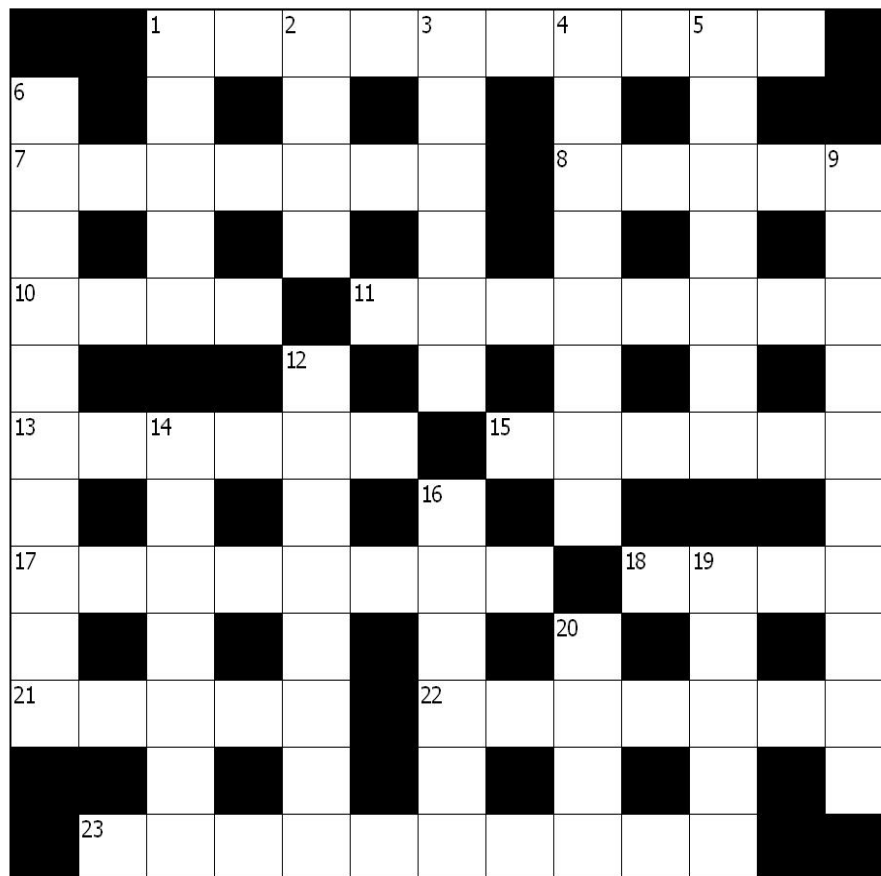
Crossword Puzzle

Clues Across

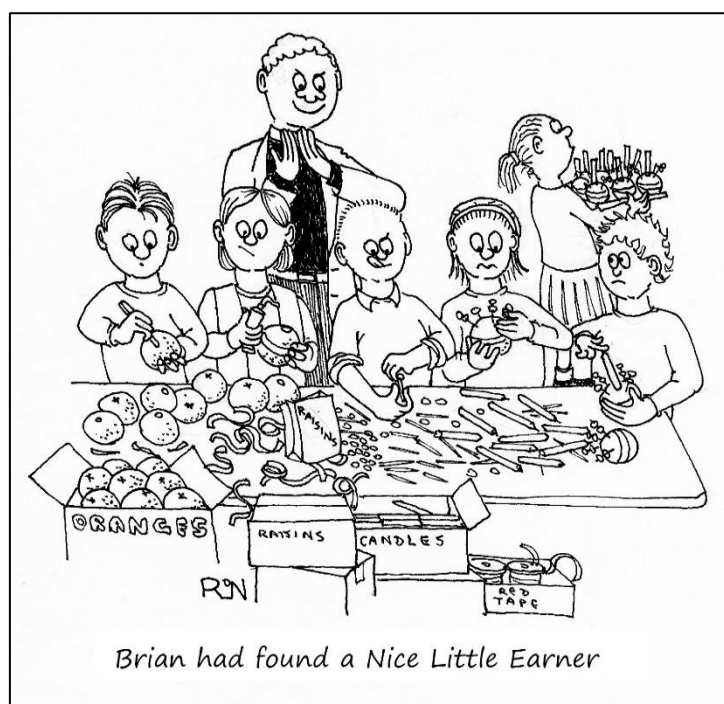
- 1 Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)
- 7 David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14ñ15) (7)
- 8 They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries (5)
- 10 Small deer of European and Asian extraction (4)
- 11 Seized control of (Numbers 21:25) (8)
- 13 Terror (Luke 24:5) (6)
- 15 First World War heroine shot by the Germans in Brussels, Nurse Edith _____ (6)
- 17 Stormy (8)
- 18 A bitter variety of this, together with lamb and unleavened bread, was the Passover menu for anyone 'unclean' (Numbers 9:11) (4)
- 21 Arson (anag.) (5)
- 22 How John Newton described God's grace in his well-known hymn (7)
- 23 Habitation (Isaiah 27:10) (10)

Clues Down

- 1 '_____ and see that the Lord is good' (Psalm 34:8) (5)
- 2 'The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as _____ as a lion' (Proverbs 28:1) (4)
- 3 One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)
- 4 He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19ñ20) (8)
- 5 City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)
- 6 'Offer your bodies as living _____, holy and pleasing to God' (Romans 12:1) (10)
- 9 Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)
- 12 One who accepts government by God (8)
- 14 Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual (Exodus 30:1) (7)
- 16 He asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) (6)
- 19 Are (Romans 13:1) (5)
- 20 'You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will _____ his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21) (4)



Crosswords in England during the 19th century were of an elementary kind, apparently derived from the word square, a group of words arranged so the letters read alike vertically and horizontally, and printed in children's puzzle books and various periodicals. On December 21, 1913, [Arthur Wynne](#), a journalist from Liverpool, England, published a "word-cross" puzzle in the New York World that embodied most of the features of the modern genre. This puzzle is frequently cited as the first crossword puzzle, and Wynne as the inventor. An illustrator later reversed the "word-cross" name to "cross-word".



Prayers and Poems Page

Loving, Almighty God,

Thank you that You came into the darkness of this broken world on that first Christmas night, pouring in your Light, in the person of your Son, Jesus.

Lord, so much of our world seems dark, still. So many dreadful things we can't make sense of: the on-going pandemic, acts of violence and injustice against good people - innocent people, child poverty, employment problems, broken relationships ... so many difficulties. It's easy to feel overwhelmed.

Lord, help us to focus on you this Christmas. Open our eyes to see your bigger, eternal picture. Help us to hear afresh the Good News that nothing and no-one can ever extinguish your Light.

Jesus overcame the troubles of the world by His death and resurrection. Father may we re-connect with you, through Jesus, this Christmas and know the Love, the Joy and the Peace, which are your Christmas gifts to us, as we trust Him.

We pray in Jesus' wonderful name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

Your Gift of Life – at Christmas

Creaking on the staircase -
Noise outside my door -
A rustle in the chimney –
It's 'Santa-time' once more.
St Nicholas is on his way
With all his Christ-life gifts
To fire every child-light with
The loving Christ-mass kiss.

In some he'll place the gift of gold -
In others frankincense -
While others will be given myrrh -
All signs of God's presence.

For in each earthly crib or bed
In squalor, comfort, splendour -
The Christ child has been placed again
To call the world to wonder.

So come you kings, come one, come all,
Come shepherds to the cradle stall
And hear the angels sing a-new
The heavenly song they sing for you.

Your God is in your gift of life -
The life He gives with love –
So take the gift and use it,
Use it wisely, don't abuse it,
Let the Christ-life fire your spirit
That God in you may LIVE.

By Sam Doubtfire

The Word of Light

The Word was in the beginning
The Word was with the Lord;
When the worlds were set to spinning
By that same Almighty Word.
Not a thing that was created
Was made without His will,
And His pow'r has permeated
Our world, and does so still.

In Him was life, and light eternal
To all men He gives His light;
Shining in the gloom nocturnal
Shines like day within the night!
And to men in sinful starkness
The Word in glory comes –
And the deep surrounding darkness
To the Word of Light succumbs!

Though by Him the world was moulded
When He came unto His own,
Yet mankind, in sin enfolded
Their Creator they disowned.
But for those who do believe Him –
Who see that He is right –
He makes those who do receive Him
Into Children of the Light!

By Nigel Beeton

Contact Numbers for Local Groups

Ecclesfield Rainbows

Gatty Hall
Tuesday 5.00 pm to 6.15 pm
Leader - Debbie
Tel: 0786 047 1793

Ecclesfield Brownies

Gatty Hall
Monday 5.30 pm to 6.45 pm
Leader - Mrs J Hutchinson
Tel: 0798 344 2742

Ecclesfield Brownies

Gatty Hall
Tuesday 6.15 pm to 7.45 pm
Leader - Mrs A. Kendall
Tel: 0114 246 8866

Ecclesfield Guides

Gatty Hall
Thursday 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm
Leader - Mrs C Topham
Tel: 0114 246 1289

Ecclesfield Priory Players

EPPIC Theatre
Monday 7.30 pm to 10.00 pm
Wednesday 7.30 pm to 10.00 pm
Secretary - Emma Addy
Theatre Tel No. 0114 240 2624

Ecclesfield Community Garden

Ecclesfield Park - Located between
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Ecclesfield Cubs

Scout Hut (off Yew Lane)
Wednesday 4:45 pm to 6:15 pm
2nd Pack 6.30 pm to 8.0 pm
Leader - Mrs A Hancock
Tel: 0114 245 2780

Ecclesfield Beavers

Scout Hut (off Yew Lane)
Monday 6.00 pm to 7.15 pm
Leader - Mrs J Steel
0114 246 0218
Thursday - 5.45 - 7.00 pm
Shane Porteous
shane@ecclesfieldscouts.org.uk

Ecclesfield Scouts

Scout Hut (off Yew Lane)
Thursday 7:15 pm to 9:00 pm
Leader - Bryony Hemming
25thecclesfieldscouts@gmail.com

The Grenoside Singers

Practice Monday in St Mark's
Church Hall at 7:30 pm
Secretary: Judith Gill Tel: 0782 411 2584
www.grenosidesingers.co.uk

Whitley Hall Cricket Club

Matches every Saturday and some
Sundays and weekdays.
Please make contact if you wish to play or
learn. Secretary: Joe Webster:
whitleyhall@ycspl.co.uk
Website:
www.whitleyhall.play-cricket.com

Chapeltown and District PROBUS Club

Meets every 2nd Wednesday in the month
in Grenoside Community Centre
All retired and semi-retired gentlemen welcome
Contact the Secretary: Trevor Winslow
chapeltown.probus@gmail.com
We are now on Zoom see
www.chapeltown-probus.org.uk

If you would like your local group advertised, please contact:
Mrs P Blackburn  0114 246 8453



Useful Contacts



Vicar

Revd Tim Gill

257 0002

E-mail: ttim.gill@sheffield.anglican.org

Churchwardens:

Ann Hackett

246 7159

Jo Hawksworth

246 2852

Michael Waldron

246 3091

Vacancy

Readers:

Pastoral Workers:

Church Office:

Tuesday 9:00 am to 1.00 pm

Thursday 9.00 am to 12.00 pm

245 0106

Church Choir Practice in Church

3.00pm on the first Friday of each month

Music Group Practice in Church

Thursday 7:30 pm - Contact: Andrea Whittaker

246 0746

Mother's Union in Gatty Hall

1st Wednesday of month 1:00 pm

Contact: Stephanie Hartshorne

245 9435

Ecclesfield Ladies Group in Gatty Hall

Thursday 7.30 pm - Contact: Anne Rostron

245 5492

Bell Ringers meet in Church Belfry

Tuesday 7:30 pm Contact: Phil Hirst

286 2766

Gatty Hall Bookings,

Contact us on:

0780 307 8223

Baptisms: Contact – Pat Clarke

257 7191

Weddings: Contact: Revd Tim Gill

257 0002

“ Or email: ttim.gill@sheffield.anglican.org

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