

# News & Views From St Mary's Church Ecclesfield



Church Magazine December 2023 & January 2024

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*Price 60p*



# St Mary's - Ecclesfield

## Blue Christmas

Thursday 21 December at 6pm

A service of comfort and peace, for those experiencing loss, loneliness, or anxiety at Christmas



'For some, Christmas is a time of magical jollification, domestic bliss, and festive feasting.

On the other hand, for others, the season is more complicated and exhausting, with little or no room for sadness.

On the longest night, amidst the midwinter darkness, St Mary's provides an opportunity to find solace and rest during the festive season, in a place of light and hope'

Christingle

The Children's Society



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To celebrate  
Christingle

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# Blue Christmas

What are your favourite things about Christmas? Everybody does Christmas differently – and start at different phases of the year (the earliest I've heard of is mid-September). Growing up, I used to look forward to feasting with my family and attending midnight mass services. I know a lot of people, for whom Christmas is their absolute favourite time of year, from which they can find immeasurable quantities of joy (my wife is one of them!); the reality is that this is not true for everyone. For many of us, Christmas is a really challenging time, which can present at least as many problems as reasons for joy. Some of this stems from the different kinds of expectations that our society imposes on the Christmas season, which one cannot always meet – you can probably think of a wealth of examples(?) It is also true that this season can often be a time when bereavement and loss is felt and remembered. Again, this is partly due to the emphasis placed upon 'family' as a staple part of Christmas rituals and traditions.

There is, of course, nothing wrong folks enjoying the seasonal festivities, and seeking to share merriment and good cheer. But it can, for some, feel a little excessive and unyielding – bright colours, and loud, familiar songs, everywhere you go – it can become exhausting. I have personally felt that there is a shortage of appropriate space to be 'sad' without judgement. One of the ways the Church responds to this is through the provision of Blue Christmas services (which takes its name from the famous Elvis song, and is sometimes also called, 'The Longest Night'). These create an opportunity for the difficulties of life to be acknowledged, in contrast to the celebrational atmosphere of most Christmas events – for those experiencing loss, loneliness or anxiety at Christmas. So, I encourage you to be kind to those around you this Christmas season, and to spare a prayer for those for whom this is an especially difficult time. If you, or anyone you know, might need such a space at this time, you are very welcome to join us at St Mary's on Thursday 21st December (6pm).

***Rev'd Sam Ellmore, curate***

## Christingle

A Christingle is a symbolic object used in the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany services of many Christian denominations. Christingle (Christ Angel) may relate to a word of Germanic origin, Christkindl, meaning "Christ Candle" or Christkind meaning "Little Christ Child"

The history of the Christingle can be traced back to Moravian Bishop Johannes de Watteville, who started the tradition in Germany in 1747 as "an attempt to get children to think about Jesus". At that time it was just a red ribbon wrapped around a candle; it is unclear how an orange came to be incorporated into the Christingle.

In the intervening years, the Moravian Church spread the tradition of Christingle through their early role in the Protestant missionary movement. As members of Moravian churches moved away from their home congregations, they took the custom of Christingles with them and introduced it to other denominations. It has been a feature in Moravian churches across the United Kingdom since before the World Wars.

A modern Christingle is made from a glow stick (or candle) in an orange, these represent the light and the world. The whole is typically decorated with a red ribbon that goes all around the 'world' and is a symbol of the blood Jesus shed when he died for us. The four sticks point outwards and symbolise North, South, East and West - they also represent the four seasons. The fruit, nuts or sweets represent the fruits of the earth.

***Editor***

# First Words

December is all about Christmas and the celebration of the birth of Christ two thousand years ago in Bethlehem. As usual at St Mary's we have lots of Christmas events for all ages, so come along, tell your family & friends - all are welcome at St Mary's!

We begin our Christmas celebrations with a **Christmas Fayre** on **Saturday 2nd December, 10am until 2pm** - lots of stalls and activities, including tours of the bell towers and a visit from Santa.

The mood changes on **Advent Sunday, 3rd December**. At **10am** during **Parish Communion** we will light the first candle on our Advent Ring. In the evening we have a very special treat - the **Steel City Choristers** return at **4pm** to lead our service of **Advent Carols and Readings**.

On **Wednesday 6th December 12.30 - 3pm** we welcome the **Ecclesfield Deanery Chapter** and Bishop Pete.

On **Thursday 7th December** there is a **funeral** in Church at **11am**.

On **Saturday 9th December** at **9am** we have our monthly **Prayer Breakfast**, followed at **11am** by the **Bereavement Cafe**.

On **Sunday 10th December at 4pm** we host the annual **Community Carols Round the Tree** (if it is raining we will move into Church) There will be free refreshments served in Church after the carols.

On **Wednesday 13th December 6.30pm** we will be hosting the **Don Valley District Beavers Scouts' Christmas Carols**.

On **Friday 15th December at 7.30pm** the **Grenoside Singers** will hold a Christmas Concert in Church. Admission is £5 (pay on the door), children free.

On **Saturday 16th December at 1pm** we have the last wedding of the year.

On **Sunday 17th December at 4pm** we have our **Christingle** Service raising funds for the Church of England Children's Society.

On **Monday 18th December 7pm** in the Church grounds (weather permitting) moving into Church at 7.45pm, we have our annual sing of **Local Ecclesfield Carols**.

On **Christmas Eve, Sunday 24th December** we have the **Crib Service**, aimed at younger children, at **4pm**, and **Carols by Candlelight** at **6.30pm**.

On **Christmas Day** we have **Communion at 10am**.

The first Sunday after Christmas is on **31st December** - there will be **Communion at 10am** and no evening service.

Lots of ways to celebrate the feast of Christ's birth, brightening up the dark winter days!

God bless you this Christmas time.

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Front Cover – **Baubles** - Creator: Prompart | Credit: Gratis Graphics CC BY 4.0 Deed

Inside Front Cover – **Blue Christmas** and **Christingle** posters

Inside Back Cover – **Grenoside Singers** and **Ecclesfield Handbell Ringers** posters

Back Cover – **Christmas Services** poster

# Andrew Jones

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# Mothers' Union - November

We had an interesting talk from Andrea Whittaker our Safeguarding Officer. We had felt we should be up to date about the demands, Andrea had looked at the safeguarding policy for the Mothers' Union and found that they did mirror many of the policies. Much of the policy is about taking care, respecting boundaries and appreciating people's feelings. Questions were asked and points raised about how we respect each other and how we might address each other. A need for awareness of the official policies should be the concern of everyone.

We look forward to our next meeting on December 6th - Carols and mince pies. We shall meet again on January 10th (note one week later) for our AGM, - the Rev'd Sam Elmore will be Chairman.

Many members will have received notice of the appeal for Tanzania which we hope you will respond to. The last appeal for Burundi has meant more than 80% of the women have learned to read and have been able to start small businesses taking them out of poverty. All the work done by the women themselves after suitable people were trained and all the money sent was accounted for. You can send your donation to MSH or give it to Jennifer Armeson.

***Thank you, Norma***

Annual subs are due in January and this time are £26.00. I shall be collecting them at our January meeting. Cheques please, if possible, payable to Ecclesfield St Mary's Mothers' Union. In an envelope with your name on the front please. Thank you. Jennifer Armeson Treasurer.

**JA**

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# God in The Arts

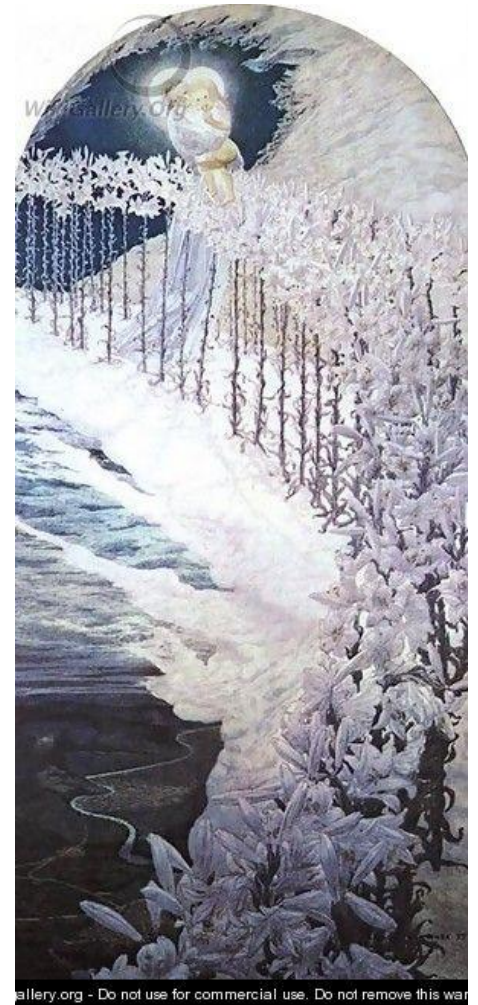
Editor: Michael Burgess continues his look at great works of art. You can see the image at: [https://www.wikigallery.org/wiki/painting\\_143485/Carlos-Schwabe/The-Virgin-of-the-Lilies](https://www.wikigallery.org/wiki/painting_143485/Carlos-Schwabe/The-Virgin-of-the-Lilies)

## 'The Virgin of the Lilies' by Carlos Schwabe

During this year we have been exploring how art can celebrate the wonder of this world. This month with our Lady and Jesus we stand above the world: high on the clouds with a glorious path of tall, elegant lilies that lead like a stairway to the earth beneath. This is 'The Virgin of the Lilies' by Carlos Schwabe. He was born in Germany and then lived in Switzerland and France, painting this canvas in 1899 when he was 33 years old.

It is like a scene caught when we look out of the window in an aeroplane. We can see the earth beneath and spot hills and valleys, roads and settlements, and a river weaving its way through the countryside. Mary and Jesus are haloed in a lunar-like radiance. The lilies are symbols of purity and obedience, the qualities that will take them to that scene at Bethlehem which we give thanks for at Christmas. The heavenly light shining out in the painting brings hope and joy to the world below, transforming lives with the wonder of the Saviour's birth.

Jesus holds three nails in his hand as a sign that His life will be tempered by rejection, suffering and death. But the lilies growing tall and straight in the skies are signs of new life and resurrection. The light come down to earth at Christmas can never be extinguished. That light and love are expressed in this vivid, moving painting of Carlos Schwabe as they are caught up in the carol of Christina Rossetti we sing at this time:



*Love shall be our token, Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men, Love for plea and gift and sign.*



Wishing you all a Happy and Peaceful Christmas  
Time and all the very best for 2024





# Local Christmas Carol Singing 2023



We are pleased to say that this Ecclesfield tradition will continue in The Greyhound on High St. every Thursday up to 21<sup>st</sup> December at 8.00pm. There will also be a special singing on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00pm around the Christmas tree in Ecclesfield Churchyard, moving into the church at 7.45 pm. You can find more information on the website <http://www.localcarols.org.uk/>

**Andrew Robinson**

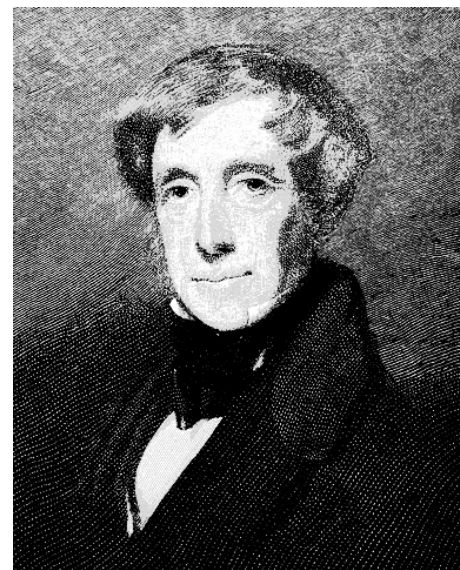
## The story behind “The Night Before Christmas”

It was 200 years ago this Christmas, on 23rd December 1823, that the famous poem ‘The Night Before Christmas’ was first published (anonymously) in the Sentinel newspapers in Troy, New York.

It was light-hearted and full of fun, and not at all what you might have expected from its author, Clement Clarke Moore.

For Moore had been born in 1779 into a prominent New York family. His father, Benjamin Moore, the Episcopal bishop of New York, had even taken part in the inauguration of George Washington as the nation’s first president.

As for Clement Moore, he was a scholar of Hebrew and a professor of Oriental and Greek literature at the General Theological Seminary in Manhattan.



But on 24th December 1822, the night that Moore composed the poem, he was traveling home from Greenwich Village. He had gone there to buy a turkey, in order to fill the last of a number of baskets that his family donated to the poor during the Christmas season.

Perhaps Moore was inspired by the plump, bearded Dutchman who took him by ‘taxi’ sleigh on his mercy errand through the snow-covered streets of New York City that night. But whatever it was, Moore scribbled down ‘A Visit from St. Nicholas’ for the amusement of his own six children, to whom he read the poem when he got home that evening. His description of St Nicholas drew upon the Dutch-American and Norwegian traditions of a magical, gift-giving figure who appears at Christmas time.

The following year, Christmas 1823, the poem was made public, without his permission. Moore was said to have been at first embarrassed to be named as the author of such a light-hearted verse, and then astonished by its quick rise to popularity. He finally published it under his own name in 1844 - A Visit from St. Nicholas - By Clement Clarke Moore.

*But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight—  
“Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!”*





# A Visit from St. Nicholas - By Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through  
the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;  
The children were nestled all snug in their beds;  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;  
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,  
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,  
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below,  
When what to my wondering eyes did appear,  
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-deer,  
With a little old driver so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment he must be St. Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by  
name:  
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"  
As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;  
So up to the housetop the coursers they flew  
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too—

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.  
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and  
soot;  
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.  
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples, how  
merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,  
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;  
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath;  
He had a broad face and a little round belly  
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;  
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;  
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight—  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

Read aloud at: <https://youtu.be/LgQ4h01r4y4>

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# No Room? On the Contrary

*Editor: The Ven John Barton considers the Christmas story ...*

This year one carol will be sung with particular poignancy. It retells the message of angels, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests” and continues:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife,  
The world has suffered long;  
Beneath the angel strain have rolled,  
Two thousand years of wrong;  
And man, at war with man, hears not  
The love song which they bring:  
O hush the noise, you men of strife,  
And hear the angels sing.*

The angels’ goodwill message will persist despite our clamour, for it proclaims God’s all-embracing and eternal welcome. Heaven’s doors are ever open: it is home for everyone. The final biblical vision is of an all-encompassing city: “On no day will its gates ever be shut... the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it.”

Jesus, for whom there had been no room at the inn, taught that God’s kingdom is home for every race: “I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” He reassured those anxious about the future: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms...”

No room? Don't you believe it!



## Drink tea or coffee each day – and keep old age weakness away!

Recent research has found that drinking coffee or tea in midlife may help keep you stronger in later life. A study at the National University of Singapore concluded that higher caffeine intake is associated with lower odds of physical frailty in old age, regardless of the source of the caffeine.

Physical frailty in old age was defined as having at least two of the following: weight loss, exhaustion, slowness and weakness. The scientists also measured handgrip strength and the time taken to complete a timed up-and-go (TUG) test.

In addition to caffeine, coffee and tea contain rich bioactive polyphenols, which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. These have been associated with reduced risk for diseases that increase frailty, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, obesity and neurodegenerative disease.



# St James the Least of All

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

## On how to make the most of carol singing

The Rectory  
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren.

Carol singing is not what it used to be. My fond memories of a group of choristers, muffled in scarves and overcoats, carrying lanterns, and walking from door to door in the snow, as they sang 'While shepherds watched ...' had to be suddenly revised when I saw your own music group, in T-shirts inscribed with 'Jesus loves You', singing 'Little donkey', in your shopping centre. I suspect any money you raised would just about have paid for the electricity used to power your banks of electronic equipment. Singing in the main square of the Centre next to the fountain may have looked good, but it seemed to mean that the choir members were obliged to make constant trips to the lavatory.

Here at St James the Least of All, carol singing is regarded as a staff perk for the choir; the year when the Boys' Brigade tried to break their monopoly was suppressed with a ruthlessness that would have impressed Genghis Kahn.

Our annual carol-singing route involves months of meticulous planning. We find that a transparent collection box is vital, so that donors can see what earlier patrons have given. This means that those who are bound to put in notes must be visited first – 'pour encourager les autres'. It also needs a detachable base, so that if coppers are given, they can be removed from sight before the next call.

Those homes that contain several children are visited just after bedtime, so that parents will give generously simply to get the choir to go somewhere else. Veiled threats to stay and sing more carols (unless they give generously) are usually very effective. Getting whoever looks the most innocent and photogenic to ring the bell and ask for money is a far more subtle way of ensuring a donation than planting any number of mafia lookalikes (such as our church treasurer) on the doorstep.

The choir always finishes its evening at the local pub – but again, the timing must be carefully managed. Too early and there will only be the landlord, his wife, and their Labrador to listen; too late and people will be so full of Christmas cheer that any carols will be hijacked and become the equivalent of back-of-the bus rugby songs.

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace



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# Thought for the Month

Advent is my favourite season in the Church calendar. It is a new start, the beginning of the Church Year. In Advent we prepare for Christmas, we prepare ourselves for Christ.

The great Biblical text of Advent is Isaiah chapter 40 in the Old Testament. It reminds us that Advent is about hope and promise and fulfilment. During the exile to Babylon in the eighth century BC, an anonymous prophet received a word from God. That word was, "Comfort, comfort my people."

At the bleakest and most hopeless time in their history, when God seemed very far away, when the people felt abandoned they were given a message of hope. They would leave exile, return home, and God himself would lead them; God himself would be their saviour.

Against all expectation, the people did leave Babylon, they did return home, but they still felt as if God was distant, they still felt abandoned. Empire after cruel empire rose to power and God's people were subject to their not-so gentle rule.

During the years after the exile the people held onto the hope and promise that God would come to his people as their Saviour. This hope sustained them. Finally, after centuries of longing and hoping and praying, there came the story of a child born in Bethlehem who would be Emmanuel - God with us. He wasn't a messenger from God, He wasn't a prophet or holy man. In this child God has come to our world in our flesh and blood, in our weakness and mortality.

The promise and the hope of Advent, fulfilled at Christmas, fulfilled in Christ, is that God is for us and God is with us. We are not abandoned; God is our Saviour - God is the saviour of the world.

The God who meets us in Jesus is unlike any other idea or dream of divinity. He comes to us in weakness and in mercy; He comes in compassion. His love will prove stronger than our brokenness, stronger than death. In this child hope breaks into our world for all people and for all time.

This Advent the words of that prophet speak to us, his words are comfort to us. In the child whose birth we celebrate at Christmas God draws close to our world and close to us. The child whose birth we anticipate in Advent assures us that, in a bleak and hopeless world we are not alone, that God has not abandoned us or our world. In Jesus God comes to us and to our world, not to judge or threaten or condemn but to save us.

In Jesus God's love is made flesh and bone. In Jesus the God of love reaches out, not just to all; not just to the world, but to us, to each one of us. In the one whose birth we look forward to in Advent, we know that we are not abandoned, rather we are loved more than we will ever fully understand. And, as we follow the story of the child who was born in the stable of Bethlehem, we will discover that His love is the most powerful force in all of creation.

That is why, at Advent, we sing my favourite hymn, "O come, o come Emmanuel!"

May the God of love bless you this Advent and Christmas.

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O come, O come, Emmanuel - (Piano/Cello) - The Piano Guys - *Instrumental*

<https://youtu.be/iO7ySn-Swwc?si=d98jYUPeI50Lf52F>

## Can you get benefits?

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) has launched a campaign to help people gain access to the various benefits that are going unclaimed by eligible households.

CAP estimates that in the past year, almost £90 million in benefits has gone unclaimed, because of the complexity of the application systems.

Pension credit is the most under-claimed benefit, and yet it acts as a passport benefit to other support, including housing benefit and local assistance. Carers' allowance is also underclaimed.

About 800 churches have now signed up to work with CAP, to encourage people to check if they could be liable to claim benefits. CAP, in partnership with the debt charity Turn2Us, has created an online calculator to help people discover what they may be eligible for. Go to: <https://capuk.org/money-and-debt-advice/benefits-calculator>

## Chinese Churches growing fast in the UK

The Chinese Christian community is growing faster than any other part of the Church in the UK. In the last two years, 27 new congregations have emerged, as more people arrive from Hong Kong.

Almost 115,000 Chinese Christians are now worshipping in 201 churches in the UK.

Up to 200,000 British National (Overseas) visa-holders are expected to settle in the UK by the end of this year. Those arriving most recently from Hong Kong are more likely to join non-Chinese-language churches, according to a recent survey by Bible Society.

As one Chinese UK Christian has said, "We are seeing a time of incredible growth, which is also a missional opportunity, as others from within the Chinese community are drawn to the church. It is also a time when local English-speaking congregations can welcome people from Hong Kong to their services."

Three-quarters of Chinese Christians choose to worship in independent Evangelical Churches, and the majority consider Bible reading to be central to their faith and church experience. Most of them prefer a digital version of the Bible.

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## We thought you might find it helpful to know what the Sundays of each month are called

3rd December	1st Sunday of Advent
10th December	2nd Sunday of Advent
17th December	3rd Sunday of Advent
24th December	4th Sunday of Advent - Christmas Eve
31st December	1st Sunday of Christmas
7th January	The Epiphany of the Lord
14th January	2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
21st January	3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
28th January	4th Sunday in Ordinary Time





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# From the Registers

## Baptisms

Sunday 12th November

Ocean Jewel Edwards; Joshua Samuel Allen

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

## Marriages

Thursday 30th November

Callum Thomas & Elle Kingswood

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

## Funerals

Wednesday 22nd November

Terence Gosney

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

# Spiritual Disciplines: Celebration

*Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham continues to his year-long series on the Spiritual Disciplines.*

*'But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.'* (Luke 2:10).

As we conclude our series on the spiritual disciplines, this month we look at *Celebration*, which is very appropriate for this Christmas season. We are called to rejoice in God's good gifts and celebrate His faithfulness.

Jesus modelled celebration in his first miracle at Cana, when He turned water into wine, enabling the party to continue (John 2:1-12). Celebration helps us with the other disciplines, as it enables us to keep going through times of joy and struggle: *'Without a joyful spirit of festivity the Disciplines become dull, death-breathing tools in the hands of modern Pharisees.'* (Richard Foster). We celebrate crucial moments in our lives with unreserved joy and thanksgiving and this shape our lives to be more like Jesus.

Richard Foster offers a few helpful pointers to celebration in his book *Celebration of Discipline*. They may come in handy as you celebrate Christmas this year!

*Singing and dancing:* how can we rediscover what children do brilliantly, in our families or church? Is there room for singing Christmas carols together at home this year?

*Laughter:* just as Jesus brought humour into His teaching, how can we laugh more? What does it mean to take ourselves less seriously and encourage more fun with our friends?

*Imagination and creativity:* how can we invest in our own creativity, as well as other people's? - e.g. in painting, poetry, reading and other leisure activities? God gave us these things to enjoy! As we celebrate our own creativity, we are sharing in God's goodness and joy.

*Family events:* we can use family celebrations and with Christmas approaching, there is the opportunity of putting God at the centre of our celebration.

*'So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God'* (1 Cor 10:31).

# 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.

## Follow the Star

Jesus' welcoming committee included Eastern scholars who learned about His birth through their study of astrology. I can't help thinking that the arrival of these people at Bethlehem is a link between a very early form of science (albeit mixed in with their own form of religion) and Christian faith. What better way to discover God than to explore the world and follow the evidence wherever it leads? But what exactly was the star of Bethlehem? Scientists have investigated this question over the centuries, coming up with a variety of answers.

First, there is the idea of a supernova: the massively bright explosion caused by a dying star. On rare occasions a supernova can be seen from Earth with the naked eye, remaining visible for several months. We now know that Herod the Great died around 4BC, so the actual date of Jesus' birth must be a little earlier. The supernovae that might match this timing were one in the Andromeda galaxy between March 8BC and September 7BC, and another in the constellation of Capricorn in the Spring of 5BC.

Next, comes a planetary conjunction. The alignment most commonly associated with the star of Bethlehem was between Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces in 7BC, but not everyone is sure whether this would be extraordinary enough to be the 'star' mentioned in the Bible.

Finally, the bright astronomical object that drew the Magi could have been a comet. This idea came from Sir Colin Humphreys, Professor of Materials Science at Cambridge University, and Oxford astronomer WG Waddington, who found that a comet was recorded by Chinese astronomers between March and May, 5BC. Humphreys then speculated that the 'no room at the inn' scenario came about because Jesus was born during Passover, and the Magi visited Jesus in May or June.

People interpret the biblical account of Jesus' birth in all sorts of ways, but there's very little argument from serious historians that Jesus of Nazareth actually existed. Whatever the true explanation for the 'star of Bethlehem' may be, there's plenty of evidence that an astronomical event could have happened at the time of His birth.

I think it makes perfect sense that if God was going to enter His own creation and take on the form of one of His own creatures, it should be marked by a very significant physical event!

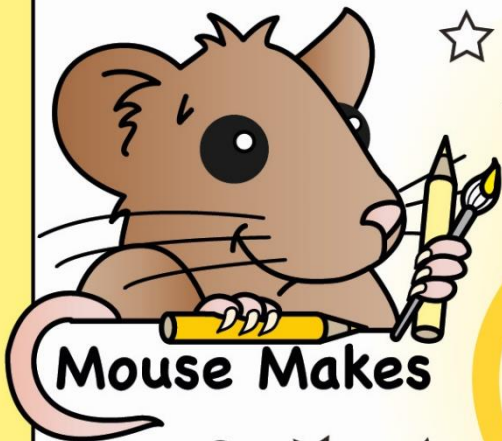
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## Father Christmas

Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable that my son would begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas. Sure enough, one day near Christmas he suddenly said: "Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy."

Taking a deep breath, I asked him what that might be. "Easy," he said, "They are all nocturnal."





**Mouse Makes**



**GOD'S PROMISE**

*Isaiah 9:6-7*

CHILD • BORN • SON  
GIVEN • WONDERFUL  
COUNCELLOR  
MIGHTY • GOD  
EVERLASTING  
FATHER • PRINCE  
PEACE • LORD



**AN ANGEL MESSENGER**

*Luke 1:26-38*

ANGEL • GABRIEL  
JOSEPH • MARY  
FAVOUR • SON  
JESUS • GREAT  
THRONE • REIGN  
FOREVER • HOLY  
SERVANT • WORD

**ADVENT**  
comes from  
the Latin  
'AD VENTO'  
which means  
**ARRIVAL**

In Advent we  
celebrate Jesus' birth  
and look forward to  
the time when Jesus  
will come again.



**A LONG JOURNEY**

*Luke 2:1-20*

BETHLEHEM  
REGISTER • BIRTH  
MANGER • INN  
SHEPHERDS • FLOCK  
ANGELS • JOY  
GOOD NEWS • PRAISE  
SAVIOUR • CHRIST



**THE BEST GIFT OF ALL**

*John 3:16*

GOD • SO • LOVED  
WORLD • HE • GAVE  
ONLY • SON  
WHOEVER • BELIEVES  
ETERNAL • LIFE

V	R	P	R	I	N	C	E	L	R	O	D
W	O	R	D	C	F	A	T	H	E	R	E
J	A	G	M	A	N	G	E	R	G	E	B
O	W	H	O	E	V	E	R	W	I	I	J
S	J	O	Y	B	O	R	N	O	S	G	E
E	S	L	S	E	R	V	A	N	T	N	S
P	P	Y	J	C	H	I	L	D	E	P	U
H	R	O	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S
F	A	V	O	U	R	E	F	R	W	S	O
B	I	R	T	H	S	W	O	F	O	D	L
I	S	A	V	I	O	U	R	U	R	L	O
F	E	C	O	U	N	C	E	L	L	O	R
A	N	G	E	L	B	J	V	K	D	V	D
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	G	E	S
L	A	N	G	E	L	S	R	G	O	D	V
I	G	A	B	R	I	E	L	T	D	S	M
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N	E	O	G	O	O	D	N	E	W	S	N
F	L	O	C	K	M	I	G	H	T	Y	B



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# Editor's Humour & Philosophy Page

Links and some images in this magazine are clickable - enjoy

## Things my mother taught me

**Appreciate a job well done:** "If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning the floor"

**Religion:** "You better pray that will come out of the carpet"

**Time Travel:** If you don't straighten up, I'll knock you into the middle of next week!"

**Logic:** "Because I said so, that's why"

**More Logic:** "If you fall off the swing and break your leg, don't come running to me"

**Foresight:** "Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident"

**Irony:** "Keep crying, and I'll give you something to cry about"

**Osmosis:** "Just shut your mouth and eat your dinner"

**Contortion:** "Will you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"



Look at this, Lime street station, now look again and squint your eyes





# Prayer for the Month

**Almighty God,  
who wonderfully created us in your own image  
and yet more wonderfully restored us  
through your Son Jesus Christ:  
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,  
so we may share the life of his divinity;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen**

This rather beautiful prayer is set for the first Sunday of Christmastide. It takes us right to the heart of Christmas; it helps us to see why Christmas is good news for all people.

Very simply it opens up for us the meaning of Christmas: God our creator has reached out to his fallen and estranged creation in the person of His Son Jesus to restore us to Himself. In Jesus God enters and shares our human nature so that we can enter and share His divine nature. One of the greatest thinkers in the first few centuries of the Church, St Athanasius, summed up the Gospel in these words: God became man that men and women might become divine.

At the heart of Christmas, at the heart of the Gospel, is a love story. It is the love of God our creator and Father for His children - for each and every one of His children. In Christ God comes to what is lost and brings us home; He comes to what has fallen and restores us; He comes to what is broken and heals us.

Christmas is a gift. It is not something that we have earned it is not something that we merit. It is a gift of God's grace, God's love; and it is for all, for all peoples in every age.

In Church at every season, but especially at Christmas, we try to reflect the grace and the welcome and the love of God that we see in Christ. During this time we are privileged to welcome many people and groups into Church, to sing carols and to hear the old story of the birth of Jesus.

As good Anglicans we don't ask what brings people to Church, we don't make demands of them. Our joy is to welcome and to celebrate with our neighbours the love of God in Christ. Some may come out of nostalgia, some with a deep faith, others not knowing why they are drawn or what or even if they believe. But Christmas is a welcome for all, an assurance that all are included in God's love made visible in Jesus.

Come all and celebrate the good news of Christ this Christmas, come with faith, come with doubts, come and know that you are loved, that Christmas and Christ are for you.

God bless you this Christmas,

Tim.

# Christian Aid - Urgent appeal for the people of Gaza

Thousands of people have been killed and over a million displaced after the recent escalation of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

In Gaza, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding. 7,028 Palestinians have been killed and 18,482 injured. Over 1.4 million have been displaced from their homes; supplies of water and food are fast running out.

We're urging all parties to abide by international law to protect innocent civilians and agree to an immediate de-escalation of this unprecedented violence.

In Gaza, our medical partner is providing mobile medical and psychological care, which ranges from access to a doctor, nurse, social worker or physiotherapist.

In southern Gaza, our partner is responding to those most recently displaced to southern Gaza as a result of the war. They're providing mattresses, medicines, and emergency food items.

We're also actively exploring ways in which we might also support Israeli civilians who've been directly impacted by the violence.

Your donations can make a huge difference to the current conditions of all those affected.

Please go to: <https://give.christianaid.org.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



# Where did Christmas cards come from?

Christmas cards have a history which may surprise you: their origins are not of the Church, but of the Post Office and railways. Of course, very early 'Christmas cards' had been around for hundreds of years, in the form of a simple exchange of Christmas greetings in private letters. The earliest such letter on record was written in England in 1534.

In 1611 a HUGE Christmas card made a one-off appearance. It measured a whopping 33" by 24", and was given to King James I of England (who was also King James VI of Scotland). It featured an illustration of a rose, four poems, a song, and a Christmas message for the king and his son. Then in 1843 came the creation of Christmas cards as we know them today. One enterprising man was responsible for this: Sir Henry Cole, a senior civil servant who had helped launch the 'Public Record Office', now called the Post Office.

Sir Henry Cole helped to introduce the Penny Post, as it was called. Until then, only rich people could afford the Post, but with the building of the railways, which carried far more packages than a horse and cart (and went much faster), suddenly the Penny Post became possible. Sir Henry wanted to encourage 'ordinary' people to use the new service. So he came up with the bright idea of a creating a simple card that people could send each other for Christmas. His friend, John Horsley, was an artist, who designed a three-panel card. Two panels depicted people caring for the poor, and the middle panel showed a family enjoying a large Christmas dinner.

They printed about 1000 cards that first year, and advertised under the slogan: 'Just published, a Christmas Congratulations Card; or picture emblematical of old English festivity to perpetuate kind recollections between dear friends!' The cards sold for one shilling each and could be posted to friends and family for a Penny. There was an immediate, warm response from the public.

Printing methods improved, and by 1860 Christmas cards were produced in large quantities. By 1870 the cost of posting one had dropped to half a penny, and the custom was rapidly gaining popularity. By the early 1900s, the custom had spread across Europe.

The first cards usually included a Nativity scene, and in late Victorian times, robins and snow-scenes. Robins were chosen because the postmen in those days were nick-named 'Robin Postmen', because of their red uniforms.

Christmas cards appeared in the USA in the late 1840s. They were mass produced from 1875, and in 1915 John C Hall and two of his brothers created Hallmark Cards, which today offers 2,000 different designs of Christmas card. Charity Christmas cards began in Denmark in the early 1900s. They spread to Sweden and Norway, and then on throughout Europe and America.

Last year the Royal Mail estimated that it had delivered 150 million cards during the Christmas period.

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# The Gardening Year – December & January

December and January are quiet months in the garden, apart from digging over and cleaning pots and tools. So, I will take this opportunity to write about pest.

**Pests large and small**, you are unlikely to be bothered by large pests such as pigeons, rabbits and cats in, a container garden, although the odd tenacious squirrel might find his way into your planters and have a dig around in the soil for something to eat. **Squirrels** are attracted to bird feeders so try and keep them away from your containers. **Cats** may get into larger planters, especially raised beds full of soft compost as this makes the perfect toilet, you can deter them with citrus sprays or sprinkle cinnamon or cloves around the area. Cats also do not like the smell of ammonia. Get a small dish put a little amount of kitchen paper in the bottom, put the ammonia on the paper, put this near your containers or on your garden, one sniff and the cat will not come back. **Aphids**, the main family includes green fly and black fly. They insert their sharp, syringe like mouths into plants and suck out the sap which can weaken the plant and spread diseases after they have fed. Aphids leave a sticky residue on the plant called honeydew which can in turn attract ants, marauding ants on your plants may alert you to an aphid infection. There are several effective ways of dealing with aphids as they are easy to spot prevention of an infestation is definitely better than cure. **Black Fly** are particularly fond of the tips of broad beans, if you are growing broad beans, you can physically remove the Black Fly by taking off the mature growing tip when the bean begins to pod .destroy the Black Fly covered tip otherwise they will move onto something else such as lettuce and runner beans. Spraying, you can control a small population of aphids by hosing or spraying them off with water every few days. If you add a few drops of regularly dish washing liquid it will be even more effective or you can buy insecticides for this purpose. If you use insecticides ,spray in the evening when there are no bees about or the spray will kill the bees. **Predators**, there is nothing a ladybird love to eat more than aphids, so try and attract them in your garden. **Ladybirds** lay their eggs in nettles, so leave a patch in the corner of your plot, if you are growing food without a garden such as on balconies or raised beds you can buy ladybirds online to introduce into your space. Parasitic wasp and laced wings also feed on aphids so introduce them to your garden.

May I take this opportunity to wish all your readers and all at St Mary's a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

*Colin Williams*

## Eat the Seasons – December / January

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

**Fruit** - Apples, Cranberries, Medlar, Passion Fruit, Pears, Pomegranate, Quince, Satsumas

**Herbs & Nuts** - Almonds Brazil Nuts Chestnuts, Cob Nuts, Hazelnuts Rosemary, Sage, Walnuts,

**Meat** - Beef, Duck, Goose, Grouse, Guinea Fowl, Hare, Lamb, Mallard, Partridge, Pheasant, Rabbit, Turkey, Venison, Wood Pigeon

**Fish** - Clams, Cod, Coley, Crab, Dab, Dover Sole, Grey Mullet, Gurnard, Haddock, Halibut, Hake, Lemon Sole, Lobster, Mackerel, Monkfish, Mussels, Oysters, Plaice, Pollack, Red Mullet, Sea Bass (Wild), Sea Bream, Skate, Squid, Turbot, Winkles

Visit - [www.eattheseasons.co.uk](http://www.eattheseasons.co.uk)

# The story behind the hymn: O Come, All ye Faithful

Nobody knows who wrote this well-loved Christmas carol. It was originally a Latin Christmas hymn, 'Adeste Fidelis'. It seems to have first 'surfaced' in English due to a John Francis Wade, who lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and who made his living copying manuscripts and, sometimes, music by hand. Wade was a Roman Catholic, and all services in the church at that time were conducted in Latin, and so he knew the language well.

The story goes that in about 1750 he slipped this hymn into a manuscript he was copying for the English Roman Catholic College in Lisbon, Portugal. 35 years later, in 1785, it turned up in the Portuguese Chapel in London, where it became known as the 'Portuguese Hymn'.

From there, the hymn appears to have 'travelled' across to the Margaret Chapel in London's West End. Young William Ewart Gladstone, who later became British Prime Minister, greatly appreciated the services at this church. He said that the congregation were "the most devout and happy that I have ever seen."

The minister at that time was Frederick Oakley, one of the leaders of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Oxford Movement, who was later to convert to Roman Catholicism. Oakley believed strongly in the power of religious symbols and fine music, and before he bade farewell to the Margaret Chapel, he introduced this hymn to the congregation. Having started as 'Adeste Fidelis', and been for a while 'The Portuguese Hymn', this hymn soon became known – and loved worldwide – as 'O Come, All Ye Faithful'.

*O Come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;*

*O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ, the Lord!*

*Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;*

[https://youtu.be/l1wHyMR\\_SCA?si=zDp50np98AVIQTmQ](https://youtu.be/l1wHyMR_SCA?si=zDp50np98AVIQTmQ)

**Crossword Puzzle - Solution is here**

D	E	P	E	N	D		C	A	N	O	P	Y	
E		E			R		U		U		U		
B	E	A	K			I	R	R	I	T	A	T	E
T		C			N		I		S		I		
	Z	E	D	E	K	I	A	H			A	T	E
I		A		X		S		O			T		Z
J	O	B	S	C	O	M	F	O	R	T	E	R	
O		L		E		A		F		E		A	
N	A	E			L	A	N	G	S	Y	N	E	
	S		G		B		R				T		L
B	L	O	C	K	A	D	E			F	I	V	E
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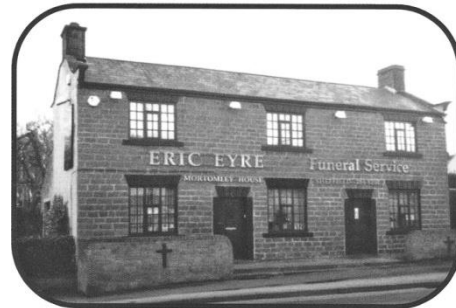
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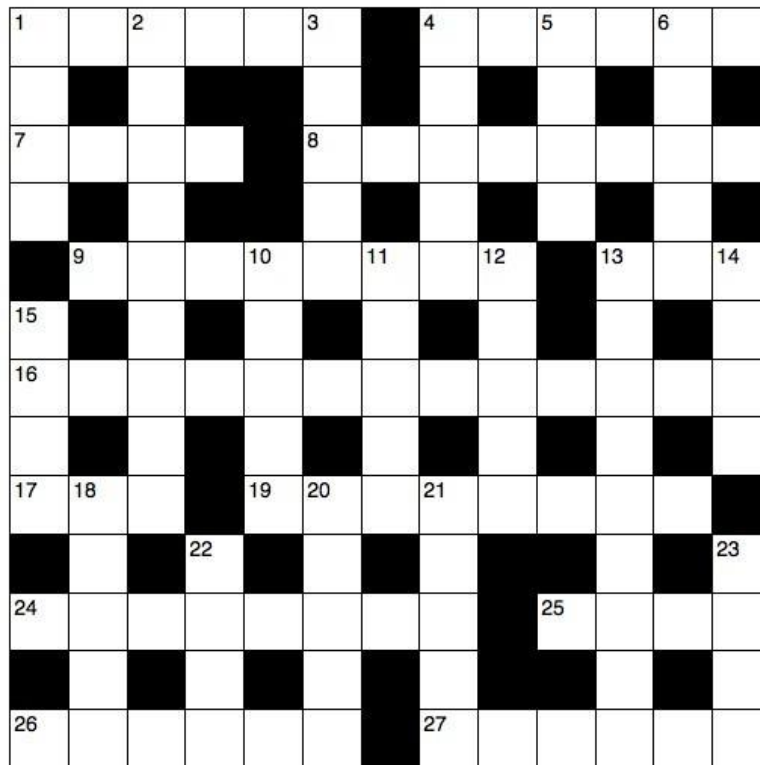
# Crossword Puzzle

## Clues Across

- 1 Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
- 4 'He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
- 7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)
- 8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)
- 9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)
- 13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)
- 16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)
- 17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
- 19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)
- 24 Able dock (anag.) (8)
- 25 The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)
- 26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)
- 27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

## Clues Down

- 1 Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
- 2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)
- 3 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
- 4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
- 5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
- 6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
- 10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)
- 11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
- 12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
- 13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
- 14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)
- 15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)
- 18 Narnia's Lion (5)
- 20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5)
- 21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
- 22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
- 23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)



## The Everlasting Turkey

**On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me**

*I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.*

**On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard**

*As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.*

**On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door,**

*The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.*

**On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old**

*We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.*

**On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried,**

*But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.*

**On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died.**

*The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.*

**On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince**

*When he sat down at table - and was offered turkey mince.*

**On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter,**

*For he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alka-seltzer.*

**On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto,**

*He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.*

**On the tenth day of Christmas, we were drinking home-made brew,**

*Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.*

**On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting,**

*And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.*

**On the twelfth day of Christmas, we had smiles back on our lips,**

*The guests had gone, the turkey too –  
**WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS!***



# It is time to eat Goose

Before being usurped by turkey, goose was the preferred choice for the Christmas lunch table in England and more recently there are signs of it making a bit of a comeback. Goose meat is richer and darker than turkey. It has a higher fat content, but a lot of the fat melts away during cooking leaving deliciously tasty and succulent meat. Although not cheap, goose makes a wonderful treat for any special meal. In addition the goose fat collected during cooking makes *the* best roast potatoes and is almost worth the entrance price alone.



Geese were bred in ancient Egypt and goose liver was esteemed by the Romans. Goose has long been important in French cuisine where it plays a key part in traditional dishes such as cassoulet, confit d'oie and foie gras. It is now eaten widely in Europe and Asia, especially China.

The common domesticated goose is a descendant of the greylag goose (*Anser anser*) still found in the wild in Ireland, western Scotland and some other parts of Europe. Goose is the name for the female bird, the male being a gander.

Fresh geese are available from specialist suppliers and quality butchers. You may need to order in advance, particularly around Christmas. Geese are quite big-boned and so choose a larger bird than you would a chicken (allow at least 750g per person). Having said that, smaller (younger) birds are the most tender, so two small geese are preferable to a single huge one. Choose plump-looking free-range birds.

Keep refrigerated, giblets removed, for up to 2 or 3 days. Scoop out any excess fat from the cavity and put aside for roasting potatoes. Pat well dry and prick the skin to enable the fat to be released during cooking (try not to pierce the flesh) and rub the skin with salt and pepper.

Place breast side up on a rack over a roasting pan. Roast at 220°C for 30 minutes followed by around 2½ to 3½ hours (depending on size) at 180°C. Baste the goose every 20 to 30 minutes and remove the fat that accumulates in the pan or it will smoke furiously (the fat can be stored in the fridge for a few days, or frozen). If parts of the goose seem to be browning too quickly, wrap them in foil. The goose is cooked when a skewer in the thickest part of the thigh reveals clear juices (the flesh may still be slightly pink). Remove from the oven, cover with foil and rest for 15 minutes or so before carving.

The fat content of goose is higher than poultry and most other game birds (but comparable to, or less than, many cuts of beef or lamb). It is a good source of protein and iron.

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/gordons-christmas-roast-geese>

<https://www.abelandcole.co.uk/recipes/how-to-cook-the-perfect-geese>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/classic-roast-geese-cider-gravy>

# Chapelton & District Probus Club



On 8<sup>th</sup> November, we welcomed Mike Higginbottom who gave a presentation on Demolished Sheffield. The focus was on what has happened since 1970 although he did go back on some of the older buildings which had been demolished in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He focused on buildings which had now gone, some which still stand, many in rack and ruin, and some which have been restored including those which have been re-purposed such as St. Cecilia's, Parson Cross which is close to re-opening as a series of new apartments. A fascinating presentation for Sheffieldsers and for anyone interested in the social history of the dramatic change in the constructed landscape over the past 125 years. Mike also has an illustrated book with photographs, some in colour. After the meeting, 25 members enjoyed lunch at Wortley Hall

The visit programme for 2024 is being finalised and the likely programme will probably include Jodrell Bank, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, South Yorkshire Transport Museum and a canal trip in addition to the trip to Highgrove House in May 2024. At the same time, the programme of speakers from April onwards is being finalised and we are looking to some new speakers who have not visited us before.

Next month we welcome back Paul Adey who will continue his history of the motor car with the story of cars from Germany and Eastern Europe. The meeting will be followed by our Christmas Lunch at Wortley Hall. In January, well-known local speaker, David Templeman, will continue his presentations on the history of parts of Sheffield.

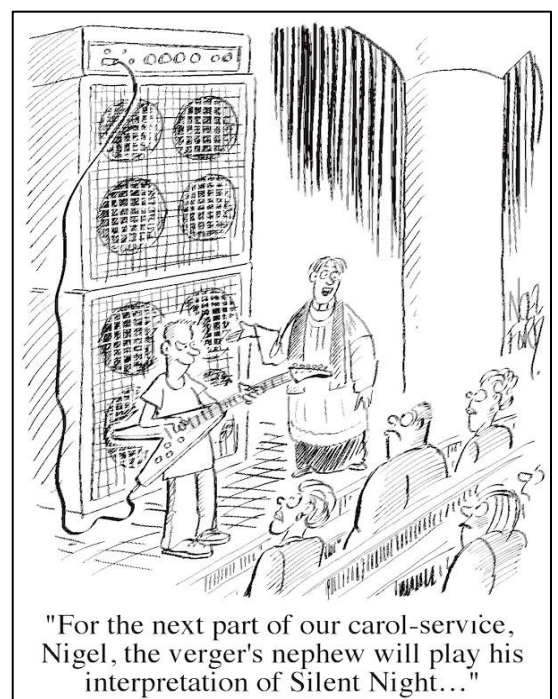
We welcome all men who are retired, semi-retired or who have time on their hands - if you are interested, why not come along as a guest to see what happens? Please make contact with the Secretary, Trevor Winslow (see below).

**Upcoming meetings at 10.00 in Grenoside Community Centre (followed by optional lunch at Wortley Hall):-**

- 13<sup>th</sup> December – Paul Adey – “European Motor Industry History Part 2”
- 10<sup>th</sup> January – David Templeman – “Ancient Suburbs of Sheffield”
- 14<sup>th</sup> February – Melvyn Cook – African Wildlife Bonanza\*

Contact details: E-Mail [chapeltown.probus@gmail.com](mailto:chapeltown.probus@gmail.com)  
Website <https://chapeltown-probus.org.uk/>

**Andrew Robinson**



# Prayers and Poems Page

## Christmas Prayer 2023 - By Daphne Kitching

Almighty Father, Thank you for your indescribable gift of Jesus – the Light of the world. Thank you that He brought light and life to all who received Him during His life on earth and that He still brings light and life to all who receive Him.

Lord, how this broken world needs your light today. As we rejoice and give thanks for Christmas, we pray that the light of Jesus will pierce the darkness of self-interest and hatred - and change the hearts of those who do not love you or their neighbours.

We pray that by the power of your Holy Spirit you will deliver your people from evil, and that Your kingdom will come on earth as in heaven. Thank you, Father, that because of Jesus, light will always shine in the darkness and the darkness will never be able to extinguish it.

Glory and thanks and praise to You Father God, this Christmas and always.  
In Jesus' saving and powerful name. **Amen.**

### The Robin on my Christmas Card

- By Nigel Beeton

The Robin on my Christmas Card  
Upon a postbox, red –  
He fixed me with a gaze quite hard  
And this is what he said:

“O, viewer of this Christmas card  
“I bet that you don't know  
“Why I upon this card am here  
“To bring a yuletide glow?”

I said to him, “O birdie, do  
“Reveal your secret deep  
“I see you all the yearlong through  
“And hear your joyful cheep!”

“So why, O Robin, tell me why  
“When you're around all year  
“On lawn, or branch, or in the sky  
“Why now this Christmas cheer?”

He said to me that long ago  
The postmen you would see  
Their jackets vivid red would glow –  
“In fact, they looked like me!”

“From then till now my bright red breast  
“And cheery trilling tweet  
“Has come upon the Christmas fest  
“To bring a Christmas treat!”

### Christmas 2023 - By Megan Carter

The night before Christmas when all are abed,  
As reindeer and sleigh bells are heard overhead,  
Children still sleeping will early arise,  
With shouts of delights as they open each prize.

A doll for Amanda, a toy soldier for Jo?  
Ah, these are toys of long ago!  
Now it's computers, a party dress,  
Gifts so expensive they're meant to impress.

But the real joy of Christmas forever will stay,  
As church bells and carols proclaim that glad day,  
As wise man and shepherds recount what they saw,  
Of Mary, her Baby - and a bed full of straw.

### Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much  
seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen



# Contact Details 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  
Ladycroft bridge/stream and Bowling  
greens. Open Wednesday + Saturday  
10 am to 12 noon  
Tel: Robert 0114 246 1095

## **Friends of Ecclesfield Library**

Run by the community for the community.  
Volunteer helpers always needed.  
Tel: 0114 246 3651  
email: [ecclesfieldlib@gmail.com](mailto:ecclesfieldlib@gmail.com)

## **Ecclesfield Cubs**

Scout Hut (off Yew Lane)  
Wednesday 4:45 pm to 6:15 pm  
2<sup>nd</sup> 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 - Joanna Steel  
0797 263 7908  
Thursday - 5:45 - 7:00 pm  
Shane Porteous  
[shane@ecclesfieldscouts.org.uk](mailto:shane@ecclesfieldscouts.org.uk)

## **Ecclesfield Scouts**

Scout Hut (off Yew Lane)  
Thursday 7:15 pm to 9:00 pm  
Leader - Bryony Hemming  
[25theecclesfieldscouts@gmail.com](mailto:25theecclesfieldscouts@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](http://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](mailto:whitleyhall@ycspl.co.uk)  
Website:  
[whitleyhall.play-cricket.com](http://whitleyhall.play-cricket.com)

## **Chapelton and District PROBUS Club**

Meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in the month  
in Grenoside Community Centre  
All retired and semi-retired gentlemen welcome  
Contact the Secretary: Trevor Winslow  
[chapelton.probus@gmail.com](mailto:chapelton.probus@gmail.com)  
We are now on face to face see  
[www.chapelton-probus.org.uk](http://www.chapelton-probus.org.uk)

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

# Useful Contacts



<b><u>Vicar:</u></b> Revd. Tim Gill	<b>E-mail:</b> ttingill@aol.com	<b>Phone:</b> 257 0002
<b>'Assistant Curate:</b> Revd. Sam Ellmore	revsamellmore@outlook.com	0747 9985 199
<b>Churchwardens:</b> Ann Hackett Jo Hawksworth		246 7159 246 2852
<b>Readers:</b>		
<b>Pastoral Workers:</b>		
<b>Church Office</b> Tuesday 9:00am to 1:00 pm Thursday 9:00am to 12:00 pm		245 0106
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://stmarysecclesfield.org.uk/">https://stmarysecclesfield.org.uk/</a>	
<b>Groups:</b>	<b>Times and Days:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Choir Practice in Church</b> Contact: Lynda Pearce	7 pm on Friday Practice in Church	246 3935
<b>Music Group</b> Contact: Andrea Whittaker	7:30 pm Thursday Practice in Church	246 0746
<b>Mother's Union in Gatty Hall</b> Contact: Maureen Lambert	1 pm 1st Wednesday of the month	246 9690
<b>Ecclesfield Ladies Group</b> Contact: Anne Rostron	2.00pm Thursday in Gatty Hall	245 5492
<b>Bell Ringers</b> Contact: Phil Hirst	7:30 pm Tuesday in Church Belfry	286 2766
<b>Gatty Hall Bookings</b>		0780 307 8223
<b>For Baptisms or Weddings Enquiries please contact the Vicar</b>		
<b>Magazine e-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:stmarys.magazine.ecclesfield@gmail.com">stmarys.magazine.ecclesfield@gmail.com</a>	

St Mary's - Ecclesfield

# Grenoside Singers Christmas Concert

Friday 15 December  
7:30 pm to 9:00 pm

Admission £5 per person  
Pay on the door  
Children free  
Refreshments included

A Christmas themed concert with some carols for  
all to sing



<https://www.facebook.com/GrenosideSingers/>



# Ecclesfield Handbell Ringers

## Christmas Concert

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2023  
3.00pm

Gatty Hall, Ecclesfield

Come and sing along to your favourite carols  
with

The Ecclesfield Carollers

and

Chapelton Silver Prize Band

Tickets: £7.00

Please ring: 07963 091121 or 07714 763370

or email : [ecclesfieldhr@gmail.com](mailto:ecclesfieldhr@gmail.com)





# Christmas Services at St. Mary's 2023

## Christingle Service

Celebrate Christingle with us on  
Sunday 17th December 4:00 pm

## Christmas Eve

### Crib Service

Join in as we hear the well-known story of  
Jesus' birth - for children and their adults  
Sunday 24th December 4:00 pm

### Nine Lessons & Carols

Welcome to our traditional family service of  
lessons and carols  
Sunday 24th December 6:30 pm

## Christmas Day

All Age Communion for Christmas  
A traditional family service  
Monday 25th December 10:00 am

All welcome

