



THE WORD

Editor: Stuart Baker: stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com



**THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
ST. JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE. PR8 4JP
Charity Number 1128171**

St. John, Chapter 1, verses 1 and 14:

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."*

ISSUE No. 252

CHRISTMAS EDITION

DECEMBER 2023

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming



Joyous News

The PCC is pleased to inform our readers of the appointment of a new Vicar of our parish, Reverend Jennifer (known as Jennie) Hardy, who will be installed on a date yet to be determined in 2024.

Rev. Hardy is from Liverpool and St. John's will be her first parish in which she will be the Incumbent.

We look forward to Rev. Hardy's arrival in our parish and we wish her and her family a very happy and peaceful Christmas. Jennie has sent a letter to the Editor which we include on page 3 of this issue.

It is now more than two and a half years since Rev. Jeremy Leffler retired and we hope that our readers will agree that our worship leaders and the PCC have done all that they could to maintain our church life (and the church buildings and grounds) so that the parish is in good shape to greet the arrival of our new Vicar who intends to build on what we already have.

Our next series of sermons:

Commencing on Advent Sunday (3rd December) and continuing until Easter Sunday we shall follow the Bible accounts of The Life of Jesus, from Cradle to Cross. If you cannot attend each week it is possible to listen to them "live" by telephone or in a recording (see page 28 for details).

As this year draws to its end the Editor and his entire staff (Christine) thank our readers for continuing to support the **THE WORD**. We are most grateful to those who have provided material for inclusion, whether it was articles, poems, pictures or jokes, and we thank our kind advertisers for their continuing support. We wish you a very Happy Christmas and all the best for 2024.

FOR ALL ENQUIRIES TO OR ABOUT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH PLEASE CONTACT US
BY EMAIL info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk OR PHONE: 07732 691542

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

Priest (retired):	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)	Church of England	
Reader:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	Children's Society:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
Churchwardens:	Clive Morris (564206) Tim Wright (553977)	Mothers' Union:	Mrs. Linda Caton (564737)
Wardens' Assistant::	Miss Lucy Wright (553977)	Girl Guides	Mrs. Janette Law (565951)
PCC Treasurer:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	St. John's Brownies:	Mrs. Helen Jones and
PCC Secretary:	Mrs. Sally Wright (553977)	Brownie Guiders:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	St. John's Rainbows:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris (563789)	Church Flowers:	Mrs. Cath Whiteside (568874)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Clive Morris (564206) Tim Wright (553977) Stuart Baker (560518)	Magazine Editor:	Stuart Baker (560518)
Safeguarding & Recruitment:	Mrs. Abbie Holden (07961003359)	Magazine Printer:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
		Notice boards, I.T, Website developer, Publicity designer:	Mrs. Sally Wright (553977)
		Buildings Inspector:	David Halsall

THE WORD in 2024

The price of **THE WORD** has been pegged for several years at £10 for the whole year (12 issues). Many readers choose to receive it by email, but many others prefer to receive it as a printed copy. As with every other aspect of life the production of this magazine is affected by inflation, and we are now at a point at which we must ask our subscribers to make an increased contribution towards the cost. Even if you receive it as a digital copy by email some costs are incurred in obtaining some of the material from external sources and avoiding breaching copyright.

At a recent PCC meeting it was decided that as from January 2024 **the price of the printed and delivered magazine will be £12 per annum** which we hope is still good value bearing in mind the size and the variety of its contents: it's only £1 per month, or 23pence per week, and for those who receive a printed copy it is delivered to your door, whatever the weather!

If you receive it by email you are invited to contribute £11 per annum which will help to offset the cost which we would otherwise have to charge for the printed edition which is received (mainly) by those who are not equipped with, or are less comfortable in using, computers.

100% of any profit which is made goes to, and will continue to go to, our church and will be used towards the cost of printing church material.

Thursday Evening Prayers on **7th and 21st December on zoom.**

The meetings start at 7.30pm and last half an hour.

If there is anything which readers would like to be included in the prayers please contact Roy Doran, Christine Baker, Clive Morris, or Sally, Tim or Lucy Wright.

The number of those joining these prayer meetings has gradually increased. Do join us if you can. See page 28 for details about logging in on zoom by computer or by telephone.



A letter from Rev. Jennie Hardy to us all:



This Christmas feels a little more merry for me this year as I look forward to joining St John's in the new year. I am really excited that God has called me to be a part of St John's and the wider community in Birkdale. On my tour of the parish and at my interview I was made to feel so welcome and really valued prayer and messages of support and encouragement from the Leadership Team who have been doing a fantastic job at leading St John's while in vacancy and along with the wider church have come up with such an exciting vision for St John's!

I'm a relationship driven person and can't wait to build new relationships with everyone and to see more lives transformed by Jesus as we centre all that we are on God - 'the Founder and Perfecter of our faith who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross' (Heb 12:2). I know we have much joy set before us as we ask God for a bigger church to make a bigger difference in Birkdale!

A little about me - my friends call me Jennie! I have two children. Josh is 15, he is working on his GCSE's this year and loves being an Army Cadet in the Royal Irish Regiment, and Caitlin is 21 and is currently studying

Sociology and Politics at the University of Sheffield. We have a 'prehistoric' dog called Tess, who doesn't realise that she has hit retirement age!

I became a Christian and began to follow Jesus in 2009 and He has completely transformed my life, and through my ministry with people struggling with addiction and homelessness I've had the pleasure of seeing Him transform many other lives too! My favourite thing is to tell people about Jesus and to share the good news, closely followed by 'proper' coffee and the gym! Sometimes I share the good news over coffee and at the gym - getting to do all of my favourite things at the same time!

I've had many previous jobs, working in hospitality, as a barmaid, a waitress, a hotel receptionist and a resource manager in a recruitment agency. More recently I worked as a Community Pastor in Kensington, Liverpool for 4 years before beginning training for ordination. I was ordained Priest in 2022 and have completed my curacy at St Michael's, Garston in Liverpool.

I'm so excited to join you all in Birkdale and wish you all a blessed, peaceful and happy Christmas and I look forward to getting to know you all, hopefully over a 'good' coffee soon! Merry Christmas!

Love, Jennie xxx

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.

St John's Church Birkdale

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

2nd & 4th
Wednesdays
2-4pm

St John's small hall

Growth Groups

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 7.30pm
@ 32 Hartley Crescent

*Finding out more
together*



WE'D LOVE YOU TO JOIN US

*We believe in
the power of
prayer*

PRAYER TIME @ ST JOHN'S

Led by the leadership team

**1st and 3rd Thursdays
7.30pm**

SEE WEBSITE FOR ZOOM DETAILS



FRIDAY

Coffee, Cake & Chat

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ST JOHN'S RD, BIRKDALE PR8 4JP

ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE

MONTHLY

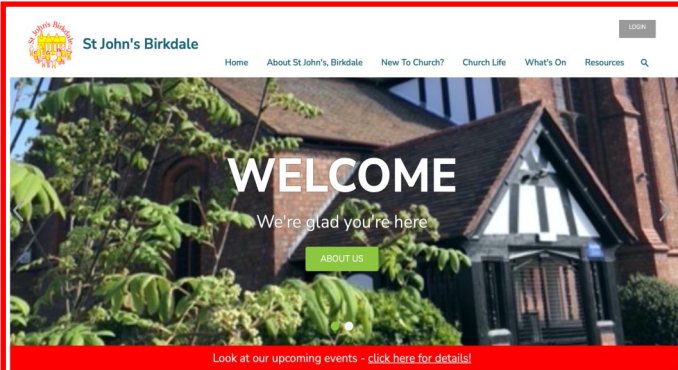
2ND FRIDAYS

10.30AM

**NEXT MEETING:
8TH DECEMBER**



WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



Visit our website

stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

- Find out about what's going on at St John's
- Check out the calendar for upcoming events
- Listen to the weekly talks
- Find out about booking the hall
- Free on-line bible
- Show it to your friends and family

**God centred, Relationship driven,
Life transforming**



Come and join us as we enjoy great films and refreshments @ 6.30pm
film begins at 7pm

For details of our screenings
see our church noticeboards

14 July

29 September

27 October

24 November

15 December

Free entry, refreshments available

ST JOHN'S INVITE YOU
TO JOIN US IN OUR

SOCIAL EVENTS

If you'd like further details or to book a place please contact Christine 07821 982477 or Sally 07800 550097



Friday 13 January @ 7pm

Early, Early Burns Night

Friday 24 February @ 7pm

Late, Late Pancake Party

Saturday 11 March @ 7pm

Andy Dean's Quiz Night

Friday 21 April @ 7pm

Italian Food Night

Friday 5 May @ 7pm

Coronation Bangers & Mash

Date to be confirmed

Summer Fair & Afternoon Tea

Saturday 8 July @ 2pm

Strawberry Tea

Friday 22 September @ 7pm

Harvest Supper

Friday 20 October @ 7pm

Just Desserts

Friday 17 November @ 7pm

Bingo and Beetle Night

Friday 1 December 6-9pm
Saturday 2 December 10-3pm

Christmas Tree Festival and
Christmas Fair

YOUNG ADULT SOCIALS

2023 - 2024

Sunday 5th November

River of Light @ Albert Dock

Friday 8th December

Christmas Games Night @ Lucy's

Saturday 20th January

Pantomine Rapunzel

February TBC

Pancake Party @ Lucy's

Saturday 23rd March

Pottery Painting and Cafe

Sunday 14th April

Pinewoods Walk and Picnic

St John's Church, Birkdale

Worship on Advent Sunday



SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER HOLY COMMUNION

10.30am service **IN CHURCH** and via
zoom & phone

Worshippers in church are invited to remain in church after the first part of the service has concluded and receive Communion.

Collect for Advent Sunday

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**The subject of
Sally's talk:**

**Jesus -
The Expected**

The Reading: Isaiah ch9, vv2-6

2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

5 Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Advent Sunday is the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, and marks the start of the season of Advent. The word "advent" is derived from the Latin word "adventus", which means "coming" – which refers to the coming of Christ.

The season of Advent ends on 24 December. Those attending church on Advent Sunday will traditionally hear scripture readings related to the Old Testament patriarchs. We start our Advent season with a reading from Isaiah.

During this first Sunday of Advent, Christians look forward to the second coming of Christ and are called to remind themselves to watch and wait for his return, while at the same time reflecting on His first coming.

The most common Advent candle tradition is to light one candle on each of the four Sundays before Christmas. Traditionally, each candle represents hope, faith, joy and peace. Sometimes, a fifth white candle is placed in the middle and lit on Christmas Day.

It is believed that the Advent season has been in existence since the fifth century, and was largely observed by monks who were ordered to fast every day in the month of December until Christmas.

Worship on the
Second Sunday
of Advent



SUNDAY 10th DECEMBER
10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone.

Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God.

**The subject of
Christine's Talk:**

**Jesus—
The Planned Birth**

The Reading: Luke ch2, vv1-7

1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

3 And everyone went to their own town to register.

4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,

7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

SUNDAY 10th DECEMBER

6.00pm CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

This service is open to all. If you have children or grandchildren (or great grandchildren!) please bring them to this service at which they can make their own Christingles and find out what Christingles represent.



Worship on the
Third Sunday of
Advent



SUNDAY 17th DECEMBER
10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone

Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent

God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord.

**The subject of
Lucy's talk:**

**Jesus -
Announced To All**

The Reading: Luke ch2, vv8-20

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

11 Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.



**Midweek Book of Common
Prayer Holy Communion**

WEDNESDAY
20th DECEMBER
10.30am service
IN CHURCH

Worship on the
Fourth Sunday
of Advent,
Christmas Eve



SUNDAY 24th DECEMBER
10.30am service
IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone.

Collects for The Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God, as we prepare with joy to celebrate the gift of the Christ-child, embrace the earth with your glory and be for us a living hope in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**The subject of
Roy's talk:**

**Jesus -
God As Man**

The Reading: Matthew ch1, vv18-23

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet:

23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

**SUNDAY 24th
DECEMBER**

6.00pm



Worship on Christmas Day



**MONDAY 25th DECEMBER
HOLY COMMUNION**

**10.00am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone**

Worshippers in church are invited to remain in church after the first part of the service has concluded and receive Communion.

Collect for Christmas Day

Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**The subject of
Roy's talk:**

**Jesus -
Today, Born For You**

The Reading: Luke ch2, vv10-11

10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

11 Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

SUNDAY 31st DECEMBER

There will NOT be a service at St John's today.

This is the fifth Sunday of the month and we shall be joining in worship with the other Birkdale churches at **Liverpool Road Methodist Church at 10.45am**



O Come, All Ye Tuneful...

On Saturday 16th December at 11:00 am come and join in some Carol singing outside Broughs in Birkdale.

No prior booking is required. Just come and sing heartily (and get into practice to be ready for St John's Carol Service on Christmas Eve).





CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL AND CHRISTMAS MARKET

FRIDAY, 1st DECEMBER
SATURDAY, 2nd DECEMBER

REMINDER!! ...

Yes. the time is drawing (very) near!! The Team have been working really hard and nearly all preparations are now ready to go. **All that remains is for everyone to come along** and not only enjoy the splendid display of trees in church with entertainment from a local choir, but also immerse yourselves in the wide variety of stalls (some new additions this year) with bargains to be had for many of your Christmas presents.

Don't forget to try your luck on the tombola and raffle stalls, and let the children have fun spending their pocket money on the stalls and activities in the Children's Room.

And if that isn't enough, finish off with some home made food from the cafe, or relax with a cuppa and cake .. not to be missed!



If you haven't managed to bring your donations for the stalls yet but have items you wish to donate, you can still bring them along or contact me to arrange to collect them.

Looking forward to seeing you all and hoping to make this event another successful one. Wishing you a very happy Christmas.

Sylvia Kent



St John's Presents
FILM NIGHTS

Come and join us as we enjoy great films and refreshments @ 6.30pm
film begins at 7pm

**Our next film will be shown on Friday 15th December.
(For details see the church noticeboard or ring 560518)**



CHURCHES together in BIRKDALE

PRAYER TIME
Meeting 1st Monday of the Month @ 10.30am

4 September - St John's Church hall
2 October - Liverpool Road Methodist Church
6 November - 66 Hartley Crescent
4 December - 32 Hartley Crescent

Please join us to pray for our churches, community and our future together

ST JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE, SOUTHPORT, PR8 4JP

St John's Church, Birkdale

Christmas Services 2023

Sunday 10 December 6pm
CHRISTINGLE

Christmas Eve 6pm
CAROL SERVICE

Christmas Day 10am
CELEBRATION & COMMUNION

WE WOULD LOVE TO WELCOME YOU AT ST JOHN'S THIS CHRISTMAS



ST JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE, SOUTHPORT, PR8 4JP

St John's Church, Birkdale

Christmas Tree Festival & Fair

Switch On Friday 6pm All Welcome

Free Entry

ALL DAY CAFE
Christmas Stalls
*Cakes *Tombola *Raffle
Children's activities

FRIDAY 1 DECEMBER 6PM - 9PM
SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER 10AM - 3PM



From the Archives: Windows in Our Church

This month we shall look at the most impressive window which is in the east window above the altar and reredos. It contains two separate themes from the New Testament.



The first (upper) is based on Matthew 19, verse 14: "Jesus said, Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." In this context the word "suffer" bears its archaic meaning "allow (to do something)".

The second (lower) relates to the account in John 4, verses 1-26, when Jesus met and spoke to a Samaritan woman at a well.

These stained glass panels were not in the church when it was built in the late 19th century. They were presented by a parishioner, Ellen Brierley, in 1901. In the lowest left hand corner panels there is a dedication:

"To the Glory of God. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: John 4:14.

In grateful memory of mercies received."

A very small engraving on the glass reveals that the panels were made by Jones and Willis, a Birmingham firm who manufactured ornamental metalwork and church furnishings. They were one of the biggest firms of this kind in the latter part of the nineteenth century. They also opened premises in Liverpool and in London. Jones & Willis began to supply stained glass from about 1880.

What is known of the donor, Ellen Brierley? She died in 1906 and is buried in Liverpool Road cemetery. The headstone at her grave says that she lived at Richmond Road, Birkdale. From this information and from census data it has been possible to trace her roots to Little Bolton in Lancashire where she was born in the summer of 1841. She had two elder sisters, Ann and Margaret, and a younger sister Sarah. The four sisters must have been of some considerable wealth because they all appear in censuses as being either "annuitants" or, in Ellen's case, a single person living on her own means. In the census of 1901 Ellen employed a live-in general domestic servant, Alice Lloyd, who was only 12 years of age.

Ellen's headstone is engraved with the words "Peace Perfect Peace." We shall never know what mercies Ellen received during her life but In providing this wonderful stained glass window she left behind her an enduring gift to the church.

Stuart Baker

People are like stained glass windows. We glow and sparkle when it is sunny and bright outside. But it is only when the sun goes down that our true beauty is revealed – and then only if there is a light deep within us – the light of God.

The story of 'Silent Night'

This much-loved carol comes from Austria, where it was first sung as *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht* on Christmas Eve, 1818. It was written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a melody for his carol. Gruber was organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during the midnight mass. The carol went on to become loved world-wide; and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all time.

Silent	Mohr
Night	Young
Loved	Priest
Carol	Organist
Austria	Midnight
First	Mass
Sung	Melody
Stille	Single
Nacht	Bing
Heilige	Version
Christmas	Third
Eve	
Father	
Joseph	



Nativity Quiz in 20 Questions By Canon Paul Hardingham.

- Where did Mary and Joseph live before Jesus was born? a) Nazareth b) Bethlehem c) Jerusalem
- What was the name of the angel who told Mary she would have a child?
- What did Joseph do for a living?
- Who was the Roman ruler when Jesus was born?
- Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?
- How did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?
- Why couldn't Mary and Joseph find a place to stay?
- Where does the Bible say Jesus was born? a) In a stable b) In hay c) In a manger
- According to the Bible, which animals were specifically mentioned as being present in the stable when Jesus was born? a) sheep and a donkey b) cattle and a donkey c) donkey, sheep and cattle d) None
- What does the angel say to the shepherds when they tell them to go to Bethlehem?
- The wise men travelled to Jerusalem. a) northward b) southward c) eastward d) westward
- What did the Wise Men follow to find Jesus?
- How many Wise Men visited baby Jesus?
- What gifts did the wise men bring for Jesus?
- Who spread the news about baby Jesus throughout Bethlehem?
- What is the City of David also known as in the bible?
- Which of the gospels tell the story of the Nativity?
- What does Jesus' other name, "Immanuel", mean? a) God with us b) Son of God c) He who is God d) Chosen One
- How many days after the birth of Christ did Joseph and Mary give him the name Jesus?
- Jesus was born on the 25th of December. True or false? (Answers on page 29)





The Rev 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 of All

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 hi-jacked and become the equivalent of back-of-the bus rugby songs.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

From Our Own Correspondent Doris Brookfield

Christmas Greetings from Ilkley

Christmas is nearly upon us, and in a few days you will be holding your Christmas Fair and enjoying the beautiful decorated trees surrounding the church, all donated by people who worship at St. John's and friends near and far, towards the many charities who sincerely need help in these stressful times.

How I loved the Christmas Fair each year, and all the different stalls etc., and the wonderful cakes made by the ladies of the congregation. Also the lovely cafe serving meals from the opening to closing of the two day event. All this couldn't be possible other than by all the members of the Church pulling together to provide such a wonderful two days. Each person doing a different role to make people welcome to St. John's, and for them to see what a wonderful church you have in Birkdale. But it takes such a lot of organising which starts months before the event, and the effort to put on an event such as this takes hours of work.

But how it turns out makes it all worth the effort. I used to take a turn welcoming people at the door, and to hear the lovely comments they made when leaving. It made it all worthwhile.

I wish you all my best wishes for a WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY and HEALTHY NEW YEAR. God Bless you all.

Instead of sending a card this year, I am sending this poem (written by Helen Steiner Rice, an American writer of inspirational and Christian poetry).

THE LIST

I have a list of folks I know, all written in a book
And every year when Christmas comes, I go and take a look.
And that is when I realise these names are but a part,
Not of the book they're written in, but really of my heart.

For each name stands for someone who has crossed my path sometime,
And in that meeting they've become the rhythm in each rhyme.
And while it sounds fantastic for me to make this claim,
I really feel that I'm composed of each remembered name.

And while you may not be aware of any special link,
Just meeting you has changed my life a lot more than you think.
For once I've met somebody, the years can not erase
The memory of a pleasant word or of a friendly face.

So never think my Christmas cards are just a mere routine,
Of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in between.
For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed to you,
It is because you're on the list that I'm indebted to.

And every year when Christmas comes, I realise anew
The best gift life can offer is meeting folks like you.
So may the Christmas spirit that inspires us and endures,
Leave its richest blessing in the hearts of you and yours.



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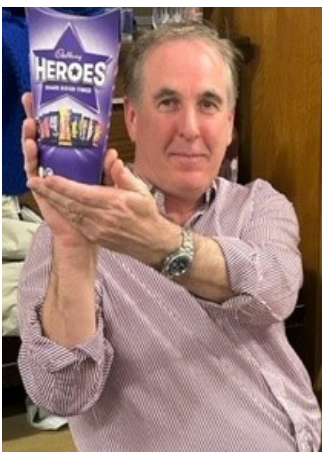
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Fun and Games

BEEBLE AND BINGO

With almost perfect timing, in the same month that **THE BEATLES** last ever song ("Now and Then") was released there was a resurgence of **BEEBLEMANIA** at St John's on Friday 17th November when we held a very competitive Beetle Drive. This very exciting game was unknown to some who arrived to play, but after Gamesmistress Christine explained the rules they quickly became familiar with them and played as if they were old hands at it. Beetle is a noisy game, not so much "Twist and Shout" but more a case of "Help!" when throwing the dice to start. Throw a six to start is "All I've Got to Do," not "Any Time At All" but the sooner the better. The room was abuzz with the sound of dice clattering on the tables and whoops of joy or sighs of disappointment when the dice came to rest and there was intense concentration amongst all the players who sought to be the first to draw a complete Beetle. Some beetles were more artistic than others.



This event was not a "Hard Day's Night" but was a game of fun and absolutely no skill whatsoever. After nine rounds all but one of the contestants had to admit "I'm a Loser" and applaud the winner, the ultimate Beetle champion, Carl Davey (left) whose adroitness at this game was previously unknown to all except, perhaps, himself. Well done Carl! Your success was a legend that will last a lunchtime.

After the prize was presented Joe Blackburn, a keen but disappointed contestant, said he would start training for the next Beetle Drive and many thought it would be a good idea to hold another one next year, so "Let It Be."

(Acknowledgements to Lennon & McCartney for adopting the titles of several of their songs).

After a break for some light refreshments the evening continued with Bingo which had lots of winners, many of whom were serial winners who sportingly declined to accept more than one prize. And then it was time to go home.

It was a jolly evening of friendship and fun and it was nice to welcome and be joined by some of our friends from Liverpool Road Methodist Church. We look forward to seeing them again at future social gatherings and at our joint services when there is a fifth Sunday in the month (as there is in December).

Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: 'Peace on Earth'; 'Goodwill to Men'; and 'Batteries not included'.

Light travels faster than sound. That's why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

He who laughs last, thinks slowest.

GOD in the Arts

The Revd Michael Burgess continues his series on God in the Arts with a look at '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.*

Eternal Truths

Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility to evaporate. – *Albert Schweitzer*

Happiness is more than a grin on one's face, it is the glory in one's heart. – *R Parlette*

A half-formed wish... or a half-warmed fish

The arresting title to this article is a well-known Spoonerism: the transposing of the first letter or the first syllable of two words so that each new word is still a recognisable word but the meaning of the sentence or phrase is entirely changed. Anyone who tries to solve cryptic crosswords will probably be familiar with the device.

There are lots of examples:

A block of flats becomes *a flock of bats*;

Taking a shower becomes *shaking a tower*;

A crushing blow becomes *a blushing crow*.

You get the idea.

The name given to these wordplays is Spoonerism. Why? Although wordplay has been used in many languages for centuries this was elevated (unintentionally, it seems) to almost an art form by an eccentric clergyman, **Reverend William Archibald Spooner** (1844–1930) whose name will be forever associated with it.



Rev. Spooner, who was an Oxford don and became Warden of New College, is said to have been absent minded. It is not entirely clear whether his linguistic mix-ups were deliberate or unintentional, but they had a comic effect. He was generous, well-liked and respected, and was described as “an albino, small, with a pink face, poor eyesight, and a head too large for his body.”

He once (allegedly) described a student as “a lazy undergraduate who has tasted two worms.” It is thought that he meant that the student had wasted two terms, but after more than 100 years it is difficult to be sure!

It is said that he once proposed a Royal toast and caused much mirth by raising a glass to “The Queer Old Dean” instead of “The Dear Old Queen”.

Greater consternation resulted (allegedly) from him accidentally describing God as a “shoving leopard.” (Readers can work that one out for themselves).

The Oxford English Dictionary cites one substantiated Spoonerism: in 1928 he told a group of undergraduates “you will find as you grow older that the weight of rages (*rate of wages*) will press hard on the employer”.

Perhaps the best, which was probably invented by a mischievous student was “You have hissed all my mystery lectures (*missed all my history lectures*) and were caught fighting a liar (*lighting a fire*) in the quad. You will leave by the next town drain (*down train*).” Perhaps his students were somewhat tired when (again, allegedly) he exclaimed to them that he was “tired of addressing beery wenches” (*weary benches*).

In 1995 an article in Readers’ Digest recalled an incident when Spooner invited a don to tea “to welcome Stanley Casson, our new Archaeology Fellow.” “But sir”, replied the invitee, “I am Stanley Casson.” “Never mind,” Spooner replied, “come all the same.”

Stuart Baker

Sources:

Fergus Butler-Gallie, “A Field Guide to the English Clergy.”

William Hayter, “Spooner: A biography.”

W CROSS R D

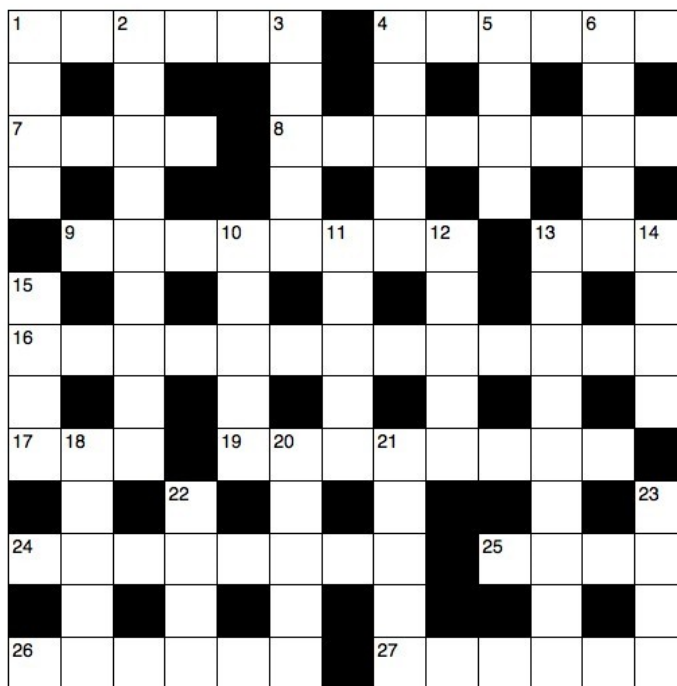
Solution on page 24

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)

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)

In our Book of Remembrance in December

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2nd Horace Hall (1998) | 18th Jack Greensmith (1982) |
| 4th Harry Pennington (2004) | 19th Albert Carr (2014) |
| 6th John Jones (2014) | 20th Leonard Carrington (2011) |
| 7th James Rimmer (1972) | 21st John Heap (1956) |
| 9th William Ball (1991) | 22nd Blanche Yarwood (1983) |
| Margaret Foster (2002) | Carol Astley (2002) |
| 10th Harry Allen (1991) | 23rd William Ryan (1985) |
| 12th Thomas Lacy (1989) | 24th Charles Bateman (1965) |
| 15th Maud Monk (1984) | 25th Elsie Hamer (1982) |
| 16th Walter Marshall (1976) | Daniel Randles (1990) |
| Emma Wright (1978) | 27th Mary Wright (979) |
| Hilda Banham (2005) | May Williams (1985) |
| | Ivan Coop (1989) |
| | Julie Kershaw (2007) |
| | 28th Sarah Halsall (1964) |
| | 29th Mary Ball (1988) |
| | 30th James Lloyd (1985) |

If any of our readers wish to have the name of a deceased relative inscribed in the Book of Remembrance please contact Stuart Baker (01704 560518)

Haven't They Done Well!

We have heard recently that Jeremy and Cathy Leffler's twin daughters Joanna and Miriam have graduated from universities this year.



Joanna is still waiting for work to be marked due to the lecturers' industrial action. She has an interim grade of a 2:1 in Biological Sciences. She is spending this year as a ministry trainee at Christchurch Durham, the church she has attended throughout her time in Durham. She has to raise her own financial support for this. Joanna is involved in leading prayer meetings, Bible studies and a variety of other activities for the students- around 200 in number. She spends one day a week doing theology in Gateshead. She is also involved with the international students and is frequently to be found baking for the various events she's involved in.

Miriam graduated from Aberystwyth with a 1st in Creative Writing with Film and Television Studies. She, too, is spending this academic year at her church in Aberystwyth. She says "I'm doing an apprenticeship with St Mike's in Aberystwyth. I work in various areas of church life but my particular focus is with the student work. I help to run Bible studies every week for the student group, I help make and serve at the student meals we hold every month, and most importantly I am in charge of looking after and meeting up with freshers. I also do a lot for the sound desk and tech side of things, I co-run the LMA student Instagram and Facebook pages and I also help out with the Sunday school club. Recently I've been going to help out at St Anne's (one of the other churches in the LMA) by going to their Warm Space/Drop-in meal where I do a lot of washing up and making hot drinks!"



Happy days, and proud parents with good reasons to be proud

Michael is busy with his UCAS form, looking to study geology at either Bristol, Durham, Exeter (Camborne School of Mines), Leicester or possibly Liverpool or Aberdeen. His geology teacher has really enjoyed having him as a student and is looking forward to having him help with another open evening at the college next week as he engages with people so well. He's studying for geology, biology and geography A levels next summer.

THE WORD sends congratulations to Joanna and Miriam, and we wish Michael success in his A levels next year and in his application for a degree course. And at this time of the year we send best wishes to Jeremy and Cathy and all the family, wishing them a Happy Christmas.

HAPPINESS

by J.M.Shakespeare

To be happy is, I believe, something that we are all entitled to indulge in. It may last only a few minutes or a greater length of our time. However, to quote G. B. Shaw (1856-1950) "But a lifetime all of happiness! No man could bear it: it would be hell on earth."

One of the contributing causes of depression, is the expectation society puts on people to be happy, especially on certain occasions such as Christmas. Happiness, in my opinion, is all in the state of one's mind at any one time, not tied to the expectations of others.

Confucius (551-479 BC), believed that traditional rites such as marriage and baptism, carried through with an attitude of suitable reverence in their performances, were occasions when great happiness could be enjoyed. He also saw the evils of society notably, immorality, rebellion and deceit, as enemies of man's peace and joy in the ability to find a happy life.

Positive thinking is, I believe, an essential art for being happy. However, a phrase that is more easily said than is practised is an essential to be developed. Following through what one enjoys about the arts can, I believe, be a source from which Happiness can be found. The good story told by an enthralling orator can for me be a real present of Happiness, not only for its content, but also the imagination it feeds.

At the moment there seems to be a multitude of food and drink programmes presented by a variety of TV celebrities. Tastes of what, for them, gives Happiness, in what they cook up, is a steady appetizer that we can all take part in as part of our enjoyment of life.

To quote the first four lines of the poem, "Happy the Man", by John Dryden (1631-1700) I feel there is a lot of honest conviction in what he says, " Happy the man, and happy he alone, He who can call today his own: He who secure within, can say Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today."

These are sentiments which I feel express Happiness as it may be felt by

any one of us in all honesty, if we can recognise it. Having sufficient money is I would agree a source of Happiness, but the pursuit of riches itself, I would argue, does not in itself bring Happiness. In pursuit of more money, greedy strikers already on large salaries, bring misery and anxiety on many people. To quote Proverbs (Chp 3 verses 13/14) in the Bible, " Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver and the gain thereof than fine gold."

Consequentialist Ethical Theory, founded by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), is based on the idea that the function of human activity and its final consequences should, by its actions, bring about Happiness. He is also credited as saying "The job of any elected Government is to ensure the greatest Happiness to the greatest number of people."

To quote Aristotle (384-322 BC), a Greek philosopher, "You can only achieve your Happiness, through relations with, and connections to, other people." All parents experience this when they interact with their children and indulge in enjoyable play together. It may of course be true, that to bring Happiness to others we sacrifice our own comforts. A simple example would be giving up your train seat for the comfort of a person standing.

The matching of behaviour, is one way that we may enjoy Happiness. If we are at peace with ourselves and yet are still able to enjoy the joy others take in their pleasures then, I believe, we can in all certainty say that we are happy. If we chase Happiness, then I believe that we will end up finding it difficult to find. I think that it's not about something tangible, but more like a feeling of spiritual contentment.

So a final thought from a poet friend of mine, Derek Bourne-Jones. To quote, "Who are those happy ones who live content, and with their present state are satisfied? Of this I am sure, though he is not yet found, but like a four-leaved clover must be sought. A man whose gaze is upward towards the sun, yet whose joy is shared with those around. A man whose basic standards can't be bought."

God in the Sciences

Dr Ruth Banciewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge, 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.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1, Depend. 4, Canopy. 7, Beak. 8, Irritate. 9, Zedekiah. 13, Ate. 16, Job's comforter. 17, NAE. 19, Lang Syne. 24, Blockade. 25, Five. 26, Enigma. 27, Drench.

DOWN: 1, Debt. 2, Peaceable. 3, Drink. 4, Curia. 5, Nuts. 6, Put it. 10, Excel. 11, Is man. 12, Hoofs. 13, Attention. 14, Ezra. 15, Ijon. 18, Aslan. 20, Abana. 21, Greed. 22, GCMG. 23, Leah.

Canon Paul Hardingham continues his new series on the spiritual disciplines that help us to grow and deepen our faith. It will run throughout this year.

Spiritual Disciplines – Celebration

'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 these 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).

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 18th 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 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 19th century Oxford Movement, who was later to convert to Roman Catholicism. Oakley believed strongly in the power of religious symbols and fine music, and in 1841, before he bade farewell to the Margaret Chapel, he translated this hymn into English and introduced it 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'. The original four verses of the hymn were extended to a total of eight, and these have been translated into many languages.

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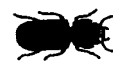
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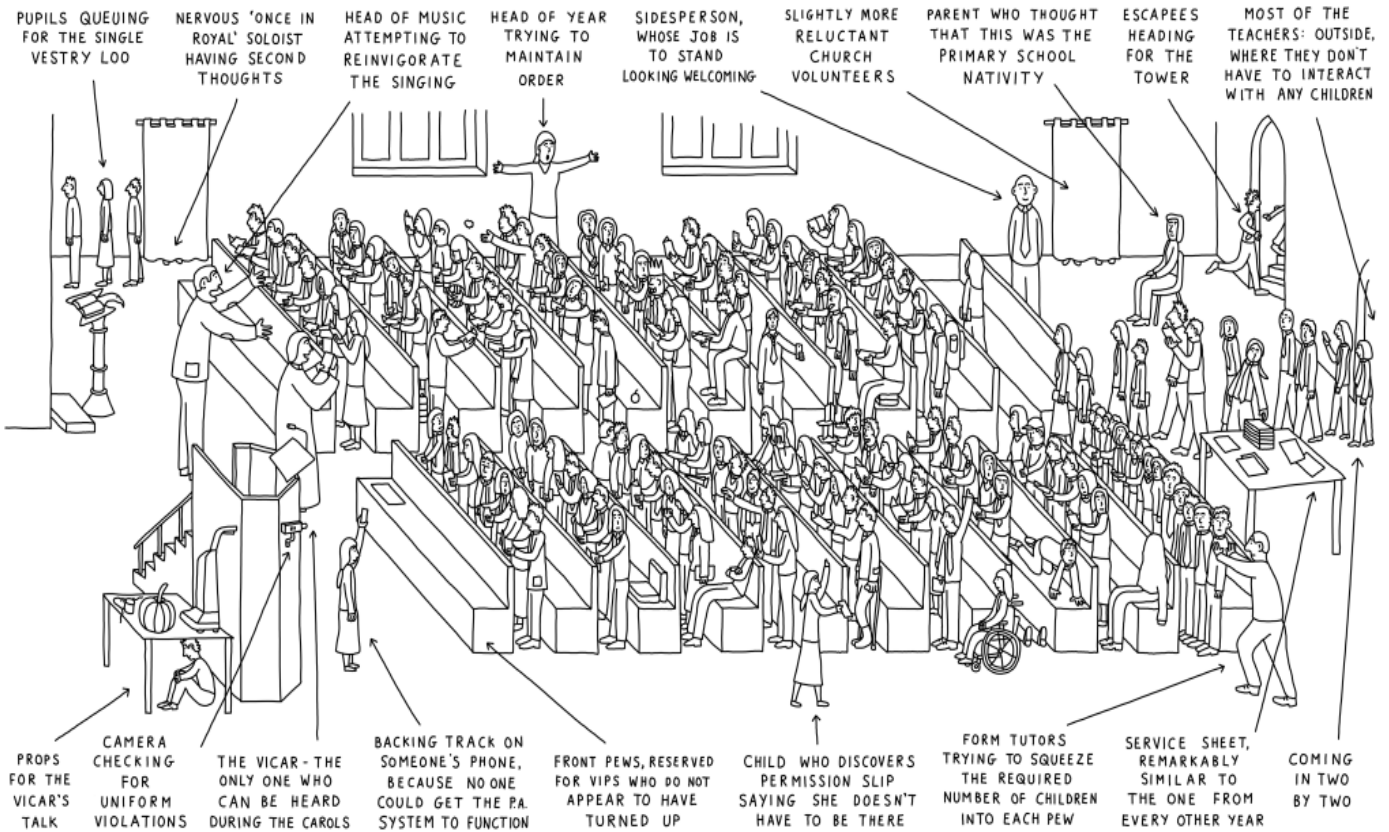
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To join the **twice-monthly Thursday evening prayers** at 7.30pm by **TELEPHONE**:

The telephone number you must ring is: 0131 460 1196

The Meeting Identification Number every Thursday will be: 879 8059 1143.

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

The Password every Thursday will be 966358.

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

BUT PLEASE CHECK YOUR CALL PACKAGE CHARGES WITH YOUR PROVIDER

IF YOU NEED ANY HELP: Please contact Clive (564206) or Sally (553977) or

Hearing the Word by telephone

If you would like to hear a recording of the Sunday morning talks telephone 0151-329-2184 at any hour of the day or night.

The calls are **free**. Each talk lasts about 15 minutes and is available for a week.

Each recording becomes available during the afternoon of the Sunday on which it is given.

Was it really that long ago?...

On 5th December 1958 Britain's first motorway, the Preston By-pass, was officially opened. (It is now part of the M6 and M55.)

On 21st December 1963 the Daleks made their first appearance on the British science fiction TV series *Doctor Who*.

On 21st December 1973 the Geneva Conference opened in Switzerland, aimed at finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. No agreement was reached, but Israel signed a military disengagement agreement with both Egypt and Syria in 1974.

On 1st December 2003 using a handheld mobile phone while driving became illegal in the UK.

On 13th December 2003 during the Iraq War, former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was captured by US forces, who found him hiding in a hole at a farmhouse in ad-Dawr, near his hometown of Tikrit.

10 years ago, on 5th December 2013 Nelson Mandela died. This anti-apartheid revolutionary and politician had become President of South Africa 1994-99. Winner of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize.

Church Hall Users (Note: with the exception of the Friday Film Nights the activities listed below are NOT run by St John's Church. They are run by independent groups who use our hall). Contact details are provided in case readers wish to enquire about or join these groups.

Monday

7.00pm to 8.00pm **Zumba@Fitness**

A fun and friendly class and a great workout.

No dance experience needed. All ages and all fitness levels welcome

Contact: Kay Bennett on 07716312909

Tuesday

4.30pm – 5.30pm **Kiwi Sports Coaching**

Tag Rugby class for boys and girls aged 5-7

School holiday classes sometimes available

Contact: shanehuttonnz@gmail.com

7.30pm – 9.00pm **Connected Voices Choir**

We are a non-audition choir for adults, singing a range of uplifting music – from pop and rock to soul and funk. We are open to anyone who loves singing, whether they think they can sing or not!

Contact: info@connectedvoices.co.uk or for more information visit the website

www.connectedvoices.co.uk

Wednesday

Morning, monthly class. **All Aglow Weaning Workshop**

Start your baby on solid food with confidence with an interactive, relaxed and informal class. Suitable for babies 4-10 months.

Contact: Jennifer@allaglow.co.uk

10.30 – 12 noon

2nd Wednesday of the month only. **Elderberries Gardening Club**

A social gardening club, where speakers are invited to talk on various topics, and visits and social events throughout the year.

Contact: Shelley Lewis Lavender on 01704 560690 or via email:

elderberriesgardening@gmail.com

7pm – 8pm **Functional Yoga**

Exploring joint mobilisation, functional movement and relaxation - suitable for beginners.

Contact Lindsay: 07747038613 or email lindsay@wobblytreeyoga.com

Thursday

6.00-9.00pm: **St John's Rainbows (6.00-7.00pm) St John's Brownies (6.00-7.15pm) and Girl Guides (7.15-9.00pm).**

Contact: Janette Law 01704 565951

Friday

6.30-9.30pm Once per month **St John's Film Nights**

A chance to see some great modern films. Tea, coffee and homemade cake available.

Contact: Christine Baker 01704 560518

Nativity Quiz Answers:

1. Nazareth
2. Gabriel
3. Carpenter
4. Caesar Augustus
5. To register for the census
6. We are not told in the Bible
7. There was no room at the inn
8. c) In a manger
9. d) None
10. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to all people'
11. d) westward
12. A star

13. The Bible doesn't say
14. Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh
15. The shepherds
16. Bethlehem
17. Matthew and Luke
18. a) God with us
19. 8, according to the law
20. False; we don't know the date

How many did you answer correctly?

These questions are a refresher course! For further details of the Nativity story come and listen to our new series of weekly sermons starting on Sunday 3rd December.

www.southportorchestra.co.uk

SOUTHPORT ORCHESTRA
Conductor: Jeff Rimmer


AUTUMN LEAVES

Karelia Overture – Sibelius
Clarinet Concerto No 1
In F minor – Weber
(with Andrew Roberts as soloist)
Symphony No. 3 – Bruch

Saturday, 2nd December 2023 at 7.30 pm

EMMANUEL PARISH CHURCH
Cambridge Road, Southport PR9 9PR

TICKETS: £10 (£5 FOR UNDER 18s)
Available from Stuart and Christine Baker (560518)



**Piano concert in church,
amongst the Christmas trees,
on Saturday 9th December.**

The students of BrookeShottonMusic will be performing piano at their first Christmas concert as well as raising money for Ataxia UK.

The students – aged 4 to 16 - will be performing well known Christmas songs and also classical, pop and jazz music which you definitely will recognise! There will also be guest spots from Suzanne Lambert (harpist) and Keisha Santos (singer).

The concert will be starting at 4pm till 6:15. There will be a raffle and refreshments in the interval.


Tickets are £5 – with under 10s free.

Contact b_shotton@aol.com


What's On in other parishes near to us



**Friday, 8th December
2023
7:00pm at St Peter's
Church, Birkdale**

Saxophonic Christmas



Phil Shotton directs the North West Saxophone Choir for a saxophonic celebration of Christmas!

Tickets £7 (including raffle and interval drink) available by texting 07985 203 226, or calling the Church Office 01704 550027 (Tuesdays and Fridays 9.30am - 12.30pm).

*St Peter's Church
St Peter's Road
Birkdale
PR8 4BY*




**FRIDAY
HANGOUTS**

STARTS 13TH OCTOBER
FRIDAYS ● 7-8.3PM ● YR7-YR11

**GAMES, FUN, TUCK SHOP,
CHALLENGE NIGHTS, SAFE
SPACE, AND A GREAT PLACE
TO CHAT!**

CHRIST CHURCH, LORD STREET, SOUTHPORT

★ **HAPPY** ★
BIRTHDAY! To

Mavis Beckingham on 28th December

If there are any birthdays, anniversaries or other reasons to celebrate which our readers would like to share with others **DURING JANUARY** please let the Editor know by email to stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com

The Last Laughs

John Shakespeare's article on page 31 about Happiness is the perfect introduction to some more one-liners from the Master of Mirth, the late Sir Ken Dodd:

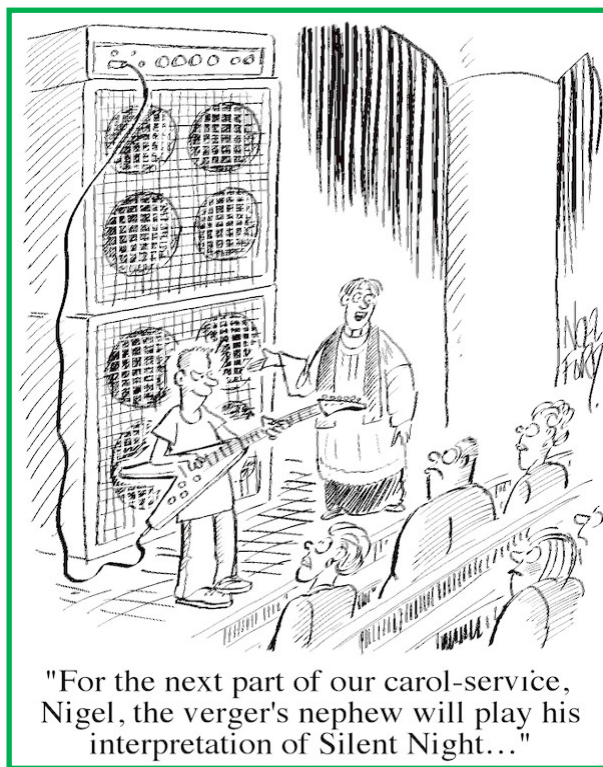
"I have kleptomania. But when it gets bad, I take something for it."

"I just read a book about Stockholm Syndrome, it started off badly but by the end I really liked it."

"How many men does it take to change a toilet roll? Nobody knows. It's never been tried."

"Five-thirds of people have trouble understanding fractions."

"Doctor, 'How old are you?' 'I'm approaching 50.' 'From which direction?'"



"For the next part of our carol-service, Nigel, the verger's nephew will play his interpretation of Silent Night..."

BLACK FRIDAY

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Why Choose Us?

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Contact us

Southport and Birkdale
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Parbold - 01257 462222

Scarisbrick - 01704 321234

Covering all surrounding areas

www.massamandmarshall.co.uk

Funerals@massamandmarshall.co.uk