

Christmas Blessings to you all

PEACE
ON
EARTH

InSpire



Issue 56 - December 2021 FREE of charge - please take a copy!
The monthly publication for the Parish of Capel and Ockley

25th December: The History of Christmas

The Bible does not give a date for the birth of Jesus. In the third century it was suggested that Jesus was conceived at the Spring equinox, 25th March, popularising the belief that He was born nine months later on 25th December. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, encouraged Christians worldwide to make Christmas a holy day in about 400.

In the early Middle Ages, Christians celebrated a series of midwinter holy days. Epiphany (which recalls the visit to the infant Jesus of the wise men bearing gifts) was the climax of 12 days of Christmas, beginning on 25th December. The Emperor Charlemagne chose 25th December for his coronation in 800, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose. In England, William the Conqueror also chose 25th December for his coronation in 1066, and the date became a fixture both for religious observance and feasting.

Cooking a boar was a common feature of mediaeval Christmas feasts, and singing carols accompanied it. Writers of the time lament the fact that the true significance of Christmas was being lost because of partying. They condemn the rise of 'misrule' – drunken dancing and promiscuity. The day was a public holiday, and traditions of bringing evergreen foliage into the house and the exchange of gifts (usually on Epiphany) date from this time.

In the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity. Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England's Puritan rulers made the celebration of Christmas illegal for 14 years. The restoration of Charles II ended the ban, but religious leaders continued to discourage excess, especially in Scotland. In Western Europe (but not worldwide) the day for exchanging gifts changed from Epiphany (6th January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, the significance of Christmas was declining. Charles Dickens was one of several writers who sought to restore it. His novel *A Christmas Carol* was significant in reviving merriment during the festival. He emphasised charity and family reunions, alongside religious observance. Christmas trees, paper chains, cards and many well-known carols date from this time. So did the tradition of Boxing Day, on 26th December, when tradesmen who had given reliable service during the year would collect 'boxes' of money or gifts from their customers.

In Europe Santa Claus is the figure associated with the bringing of gifts. Santa Claus is a shortening of the name of Saint Nicholas, who was a Christian bishop in the fourth century in present-day Turkey. He was particularly noted for his care for children and for his generosity to the poor. By the Middle Ages his appearance, in red bishop's robes and a mitre, was adored in the Netherlands and familiar across Europe.

Father Christmas dates from 17th century England, where he was a secular figure of good cheer (more associated with drunkenness than gifts). The transformation of Santa Claus into today's Father Christmas started in New York in the 1880s, where his red robes and white beard became potent advertising symbols. In some countries (such as Latin America and Eastern Europe) the tradition attempts to combine the secular and religious elements by holding that Santa Claus makes children's presents and then gives them to the baby Jesus to distribute.

From: <https://christianity.org.uk/the-history-of-christmas/#.W9LmchNKhsM>



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Christ became what we are that He might make us what He is. -

Athanasius

“The greatest pleasure I know is to do a good action by stealth, and to have it found out by accident.”
- Charles Lamb

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www.capelandockleychurch.org.uk/inspire-magazine

This issue is kindly sponsored by

Liz & Tim Wombwell

In loving memory of Pat Wombwell

Thank you for your sponsorship

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Dear all,

As I write this letter Doug and I are delighted to have become grandparents once again. We have a new little granddaughter just a couple of days old. Her parents are staying with us in Capel while their new house is being sorted out which means we are sharing in this wonderful new born phase of their first baby's young life. It has taken me right back to nearly 40 years ago when our first child was born in Kingston Hospital - to the 8 days or so spent in those big old fashioned wards when Sister ruled and babies went to nurseries at night! These days of course new parents are home very much sooner and things have no doubt changed for the better but one thing doesn't change - that it is such an overwhelming, vulnerable time for all concerned isn't it as not only is a child born but new parents are born as well. And then there is the baby who is completely dependant on their parent for absolutely everything...



This vulnerability we remember was the same for Jesus as a new born to his parents, teenager mother Mary and her husband Joseph. And how vulnerable they must have felt away from their home and in very temporary accommodation shared with the animals most probably. It was a vulnerability God called these two to embrace as he sent his Son to be born among us; to live among us; to be one of us, yet without sin although knowing and experiencing life as a human being. A mystery indeed yet it was a revelation foretold through scripture and continuing to be fulfilled as we worship and celebrate his coming into the world.

As this festive season approaches there are many different services and events planned in order to help you worship and celebrate throughout December. The month begins as usual with the decorating of the community organisation Christmas trees lining the path and front of our Capel Church and later the same day we regather for the grand switch on of the lights and an opportunity to sing some carols outside as usual. The lovely Crown Pub will be offering supper I know and then there is a wonderful concert to enjoy inside church as Green Matthews entertain us with some 'Midwinter Revels,' songs, tales and carols from yuletide past! A busy day indeed!

Then the following afternoon at St Margaret's Ockley we have the first of our annual Christingle services where we discover through the making of the Christingle Orange that Christ is the light of the world. All children are welcome of course whatever age you happen to be! We are all God's children...

Talking of children of all ages - on the following Saturday, over in Ockley on the Green, there will be more carols and a surprise visit from a bearded gentleman in a red costume riding on a sleigh. I wonder who that might be?! The next day if you fancy something a little bit different again why not come along on Sunday morning to our Christmas Cafe Church where we will enjoy more songs, carols, poems and laughter - again an opportunity for all the family to join in, courtesy of Bob and the Cafe Church Band. I can't wait! Later that day we have the last of the Capel teas for the season. I think there may well be some of Joy's famous Christmas puddings there too....

The Saturday before Christmas there is more carol singing to enjoy at Ockley Village Hall for the Ockley Cricket Club. If you have any more energy for carol singing the following evening we will be holding our traditional Nine Lessons and Carols at St John's Church Capel. A lovely prelude to Christmas Eve with our Crib service and Midnight Communion which begins at **11pm!!** This means by 12 midnight we are singing Silent Night in candlelight and wishing one another the first "Happy Christmas!". Which leaves us with the great day itself where we join as our two churches to welcome the new born King at our Christmas Day service of worship and celebration at St Margaret's Ockley. Then for the first time in many years, the following day is Boxing Day and we drop down a gear slightly as both our churches are able to offer you a traditional Matins at Ockley or a said service of Holy Communion at Capel - both services offering a time to quietly reflect on all the busyness of the lead up to Christmas, a sacred quiet time of space as the year draws to a close.

So there it is! Sounds exhausting but don't let it be so. As we reflect on the vulnerability of the Christ child remember how vulnerable we are especially at this busiest of seasonal times, when expectations can run high and pressure builds. We are vulnerable too of course as the pandemic continues so choose your services and events carefully; remember that we are watchful over helping to keep you safe. Christmas although a time to celebrate is a difficult time for many, particularly for the bereaved and lonely. Please know that we wish to pray for you and serve you as your parish churches in the best way we can. We will have the prayer trees inside both churches for you so that you can write down your hopes and dreams and prayers for whoever or whatever you feel so called. Place them on the tree and they will be prayed for throughout the month at our regular weekly services. I pray that during this month you may find peace amidst whatever and wherever you find yourself in your life and may I wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year. I pray too that you will realise that however vulnerable Jesus himself once was, like we all were once when we were newly born into this world, and still very much are, God is our heavenly parent and will see to our every need if we trust and depend on him.

With my love and prayers,

Revd Liz

Revd Liz Richardson liz@hostmyserver.co.uk 01306 711260

Vicar St John the Baptist Capel and St Margaret's Ockley

PS - look out for the appearance of the Holy Family who are planning to pitch up on the Vicarage Lawn again!

CHURCH SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR THE PARISH OF CAPEL AND OCKLEY - DECEMBER 2021

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SATURDAY 4th
 9.30am Christmas Tree decorating in Capel Churchyard
 12.00pm Baptism at St Margaret's Ockley
 5.00 pm Switching on Christmas tree lights and carol singing - Capel
 8.00 pm Midwinter Revels with GREEN MATTHEWS (Concert in church)
 Christmas carols, winter folk songs www.capelboxoffice.co.uk

SUNDAY 5th
 9.30am Matins at St Margaret's Ockley
 10.30am Family Communion at St John's Capel
 4.00pm Christingle Service at St Margaret's Ockley

SUNDAY 5th – CAROLS & CAKES @ CAPEL
2-4pm – Capel Choral Society invite you to join them with your "requests of Carols" in St. John's Church followed by Tea and Cakes.

SATURDAY 11th
 5.00pm Carols on the Green at Ockley
 Wonderful festive occasion with the arrival of Father Christmas on his sleigh

SUNDAY 12th
 9.30am Family Communion at St Margaret's Ockley
 10.30am Christmas Cafe Church in St John the Baptist Capel
 The band will play, songs and carols will be sung, poems and laughter.
 A special festive Cafe Church for all the family!
 3-5pm Capel teas in church (last one of the season)

SATURDAY 18th
 7.00pm Carol Singing for Ockley Cricket Club
 Ockley Village Hall



SUNDAY 19th
 9.30am Matins at St Margaret's Ockley
 10.30am Family Communion at St John the Baptist Capel
 6.00pm Traditional Nine Lessons and Carols at St John's Capel

FRIDAY 24th
 4.00pm Christmas Eve at St John the Baptist Capel
 Crib Service - Christmas really begins...
11.00pm Midnight Communion (*please note start time!*)

SATURDAY 25th
 10.00am Christmas Day at St Margaret's Ockley
 Parish Celebration Worship at St Margaret's Ockley
 both churches worship together on this special Christmas Day

SUNDAY 26th
 9.30am Matins at St Margaret's Ockley
 9.30 am Holy Communion at St John's Capel (shorter said HC) with Rev Jo (NB: Earlier time)

JANUARY 2022

SUNDAY 2nd
 9.30am Second Sunday of Christmas
 Matins at St Margaret's Ockley
 10.30am Family Communion at St John's Capel

Please note:
 BCP - service is from The Book of Common Prayer 1662
 CW - service is from Common Worship 2005

Our current PCC guidelines:

At both churches:

- ◆ We encourage all our congregations to wear masks during our services, if they can, and to maintain appropriate distance from each other
- ◆ Hand sanitiser will be available for use by the entrance door.
- ◆ Holy communion will for the moment continue in one kind only.

At Capel:

- ◆ We have designated the front pews for those who would like to sing during the service. These pews will have hymn books and kneelers available. Please leave the hymn books in the pew when you leave.
- ◆ Please continue to wear your masks when singing.
- ◆ The back pews are available for those who would prefer not to sing and maintain more social distance.
- ◆ One of the hymns will be designated as an offertory hymn. The bag will be passed round by the sidesperson but should not be handled by others.

At Ockley:

- ◆ We have taken the decision to have no congregational singing at present, this will be reviewed in September.
- ◆ Prayer books will be available, please leave them in the pews at the end of the service.
- ◆ The collection plate will be on the table at the back of the church for donations.



Capel Christmas Fair

Debbie and I would like everyone for their support at our first Capel Christmas Fair on Saturday 20th November 2021. After months of planning, the day finally arrived! We had a sterling team of helpers to help us set up the day before, help at the Fair itself and then a wonderful team to help us clear up at the end! Everything went very smoothly thanks to our helpers!

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from both our stallholders and visitors! We still have some money coming in but we are now able to say that we have raised in excess of £3,000! The monies will be split equally between The Parish of Capel & Ockley and the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA). As many of you know, my father died of MND in 2015 and I have fundraised for the Association ever since. There isn't much support in the UK for families who find themselves coping with motor neurone disease apart that offered by the MNDA. They provide support, equipment and fund vital research. So my thanks to everyone who supported us with this new Fair - we couldn't have done it without you!

We've already booked next year's Fair for **Saturday 19th November 2022** 12—4 at both the Memorial & Parish Halls in Capel. We hope to make it **BIGGER AND BETTER!** So do keep watching our social media pages and our website for updates! *You can see some pictures from our recent first fair on the back of this issue!*

Again, our sincere thanks for all your support with this new event.

Best wishes,
Suzanne Cole & Debbie von Bergen

FROM THE REGISTERS Capel and Ockley

Holy Baptism

We welcome into the family of the Church

Caleb Romeo Cole
28th November 2021
St Margaret's Ockley

In Memoriam

We mourn the loss of
Filomena Edwards
13th November 2021

Dennis Anthony Parkins
15th November 2021



Royal British Legion Collection

Stuart Cole would like to thank everyone for their support. He would like to thank the volunteers who go door to door collecting and to everyone for their generosity.

£2,274.79 was raised in Capel!



Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Many congratulations to the Mid Surrey Community Fridges who visit our villages every week. They have won the **Queen's award for voluntary service**. A remarkable achievement.

They won their award for **"Reducing waste and meeting need by redistributing food and encouraging sustainable living"**. sustainable living.

Many Congratulations to them and their many volunteers!

SUNDAY 5TH DECEMBER, CAPEL Traidcraft in church after 10.30 service!

Don't forget you can order at any time! To see what's available, do pick up a brochure from either church or look at the online catalogue:
<https://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/traidcraft-catalogue>

We will happily order for you! You can reach us on 01306 711449 or email: traidcraft@ansford.me.uk

Thank you
Suzanne & Stuart Cole

DON'T FORGET 10% goes to our Parish Churches!



The Pavilion Café

We are open every Wednesday morning from 9 to 12 in the Cricket Pavilion on the green in Ockley.



We serve homemade cakes and savouries and offer a range of teas and fresh coffee. On the last Wednesday of the month we also serve bacon butties which are very popular. We ask for donations and, after expenses, the money goes to charity. We like to donate to our local churches, local amenities and charities and also national ones. We have become very popular over the years and there is plenty of parking and disabled access to the building.

The cafe was started in 2012 by a team of local church-going women called 'Kindred Spirits'.

We are delighted to say that January 2022's issue of InSpire will be sponsored by Kindred Spirits.

LOVELY NEWS!

Many Congratulations to Liz & Doug's daughter Vicky and her partner Jack on the safe arrival of their daughter Elsie.

We wish all the family many congratulations!

Church Mailing List

Do you know of anyone who would like to be added to the Church mailing list? This would ensure they received the weekly notice sheets and readings, amongst other things.

If so, please get in touch with Debbie von Bergen:-
debbievonbergen@icloud.com

We must have their permission before adding them to the list. Thank you.

STAMPS AND OLD PRINTER CARTRIDGES

! Don't forget that you can drop off your used printer cartridges in the box in the church porch at Capel. These are sent to a recycling firm who give a small amount towards our church funds.

! Also, don't forget to keep bringing your used stamps to church - again a box is in the porch at Capel. Thank you

SAFEGUARDING NOTICE

'The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the church. If you are concerned that someone you know is at risk of, or is being abused, or presents a risk to others, please seek advice from a Safeguarding Adviser or if necessary report the matter to the Local Authority Social Care Services or the Police without delay.'

If you have any concerns please contact our Safeguarding Officer Leigh Smith 07732825908
leighdesouza@yahoo.com

or Revd Liz Richardson 01306 711260
liz@hostmyserver.co.uk

This notice will appear each month in InSpire and the contact details for our Safeguarding Officer and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor Jackie Broadfoot will be published in our weekly pew sheets as well as in the Church Contacts section in each issue of InSpire.

Our Parish Harvest Appeal 2021 Thank you!

Dear Liz,

It's been 100 days since a 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck southwest Haiti on the 14 August. When the quake hit, families not only lost loved ones, homes and livelihoods, they also lost their sense of safety.

The earthquake affected 15,654 Compassion-supported children. Of this number, tragically, 16 died. In addition, 12,000 homes were destroyed or damaged, alongside 34 buildings belonging to Compassion's church partners. But you were there to supply much needed funds that are now being used to help rebuild lives.

Thanks to your generous donation, we've been able to send more than £826,000 in relief funding to Haiti to aid the disaster response. One-hundred days on, this is how your donations are being and will be used.

In the short-term, we have:

- Supplied food kits and hygiene packs for 15,654 children, youth and families.
- Distributed more than 3,000 food and hygiene kits to affected children in nine church partners.
- Provided 37 local church partners with cash transfers so families of Compassion-supported children could buy food and basic necessities.

In the long-term:

- We'll strengthen a powerful and effective support system: our local church partners.
- We'll repair or rebuild 12,000 homes and 34 of Compassion's church projects to withstand future earthquakes and hurricanes. In parts of Haiti, Compassion's local church partner buildings double as schools. Reconstruction means teachers can again deliver education, restoring children's safety and sense of normality.

Our aim is to stabilise the community as the church continues to support and serve them into the future.

Your vital support is helping rebuild entire communities.

After the dust settles and the media moves on, Compassion and the Haitian church aren't leaving. We're both called to the hard places of suffering. We're called to rebuild as an act of hope and love.

Unfortunately, as you may have read in news reports, the aftermath of the earthquake has brought further hardship. Social unrest has led to security issues. Getting food, materials, and essential support to where they're needed most has been made more challenging. We cannot support these communities alone. We need God's help.

Please join us in prayer for Haiti...

Dear Lord, we thank you for your faithful people. For their generosity in responding to those in greatest need. We pray especially for all those affected by the earthquake in Haiti. We pray for the mental and physical well-being of children and families still recovering. We pray that your love will shine through in the most difficult of circumstances. We commit the safety and security of those displaced from their homes, now in temporary accommodation, into your loving hands. We pray for Compassion's staff supporting children and families, acting as your hands and feet. Gracious Lord, we lift to you the rebuilding efforts. We ask that your favour be upon those skilled labourers and that building materials would arrive at sites without delay or hindrance. Amen

Thank you again for your heart for our neighbours in Haiti who have lost so much. Thanks to you, they haven't lost hope.

God bless you,



Justin Dowds
Chief Executive





I hate XMAS!

What? Did Bob just say he hates Xmas? Bob! That bloke who says he's a Christian and even runs the Café Church services every month? He hates Xmas?!?!?

Absolutely! And it may not be for the reason you think. I know for a fact that most people are fed up that Xmas starts at the end of August with pubs, hotels and restaurants promoting their Xmas meals and festive fun. By the time we reach October you can barely move in the aisles of any supermarket for huge displays of Xmas food and gifts. (Has it struck anyone else how odd it is that people are buying Xmas mince pies whose "use by" date expires weeks before the event itself?) The whole thing has been hijacked by large corporations who see it purely as the biggest retail opportunity of the year. Is that really what it's all about?

"But it's the biggest Christian festival of the year", I hear you say. Well, yes, it is. But it's becoming more difficult year by year to call it such for fear of causing "offence" to others who do not share the same Christian faith or have no faith at all. We are being encouraged to wish people a Happy Holiday or Season's Greetings thus taking the focus away from the original reason for the celebration and making it an "anonymous" occasion with no mention of the central character. Is that what it's all about?

"So, what is it that you hate so much?"

I'll tell you. It isn't Xmas - it's **CHRIST**mas! The ultimate insult has been to remove Christ altogether from the celebration of his birth. Why would you do that? I can't think of any other religious festival where the person, deity or event being celebrated has their name deliberately erased from history. My Jewish friends celebrate Passover - not X-over. The Hindu festival of lights is Diwali - not X-wali. And I can't imagine any of my Muslim acquaintances substituting an "X" anywhere! So, what is it that the world finds so threatening or offensive about Jesus? Even the most ardent atheists will often acknowledge the person of Jesus as a "good man" even if they can't accept his divinity.

And the greatest irony of all? The fact that the world chose to substitute the name of Christ with a cross! The birth that so many of us will celebrate this month at carol services, midnight masses, nativity plays and so on is the start of a life's journey that went from the humblest of beginnings in a manger to a world-wide faith that touches millions of lives every day via the miracle of Easter. It's almost as though Jesus is having the last laugh. Christ and a cross. Inseparable.

Happy Christmas

Bob Cranham

Café Church this month meets inside St. John's church for a celebration of Christmas. It's a relaxed, welcoming get together for anyone and everyone. The band will play; songs will be sung; poems will be read; there will be laughter; there will be plenty to think about AND there will be FREE coffee and mince pies!!!!

SUNDAY 12th December at 10.30am.

Nine Lessons and Carols

This year we will be holding a Nine Lessons and Carols service. Often this is referred to as 'traditional' but it only has a history of 140 years.

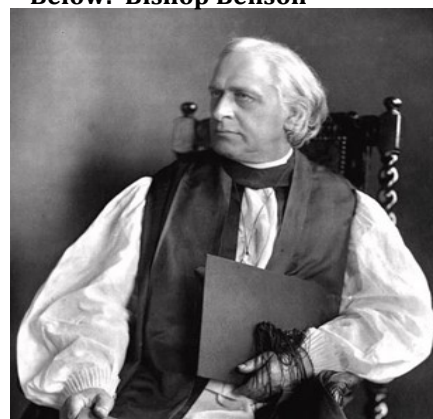
Below: Somerset Walpole



It had been traditional in Truro for the choir of St Mary's to walk around the town visiting homes and singing carols on their doorstep receiving refreshments and donations. Carols at that time were considered secular and not suitable for church services, but there was increasing public interest and John Stainer introduced a carol into Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral in 1878. At the same time, Somerset Walpole arrived as a new curate in St Mary's Truro. He held a carol service on Christmas Eve which attracted many and nonconformists as well as church goers. He held another in 1879 which was again popular despite the attraction of many local inns where carols had traditionally been sung. At the time the old St Mary's was being partly demolished to be enlarged as the new Truro Cathedral (designed by John Loughborough Pearson) for the newly formed Diocese of Cornwall.

From these modest beginnings Edward White Benson, who was appointed the first Bishop of Truro, put together the first Nine Lessons and Carols to be held in the temporary unheated wooden pro cathedral in the masons' yard in 1880 where it remained for the next six years. It took him two months to design the service, and it is thought that it was partly based on the nine-lesson sequence of the great feasts of the church in the Middle Ages and other ancient and medieval sources including Grandisson's (Bishop of Exeter, 1327-1369) *Legenda*. Benson kept his draft for the first service and noted that the length was 70 minutes. It was attended by approximately four hundred and according to reports in the local press was well received. Upon the completion of the cathedral the wooden pro cathedral was dismantled and moved to Redruth where it was used as a shoe factory, before being destroyed by a fire in 1981.

Below: Bishop Benson



The first service was very different to what we have today. Originally the first five lessons were from the Old Testament and the Johannine Prologue (In the beginning was the Word...) was the seventh lesson rather than the final as now. Each was preceded by a short Benediction taken from the Sarum Breviary and read from the reader's position. The music was also different, and this was chosen by Somerset Walpole. There were three hymns (Hymns Ancient and Modern), four carols (Christmas Carols Old and New), three anthems (Messiah) and the Magnificat. One aspect has remained the same in that the readings were read by the officers of the church, beginning with a chorister and ending, through different grades, with the bishop.

Benson was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1883. This probably helped its gradual adoption within the Anglican Communion. By 1909 it was noticed by the Church Times that it was being used both in cathedrals and parish churches not only on Christmas Eve in place of Evensong, but also during Epiphany. They noted that the sense of corporate worship was likely to attract persons whose attendance at church was irregular and suggested that other services could be adapted in a similar manner to attract congregations.



Eric Milner-White served as army chaplain in the 7th Infantry Division during the Great War and was concerned with the prevailing attitude against religion. In 1918 he was appointed Dean of King's College, Cambridge and introduced Benson's service as a means of attracting people back to Christian worship. He went on to become the Dean of York and helped produce the New English Bible. The service was successful, and the following year he adapted Benson's original format opening the service with a solo treble singing "Once in Royal David's City" followed by a bidding prayer that he wrote. He also changed some of the lessons to those that we use today. The BBC started to radio broadcast it live in 1928 and on television in 1954.

Above: Eric Milner-White

Written by Stuart Cole

With Christmas entertaining in mind...some very light-hearted observations

The family is the place where the most ridiculous and least respectable things in the world go on. - *Ugo Betti*

There are some people who want to throw their arms round you simply because it is Christmas; there are other people who want to strangle you simply because it is Christmas. - *Robert Lynd*

His father had a weak heart and habitually threatened to drop dead if anybody hurt his feelings. You may have noticed that people with weak hearts are the tyrants of English married life. - *George Bernard Shaw*

Be kind to your mother-in-law, and if necessary, pay for her board at some good hotel. - *Josh Billings*

Parents are people who bear children, bore teenagers, and board newlyweds. - *Anon*

Loneliness is to endure the presence of one who does not understand. - *Elbert Hubbard*

You talk about your pleasures to your acquaintances; you talk about your troubles to your friends. - *Fr Andrew SDC*

Some people use one half their ingenuity to get into debt, and the other half to avoid paying it. - *George D Prentice*

The only way to entertain some folks is to listen to them. - *Kin Hubbard*

There are few wild beasts more to be dreaded than a talking man having nothing to say. - *Jonathan Swift*

Be kind to your neighbour

This Christmas, why not make an extra effort to be kind to your neighbours? It seems that neighbourly distrust has grown more than fivefold since the summer of 2020, with one in five of us now saying that relations in our community have soured.

On the plus side, there are still 25 per cent of us who report greater trust in our neighbourhoods. But on the debit side, now 22 per cent of us, up from just four per cent, have reported a deterioration.

The research was carried out at University College London (UCL), who found that one in five of us now feel less cohesive with our neighbours, feeling that we have fewer shared values with them.

As one researcher put it, "Much has changed over the last 18 months, with limits to our freedom, how we interact with other, and changes to how we shop and travel. Perhaps these restrictions have caused some to feel less satisfied with life in their community."

Proverbs 11:12 advises: 'Whoever derides their neighbour has no sense, but the one who has understanding holds their tongue.' Proverbs 27:10 advises: 'Do not go to your relative's house when disaster strikes you— better a neighbour nearby than a relative far away.'

APPEAL!

Crisis grows in Lebanon

"Now that Christmas is approaching, many families are worrying that by then, they won't even be able to provide a home or food for their children." – The words of a Lebanese Christian leader.

Lebanon's crippled economy has reached such a low point that state-supplied electricity has dwindled to almost zero, so that extended blackouts engulf all without private generators. Fuel, whether for generators or cars, is becoming increasingly scarce, and so expensive that many cannot buy it even when available. Shelter and warmth are not the only problem. Food is a challenge too. Already many families are going without meals in a time of hunger unlike anything in living memory in Lebanon.

If you would like to send some food and medical support to Lebanese Christians this Christmas, please go to Barnabas Fund at <https://barnabasfund.org>.



PRAYER DIARY

DECEMBER 2021

Page 12

Compiled by Belinda Kerry

'But you Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times.' Micah 5:2

GRACE

'Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.'
Romans 1:7

WEDNESDAY 1st

Loving Father, we thank You for Your unconditional love for us. When things that seem challenging, unfair or complicated threaten to overwhelm us, may we remember that You are close to us.

THURSDAY 2nd

Gracious God, through Jesus, You have extended Your grace to us. By grace, we have been saved. Day by day, help us to comprehend Your grace more and more in our lives. Give us an increase of grace this day so that we can respond to Your love.

FRIDAY 3rd

Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that You may give us Your grace in how we live our lives. Give us wisdom and gentleness in how we interact with others. Make us pure and gentle and in all of today's tasks, grant us the wisdom and grace to be sincere and meek.

SATURDAY 4th

Heavenly Father, may we be reminded that Your grace is sufficient for us. Whether in wealth or poverty, hunger or feasting, may we, like Paul, boast in our weaknesses.

SUNDAY 5th

Lord, lead us by Your Holy Spirit and keep us from straying to the right or the left. By Your grace, let us not take a direction that might be contrary to Your desire. Whether that be in a career or in relationships, open the right doors in front of us, we pray, and guide us to the right path.

ADVENT

'The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.' John 1:9

MONDAY 6th

Dear Lord, be with us as we begin our Advent journey. Move us from our lives of greed and selfishness, from our world of inequality and exploitation, to Your kingdom of righteousness and mercy. Transform the world, we pray, where peace is built on understanding not weapons, where the poor are empowered to live their lives to the full, and your Creation is nurtured not abused. Let us live as people of the light.

TUESDAY 7th

Lord Jesus Christ, come into this world of darkness and light up our lives with Your coming. Fulfil all our longings with the joy of Your birth and strengthen our resolve to work for change in our world. Lord Jesus, may we share the hope of Your birth that each Advent brings.

WEDNESDAY 8th

Loving Father, You sent Your Son into this world, a world of scarcity and need, a world of suffering, of refugees and of poverty. As we look forward to Your Son's birth, may we choose this time to be the time of our rebirth; rebuild us, transform us and make us anew.

THURSDAY 9th

God our Father, we rejoice as we look forward to the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ. We welcome Christ as our Redeemer and meet Him with confidence when He comes to be our judge.

FRIDAY 10th

Heavenly Father, send Your Holy Spirit into our lives as we make our preparations for Christmas. There have been many difficulties to face this year and the virus is still affecting our lives. We look forward to Your coming among us bringing us Your peace.

SATURDAY 11th

Lord Jesus Christ, help us to be peacemakers this Advent. Give us the strength and courage to forgive those who have hurt us and to reach out to all who feel imprisoned by anger and hurt.

SUNDAY 12th

Dear Lord, in this season where every heart should be happy and full of hope, many struggle with the heaviness of life. We pray for Your peace, Your love and Your comfort to be with everyone this Advent time.

LISTEN

'Listen, my son, and be wise, and set your heart on the right path.' Proverbs 23:19

MONDAY 13th

Loving Father, help us to make this Advent time an offering of praise to You. Help us to hear Your voice and be aware of Your grace in our lives.

TUESDAY 14th

Almighty God, as we prepare for the holiday with present buying, food preparation and decorating our homes, help us to find quiet times to dwell on Your Word and to listen to Your voice. Restore to us the wonder that came with the birth of Your Son, our Saviour.

WEDNESDAY 15th

Heavenly Father, when we are with our families this Christmas, may we be aware of those who have no one to share the joy and love You bring. May we listen for Your guidance to lead us to bring comfort to those who are alone.

THURSDAY 16th

Loving Father, thank You for being a God of Compassion and Love. Although life can be hard, help us to take time in busy schedules to listen to Your voice to guide us, to lead us and to comfort us.

FRIDAY 17th

God of Wisdom, You are calling us out of the darkness to share in the light of Your love and Your truth. May we listen and obey.

SATURDAY 18th

God of Power and Mercy, open our hearts and our minds to You. After another difficult year, remove from our hearts and minds the things that hinder us from listening to Your call and from receiving Christ with joy.

SUNDAY 19th

Dear God, we pray to understand Your call to love one another as You love us. We pray to close the door of hate and open the door of love in our communities.

CHRISTMAS WEEK

'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.' John 1:14

MONDAY 20th

Dear Lord, may kindness come with every gift we give and earnest desires with every greeting. May we take this time to extend our gifts to those in need and to bring Your love to them.

TUESDAY 21st

Loving Lord Jesus, we pray that You will turn our hearts towards You as Christmas approaches. Let us not get caught up in the busyness of the season this year and miss the chance to celebrate Your gifts of hope, peace, joy and love that You sent us on that first Christmas.

WEDNESDAY 22nd

Father God, may we be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the Angels, the eagerness of the Shepherds, the determination of the Magi and the peace of the Christ Child this Christmas.

THURSDAY 23rd

Generous God, thank You for those who will be spending time helping others this Christmas. We especially thank You for those who leave the comfort of their own homes on Christmas Day to help provide a meal for the hungry and forgotten.

FRIDAY 24th

Lord, we receive Your love with joy. We welcome You into our lives. You are good and You are worthy to be praised. You wrap us in arms of grace, You smile on us. We are Yours and You are here. Thank You Jesus for being our Saviour, our hope and our friend.

SATURDAY 25th

Lord of Beauty and Majesty, You revealed to simple shepherds the very joy of heaven in Jesus, but You were proclaiming to the whole of creation that things had changed forever. The Messiah, the anointed one, had come. Lord, we thank You that Jesus is the One we meet by faith today. The Jesus of new life, forgiveness and hope is with us. Hallelujah, we praise your name and join with all creation in celebration.

SUNDAY 26th

Dear Lord Jesus Christ, born in a stable, be with the poor and homeless this Christmas time, we pray. Shine Your everlasting light on those suffering from cold, loneliness, pain and discomfort this winter.

PATIENCE

'Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.' Romans 12:12

MONDAY 27th

Dear Lord, we pray that neither fear nor worry may consume our lives, even though the winter brings illnesses and discomfort. Help us to wait patiently for Your peace.

TUESDAY 28th

God of Love, help us to be patient and not quick-tempered with others. We pray that we will reflect Your love in all our encounters this Christmas and that patience and understanding will rule our hearts.

WEDNESDAY 29th

Father, may we learn to wait patiently for You to bring answers to our prayers. We know You listen to us and love us but teach us Lord to wait for Your perfect timing.

THURSDAY 30th

Caring Father, if we suffer from disappointments, the thoughtlessness of others, insincerity of those we trust and on whom we rely, help us to be strengthened by Your power and might. May patience bring us peace and joy to alleviate the suffering.

FRIDAY 31st

Merciful God, we pray that the new year will bring peace, joy, love happiness and health to us and those we love. We pray that our celebrations and worship this Christmas time have not caused Covid to spread again. Bless us all, our Lord and our Saviour.



How to beat the internet

Churches across the country are now squaring up to the same challenges – and opportunities – that many local shops and businesses have faced for years.

It's all about the internet, and how it changes everything.

In the pre-Covid world, services were held in churches, and people went to them. Or not. Throughout the lockdowns, most churches went online. Services were recorded or streamed from church buildings, kitchens, lounges or even, sheds.

Some looked amazingly slick and professional. Most simply reflected the gifts and technical skills that the church could muster.

The move online brought other changes. Local people dropped in online to high-profile churches in the UK or overseas. Worshippers from around the world started 'attending' services across Britain.

People who had not attended church for years, or not at all, came across services online and were surprised at the variety on offer. They joined online services at different times to when they had been available live – and some watched while drinking coffee in bed.

Those who through disability had not been able to attend services could now join online alongside those who used to go, physically, each week.

But now, as post-Covid normality largely returns, many churches are facing tough decisions about their online offerings.

Do we go back to services only being held in church? Or do we continue with online offerings as well? Where technically possible, the answer must be yes – to keep going both online and in church.

Yet if churches want to encourage more people to come through our doors – and we do – we need to look at what's on offer. That means working on the warmth of welcome and the quality of worship and practical teaching.

More importantly, it's about bringing people into the presence of a God who loves them, affirms them and wants the best for them. It's about being part of a community of people who are seeking to follow God, who fail, but go on trying.

It's about church as a place where people can feel welcomed, at home, safe, and valued. A place where they are known and loved.

And, when all that is in place, it beats anything the internet can offer.

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The Nativity in your window

This Christmas, why not think about putting a Nativity scene in your front window, to remind passers-by of the real reason for Christmas? And next Easter, you could put up a Christian poster or a Christian cross in your front window.

Dear Readers,



St Luke's Chapel, nr Abbotsbury

I'm writing to you all on the last day of a short break to our favourite spot in Abbotsbury, Dorset. This morning we have walked a couple of miles to a nearby chapel in the woods which we discovered on a visit years ago. It is a magical, peaceful and somewhat ethereal spot when you come across the ruins of the chapel nestled in woodland. I've included a couple of photos here. We will do a short article sometime about it. But if you're ever walking near Abbotsbury, behind Chesil beach it certainly is a hidden gem. It is only a couple of miles from the wonderful St Catherine's Chapel which is on a hill by itself overlooking Chesil beach and the ruins of the Abbey at Abbotsbury. It is humbling to think of pilgrims who made their way between these chapels and Abbeys. Certainly in the freezing temperatures this weekend it makes you realise their grit and determination as it was hard enough to keep warm in modern walking clothing! To think they would have done it in thin leather shoes or sandals and thin and meagre clothing is a feat in itself!

As we missed our November issue due to my commitments with our Fair, I just wanted to remark on the fact that October marked Rev Liz's 10th Anniversary of joining us in Capel! We presented her with a card at PCC and a gifts from the congregation and the PCC at the joint service at Ockley at the end of October. We thank Liz for her first ten years of ministry with us and look forward to the next three before she retires! We also congratulate her, Doug and their family on the recent safe arrival of a baby girl to their daughter Vicky and her partner Jack! Always wonderful to hear of the birth of a new baby. We wish them all many years of happiness and enjoyment with little Elsie!

As mentioned on the News in the Pews pages, Debbie and I were indebted to everyone who supported us on the day of our first Capel Christmas Fair. From our wonderful team of volunteers to our stallholders and visitors, we all enjoyed a happy day and have raised just over £3,000 to split between our two charities, one of which is our two parish churches in Capel & Ockley. Debbie and I had worked hard for nearly two years as the first one had to be cancelled in November 2020 to produce the new Fair. We both shared a vision of what we wanted to create and it came to fruition with everyone's help. It was lovely to see so many people catching up with one another after a difficult year and we've had some wonderful and very positive feedback from everyone, including our stallholders. So thank you to everyone who supported us! If you have any suggestions of things we could add or alter, do let Debbie and I know! We've already met to discuss what we felt went well and what we might change and have actively started planning for our next one on 19th November 2022. Sadly, we may well lose Debbie in 2022 when she and Hugh put their house up for sale in anticipation of a move to the West Country. If anyone would like to join us as a planner of this Fair, please do let us know. There is no immediate urgency but should you be interested, we would love to hear from you as I know it was nearly a full time job with two of us doing it! It is a certainty that one person could not manage to do an event this size alone!

With best wishes for Christmas and wishing you all a very happy 2022.

Suzanne

editor@capelandockleychurch.org.uk

A link to the brief history of St Luke's chapel and details of how to walk there as mentioned in this letter:

<https://tessofthevale.com/2020/10/14/st-lukes-chapel-near-abbotsbury/>



St Catherine's chapel overlooking Chesil beach



Carving of our Lord Jesus Christ at the ruins of St Luke's Chapel, nr Abbotsbury

Daily Hope phone line receives more than 550,000 calls

Daily Hope, a free phone line which offers prayers and support for callers, receives nearly 20,000 calls every month. The service, which was launched during the Covid-19 lockdown, has spent more than 7.15 million minutes on more than 550,000 calls.

The phone line originally launched in April 2020, only to continue in response to ongoing demand once restrictions were eased.

Daily Hope set up by the Church of England nationally, has also been supported by Connections, a Missional Programme to older people based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.

Over the year and a half of service, Daily Hope has continued to encourage people across the country and beyond including Australia, Japan, and the United States.

Since the phone line launched, users have been able to listen to a range of audio, including the Church of England's national weekly service, hymns and daily prayer.

Many have messaged Lambeth Palace to express their thanks for the introduction of the phone line, particularly for elderly people.

Archbishops' Commission on Reimagining Care proposes set of values

The Archbishops' Commission on Reimagining Care has launched a consultation on a set of values, informed by Christian theology and ethics, that it thinks should underpin a vision for care and support in England.

As well as consulting on the proposed values, the Commission is also asking for people's views of what is good and what is difficult, challenging or missing about care and support currently.

The Commission on Reimagining Care has been charged by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to develop a radical and inspiring long-term vision for care and support in England, underpinned by a renewed set of values and principles, drawing on Christian theology and ethics.

The focus of the Commission is on adults with disabilities and those with care and support needs in later life.

The Commission began work in June 2021 and is due to publish a final report in September 2022.

The Commission has recently published a draft set of values which draw on Christian theology and ethics. These include concepts that are not usually heard in policy discussions about care such as flourishing, loving kindness, empathy, trust and justice.



*We don't sing carols no more...
you 'ave to listen to 'em off me iPod!*



Church launches consultation on plans to get to net zero carbon in just nine years

The Church of England is consulting dioceses, cathedrals, national institutions, parishes, schools, and other interested parties on a proposed route map to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

The draft route map suggests how all parts of the Church of England can make changes together, in order to achieve the ambitious target set by General Synod in 2020: to be net zero carbon 20 years ahead of the Government's targets.

It includes recommendations for building maintenance, heating and the availability of specialist advice for each, setting alongside how the central Church and dioceses can offer support.

The draft net zero carbon route map was written by a sub-committee of the Church of England's Environmental Working Group, chaired by the Bishop of Selby, Dr John Thomson.

He said: "God's creation is in crisis, and there is an urgent call to address this at every level of our global community.

"Synod has set an ambitious target. We recognise this will be challenging, however many adaptations can also be made simply and quickly, such as switching to a green energy provider, filling gaps in windows, and changing lightbulbs, all of which can help to reduce energy costs.

"I encourage individuals and communities to engage with these consultation proposals and to think at every level what can be done to be part of the change. We need to safeguard and care for all of God's creation."

The Government has committed to a target of net zero carbon by 2050, with an interim target of a 78 per cent reduction, set in April 2021.

Anyone can respond to the consultation online before the closing date of 28 February 2022, with responses particularly requested from Dioceses and Cathedrals.

First meeting of the new General Synod

The 11th General Synod of the Church of England was formally inaugurated on Tuesday 16th November, at the start of a two-day meeting in London – the first full group of sessions held in person since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The recent elections attracted a record number of candidates (with 956 standing for the Houses of Clergy and Laity combined) and returned a majority of new members - 60 per cent of those elected.

Landmark New TPI Global Climate Transition Centre to be created

The President-Elect of the Glasgow COP, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the CEO of London Stock Exchange Group have supported the landmark launch of the opening of the TPI Global Climate Transition Centre.

The centre will provide free and publicly available in-depth data on how 10,000 companies are aligning with a net zero pathway, significantly scaling existing coverage across global equity markets. The Centre will also expand to assess Government bonds and corporate debt issuers.

Transition Pathway Initiative is backed by investors with a combined \$40 trillion of assets under management or advisement, and the new centre will be a key part of a post COP-26 financial infrastructure to support transparency, accountability and action on climate commitments.

The Centre, which is intended to be opened in early 2022, is set to be based at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

It will increase the independent assessments of companies from 400 today, to 10,000.



News from the Belfry

The Lost Bell

This tale was published in the parish magazine in 2017 and I repeat it here for the benefit of those who missed it or have forgotten it. The story, of a legendary church bell buried at Slinfold, appeared in the Ringing World in 2015 as a '50 Years Ago' piece. It had been related by Stephen Peacock, aged 78, of Cranleigh, a retired farmer, to the West Sussex Gazette in 1965. The legend had been told to him by an old Sussex carter of Dedisham farm and with the local connection and the time of year, you too may find it of interest. The bell is supposed to be buried in a field which was once a bog at Roman Gate on the Guildford to Horsham Road, at the junction of the road to Billingshurst, which is where the A29 turns off the A281. According to Mr Peacock, in Saxon times there was a village or town at this spot known as Alfold Dene (or Anfold Dean). The old tollhouse which has since been demolished is the reputed site of the buried bell and Roman paving and other remains have been unearthed nearby.

The legend is that no one knew how to recover the bell until a witch advised that 12 white oxen should be taken to the field at midnight to drag it out but that not a word must be spoken. The oxen were duly obtained, a chain hooked to the bell and dragging started. Just as the bell reached the surface someone shouted "We've got Alfold Dene 'gurt' bell in spite of all the devils in hell." Instantly the chain broke and the bell slipped back into the quagmire never to be recovered.

There was a bell foundry in Horsham 500 years ago and a 'grete' bell was cast around 1611-1618 which may be the buried bell. Henry Burstow, a well known 19th century ringer from Horsham who frequently rang at Newdigate, Capel and Ockley also refers to this legend in his memoirs which are available for sale online. There is also some interesting information about this colourful character in Wikipedia.

Bellringing is an art which has developed and passed from generation to generation in Britain for over three hundred years. It is a wonderful blend of sport, music, exercise, friendship, a challenge of wits and skill which gives great enjoyment. Our Wednesday night practices at St Margaret's, Ockley are still rather disrupted by the after effects of the pandemic. If you want to come along and have a go, under supervision, or just to watch, you would be most welcome but please check first.

For more details call **Sue on 01306 627168**

Or, email ockleybellringers@btinternet.com

13th December: Lucy, Martyr at Syracuse

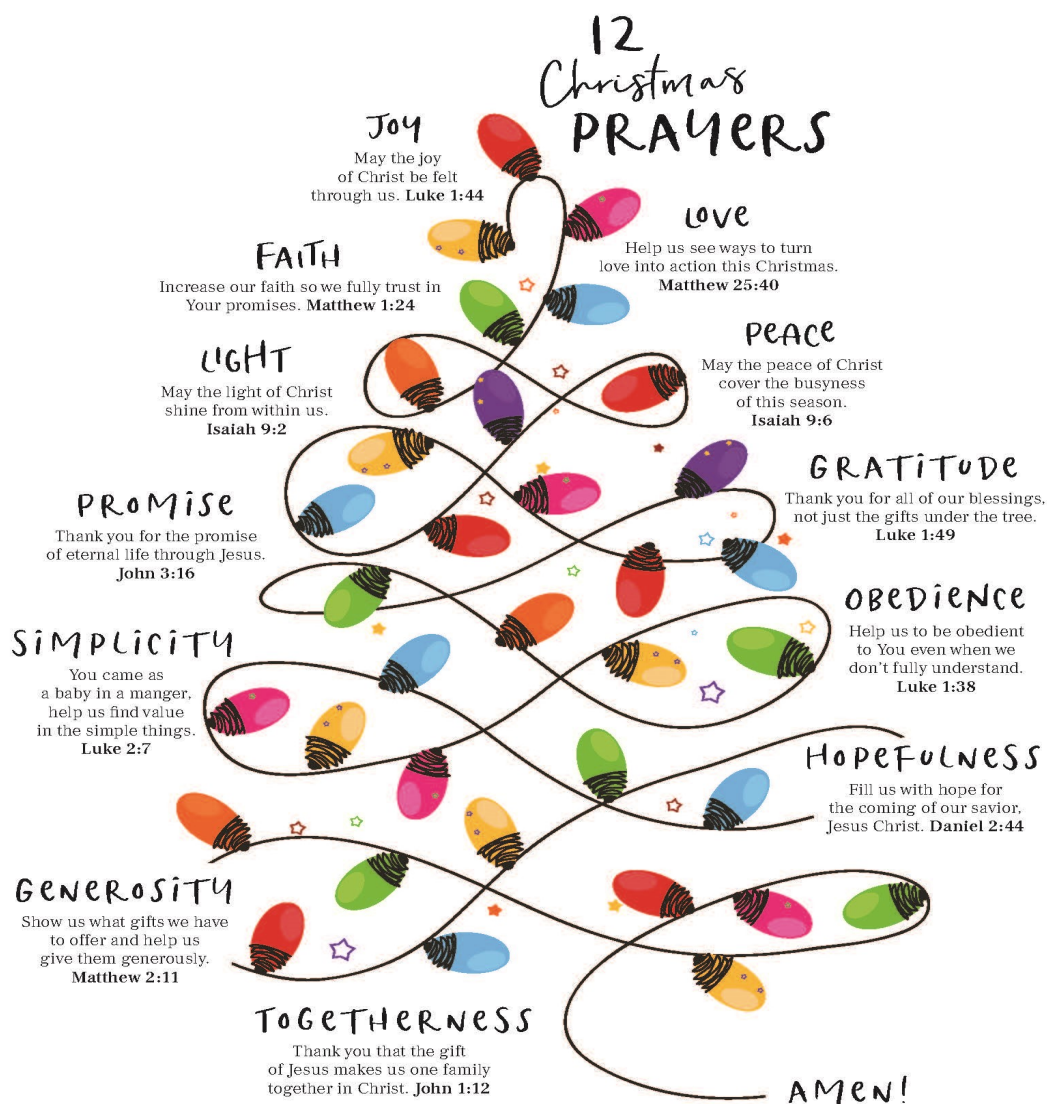
Lucy was a Christian girl who got caught up in the fierce and widespread Diocletian persecutions of 303-4. She refused to give up her Christian faith, and so was put to death. Her tomb can still be found in a Catacomb in Syracuse (Sicily), and there are early fourth-century inscriptions bearing her name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

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

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

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

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Editor: The Revd Canon Paul Hardingham on waiting for Christmas.

Advent

Waiting is not popular in our culture, when so much can be obtained simply at the press of a button! Advent, when we wait for the coming of Christmas, is also an opportunity to learn what it means to be waiting for the promised return of Jesus. He says: *'It's like a man going away: he leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore, keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back'* (Mark 13:34-35).

We live between Jesus' first and second comings and this parable reminds us of the need to watch and wait, as disciples living faithfully for Him. It reminds us of two kinds of waiting: *passive* and *active*. Imagine you're at the railway station, awaiting the arrival of a train. On the platform a man is asleep, as he thinks there is plenty of time before the train arrives. He is *passively waiting*. There is also a small boy on the platform who is excited about the train coming. He can't sit still and constantly looks down the track to see if the train is coming. He is *actively waiting*, for he expects the train to arrive at any moment.

Advent gives us a choice: *how will we wait for Jesus' coming?* Passive waiting doesn't require much attention on our part. We can live our Christian life pre-occupied with our own concerns, rather than looking to God. However, active waiting involves an eager expectation, as we await Jesus' return or simply look to him coming to us today. All we want is to be found faithful as His disciples. There is nothing more important than being ready to meet our Master!

Editor: Lester Amann considers the melody of Christmas

Music for the Messiah

Have you noticed that, in the Christmas story, singing is featured on three occasions?

Firstly, after Mary was given a message from the angel Gabriel, and was visiting her elderly and pregnant relative, Elizabeth. Mary was so overwhelmed with happiness at the forthcoming miraculous births, she started to sing.

Over the years, her words, known as *The Magnificat*, have been set to music by various composers. The hymn *Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord* is one example of it. Of course, we don't know Mary's melody line, but her words express God's promise that He would rescue His people and through them save the world. Mary sings of God's mercy and benevolence on the helpless, the humble and the hungry.

Months later, in the fields of Bethlehem, shepherds were confronted with an angel and given an incredible message: the Saviour, the Messiah had been born. This was followed by a host of angels who could not help but sing glory to God. Later, the shepherds saw the baby Jesus. They then returned home: not in silence and awe, but in song. They were overwhelmed with an encounter with Almighty God! Heaven and earth had been brought together. They simply couldn't stop themselves from praising and glorifying God.

For Mary, the Shepherds and the Eastern Men too, that first Christmas brought in a time of hope: hope for the helpless, pardon for the guilty, and forgiveness for the conscious stricken. Good news for those who had had nothing but bad news!

From that time on, people have tried to express their gratitude, thanks and wonder at God's love and mercy. Over the centuries, countless poets and musicians have composed music for us to sing. At no other time in the year, is so much music used to describe and express one moment in history.

Traditionally, December is a time for concerts and services of Christmas music. We come together to sing carols and other songs that express the wonder of God's Gift to us. Unfortunately, last year, the coronavirus restricted or even cancelled our musical festivities. This month, we may be in a better position to worship together.

Jesus has given us hope; forgiven our sin; and continues to impart faith and heal our spiritual wounds. Isn't that something to always sing about? *O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

This poem is written by Sam Doubtfire who served as a vicar in Knottingley, Ripponden, Keswick, Barrow-in-Furness, and Reddish .

Your Gift of Life – at Christmas

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

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

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

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

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

By Sam Doubtfire



Hymns for the road

If you MUST speed on the road during this Christmas season, at least sing these hymns loudly as you go:

- at 45 mph.... 'God Will Take Care of Me'
- at 55 mph.... 'Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah'
- at 65 mph.... 'Nearer My God to Thee'
- at 75 mph.... 'Nearer Still Nearer'
- at 85 mph.... 'This World is Not My Home'
- at 95 mph.... 'Lord, I'm Coming Home'
- at 100 mph.... 'Precious Memories'

Snowmen

Two snowmen were standing next to each other. One said to the other: "Can you smell carrots?"



Miscellaneous observations on modern life

I don't always go the extra mile, but when I do it's because I missed my exit.

Humans are about 60% water. Basically, we are ice cream with anxiety.

A lot of money is tainted - It taint yours and it taint mine.

Once you've seen one shopping centre, you've seen a mall.

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead-to-know basis.

© Parish Pump

Where did Christmas trees come from?

There are two early stories that mention fir trees. The first involves St Boniface, who went to Germany in the 8th century as a missionary and found people sacrificing a child to their god under an oak tree. Boniface was appalled, and he rescued the child. He then chopped down the oak tree and found a tiny fir tree growing nearby. He gave this to the people and said: "This is a symbol of life. Whenever you look at this tree, remember the Christ-child who is the One who will give you life, because He gave His life for you."

The second early fir tree story involves Martin Luther in the 16th century. It is said that one year he decided to drag a fir tree into his home and to decorate it with candles. He used it as a visual aid, telling people that the candles symbolised Jesus as the light of the world, and the evergreen tree symbolised the eternal life that Jesus gives to us. Many of the people who followed Luther were struck by the idea and took up the custom.

Where did Christmas stockings come from?

No one is really sure, but a story is told of St Nicholas, a bishop who lived in the 4th century, who may have started the custom by accident. St Nicholas was of a wealthy family, and of a generous heart. As Christmas approached one year, he wanted to help a poor family whom he knew, but he did not want them to know it was him. So he climbed up on their roof on Christmas Eve and dropped some coins down the chimney.

The next morning the coins, to the great surprise of the family, were found in the stockings of the ladies, who had hung them to dry by the fire the night before. Every year after that they put their stockings out, in the hope that some more money would fall into them. They told the story of this amazing appearance to their friends and neighbours, and the custom caught on.



© Parish Pump

Eglantyne Jebb – founder of 'Save the Children'

17th December is the day when we remember Eglantyne Jebb.

Here is a modern-day saint whose compassion and determination has saved literally millions of lives.

Eglantyne did not begin as an obvious 'mover and shaker' of people. Born in Shropshire in 1876, she grew up in Ellesmere, studied history at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford, taught at Marlborough, and then resigned as she was not physically robust.

Eglantyne moved to live with her mother in Cambridge, and it would have been so easy to settle for a life of peaceful obscurity. But she was a Christian, and at Oxford she had developed a passion for social concerns, so this compassion now drove her to take action.

She began in 1906 by publishing research on the poverty she'd found in Cambridge.

Then in 1912 the Balkan Wars broke out, and Eglantyne left Cambridge for Macedonia. Her months among the refugees led her to decide that long-term constructive aid was more effective than short-term handouts.

The First World War left Eglantyne horrified by the prolonged Allied blockade on Germany and Austria-Hungary, which even after Armistice meant starvation for millions of civilians, especially children.

And so in 1919 Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy Buxton helped found the 'Fight the Famine' Council, which wanted to end the blockade and establish a League of Nations.

One day during a rally in Trafalgar Square, Eglantyne was arrested for distributing a leaflet showing starving children which read: "Our blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death."

She ended up in court and was fined, but the judge was so impressed with Eglantyne's commitment to children that he himself paid her fine. His money became the first donation to Save the Children, the new charity just set up by Eglantyne and Dorothy.

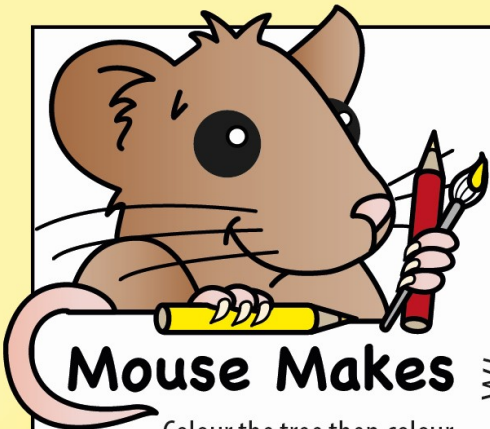
Save the Children was officially launched at the Albert Hall in May 1919, with the aim of helping the starving civilians of central Europe. It was a success, raising £400,000 in that first year alone.

When in the autumn of 1921 Russia was facing famine, Save the Children chartered a cargo ship, the SS Torcello, to carry 600 tons of lifesaving food and medical supplies to Russia – saving hundreds of thousands of lives.

By 1922 Save the Children had become one of Britain's biggest charities. Eglantyne's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1923, was adopted by the League of Nations the following year. The present-day UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is derived from it.

But ten years of running Save the Children had sapped Eglantyne's fragile strength, and she died in Geneva in 1928, aged only 52.





Mouse Makes

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

What's on the Christmas Tree?



A STAR

shows the way to Jesus

Read

Matthew 2:1-12

ANGELS

bring messages from God

Read about

Gabriel's message in

Luke 1:26-38

Read the

shepherd's story in

Luke 1:26-38

LIGHTS AND CANDLES

remind us that Jesus lights our way to God

Read Luke 2:29-32

PRESENTS

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

Presents at Christmas under the tree,
A red Christmas stocking waiting for me,

But what really is Christmas,
What is it about?
Just look and the Bible and you will find out!

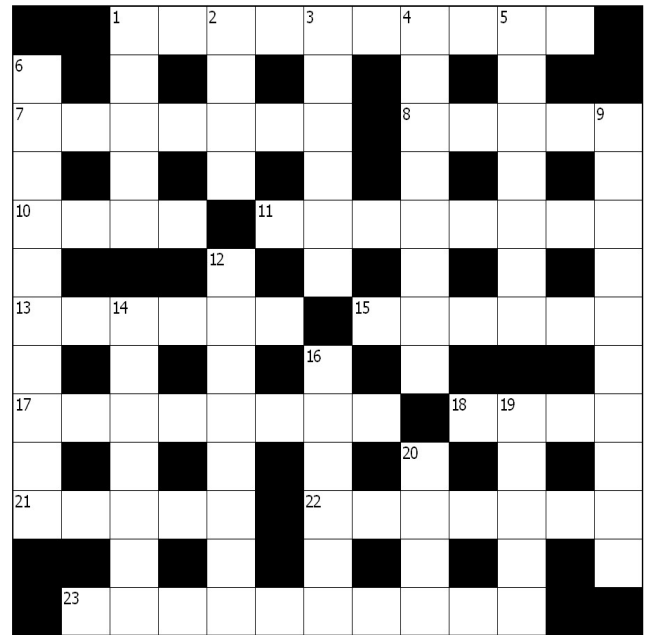
It's about **JESUS** - the best present of all,
JESUS our **Saviour**,
God's gift to us all!

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

Crossword Clues &

Across

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



Down

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

Puzzle Solutions on page 28

Easy Level Soduku

2		1		8		7		
8	4	7	2			6		
				7	5	2		
7	3			2	6	4	5	
			5		8			
	6	4	1	3			2	9
		6	7	5				
		2			1	5	3	6
		5	6		1			2

Medium Level Soduku

			8	2				
						3		7
	4				3	8	5	
		6	3	5		7		2
5				1				3
1		3		7	9	5		
	2	9	5				6	
6		5						
				9	2			

The day Mikhail Gorbachev resigned

by Tim Lenton

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Why the world was ready for Christmas



Ever wonder why Jesus was born when He was? The Bible tells us that "when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son..." The Jewish people had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. Why did God send Him precisely when He did?

Many biblical scholars believe that the 'time had fully come' for Jesus because of the politics of the time. The Roman Empire's sheer size and dominance had achieved something unique in world history: the opportunity for travel from Bethlehem to Berwick on Tweed without ever crossing into 'enemy territory' or needing a 'passport'.

For the first time ever, it was possible for 'common' people to travel wide and far, and quickly spread news and ideas. And all you needed were two languages - Greek to the east of Rome, and Latin to the west and north. You could set sail from Joppa (Tel Aviv) and head for any port on the Med. And the Roman roads ran straight and true throughout the empire.

So, the Roman Empire achieved something it never intended: it helped spread news of Christianity far and wide for 400 years. After that, the Empire crumbled, and the borders shut down. Not until the 19th century would people again roam so freely. The time for Jesus to be born, and for news of Him to be able to travel, had indeed 'fully come'.

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Held in Your Bottle By Jeannie Kendall, Authentic, £9.99

This book looks at the many reasons why we cry, and why these tears are important to our wellbeing and to God. Whether we are crying tears of regret, loss, gratitude or anger, the Bible says that God holds them all in His bottle. We can draw comfort from the fact that no tear goes unseen by Him.

Each of these emotions is explored by a modern-day story mirroring a retelling of a relevant Bible character's experience. The book may enable you to look at the Bible in a fresh way and help you accept and understand your emotional life.

Spiritual Detox – discovering the joy of liberating confession by Howard Satterthwaite & Holly Satterthwaite, SPCK £11.99

The gospels tell us that God wants to offer us forgiveness. So, confessing our sins should be liberating and joyful. Why do we so often feel only shame and guilt?

Spiritual Detox invites you to rethink this much-neglected spiritual discipline. Blending biblical teaching with practical advice and application, it will show you how making regular, heart-felt confession will revitalise your spiritual life – whether you are unhappy and discouraged, wrestling with guilt and shame or just longing to drink more deeply of God's forgiveness and abundant grace.



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*...no I don't think you're the real Father Christmas!
I think you're up there pinching lead off my roof!!*

Puzzle Solutions

ACROSS: 1, Tabernacle. 7, Absalom. 8, Incas. 10, Roes. 11, Captured. 13, Fright. 15, Cavell. 17, Cyclonic. 18, Herb. 21, Sonar. 22, Amazing. 23, Settlement.

DOWN: 1, Taste. 2, Bold. 3, Ramiah. 4, Abiathar. 5, Lucerne. 6, Sacrifices. 9, Saddlebags. 12, Theocrat. 14, Incense. 16, Pilate. 19, Exist. 20, Save.

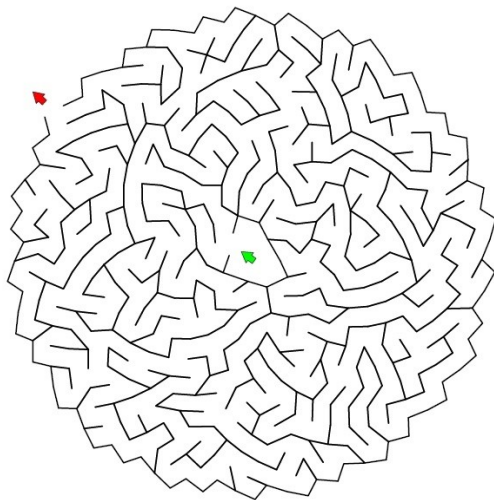
Easy Sudoku solution

2	5	1	6	8	9	7	4	3
8	4	7	2	1	3	6	9	5
6	9	3	4	7	5	2	1	8
7	3	8	9	2	6	4	5	1
1	2	9	5	4	8	3	6	7
5	6	4	1	3	7	8	2	9
3	1	6	7	5	2	9	8	4
4	7	2	8	9	1	5	3	6
9	8	5	3	6	4	1	7	2

Crossword solution

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

December's Maze



Medium Sudoku solution

3	5	1	8	2	7	6	9	4
9	6	8	1	4	5	3	2	7
2	4	7	9	6	3	8	5	1
4	9	6	3	5	8	7	1	2
5	7	2	4	1	6	9	8	3
1	8	3	2	7	9	5	4	6
7	2	9	5	3	1	4	6	8
6	1	5	7	8	4	2	3	9
8	3	4	6	9	2	1	7	5



When someone you loved has died

Tony Horsfall lost his wife last year to cancer. He is a former missionary in East Malaysia and former retreat leader based in West Yorkshire.

Page 29

Since my wife passed away in July 2020, I have often been asked, “What are you learning from your grief journey?” Here are a few standout lessons:

1. That grief takes longer than you think to work itself through, and it can't be rushed. It is a journey you must take slowly.
2. That when you lose your spouse, you lose not only the person you loved, but the person who loved you. This second loss leaves a hole in your heart, making you very vulnerable to new relationships.
3. That you will need to re-discover your identity as God's deeply loved child in this season of your life, as if you had never known it before.
4. That God can be trusted to help you rebuild your life, but trust may not come easily. It is better to focus on God's trustworthiness than on your ability to trust, which may be shaky.
5. That your experience of grief and your response to loss is unique and personal, so don't compare your journey to that of others.
6. That good friends can make the journey so much easier. Be prepared to ask for help.
7. That you will be ambushed by grief. Some things will take you by surprise, especially the little things.
8. That the loss of a spouse will leave you feeling very lonely, even when you are surrounded by family and friends. This is not a weakness, just a sign of what you have lost.
9. That loneliness is not a mental illness, just a natural response to being bereaved, and it will get better.
10. That moving forward is not a sign that you didn't care, but that there is still a life to be lived and not wasted.
11. That it helps to talk about your loss and the person you have lost. Sharing helps you to put things together in your mind, and is healing in itself.
12. Don't be afraid of pain, and don't anaesthetise it or avoid it – acknowledge it, face it, and you will heal more quickly.
13. That crying is normal, even for men, and it is a healing part of the grief process. Don't be afraid of this, even in public.
14. It may surprise you, to discover which people draw near to you in your grief, and who steps away. Appreciate those who come closer, without judging those who hold back.
15. Not everything people say to you about grief and your response will be helpful. Decide for yourself what is important for you, and let the rest go.
16. That grief may expose some of your inner fault-lines, but don't be afraid of this – learning more about yourself is a gift that comes with grieving.
17. No-one grieves perfectly. Following the death of your loved one, you will make mistakes, bad choices, and errors of judgment. This is normal, so forgive yourself.
18. That hope will rise again within you. The human spirit, in combination with God's grace, has its own remarkable resilience.
19. Don't be afraid to live again. God has a good purpose for you, and a plan for your life.
20. That your faith is an asset, not a liability. When you are tempted to be angry with God, remember that He is an ever-present help in time of need. Lean on Him.
21. That you have a part to play in your grief journey, so don't be passive and allow it to overwhelm you – begin to do what you can to rebuild your life.

Tearfund campaigns for Covid vaccines

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

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

"Our local partners are advocating for governments around the world to include vulnerable groups, such as refugees, in their vaccination programmes. And we are asking the UK government to do even more to support lower-income countries."

Tearfund is also helping to prepare communities for the rollout of a vaccine, including equipping church leaders to share accurate information about Covid-19 vaccines. If you would like to support this, please go to: <https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/recover-together>



Could you sponsor an issue of InSpire in 2022?

Our thanks to all our Sponsors in 2021 for their generosity and support. This enables us to keep the magazine free of charge to the readers and limit costs for the church.

Sadly, it's already that time again and we are seeking Sponsors for 2022. If you are able to Gift Aid your donation, the approximate cost is £66-£70 currently. However, we are beginning to do larger print runs as more copies are being taken which is very encouraging!

The months that are currently free for sponsoring in 2022 are:- **February, April, May, June, November and December.**

If you have any questions, please speak to either Suzanne Cole or Debbie von Bergen. Thank you. (contact details at the front of this issue in the 'Contacts' box).

Thank you!



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www.capelchristmasfair.co.uk



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Proceeds will be split between
our Parish churches and the
MNDA. Thank you!**

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas

Your contributions would be most welcome and any copy for this publication should be sent to Suzanne Cole editor@capelandockleychurch.org.uk **By 25th of each month please.**
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