

InSpire

**Wishing all our readers
a
Happy Christmas**

***"For unto us a
Son is born"***



The monthly publication for the Parish of Capel & Ockley

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InSpire magazine Issue 98 December 2025

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"My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?" –
Bob Hope

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www.capelandockleychurch.org.uk/inspire-magazine

This issue is sponsored by

Mairi Inglis-Jones

Thank you Mairi for your ongoing support of this magazine and for hosting our Advent & Lent courses

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* See our **Safeguarding Notice** in 'News from the Pews' each month *

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CHURCH SERVICES AND EVENTS - DECEMBER 2025

at St John the Baptist, Capel & St Margaret's, Ockley

December

Saturday 6th Christmas Trees and Carols

9.00am Community groups dress their trees
5.00pm Grand switching on of lights and carol singing

Sunday 7th Advent 2

9.30am Matins - Ockley
10.30am Family Communion - Capel
4.00pm Christingle at Ockley Pavilion
4.00pm Choral Society Concert—Capel

Sunday 14th Advent 3

9.30 Parish Communion CW - Ockley
4pm Nine Lessons and Carols with Scott Broadwood School - Capel



Sunday 21st Advent 4

9.30am Holy Communion - BCP - Ockley
10.30am Christmas Cafe Church - Capel

Wednesday 24th CHRISTMAS EVE

4.00pm Crib Service - Capel
11.00pm Midnight Holy Communion - * START TIME 11PM

Thursday 25th CHRISTMAS DAY

10.30am Christmas Celebration Worship - Ockley
10.30am Christmas Family Communion - Capel

Sunday 28th 1st Sunday of Christmas

9.30am Parish Morning Worship - Ockley

JANUARY 2026

Sunday 4th The Epiphany

9.30am Matins - Ockley
10.30am Family Communion - Capel

All this information and more available on our Parish website:
<https://www.capelandockleychurch.org.uk/>

Revd Liz writes

December's letter

Dear friends,

As I write at the end of November, I am thinking about Christmas puddings! One of my favourite things at Christmas. This coming Sunday is known as Stir Up Sunday because one of the set prayers following Holy Communion, after we have taken bread and wine is this: 'Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord.' This ancient prayer has become traditional in the proximity of preparing for Christmas - a good time to make the Christmas pudding - at least. Full of wonderful fruits and sugars and I seem to remember in my childhood it contained a sixpence or a shilling! I am sure we shouldn't do that now!

December, the season of expectation and preparation as we wait for the birth of our Saviour Jesus. In the churchyard the community Christmas trees will be put up and dressed, the lights will be switched on and carols will be sung. In the church there will be more carols to be sung in our special services and once again we will be joined by children and staff from Scott Broadwood School in our traditional Nine Lessons and Carols on the 14th December. The following Sunday on the 21st Bob and the Band will be upping the tempo somewhat with their upbeat very jolly renditions of Christmas carols and music. You will see all the details for our December services in the calendar.

At home at the vicarage our nativity scene will once again appear, probably for the last time as this Christmas will be my last one in the parish so do make the most of it! I will be retiring next October after 15 years of ministry here - time goes so fast and I can hardly believe it. In the meantime there is lots to do in preparation for the vacancy that will follow as the parish begins the appointment process for my successor.

So what happens after the celebrations then, and January welcomes us into another new year? Well there are a few things that might pique your interest and one is that we are planning to run an Alpha Course beginning towards the end of January. An opportunity to join together to explore life, faith and meaning. Running over several weeks we look at a different question around the Christian faith so its a good opportunity to meet new people, grab some free food, get to know each other and have a completely open conversation about what we will see and hear, sharing our thoughts if we wish to and hear what others say. Invitations will be handed out at all our Christmas services plus invitations for you to invite others along as well. We will also be giving you a lovely booklet 'Twelve Joys of Christmas' to enjoy. It contains short meditations for Christmas and the New Year and guess what the subject is for Day 1 - Christmas Day? Its all about the Christmas Pudding!!! Its a lovely little booklet and I do hope you enjoy it. They will be available in our churches throughout December. Now I must go shopping and buy my ingredients for I have to make my Christmas Pudding and by the way may I wish you every blessing for Christmas and the New Year!

With my love and prayers as ever,

Liz

Revd Liz
Vicar St John the Baptist, Capel and St Margaret's, Ockley
vicar@capelandockleychurch.org.uk
01306 711260

NEWS from the Pews

From the Registers



Holy Baptism

We welcome into the family of the church

Daisy De Almeida
8th November 2025

NEXT CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

SATURDAY 13TH DECEMBER
9am — 12 noon

Following a successful churchyard working party in November, we are going to do another one on Saturday 13th December 9am—12 noon.

Please bring along your own tools.
Refreshments will be provided!

Thank you
Stuart Cole

Please see information on page 13 regarding providing some refuge for our local wildlife in our churchyard.

PCC Members 2025

Vicar and Chair: Revd Liz Richardson (ex-officio)
Curate: Revd Gill Christie (ex-officio)

Churchwardens

Joy Harman (ex-officio) St John the Baptist
Stuart Cole (ex-officio) St John the Baptist
Andy Carr (ex-officio) Deputy Churchwarden, St John the Baptist
James Lee-Steere (ex-officio) St Margaret's

Deanery Synod:

Andy Carr (ex-officio) St John the Baptist
Shirley Dean Webster (ex-officio) St Margaret's

Elected members:

Helen Burt (Hon Treasurer)
Gordon Lee Steere
Wendy Goddard
Suzanne Cole
Sarah Pusey
David Silliman
Jessie Sutcliffe
Leigh Smith (Safeguarding Lead)

Hon Secretary:

Sir Richard Winter- Stanbridge

Parish Safeguarding Officer:

Leigh Smith

Electoral Roll Officer:

Vacant

Advent Course 2025



Meeting for four Tuesday afternoons from 18th November 2025 at 1 Old Barn Drive, Capel. We are gathering to share our thoughts as Christmas approaches with a book written by Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani (Bishop of Chelmsford). We will be covering two short chapters each week. Please let Rev Liz or Rev Gill know if you would like a copy of the book.

Our thanks to our host, Mairi Inglis-Jones for kindly hosting our meetings once more.

NEWS from the Pews

Used stamps for UK Air Ambulance Services

The UK's Air Ambulance Services are charities which receive no government funding and rely entirely on charitable donations to continue flying and responding to life threatening medical emergencies. All funds raised will be donated to the Association of Air Ambulances to be distributed equally to all UK Air Ambulance Services. All you need to do is cut or carefully tear the stamped corner from any envelope or packet that you receive in the post and start a collection.



Once you have a large bundle, would you please put them in a bag and take them into St John the Baptist, Capel to place in the marked box. Sue Partridge is going to post them when we have a good amount to send. Thank you to Sue.

* Save the date - Net Zero Conference coming to Guildford 17th January 2026

On Saturday 17 January, our diocese will host the annual Net Zero Conference. It will be an opportunity for parish leadership, Eco Links, church wardens and PCCs to come together to share practical ideas and gain inspiration about various ways to go greener.



The conference will be held at St John's Stoke, Guildford. The Church has recently installed solar panels as part of its plan to make all its buildings net zero. They recently invited all churches in the diocese to a talk and tour about the range of energy-efficient upgrades undertaken. We will be sharing more detail on the Net Zero Conference in the coming weeks, but you can [reserve your space from now](#).

If you wish to attend and book a place, please would you let Rev Liz know. It might be that we can then share cars to the venue. Thank you.

SAFEGUARDING NOTICE

This notice will appear each month in InSpire

'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 07732 825908 leighdesouza@yahoo.com or Revd Liz Richardson 01306 711260 liz@hostmyserver.co.uk

Diocesan contact number for reporting safeguarding concerns: safeguarding@cofeguildford.org.uk or call: 01483 790379 **and the contact details for our Safeguarding Officer and the Diocesan Safeguarding contact will be published in our weekly pew sheets as well as in the Church Contacts section in each issue of InSpire.**
(Updated August 2025)

Christmas Hamper Appeal



As in recent years, we are once again making up some Christmas hampers for some local families. There are lists in both St John the Baptist and St Margaret's to sign up for contributions to this year's Christmas hampers.

Leigh de Souza is co-ordinating the hampers once more and if you have any queries, please speak to her. Her contact details are on page 3 of this magazine.



We thank you for any help you can give.

Café Church— DECEMBER 2025

ROLL UP, ROLL UP!

Gather round, people, and get ready for the greatest show on earth. One day only - never to be repeated. Something for the whole family. See the spectacular light show in the sky; witness a miracle before your very eyes; marvel at the exotic glamour of Wise Men from far-off lands; let the children enjoy the petting zoo featuring donkeys, sheep, camels, cattle and various rodents who make their homes in beds of straw. Take home a souvenir manger hand-crafted by local artisan peasants. Bonus content in the V.I.P. package includes a meet-and-greet with the shepherds who first broke the news and a selfie with an Archangel Gabriel tribute artist.

Surely the church has been missing a trick for years. After all, for the rest of the world the relentless promotion and commercialisation of the Christmas story starts months before the day itself with ever more expensive and gratuitous advertising campaigns offering the “perfect gift”, “the finest food”, the “stress-free” solution to the pressures of having to spend a day in the company of your own family! Companies spend millions of pounds trying to squeeze every last penny out of cash-strapped people desperate to please those nearest to them while also feeling the need to impress the neighbours. The glitz, the glamour, the active promotion of envy and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is inescapable. By the time the “big day” arrives its true meaning has been completely obscured by all the noise and clamour of “big business”.

Compare all of the razzamatazz, greed and cost of Christmas today with God’s approach to the most significant event in human history. He didn’t spend months telling people in advance of what was coming - He spent hundreds of years! Think of those familiar words from the bible that you will hear at every carol service this year. *“Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”* and *““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 of old, from ancient times.”* These verses were written 700 – 800 years *before* the birth of Jesus. God didn’t need hi-tech advertising campaigns beamed across the world by satellites to let people know when the great day had finally arrived - He used a single star. And God didn’t choose an endless parade of celebrities to reveal the truth of what was happening on that amazing day - He used shepherds, the lowest of the low in society at the time, to spread the good news.

So, as we all look forward to the Christmas celebrations this year, can we remember two things. Firstly, that God’s desire is that we should *all* celebrate, whatever our personal circumstances are right now - *“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it”.* Psalm 118. v.24 - and secondly, that the greatest gift that any of us can receive this Christmas is completely free - *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”* Ephesians 2 v.8-9.

Happy Christmas and Every Blessing for the year to come.

Bob Cranham





Archbishop Designate, Sarah Mullally, sets out her hopes for the Church

Shortly after the announcement of her nomination as the next Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Sarah Mullally delivered an address at Canterbury Cathedral, reflecting on her calling, the challenges facing the Church, and her hopes for its future.

Rooted in her early vocation as a nurse and shaped by her ministry in London, she spoke of “washing feet” as a guiding image of Christian service, and of finding hope in the quiet faithfulness of churches, chaplaincies, and communities across the Anglican Communion. She addressed the Church’s responsibility in safeguarding, the need to confront power dynamics, and the importance of standing against hatred and antisemitism.

She said she would seek to be “a shepherd who enables everyone’s ministry and vocation to flourish,” and expressed her desire to nurture confidence in the Gospel. “Held fast by the Lord’s hand,” she concluded, “please pray for me as I will pray for you”.

Bishops pray Gaza ceasefire deal brings immediate relief and comfort

A group of bishops with a close interest in the Holy Land have welcomed the recent Gaza peace deal, praying that it will “bring immediate relief and comfort”.

The Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun, the Church of England’s lead bishop for the Middle East, together with the Bishops of Chelmsford, Gloucester and Norwich, said that what had happened in Israel and Gaza “must never be allowed to happen again, anywhere” and pledged to continue to stand in solidarity with the Churches of the Holy Land.

They said: “After two years of unimaginable death and destruction now is the time for all parties to turn away from war and commit to peace.

“A credible peace must start with a ceasefire, but it will not last without a fundamental shift in the attitudes and behaviours that, for too long, have maintained Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territory and thwarted Palestinian self-determination and statehood. The settler violence in the West Bank must cease and the settlement-expansion programme must be reversed.

“We call on our own Government and the wider international community to now work tirelessly in order for Hamas, and for other Palestinian factions, to fully commit to decommissioning their arms and dismantling their military capabilities, while at the same time securing the necessary commitments from Israel to end the occupation in accordance with the International Court of Justice’s ruling of 19th July, 2024.

“We continue to hold that the only path to a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians, is a two-state solution that provides for a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

“To that end, we will continue to stand in solidarity with the Churches of the Holy Land in ensuring that their people’s voices, including their hopes and their anxieties as to the future, are not ignored in the weeks and months ahead.”

The Rt Revd Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford
The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester
The Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich
The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark

Renewed call for national conversation on AI and the Future of Work

Church of England academics and policy advisers have renewed their calls for a national conversation on the impact of artificial intelligence on the world of work, warning that rapid technological change raises profound questions.

In February 2024, General Synod passed a motion recognising the scale of the challenge posed by AI and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The motion affirmed the value of purposeful work and called for guidance on how emerging technologies can serve the common good rather than deepen inequality.

A new series of articles recently published in the quarterly journal *The Crucible* explores these issues in depth. They highlight the opportunities and risks of AI, drawing on biblical principles and Christian social teaching to ask what fair, purposeful and dignified work should look like in an age of intelligent machines.

The reflections consider how automation and algorithmic management are reshaping employment, from the rise of the gig economy to the spread of remote working and workplace surveillance. They examine the ethical questions raised by AI-driven decision-making and the growing influence of technology companies on the conditions of work.

The urgency of this conversation is echoed beyond the Church. Within days of his election, Pope Leo XIV described artificial intelligence as “one of the defining issues of our time”, warning that its rapid advance poses new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice and labour.

The collection calls on churches, policymakers and the wider public to engage with these questions now, ensuring that innovation serves people rather than the other way around.

Update on Living in Love and Faith

The House of Bishops has recently made a series of key decisions on the future direction of the Church of England’s Living in Love and Faith process, which explores questions of relationships, sexuality and marriage. Final decisions will be taken in December.

At its residential meeting, the House reviewed detailed theological and legal advice on outstanding questions following the landmark 2023 Synod vote which led to the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith (or PLF).

The PLF are a set of prayers, readings and liturgical material which, for the first time, enable same-sex couples to come to church for public prayers of dedication, thanksgiving and asking for God’s blessing as part of a regular church service.

Since then, the Church has been exploring whether special ‘bespoke’ services using the PLF could be introduced and whether clergy could legally enter into same-sex marriages. There has also been extensive consideration of possible new arrangements for how the Church is organised including so-called ‘Delegated Episcopal Ministry’.

The bishops reviewed advice both from the Church of England’s Legal Office and the Faith and Order Commission (all of which will be published in due course).

While final decisions will be made by the House in December, the bishops agreed in principle that both bespoke service and clergy same-sex marriage would need formal synodical and legislative processes to be completed before they could be permitted.

As a result, they also concluded there is currently no need for a new code of practice setting out special arrangements such as Delegated Episcopal Ministry.

Although there remains a wide range of views within the House on questions of sexuality and relationships, there was strong consensus on the need for unity, transparency and proper process alongside pastoral care. Despite personal convictions across traditions, the House of Bishops recognised these were the procedural realities to effect any future change.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, chair of the LLF Programme Board, commented: “As we continue prayerfully to navigate this important work on behalf of the Church, we believe these are the right decisions following further legal and theological advice.

“However, we recognise that for some, they will be difficult and disappointing. I continue to pray for God’s grace and gentleness for all as we continue to discern a way through these questions.”

Thomas Ken

Suzanne and I went to Boston in the States recently, and walked The Freedom Trail which takes in all the key sites relating to the start of the movement for the States to have independence from Britain. One of the key sites is The King's Chapel which was established in 1686 as the first Anglican congregation in New England. It has a very moving memorial to the 219 slaves of the Ministers and congregation that have been identified. It also had on display the following extract from one of their early published prayer books:

*O God, make the door of this house
wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship,
and a heavenly Father's care;
and narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and hate.
Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children,
nor to straying feet,
but rugged enough to turn back the tempter's power:
make it a gateway to thine eternal kingdom.*



Morning

Awake, my soul, and with the sun
thy daily stage of duty run;
shake off dull sloth, and early rise
to pay thy morning sacrifice.

Lord, I my vows to Thee renew.
Disperse my sins as morning dew;
guard my first springs of thought and will;
and with Thyself my spirit fill.

Direct, control, suggest, this day,
all I design or do or say,
that all my pow'rs, with all their might,
in Thy sole glory may unite.

This was written by Bishop Thomas Ken (1637 – 1711) and is also inscribed on the door of St Stephen's Walbrook, where I used to go when working, next to the Mansion House in the City of London. He was educated at Oxford and ordained in 1662. Following parishes in Essex and Hampshire he was appointed prebendary of Winchester Cathedral, and it was there he wrote on prayers and was one of the earliest Anglican hymn writers. Today he is remembered for two hymns for the morning and evening and the doxology which is common to both.

He lived in turbulent times. He was appointed by Charles II as chaplain to Princess Mary the wife of William of Orange in The Hague. He fell out with William and on his return to England became chaplain to the King. He later fell out with the King when he refused to accommodate Nell Gwynn on a visit but the King still appointed him as Bishop of Bath and Wells. He was charged with

high misdemeanour by James II and was sent to the Tower because of his rejection of the Declaration of Indulgence which gave some rights to nonconformists and he thought that this could result Roman Catholics being given more rights. He was acquitted, but was in trouble again after the Glorious Revolution brought William and Mary to the throne as he said that he could not serve having given an oath of allegiance to James II, and thus became known as a non-juror. He withdrew from office and stayed with his friend Lord Weymouth at Longleat for the rest of his life. He eventually received a pension of £200 pa from Queen Anne.

He died at Longleat in 1711 and was buried under the East window of St John in Frome which was the nearest parish to his old Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise Him all creatures here below;
praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Evening

Glory to Glory to thee, my God, this night
for all the blessings of the light;
keep me, O keep me, King of kings,
beneath thy own almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
the ill that I this day have done,
that with the world, myself, and thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

Teach me to live, that I may dread
the grave as little as my bed;
teach me to die, that so I may
rise glorious at the awful day.

O may my soul on thee repose,
and with sweet sleep my eyelids close,
sleep that may me more vigorous make
to serve my God when I awake.

When in the night I sleepless lie,
my soul with heavenly thoughts supply;
let no ill dreams disturb my rest,
no powers of darkness me molest.

Article and photo credit: Stuart Cole

King's Chapel Memorial to Enslaved Persons

For further info: <https://www.memorial.kings-chapel.org/about-the-memorial>

Churchyard working party

On a very misty Saturday morning in November, Stuart rallied round a number of us to form a churchyard working party. With the recent arrival of our beautiful memorial garden, it seemed a good time to clear some of the many brambles that have grown up in the last couple of years. Everyone worked extremely hard all morning and we exposed several long lost gravestones. It felt like we were welcoming them back into the fold having been invisible for some time. Stuart and I have visited his



grandparents' graves in North Devon and it was very upsetting that they had disappeared in a thicket of brambles, particularly when loved ones still visit. We had to go to nearby shops and get some gardening tools and gravestone cleaner to get to their graves and then tidy them up appropriately. Although many of our gravestones are very old, we can't be sure which descendants might pop by and like to see their ancestors' graves. To that end, I received a beautiful letter from a lady in Eastbourne recently regarding their enjoyment of InSpire, but equally she wrote to say how they visit often and 'how good it is to find the church open and the lights on'. How lovely to hear that not only do they visit often to see relatives' graves but the simple act of our church being unlocked gives them a welcoming space to enter, pick up things such as InSpire and enjoy some quiet time in our beautiful church.

With our Eco Church interests in mind, we are looking to compensate for any loss of wildlife habitat in the brambles by installing some bird boxes and insect homes. Also, it may be that we leave an area of brambles if appropriate. If anyone would like to donate any bird boxes or insect homes (available in garden centres and online), that would be wonderful.

In the meantime, here are some pictures of our hardworking party of volunteers and their sterling efforts! The next working party is on SATURDAY 13th DECEMBER 9am - 12 noon. There will be refreshments on offer. Please bring your own tools! Thank you. Suzanne Cole



One man and his dog! Jay and the lovely Charlie taking a break!



Our series on the Nicene Creed concludes this month, as Canon Paul Hardingham considers a bedrock of our Christian belief: that the Church has an eternal future.

The Nicene Creed: Trinitarian Faith

In the last of our series on the Nicene Creed, we want to ask about its significance today. The original Creed dates from 325 AD, but was expanded at the Council of Constantinople in 381. Over the last months we have seen how the Creed provides a 'big picture' of who God is and challenges our commitment to him. Its value can be seen in three main areas:

The Nicene Creed stresses the need to believe the right thing:

Sadly, we often hear Christian leaders and churches denying the essential articles of the Christian Faith. To be a part of orthodox Christianity, we must believe in what is affirmed in the Nicene Creed. *'For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures'* (1 Corinthians 15:3-5).

The Nicene Creed affirms the importance of the Trinity:

Generally, Christians give little thought to the Trinity, and many churches rarely teach on the subject. However, by regularly reciting the Nicene Creed, people are reminded of the doctrine about the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It protects the truth about the Trinity, especially in opposition to Arianism, which sees Jesus as the first and greatest of God's creatures, but not the same as God the Father.

To be a Christian is to be baptised in the triune name and to worship God, who is three persons in one Godhead: *'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'* (Matthew 28:19).

The Nicene Creed focuses on God's salvation:

At the heart of the Nicene Creed is the good news that Jesus came down from heaven *'for our salvation'*. It understands Christianity as essentially being about sin and salvation, judgment and forgiveness, and new life in Jesus Christ.

This theme is very relevant at Christmas, when we celebrate the baby born in Bethlehem as our Saviour. As the angels said to the shepherds: *'Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'* (Luke 2:11,12).

Royal Mail Posting Dates

We send an estimated 900 million to 1 billion Christmas cards in the UK each year. Royal Mail delivers around 150 million. On average, each person in the UK sends and receives about 17 cards.

This year **the final Royal Mail Christmas posting dates are as follows:**

Wednesday, December 17 th :	2nd Class and 2nd Class Signed For
Friday, December 19 th :	Royal Mail Tracked 48
Saturday, December 20 th :	1st Class and 1st Class Signed For
Sunday, December 21 st :	Royal Mail Tracked 24
Tuesday, December 23 rd :	Special Delivery Guaranteed.

(It is best to post as early as possible to avoid the last-minute rush.)



PRAYERS, PROSE & POEMS

God of Joy

God of joy,
remind me to rejoice.
Wrapped up in my Christmas gifts,
tied down in my debts,
I have forgotten.

God of peace,
remind me of your calm.
In my anxiety
and in my haste,
I have forgotten.

God of all,
remind me
of the true light of Christmas,
of your gift shared.

In my own wants
and in my own needs
I have forgotten.
Wrapped up in my little world,
remind me of your world.
God of joy, remind me
to rejoice.

Amen.

Linda Jones/CAFOD

<https://cafod.org.uk/pray/prayer-resources/god-of-joy>

I heard the Bells on Christmas Day

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth, ' I said
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men.'

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

What Does Christmas Mean To You?

When you prepare for Christmas
What matters spring to mind?
The coming of the Saviour
Or the gifts that you can't find?

Do you think of baby Jesus
As you deck the halls with holly?
Or are your thoughts preoccupied
With piling high your shopping trolley.

Will you be moved this Christmas
By the sound of carol singing
Or are you more in tune with
The sound of shop tills ringing?

On that family occasion
When you choose your Christmas tree
Do you think of how that tiny babe
Came to die for you and me?

Christmas to you could mean much more
If you're prepared to see
The reasons why each Christmastime
Just mean so much to me,

So as you celebrate this Christmas
Why not resolve to start anew?
And change your whole perspective
Of what Christmas means to you.

By Colin Hammacott

Guiding Star

Lord, the sight of the guiding star,
brought hope, courage and joy
to those who had journeyed to find you.

When our journey seems long,
when hope seems far away,
when our courage is failing
fill us with faith and trust;
shine your light on our fears,
lift our hearts with your joy.

Help us to recognise you
in our brothers and sisters
throughout the world;
show us how we can work together
so that we may all come to share in the life
promised to us by Jesus,
the Saviour of us all.

Amen.

CAFOD

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

Deacon's diary

November is one of my favourite months of the year (not only because my birthday falls in it), but to me it is a month of transition.

We look back on Remembrance Sunday to the great suffering and sacrifice of so many people from so many nations in the years 1914-18 and 1939-45. We remember not just those who actively fought, but those who supported e.g. the medical teams, and those who grieved and mourned the death of their family members. We make a determined effort not to forget and to honour what they did.

I attended two beautiful but different Remembrance services in our parish:

In Ockley the proud reading of the names of the fallen followed by the respectful silence

In Capel the presentation of the colours of all the uniform brigades and a slide presentation by the Scouts of their visit to Belgium, including the Menin Gate, was a great example of how the words "we will remember them" of the poet, Laurence Binyon, are still being fulfilled. The children of today have been told and taught of the importance of remembering the sacrifice of others.

Today, we may reflect on the reality that although our country is not at war, war continues on our continent as well as in other parts of the world. The pain and suffering of fighters and the bereaved families continues. And looking forward – the last Sunday in November is the first Sunday in Advent. This is the beginning of the church's calendar year and it begins with an opportunity to decide to do things differently just as many people make New Year's resolutions on 31st December to change a habit/ take up a new activity.

The first three weeks in December can be busy – I am looking forward to village Christmas events including the school nativity, Village Christmas trees and carols, shared village Christmas meals and Christingle in Ockley as



well as the usual commitments of work and life, BUT I am planning to take a moment each day in Advent to do more than open a door on a calendar. I would like to consider in that quiet moment what difference it makes, or should make to each of us, that God became human to help us.

Yes, November has been a good month and I look forward to celebrating the pivotal event of December with many other people who consciously or unconsciously recognise it by the giving of a present to another, a shared meal, a seasonal greeting to another person at the pub or in passing!

Should any of you like a prayer to be said for you, anyone you know or a situation you care about, please do let Rev Liz or I know.

Rev Gill Christie

curate@capelandockleychurch.org.uk

01306 711917



Micah's Message – look forward to the child born in Bethlehem

by Lester Amann



Why is the news so full of depressing stories? Why can't they report some good news for a change? Indeed, our world is always full of troubles, and we may wonder if better times will ever come.

Similar comments might have been directed at many of the Old Testament prophets who nearly always said negative and gloomy things. The people of Micah's day had many problems. They were surrounded by warring nations and peace in their time was unlikely.

It was Micah's task, as God's messenger, to tell the people how it was and how it was going to be, no matter how painful the facts. Micah was deeply concerned with the social ills of his day and spoke out against false prophets who were leading the people into contrived hopes and errors.

Micah was quite forthright. He announced that God would punish the people for their sinfulness and their enemies would overcome them. Micah came with bad news and there seemed no end to his reprimands and denouncements.

But in the desert was an oasis. Amidst his descriptions of imminent pain and suffering, Micah looked forward to a time of peace with freedom from injustice, fear and war. Micah delivered God's promise that from Bethlehem there would come a ruler to free them from their oppression. Their Saviour would come. (Micah 5:2)

Of course, Micah's hearers did not understand about the Babe at Bethlehem, but they were told to stand firm in their faith no matter what troubles or disasters would befall them. They were to look forward to their deliverance, whenever that would be.

Amidst Micah's attack on the deplorable actions of leaders and the nation's wrong values and behaviour, he gave hope that God was with them in the failures and difficulties. Only God could take them through their troubles to a place of peace.

Micah's message still stands for us today. God wants us to mend our wilful ways; to correct bad attitudes and

Well known pilot

At Sunday school, the younger children were drawing pictures to illustrate a biblical story. The teacher was startled to see one little boy was drawing an airplane. "This is the Flight into Egypt," the little boy explained. "See, here is Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. And this," he said, pointing to the figure in the front of the plane, "is Pontius. He's the Pilot."

The Wrong Gift

A young couple began to assemble a special Christmas gift they had bought for their children. They had bought a kit for a tree house, but it didn't make sense. Then they realised that the materials were for a sailboat, so they wrote to the company to complain. The company's reply was brief: "While we regret the inconvenience this mistake must have caused you, we are more concerned about the man who is out on a lake somewhere, trying to sail your tree house."

Know what?

As we were putting out cookies for Father Christmas one Christmas Eve, I accidentally dropped one. I picked it up and dusted it off before placing it back on the plate. "You can't do that," argued my four-year-old. But I assured him that Father Christmas would never know.

He shot me a dubious look. "So, he knows if I've been bad or good all year, but he doesn't know if you dropped his cookie on the floor?"

The Pavilion Café

**Every Wednesday at Ockley Cricket Club Pavilion
9 am until midday**

Come and enjoy a warm welcome and a delicious range of homemade cakes and savouries - including gluten/dairy free. Bacon butties every fourth Wednesday and freshly made teas and coffees.

The Pavilion Café was originally the idea of Kindred Spirits, the women's outreach group from Ockley, Okewood and Forest Green Parish, 11 years ago.

It is run by a team of volunteers in support of charities, local charitable causes and Ockley events.

If you would like to volunteer, please let Liz know on either 07951 710176 or lizthorne2053@hotmail.co.uk

And there were shepherds...

by Tony Horsfall, a Bible teacher and conference speaker.

In his gospel, Luke tells how the shepherds in the fields were keeping watch over their flocks when they were terrified by the sudden arrival of heavenly angels, surrounded by the glory of the Lord. And the message of the angel that night has rung down the centuries:

"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:10,11)

And so, the first people to greet the Saviour were not rich VIPS, but humble shepherds. And in turn, it was the shepherds who became the first evangelists: for they would have gone home to their families and neighbours that night with the amazing news of what they had seen.

Meanwhile, for Mary there followed a time of reflection. She gathered up in her mind all her impressions, and all that the shepherds had shared about the angelic visit. She knew it was treasure, and not to be squandered. Then she quietly pondered in her heart the meaning and significance of all that had happened, so that she would never forget.

Exuberant witness and quiet contemplation are not opposites. They are, in fact, good companions in the spiritual life!



So, this Christmas, let's be filled with the joy that the Saviour has also been born 'to us'. May our lives reflect the glory of His coming, even in a small way. May our interactions with friends, colleagues and families during this Advent season reflect the great joy that the angels brought that night, so long ago.

Reflecting Faith: Listening to the gospel

One of the highlights of the Christmas services is the reading of the opening passage from John's Gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word ...'

I love the poetry of the words and sentences, as well as their very meaning. In most churches everyone will stand for that reading, which emphasises its importance. But what makes it important?

Most gospel passages that are read in church include the words of Jesus Himself, handed down to us over the centuries, but here there are none. Rather, this is the defining statement of who Jesus is and where He came from.

The way that the gospel readings are valued by the Church can be seen in our church buildings over the years. In older churches you will find two lecterns, one either side of the central altar. The right-hand side is for the Old Testament and epistle readings, and the left-hand side lectern (as the congregation faces the altar) is for the gospel reading.

On the altar, the holder for the priest's book was physically moved to that side, so that as he read out the gospel he would be facing the northern side of the church. Traditionally that was the colder, darker side, thought to be 'least' holy and therefore in need of the gospel most.

Nowadays all readings may be given from the same place at the front of church, though in some churches the gospel book will be processed with or without candles, into the centre of the congregation, to bring us all gathering around Christ's words.

It is because of this absolute importance of the gospels that people face the gospel, so as it is processed, they move their body and heads towards it. This will leave some people with their backs to the altar for that time, but it is the 'Word made flesh' that we honour.

This month: This year during the Christmas season, listen out for that wonderful passage from John chapter 1 and consider how and where from it is being read and how that reflects the faith of the congregation you are within.



We've got online carol-singers again!



Read the Christmas story in Luke 1:1 - 2:21

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Colouring in page for all ages!

What Does Christmas Mean To You?

When you prepare for Christmas
What matters spring to mind?
The coming of the Saviour
Or the gifts that you can't find?

Do you think of baby Jesus
As you deck the halls with holly?
Or are your thoughts preoccupied
With piling high your shopping trolley.

Will you be moved this Christmas
By the sound of carol singing
Or are you more in tune with
The sound of shop tills ringing?

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When you choose your Christmas tree
Do you think of how that tiny babe
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If you're prepared to see
The reasons why each Christmastime
Just mean so much to me,

So as you celebrate this Christmas
Why not resolve to start anew?
And change your whole perspective
Of what Christmas means to you.

By Colin Hammacott



Quotes for December

The Incarnation

The incarnation of Christ is the clearest affirmation of the truth that man is created in the image of God. - *Lawrence Adams*

To perceive Christmas through its wrapping becomes more difficult each year. - *E B White*

This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall.
From John Betjeman 'Christmas'

Filling the world He lies in a manger! - *Augustine*

Remember, Christ was not a deified man, neither was he a humanized God. He was perfectly God and at the same time perfectly man. - *C H Spurgeon*

Christ took our flesh upon him that He might take our sins upon Him. - *T Watson*

Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. - *Anon*

'Grow old along with me. The best is yet to be; the last of life, for which the first was made.
Our times are in His hands who saith, "A whole I planned, youth shows by half. Trust God; see all, nor be afraid."' - *Robert Browning*

Some people use religion like a bus – they ride on it only while it is going their way. - *Anon*

The world is equally shocked at hearing Christianity criticized and seeing it practiced. - *D Elton Trueblood*

This world is all a fleeting show, For man's illusion given;
The smiles of joy, the tears of woe, Deceitful shine, deceitful flow,
There's nothing true but Heaven. - *Thomas More*

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear friends,

We come to the end of 2025 which has been a hard year for some of us losing someone we love very dearly. We've also lost some dear friends from our congregation and church family including Eric Sutcliffe and Rosemary Relf. But for others it will have been a good year with celebrations a plenty! Life goes around in circles and whilst some are suffering, others are celebrating. If we all had our tough times at once, we would never be able to support one another fully. I'm always delighted to hear of a baby being born not long after someone dies and this year that has given me so much hope to see new life. The most precious new life is of course that of our Saviour Jesus Christ, whose birth we will once more celebrate this month. It is so easy to lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas in our hectic modern lives. But there are so many ways to reconnect that our churches offer including the **Advent course every Tuesday afternoon** leading up to Christmas (see page 6 for more details). Also we have other events that you can attend including **Christingle at Ockley on 7th December** and **Nine Lessons and Carols at 4pm on Sunday 14th December at Capel**. Scott-Broadwood school will be joining us for Nine Lessons and we look forward to welcoming the children and their families once more.

We had a working party on a Saturday morning in November in an attempt to tidy up our churchyard, particularly after our beautiful Memorial Garden was installed. There's a full report on the morning on page 13. We are doing another one on **Saturday 13th December 9am—12 noon (see more details on page 6)**. The team worked very hard together and it was a productive morning, yet in some ways only scratched the surface! It was lovely to 'welcome back' some of the gravestones that had been hidden for a long time.

There is a lot in this slightly bigger issue including a 2025 Quiz, a colouring in page ... for all ages, book reviews, news, humour and puzzles. I strive to make the magazine as varied and as informative as possible and hope that readers feel that is the case. I was delighted to receive a letter from Eastbourne recently via Rev Liz from a visitor who comes to St John the Baptist as her parents are buried there. She kindly took the trouble to write and said how 'good it is to find the church open and the lights on'. Our beautiful churches should be a place of welcome to anyone and it was lovely to read those words. Equally, she was complimentary about InSpire and said she had passed it to friends who had enjoyed it. I'm delighted that the magazine is proving to be an outreach tool as we intended. Soon it will be our 100th issue! Any suggestions or contributions are always welcome.

We enter 2026 with our Rev Liz going into the final stages of her tenure with us. She said at a meeting recently that she hoped her legacy would be 'with people'. I'm sure others would join me in saying she certainly has done that—my own mother loved Liz for her humour and the fact that she was so down to earth. I'm sure many others see those qualities in Liz. We will go into the year enjoying the last few months of Liz being with us and we will need to pray as we begin the process in due course to choose a new vicar. She will be a hard act to follow. Rural ministry is not the easiest as you've got to be 'something for everyone' in a small community rather than towns where people choose their 'style' of worship and find a church accordingly. In the 35 years we have been here, I think on the whole, we have achieved that and we have been blessed with our Ministers. I would add to that that Rev Gill is our latest and blessed asset - to both Rev Liz and our Parish. I thank God for her Ministry together with that of Rev Liz and pray for the year ahead for us as a Parish. I'm sure there are exciting (and sometimes challenging!) times ahead.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and every blessing for 2026.

With my very best wishes,

Suzanne

inspire@capelandockleychurch.org.uk

The Royal British Legion Appeal 2025

I'm pleased to report that the Capel village collection this year totalled £1,310.76. My thanks to all the volunteers who collect for the Legion and to all who donated.

Thank you for your continued support.

Stuart Cole
Poppy Appeal Organiser, Capel Village



Editor: The Ven John Barton explains the meaning of the colours of the vicars' stoles.

Why is the vicar wearing white today?

You may have noticed that the Minister who officiates at Church Services may wear a long, thin scarf which is called a stole. This can be white, purple, red or green.

White is for festive occasions like Christmas and Easter, christenings and weddings. Purple is worn during Advent and Lent, when we bring to mind our sins and seek God's forgiveness, in preparation for the wonderful seasons of Christmas and Easter. Red at Pentecost, symbolises the fire of the Holy Spirit, and on Saints Days it signifies that many of them (and some today) were martyred because they were Christians. Green, marking growth and hope is worn for the rest of the year.

So, white for 'best', purple for penitence, red for the Holy Spirit and the blood of the Martyrs, and green for growth.

You will also spot the same changing colours for items on the Altar-Table at the beginning and end of the Service of Holy Communion. The Burse is a flat, square case holding a linen cloth called the corporal, on which the vessels used in Holy Communion are placed. The Veil covers them until they are used.

The vessels are called Paten and Chalice. The Paten is like a plate on which the bread is placed. A bowl, called a Ciborium, may be used for the same purpose. The Chalice is a cup for the wine. Because the bread and wine represent the Body and Blood of Christ, which He sacrificed for us when He was crucified, we handle them with care.

The minister's ceremonial robes, called vestments, and the vessels all point to something greater. In one of St Paul's letters in the New Testament, he explains in these words that receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion has past, present and future significance: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."



A Quiz on the year 2025

We are going with multiple choice questions this year. No “ask a friend” or “phone the audience”, sorry. No prizes for pointless answers or can you beat the chaser.

Ashley, Bert and Conall were:

Names of storms

Names of Eurovision entrant

Names of footballers

There was a re-wilding lynx project this year. Was it:

A new golf course

Releasing cats in the wild

Releasing aftershave

Palmerston the former resident cat at the Foreign Office was brought out of retirement for a “purr-fect” diplomatic posting to where:

Belfast

Bermuda

Birmingham

What is President Trump’s favourite word?

Tariffs

Musk

Sorry

We celebrated the 200th anniversary of the start of modern railways (or at least, I did). The East-West Rail Link is due to be opened next between Oxford, Milton Keynes and eventually Cambridge. What was the nick name of the original line?

The Varsity Line

The Farcical Line

The Gravy Train

Donald Trump called King Charles “aman”

Young

Regal

Beautiful

Restaurants in Pozzuoli Italy cooked up a plan to attract customers who are being put off by 1800 land tremors a month. How long did they have to stay?

Until paid bill

Until dessert served

Until coffee served

Birmingham experienced ‘Binmageddon’. Was it

Shortage of bin bags

Too many bin bags

Bin collector strike

A singer was joined by Bezos's fiancée Lauren Sánchez, CBS presenter Gayle King, former Nasa rocket scientist Aisha Bowe, civil rights activist Amanda Nguyen, and film producer Kerianne Flynn had a space trip. The flight lasted around 11 minutes and took the six women more than 100km (62 miles) above Earth, crossing the internationally recognised boundary of space and giving them a few moments of weightlessness. What music accompanied them?

Louis Armstrong's What a Wonderful World.

Fly me to the Moon

Up, up and Away?

A big hit at the cinema early this year the film *Conclave*. If you have not seen it is recommended. What colour is the smoke used to signify the election of a new Pope?

White

Black

Grey

What was Doge that Elon Musk was associated with and then left?

Department of Government Elasticity

Department of Government Efficiency

Department of Government Energy

Loretta Swit passed away this year. What long running sitcom is she best known for?

Friends

Mash

Frasier

UK proposed a wider ban on destructive bottom trawling. Is it:

Anti-social behaviour

Long trousers

A type of fishing

Which composer whose centenary was marked this year invented 'furniture music'? He always kept a hammer in his pocket for fear of muggers and once even founded his own church

Frank Sinatra

Jean Sibelius

Erik Satie

What were the "mushroom murders" in Australia?

Killing by adding fungi to dinner guests' meals

Illegally picking mushrooms from fields

Killing someone in vegetable aisle at supermarket

Which of the following were not Proms this year?

The Shipping forecast prom

The Traitors prom

The Grand Prix prom

'Skibidi' 'Delulu' and 'tradwife' among words added to Cambridge Dictionary. What does delulu mean?

French

Delusional

Incontinent

Heartthrob Terence Stamp passed away this year, which part did he play in the 1960s film of *Far from the Madding Crowd*?

Sgt Troy

Farmer Boldwood

Gabriel Oak

What month does October Beerfest in Germany start?

October

September

November

In October a lady in Kew was given a fine of £150.00 for pouring what down a drain on a road? The council later withdrew the penalty notice.

Beer

Oil

Coffee

Hope you have a: *Happy Christmas * Merry Christmas * Peaceful Christmas!*

What's the Big Idea? Philippians

This letter was written to Christians in the Macedonian city of Philippi when Paul was in prison, probably in Rome (60-62 AD). His primary purpose in writing was to thank them for the gift they had sent him upon learning of his imprisonment. However, he also uses the letter as an opportunity to report on his situation; to encourage the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of circumstances; to exhort the church to live in humility, fellowship, and unity; to commend Epaphroditus and Timothy to them; and to warn them about false teaching. This included Judaizers who were persuading the Philippians to submit to circumcision.

The central message of Philippians focuses on joy (the word occurs some 16 times!). For Paul, joy isn't simply an emotional response to favourable circumstances. True joy is to be found through a relationship with the resurrected and glorified Christ. Death ceases to be an enemy, because through it we can more fully enjoy the presence of Jesus. This joy is also rooted in an expectation of the return of Jesus, which gives urgency to the task of sharing the gospel. So, Paul begins his letter by thanking the Philippians for their partnership together in the work of the gospel through the offerings they have sent.

Paul also powerfully appeals to the Philippians to be of *'one mind'* in pursuing humility and unity. He gives the example of Jesus himself *'who made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant'* (2:7) to the point of dying the death of a common criminal. *'Therefore'*, say Paul, *'God exalted him to the highest place'* (2:9). This *'Jesus attitude'* is the one that all believers should share.

With many thanks to everyone for the continued support of the Dorking Foodbank. Thanks to Sylvie who volunteers at the Foodbank, we always have an up to date list of items they need at this point.

This month:

**Children's toothpaste
Christmas cake
Christmas sweets
Long life fruit juice**



Do you have any plastic carrier bags you can spare? Please do continue to donate non-perishable food, personal hygiene including shampoo, body wash and disposable razors, together with sanitary items, amongst other things. **ALL items are gratefully received.**

'DONATE TEN'

Could you donate ten items to the Foodbank,
or maybe make a direct debit for £10 each month or arrange
a one-off donation?

If you would like to hear more regarding this project
please contact: Revd Liz Richardson - 01306 711260
or Pastoral Assistant Sylvie Beckett on 07711 849338

Editor: These come from the website of The British Christmas Tree Growers Association (BCTGA).

10 Fun Facts about Christmas trees

Even before the time of Christ, evergreen trees were seen in winter as a symbol of fertility.

It was the 16th century monk, Martin Luther, who is credited with the idea of having lights on Christmas trees. He added candles to his tree, to look like stars in a forest.

Windsor Castle got its first Christmas tree in 1800, brought by Charlotte, wife of George III.

It was in 1835 that the term 'Christmas tree' was first used in English.

It was in the 1840s, when Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, began bringing trees inside, that led to their popularity throughout the UK.

It was Woolworths who first sold manufactured Christmas tree ornaments – back in 1880.

The tree in London's Trafalgar Square has been a gift from the city of Oslo, Norway since 1947.

The world's tallest Xmas tree, at 221ft high, was erected in a Washington shopping mall in 1950.

In a survey of the nation's favourite smells, real Christmas trees came eighth, just behind the sea, but ahead of perfume.

About five million real Christmas trees are sold in the UK each year.



Book Reviews

Giving Thanks – rediscovering the Heart of Gratitude

By Philip Plyming, Canterbury Press, £11.99

For more than 350 years, a powerful resource has helped believers frame their thanksgiving: *The General Thanksgiving* from the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*.

This theological masterpiece has guided generations in expressing profound truths in an accessible way, providing a framework for gratitude even in the hardest times.

Giving Thanks seeks to reintroduce this prayer to the contemporary church. It explores the spiritual truths embedded in the prayer and reveals how thanksgiving is not about ignoring reality, but responding to God's goodness – past, present, and future.

Far from being a burdensome duty, a life of gratitude is a whole-life response to who God is and what God has done. This is an invitation to rediscover *The General Thanksgiving* and integrate its wisdom into daily Christian living.

Be Still: 30 devotions for those who feel anything but

By Lucy Rycroft, BRF, £8.99

Stillness is an alien concept in today's busy world. Communication, entertainment, work and relationships seem accessible to us 24–7, and it can feel impossible to change the pace. So this book is a series of reflections on the concept of being still. Made up of 30 Bible moments, it ranges from Moses leading the Israelites through the Red Sea, to the raw emotions of the Psalms, to Jesus calming the storm. The book's aim is to help Christians living in the crazed busyness of the 21st century to discover what 'being still' looks like for us today.

All You Want for Christmas

By David Platt, 10Publishing, £9.99

At our deepest level, we all have needs we long to be met and desires we want to be fulfilled. Jesus came and meets our deepest need. This new giftable Christmas book, *All You Want for Christmas* (hardback) explains four simple reasons why He came: to be with you; to die instead of you; to show you how to live; to be your servant; to be your God.

Are you ready for Christmas?

By Roger Carswell, 10Publishing, £3.99

Christmas is a hectic time of year: cooking big meals, buying and wrapping the presents, sending the cards, and wondering if we've forgotten something. All these preparations help to make Christmas such a special time of year, but before the very first Christmas it was God who was getting the world ready to meet His Son. This book tells the story of God's Christmas plan, and explains how He can help us to be ready for Him today. You'll discover how the baby whom God sent that first Christmas is still His message of hope, joy, and peace to us today.

The Four Emotions of Christmas

By Bob Lepine, 10Publishing, £3.99

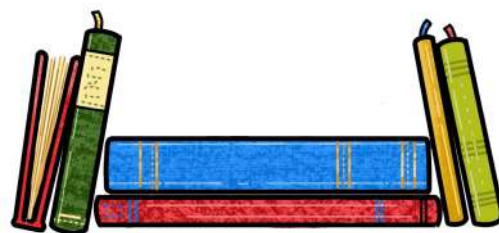
We expect Christmas to be a season filled with happiness and love. And yet so often, what we want to be a nice, relaxing family day turns into 24 hours of stress and disappointment. Our loneliness and sadness are amplified because of how out of sync they are with what the season has promised. Shouldn't there be something better than this? This book is designed to be given out widely, and contains a clear gospel message.

The Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas

By Jonathan Maltz and Christopher Poch, CHP, £5.49

Here is a beautifully illustrated children's nativity story told from the unusual angle of a grumpy owl who lived in a little old empty barn in Bethlehem.

When a man, a woman and their donkey burst into his barn, making a lot of noise, the grumpy owl decides to fly away to somewhere quiet where he can be grumpy in peace. But can he find such a place, or will he return to his barn in time for a big, not-at-all grumpy, surprise?



High Days & Holy Days for December

25th December - 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’.

Easy Soduku

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

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Medium Soduku

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

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Sara preferred to let people work out the hymns for themselves



WORDSEARCH

Did the Old Testament expect Jesus to come? Yes indeed! Here are just some examples of OT prophecies:

He would be born of a virgin. 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son and will call Him Immanuel.' (Isaiah 7:14)

He would be born in Bethlehem. 'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel...' (Micah 5:2)

His lineage would be of the line of David. 'I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.' (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

He would bring healing. 'Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.' (Isaiah 35:5-6)

He would be crucified. They pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. (Psalm 22)

He would rise from the dead. 'You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay...' (Psalm 16: 8-11)

**Born
Virgin
Immanuel
Bethlehem
Ruler**

**Israel
David
King
Just
Right**

**Healing
Blind
Deaf
Lame
Mute**

**Crucified
Pierce
Hands
Feet
Gloat**

**Rise
Dead
Abandon
Decay
Realm**



Puzzle solutions on page 30

Harvest Supper Murder Mystery Evening

So this year it was time for 'Murder in the Library'! An excellent play once again directed by Sylvie Beckett our Church Pastoral Assistant and assisted by Yvonne Featherstone. It was a good plot which although each of the characters had reason and motive to commit something they would later come to regret... things were not too complicated for us in the audience not to be able to have a go at guessing whodunnit! Once again we ran the play over 2 nights, once in Ockley and secondly in Capel. Tickets in Capel were a sell out and so we may well put on an extra performance in Capel next year.

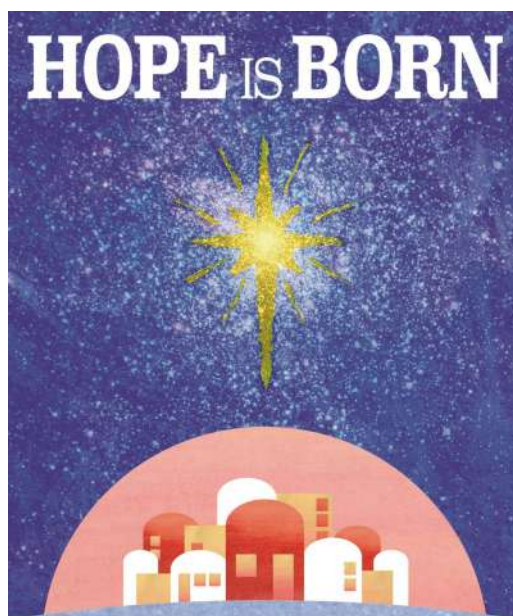
We would like to thank all those who took part, the wonderful cast, backstage assistance, and of course Alan Hardy from Ockley Dramatic Society as our sound and technical manager. A big thank you also to Viv Taylor for her stage manager role and to Corinne Jay as box office manager.

All in all the cast and crew had good fun rehearsing and performing the play and we thank them for their commitment over several weeks.

There was a secret surrounding this year's play though. In the script a detective arrives on the scene to investigate the murder and the identity of the detective was kept quiet until the first night. Enter Chief Inspector Vera Stanhope visiting her friend Reverend Liz in Capel! This was a huge surprise for the cast who had been trying to work out who would be playing the detective character assuming it would be a man! Imagine their reaction then when 'Vera' enters the hall, asking for the curtain to be held, being played no less than their director Sylvie Beckett wearing an old green Mac and my green dog walking hat!! Well done Sylvie! The best one liner was Vera reflecting how she had understood Capel and Ockley to be a very quiet peaceful place but had now been told a murder occurs here once a year! Metaphorical of course. So great fun.

Then of course we enjoyed yet again a delicious meal along with a wonderful array of desserts. Thank you to David Silliman and Helen Burt for organising the food, to all who provided and cooked such a marvelous feast, to all who worked so hard in the kitchen, decorating tables and a big thank you to Judy Cranham for bringing out her poison bottles to adorn each table. All of this accomplished to provide us with a lovely fun evening with friends and to raise money towards our Parish Share. Last but not least we had amazing raffle prizes donated from kind folk and every little bit helps towards our initial figure of £1900 raised, following expenses. Thank you all so much. We will be back next year!

Rev'd Liz



Jane Austen – still loved 250 years later

It was 250 years ago, on 16th December 1775, that novelist Jane Austen (*Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*) was born. Over 30 million copies of her books have since been sold – 7000 in her lifetime.

She was the second daughter and seventh child of the Revd George Austen, rector of the village of Steventon in Hampshire. Two of her brothers became clergymen, two were Admirals in the Royal Navy and the other inherited substantial estates in Kent and Hampshire from a distant cousin. Neither Jane nor her sister Cassandra, with whom she was very close, ever married.

Jane had a sincere Christian faith which deepened as she got older and is reflected in her novels. She had sympathy with hands-on evangelicalism and a desire to abolish the slave trade, which she refers to particularly in *Mansfield Park*.

She lived at Steventon for 25 years and then moved with her parents and sister to Bath, enjoying holidays in the West Country. Her father died in 1805, and they moved to Southampton and then Chawton in Hampshire, less than 20 miles from Steventon, where they had a cottage on one of her brother Edward's estates – now a Jane Austen museum. This cottage was where she devoted herself to writing, revising her first three novels and composing another three.

But it was here too that she fell ill and died in 1817 – probably from Addison's Disease. She had been published only anonymously in her lifetime, and her style was not immediately appreciated, though its comments on the world of the landed gentry, to which she belonged, quickly became popular – as did her wit, irony and her realistic plots.

She is now more popular than ever, with followers known as Janeites and a flourishing Jane Austen Society with worldwide membership, plus numerous film and TV adaptations of her work.

There are some gaps in her private life, mainly because her sister Cassandra destroyed most of her letters. At the age of 20 she seems to have fallen temporarily for Thomas Lefroy, a neighbour who later became Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, but the relationship never developed. The epitaph by her brother James on her tomb in Winchester Cathedral praises the "extraordinary endowments of her mind".

With New Year's Resolutions in mind, here is John Wesley's rule of conduct

Do all the good you can
By all the means you can
In all the ways you can
In all the places you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can.

Quiz 2025 answers

Ashley, Bert and Conall were names of storms

The re-wilding lynx project was releasing cats in the wild.

Palmerston was brought out of retirement for a “purr-fect” diplomatic posting to Bermuda.
President Trump’s favourite word is tariffs.

The nickname of the original line was the Varsity Line as it linked the two universities. It was a favourite journey of CS Lewis.

Donald Trump called King Charles “aman” Beautiful.

Restaurants in Pozzuoli Italy cooked up a plan to attract customers who are being put off by 1800 land tremors a month. They got an “earthquake discount” if stayed until dessert served. I do not know if it was successful. I usually prefer the cheeseboard after a meal.

Birmingham’s ‘Binmageddon’ was the Bin collector strike.

The music that accompanied the astronauts was Louis Armstrong's *What a Wonderful World*.

The colour of the smoke used to signify the election of a new Pope is white.

Elon Musk was associated with the Department of Government Efficiency.

Loretta Swit was best known for MASH. The television series made stars of some of the actors and went on much longer than the Korean War, which it was based on.

Destructive bottom trawling is a type of deep sea fishing.

The composer who invented ‘furniture music’ was Erik Satie.

The “mushroom murders” were done by adding fungi to dinner guests’ meals.

The Grand Prix was not a prom.

Delulu means delusional.

Heartthrob Terence Stamp played Sgt Troy in the 1960s film of *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

October Beerfest in Germany starts in September.

She poured a cup of coffee down a drain.

How many did you get right?



Puzzle Solutions

Sudoku Easy Solution

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

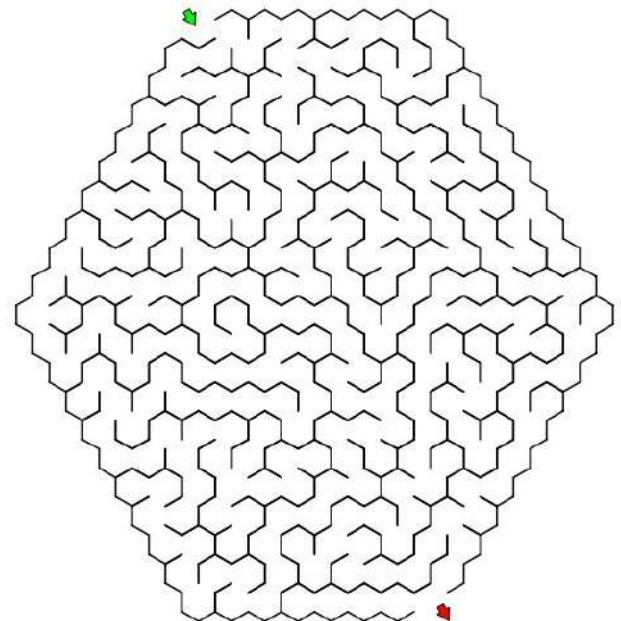
Sudoku Medium solution

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

Wordsearch Solution



Can you find your way out of the maze?



Actual children's versions of Christmas Carols

"...sleep in heavenly peas"
 "Joy to the world, the Saviour rains!"
 "Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plane..."
 "While shepherds washed their socks by night..."
 "Deck the Halls with Buddy Holly..."
 "We three kings of porridge and tar..."
 "On the first day of Christmas my tulip gave to me..."



Capel Church Garden of Remembrance

We are pleased to say that the new Garden of Remembrance has now been created in the grounds of Capel Church for the burial of ashes. Do go and see it when you have an opportunity!



Many people are now choosing cremation over burial. The burying of ashes within the church graveyard is preferably within a designated Garden of Remembrance. In addition, the adjacent civil cemetery is nearing full capacity. This new space will provide a solution to these issues.

The new garden is in the southwest corner of the graveyard, just past the old mortuary. The proposal is to provide a grassed area where ashes will be buried in the ground, not in urns. The burials will be recorded in a Book of Remembrance retained in the church. There will also be a memorial wall within the Garden on which a small plaque may be fixed with the person's name. Residents of Capel and the immediate surrounding area will be able to make use of this facility.

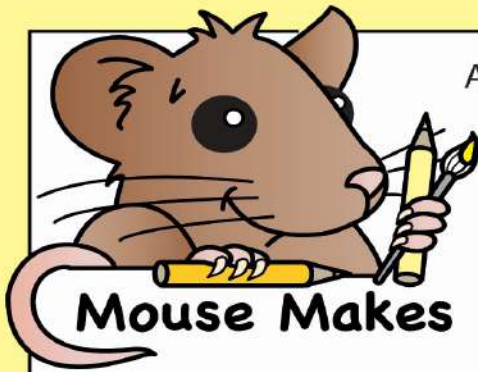
The grass areas incorporate paths which will be suitable for wheelchair access. This will be a quiet area of reflection and remembrance. It has been planted out and in time there will be benches included in the garden, giving a comfortable place to sit and reflect.

We are very grateful that most of the funding for this has been made possible by private legacies, the John Ede Fund, the Capel Parish Council and the Friends of Capel Church. However, we are seeking further contributions for benching, planting, the book of remembrance, ongoing maintenance, etc.

Should you have any questions or wish to contribute to this community asset please contact Liz Richardson or David Silliman.

Donations to:-
Capel & Ockley PCC
89053287
09-01-53

Junior InSpire



At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus,
God's Son and our Saviour
coming into the world as a baby,
and we look forward to the time
when Jesus will come again,
not as a baby but as the
King of kings and Lord of lords!

read
John 14:3

A baby needs clothes
to keep warm like
a snuggly sleep suit
or a vest and nappy.
What were you dressed in?
Jesus was wrapped in

.....
read Luke 2:7

A baby needs somewhere
to be born like at home
or in a hospital.

Where were you born?
Jesus was born
in a stable in

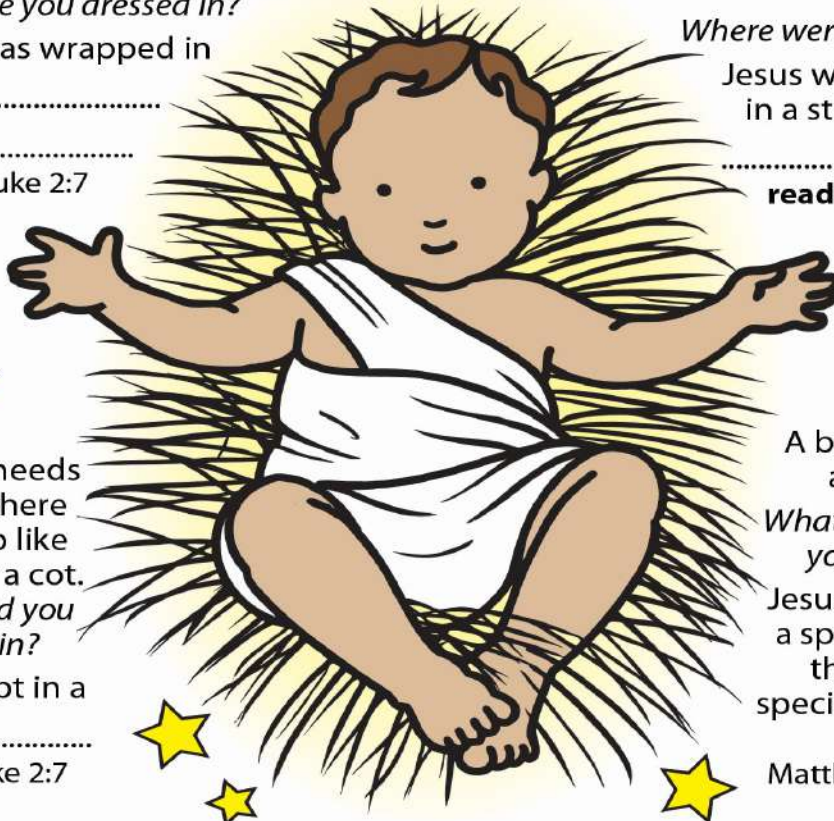
.....
read Luke 2:1-6

A baby needs
somewhere
to sleep like
a crib or a cot.
*What did you
sleep in?*
Jesus slept in a

.....
read Luke 2:7

A baby needs
a name.
*What name were
you called?*
Jesus was given
a special name
that had a
special meaning.

read
Matthew 1:21-23



HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ★ NOLLAIG CHRÏDHEIL ★ NOLLAG SHONA
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN

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Suzanne Cole inspire@capelandockleychurch.org.uk **By 20th of each month please.**
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