

INSPIRE



ST JOHN'S

ST KATHARINE'S



**THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE PARISHES
OF**

**ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, FROME
AND
ST KATHARINE, EAST WOODLANDS**

DECEMBER 2021 / JANUARY 2022

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in the Frome Local Ministry Group**

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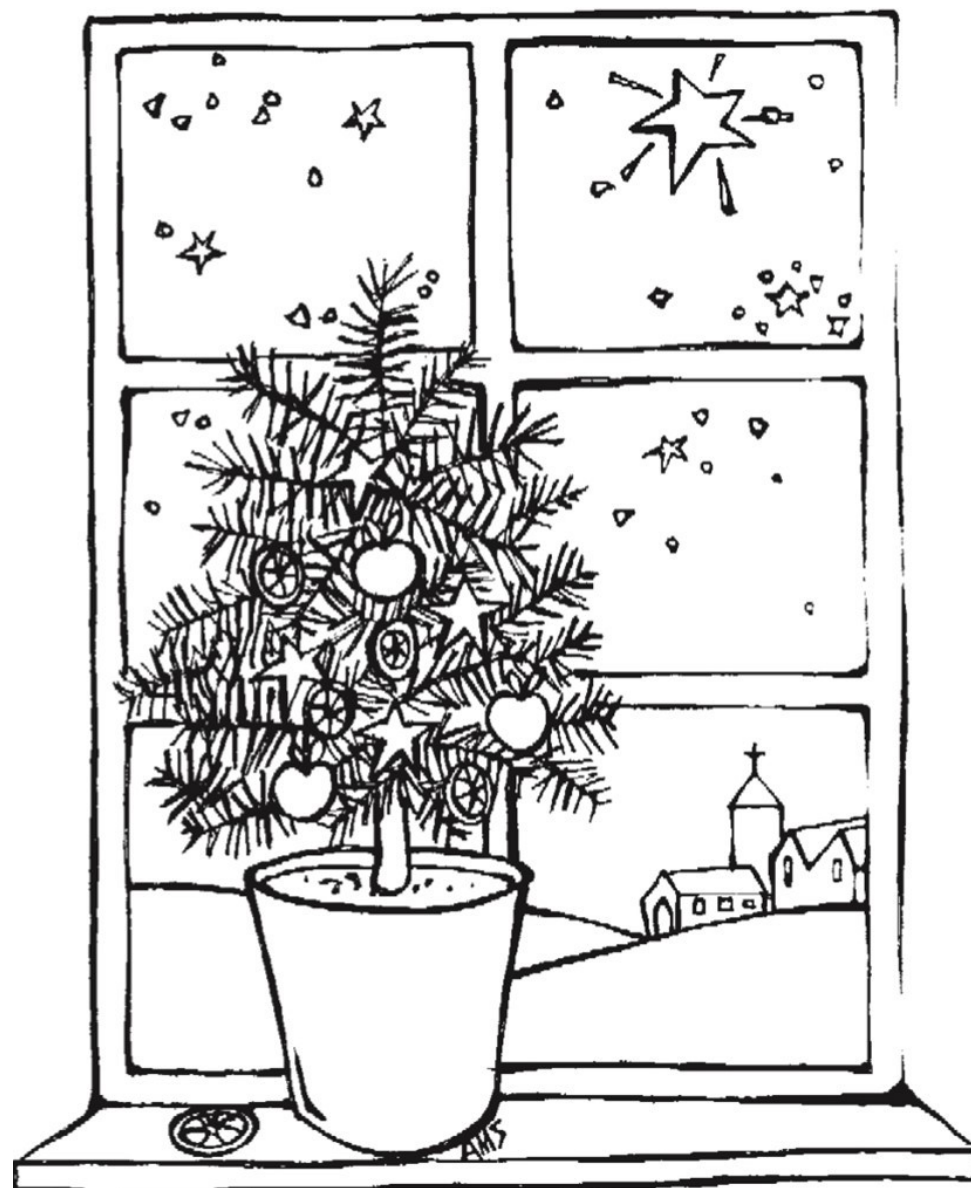
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December 2021 / January 2022



Dear Friends

As I got up again and again this morning to reset the trip on our electricity supply as surges came down the power lines whilst the electricity suppliers were working to fix a fault, I was reminded of the commendable modern tradition of the 'reverse advent calendar'. Instead of a chocolate to consume each day or other such treat, the reverse advent calendar takes many forms:



- a box marked with 24 spaces into which you put a non perishable food item each day – and then donate it all to the local food bank
- a list of different things to count each day: the number of taps in your home, the number of electric sockets in your home, the number of pairs of shoes you own; and then an invitation to set aside a few pence for each item you have counted. This accumulates – quite fast! – and provides a sum of money to donate to a charity or other good cause.

There are many similar ideas online and it is easy to do.

Please make your Advent a bit different this year and do something that will help those for whom the Christmas season may be bringing many stresses and strains in life.

Your Friend and Vicar
Colin Alsbury

From the Editor

A huge thank you to Karolyn, who has put the magazine together singlehandedly this month while I was away on a three-week trip to visit my son in Uganda – I only returned yesterday ...

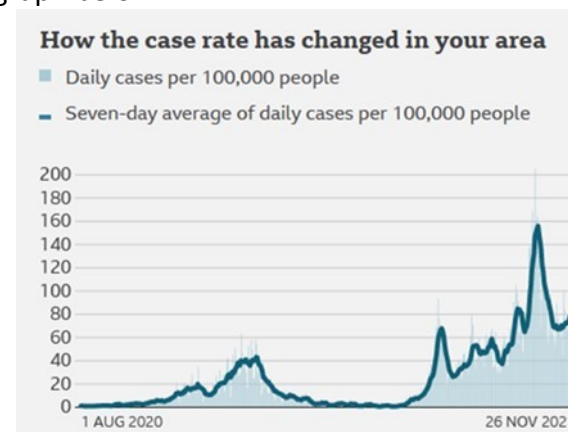
Thank you too to Pam Chapman, who has offered to coordinate the Woodlands news – please email St Katharine's and East Woodlands Hall news to her: friggleltowers@gmail.com.

And finally, may I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year. Let's hope we can finally fill the diary dates page to overflowing again with activities in 2022!

Mandy Crook

COVID-19 update

Planning services and events is difficult at present as COVID infection rates continue to rise and there are concerns about new variants. Mendip area figures still show an ongoing upward trend of infection as in the graph below.



The latest guidance from the House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group (30th November 2021 – COVID-19 Opening and managing church buildings v2.2) includes the following:

"Although social distancing measures and face coverings are no longer required by law in places of worship, the incumbent may still make decisions to encourage or retain some of these measures if they believe doing so is important for safety in their building, or if they judge that it will help people to feel more secure in returning to worship and other uses of the building. The responsibility for making decisions about how to proceed lies with the incumbent. This applies to acts of worship, to events run by the PCC or church community, and to decisions on whether to hire out spaces or allow other events to proceed.

Incumbents should feel empowered to make locally appropriate decisions, including taking different approaches to different types of services and events where the risks may vary. Some activities can also increase the risk of catching or passing on coronavirus. This happens where people are doing activities which generate more particles as they breathe heavily, such as singing or raising their voices."

In planning our services through Christmas we are bearing all this in mind and our policy is that we strongly encourage the wearing of face coverings in our churches, and encourage 1+ metre social distancing from people you may not know, so that those attending church will feel safer and more secure in attending services. We ask that anyone not wearing a face covering should not sing or shout within the buildings, and we restrict unmasked singing to choir members within the chancel area of our churches.

As circumstances change we will review our plans and any change in government or church guidance may change our planned service pattern. We are, however, also in process of planning a safe means by which tea and coffee can be available after the main morning service at St John's and hope to reintroduce this early in the New Year.

Colin Alsbury

Glimpsing Frome at Christmas 200 years ago: Mystery, Floods and Crime

At the time of her death in 1817, Jane Austen had completed 24,000 words of the novel on which the TV series *Sanditon* is based. The recent filming in Frome at Gentle Street and St John's will form part of season 3 when it airs in due course. The Regency era (1811-1820) in which the drama is set was the period when King George III was deemed unfit to rule, and his son was appointed as Regent in his place. Sometimes the Regency period is taken to include the years from 1795 to 1837 in terms of the cultural changes of the period. The following newspaper snippets relate to events at Frome in that period – in the year 1821.

On 6th December 1821 the Worcester Journal recorded: "*Singular Effect of a Will-o'-the-Wisp: On Sunday night, about o'clock, servant girl was returning from a farm-house not quarter of a mile from that where she resides, near Frome, the boisterous weather extinguished the candle in her lantern, and she was left in total darkness in the*

midst of a large field. At this moment, jack-o'-the-lantern appeared; and the poor girl, with every expectation of meeting neighbour, proceeded towards it; on which the ignis fatuus retreated, and led her over several hedges completely in the dark, and in weather the most dreary. Here two of these mysterious visitants appeared, and their delusive attraction the poor creature was led (and frequently at the imminent hazard of her life) many miles through marshes and brakes, until seven o'clock the next morning! when she found herself at a considerable distance from home nearly exhausted."

Two hundred years ago, in 1821, the weather was awful – the amount of rain during November and December caused flooding in many places. On Christmas Day at Greenwich a pressure reading of 948.7mbar was observed – the lowest known reading for the 'London & SE' area. At Frome it was reported on New Year's Eve that "*The flood at Frome, on Sunday morning last, occasioned by the tremendous storm of the preceding evening, was higher than any that has been known in that town for nearly sixty years. The damage sustained amounts to several thousand pounds. Fourteen sheep and three cows were lost on Monday, at Road, in consequence of the flood. There was to-day a heavy fall of snow on Mendip."*

A newspaper on Christmas Eve 1821 reported that "*On Friday sennight the new church, called Christ in Frome, was sacrilegiously entered, means of forcing the back window. — The thief or thieves got into the vestry, and, after drinking several bottles wine, stole a covering for the pulpit, of crimson velvet, edged with crimson silk fringe, and having an inscription in the front; a covering for ditto of brown holland, covering of crimson velvet for the communion table, a covering of brown holland for ditto, two holland surplices, four silk hoods, and one silk scarf, one black gown, two blue cloth cushions, a decanter, a water croft, and two wine glasses, a looking glass, about two dozen pounds of candles, &C."*

Colin Alsbury



Remembering and Remembrance

One of the unexpected, positive outcomes of the pandemic has been my introduction to the webinar. After years of trundling over to Wells for the occasional whole day of Continuing Ministry Development, I now sit for an hour or two at my laptop and receive teaching from some eminent Anglicans. And it's all via Zoom, with its familiar hazards: 'You need to un-mute, Justin!'

There have been lots of good, practical ideas, and our own recent Week of Remembering was inspired by some of them. One of the points hammered home was the important distinction between Remembering and Remembrance. It was pointed out that the concept of the All Souls commemoration is not a familiar one to many, but that this year people would want to remember. And remembering needed to be distinct from the national time of Remembrance.

So we set aside the first week in November to remember all those we had lost. Around the base of the columns in St John's we placed name cards for each of those who had remained on our prayer list since March 2020. There was some incidental grouping: there was the Woodlands group, a choir section and some well-loved members of St John's congregation. There were some prayer and reflection stations. The memorial tree was rescued from Neil's garden and soon carried loving messages. And there were candles and tea lights.

The church remained open as usual every day, but we set aside two hours each day when we had stewards present, and candles and tea lights could be lit. Despite the impression given in popular television programmes, it is not deemed to be a good idea to have lots of brightly burning candles in an empty church! I was so grateful to Mandy's loyal team of stewards who enabled us to have candles lit

safely and who welcomed people into church so sensitively. On Saturday afternoon a surprisingly large gathering of people attended St John's for what in previous years we would have called our All Souls Service. Many names were read aloud, and memorial tea lights were lit all along the nave. The church remained in stillness for some minutes at the end of the service as people sat among the flickering flames.

This year's service differed from other All Souls services we have held. There was a sense that many were conscious of the different sorts of loss we have all experienced since the pandemic began. These words from the service reflected that:

God of all, the world has changed so much.

There is so much that we have lost, and so many that we grieve.

May our tears speak where our words cannot.

God of community, the distances have grown between us.

There are spaces that have we missed and others that we have created.

May our tears speak where our words cannot.

God of the church, we have missed the times to be together and to hear each other's stories and the story of our faith.

May our tears speak where our words cannot.

God of peace, we weep for those whose passing we have not been able to mark, and for those whose grief we cannot ease.

May our tears speak where our words cannot.

On Armistice Day, 11 November, at 11.00am a number of us gathered by St John's War Memorial for the familiar two minutes' silence. This was made more memorable and poignant this year by the sounds which rang round the church: Colin's compilation of recordings of the Last Post and Reveille being played at the Menin Gate as it is each day at 8.00pm and the words of the Kohima epitaph spoken by Ron Stone, who took part in last year's virtual Remembrance Day video, but who has since died. Passers-by gathered at the open West Doors to join us.

Janet Caudwell





Janet Wrayford

Just as we were ending our Week of Remembering, we heard that Janet Wrayford had died. Janet is fondly remembered as the wife of a former Vicar of St John's and St Katharine's, the Revd Geoffrey Wrayford. Many will remember her as the instigator of the Lent Lunches (long before the FACT Lent Lunches) which she hosted in the Vicarage. Some will treasure the memory of her entrance, with Sally White, to accompany the arrival of Geoffrey's (big) birthday cake at a 'do' held in Selwood School Hall. No wife of the Vicar of St John's had ever appeared in such attire ... I can furnish further details for the curious! We were aware that Janet had been unwell for some time. Judith and her son David, who was a contemporary of the Vicarage youngsters, attended Janet's funeral. And we were able to remember her and light a candle for her at our service.

May she, and all those we remember, rest in peace and rise in glory.

Janet Caudwell

St John's School News

This term children and staff have been discussing how we can use 'one kind word' to make a real difference to somebody's day. Lots of displays of kind words have popped up around the school, and it has been wonderful to hear the children using these words to give each other compliments.



NEWS FROM WOODLANDS

St. Katharine's 100 Club

The winners of the November draw were:

1st Jessica Joyce; 2nd Anthony Richards; 3rd Alan Chant

The PCC will again run a 100 Club next year, and application forms can be obtained from Mandy Hulme, 52 Berkley Road, Frome BA11 2EE 01373 461941 or email mhulme2909@aol.com

The annual subscription is £10 and there will be a draw every other month with first prize of £30, second prize £20 and third prize £10. Good luck and thank you for your continued support. **Mandy Hulme**

St. Katharine's Carol Service – Sun 19th December, 11.15am

This year we will have a Carol Service with the choir AND the congregation free to sing also ... Hallelujah! Come along to participate in and enjoy the Christmas music. **Diana Carrington**

NB: The congregation must wear face coverings when singing

It has been a case of 'wrap up warm and search out those woolly gloves' recently, but the heating oil pipeline repair is now complete, oil delivered, and, after a boiler service, we can have heating. Hurrah! You don't know what duties a churchwarden carries out until he or she is 'missing in action'. As we go to press (8th December) we are sad to learn that Michael Joyce has had to return to hospital. We hold him and Allyson in our daily thoughts and prayers.

Every year I think 'What a lovely idea, I'll do that' and dawn breaks as the day arrives ... and I turn over in bed. This year I will be singing Carols with you at Frome Station 6.30am on Tuesday 14th December (unless snow and ice prevent me getting there).

Season's greetings to you all. **Pam Chapman**

Village Hall news: The evening with Valerie Singleton was very entertaining. Attendance was fairly low on a November night, but the bonus was that she could come off the stage and chat with the audience. All quiet for the next couple of months. Fingers crossed for more bookings from Spring 2022 onwards. **Pam Chapman**

Archaeological investigations at St John the Baptist

Thanks to funding from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage we were able to ask Context One Heritage & Archaeology to investigate the areas below the timber flooring at the west end of St John's in March 2021. This work was undertaken as part of a feasibility study for the potential replacement of some of the timber flooring with a new stone floor in line with ideas suggested by the Diocesan Advisory Committee in relation to our reordering of the welcome area at the west end of the church.

Trial pits were opened up on each side of the nave within the second bay from the west end. As was expected, evidence of burials within the church was found: no graves were disturbed and any disarticulated remains encountered were reburied. Testing by a structural engineer found the ground to be quite soft, with propensity to be unstable on the north side, though a little firmer on the south side. Discussions with our church architect and others have yielded the view that any future replacement of timber flooring by stone would need to be by means of installing a supporting beam structure (such as is used when building in Radon affected areas) rather than being supported by the potentially unstable earth floor.

A further pair of trial pits were opened near the centre of the nave close to the line at which the late 12th century building is believed to have ended. Substantial brick walled crypts with stone capping were found in the middle of the nave. Evidence of robber trenches in this area and some remnants of stone walling together with the evidence of instability at the west end allowed an extension of permissions to investigate, and Context One returned in May 2021 to conduct further work funded by St John's Restoration Fund.

The archaeological investigations discovered the west wall and long side walls of a building that pre-



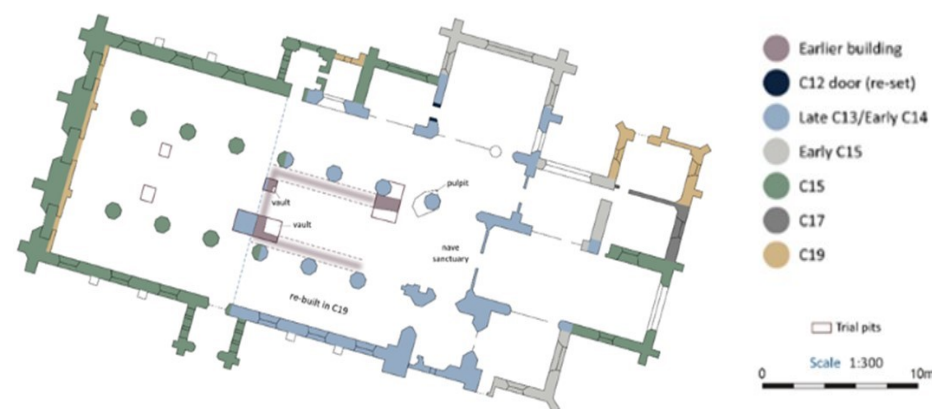
SW corner of earlier building contained within late 12th to late 13th or early 14th century nave

dated the late 12th century church. A significant linear disturbance immediately west of that line appears to indicate where the west end wall of the late 12th century church was removed during the extension of the church to its present size in the early 15th century. A corner of walling on the south side of the nave and related robber trenches on the north side indicate the presence of a stone building exceeding 10 metres in length with an internal width of 4 metres, and with a slightly lower internal floor level than the later medieval church. This earlier building stood on the site prior to the late 12th century rebuilding work done under the direction of the Abbot of Cirencester, the then Rector.

These remains are consistent with being those described by William of Malmesbury in the early 12th century when he wrote of a stone church on the site larger than that at Bradford on Avon: "*Stat ibi adhuc et vicit diuturnitate sua tot secula*" – 'It stands there still surviving the centuries' [Anglia Sacra vol 2 pp7-8]. As yet the date of construction of that stone church remains undetermined, but it is hoped that some samples awaiting radiocarbon dating may yield scientific evidence relating to its lifetime.

Full details can be found on the parish website at www.stjohnsfrome.com/archaeology2021 and a BCC Radio Somerset interview with the Vicar about the findings is available through December at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0b76x0y>

Colin Alsbury



‘I was in prison and you did not visit me’

Articles on people Christians should talk about more

I first talked with Borstal Boys in 1961 when spending a week putting up a fence with them around Lee Abbey in North Devon: they were much better than I was at doing this. We talked about plans for the future and found we had lots of things in common. Last month I talked with a dozen men in prison in Lancaster, as part of research for a Christian charity. During the intervening 60 years I have talked with many hundreds of prisoners and learned that their one common feature is that they need help: help with understanding the consequences of their actions, especially on victims of their violence or robbery; help to get off drug addiction; help with impulsivity and poor decision making.

I am not saying they have been badly done by – most have committed awful offences and should be in prison – but just to lock them up and ignore them is not the answer.

The scale of the problem is enormous, as can be seen from looking at three of the men I recently interviewed:

Adam (names have been changed) has been involved in crime since he was around 10 years old. He is from a very dysfunctional family and himself has five children from three relationships. His most recent sentences were for domestic violence, due to lack of trust in his partner, but he can assault anyone he comes into contact with: gang members, the public, and the police who try to arrest him.

Ben had his first custodial sentence at 12. He has been much involved with gangs and has committed most types of offence, including violence. He has been on drugs since a teenager. However, he comes from a family which is all in work and he was not badly treated as a child. He has four children with the same partner but is no longer with her, as she found him to be unfaithful.

Cohen comes from a crime-ridden and dysfunctional family and has been involved in crime since he was about 11/12 years old. He later became an expert at stealing high-performance cars and selling them

abroad. He got into debt because of his cocaine use and was forced into more criminal activity to clear this debt and is now in prison for drug dealing. Most recently he attempted to leave his life of crime by moving to Wales with his partner and children, but she missed city life and went back to the north-west.

These three all want to get off drugs and stop being criminals. They have signed up to a six-month course run in prisons by a Christian charity which promotes them to challenge and change their own value systems and to take greater responsibilities in the community as their behaviour becomes more pro-social. It does this within a therapeutic community, where democratic processes are encouraged through peer support and community meetings and they have freedom to voice their views of others' behaviour in a respectful and supportive manner. The course promotes positive change without punitive confrontation, but equally encourages honest and respectful peer feedback regarding the personal consequences of anti-social behaviour. Sanctions are in place for repeated transgressions of the rules of their community. The course attempts to replace adversarial relationships between the offenders and authority with ones of collaboration and open communication. They are given personal feedback on a regular basis; they live on a prison wing that is much calmer than most. They are supported when their sentence is over with accommodation and job seeking.

This programme is not perfect: some men drop out but most graduate at the end of the six months. It is a fact that fewer men who have been through this programme re-offend than other prisoners of a similar background. Men do grow up and stop offending if supported: I have a close family member who is a good example of this. The staff who facilitate the course are trained in psychology and social work and are experienced teachers. They find the work stressful but rejoice in every prisoner who completes the course and goes straight afterwards. Their main concern is that neither the prison service as a whole or the general public is very interested in what they do or

recognises the value of their work. This isolation makes their work more difficult.

In his parable about the sheep and the goats, Jesus blames those who ignored him when he was in prison. They complain that they never did this: but he responds: *'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'*

Where does that leave us, in 2021, with 90,000 people in English prisons and as many again being detained while their refugee status is being reviewed? We cannot visit them all, but we could support, by our prayers, our praise and our giving, those who work in prisons as prison officers, psychologists, chaplains or running programmes to inspire prisoners to more pro-social behaviour on release. After all, as has been said by many people: *'there but for the grace of God, go I.'*

Chris Lewis

My Kitchen Notebook

A vegetarian Christmas alternative:

Cheese and Parsnip Roulade

For about fifteen years I spent the Easter weekend catering for the Easter Singers, a group of friends who enjoyed singing the Easter liturgy in glorious (if usually cold) settings. For several years we went to Milton Abbey school where we were able to enjoy the wonderful acoustic of the ancient Abbey. Services would include a meditation with music on Good Friday, Choral Evensong on Saturday and Sunday, and Choral Eucharist on Easter morning. The music changed every year but the menus stayed much the same: on the Sunday evening the singers liked a full roast turkey dinner with all the trimmings, but what to give the vegetarians? My go-to option quickly became this roulade: with its sage and onion stuffing and creamed parsnips filling it beautifully complemented the roast turkey and it worked well with the bread sauce and cranberry relish that the meat eaters were having.

The full recipe can be found in two of Delia's books, her Christmas and Vegetarian collections, and it is also easy to find online (see link

below), so I will only give a brief outline here. If you would like the details but can't access the link, I can easily give you a copy of the full recipe.

<https://www.deliaonline.com/recipes/type-of-dish/vegetarian-recipes/cheese-and-parsnip-roulade-with-sage-and-onion-stuffing>



At first sight it may look to be quite a complicated recipe with a lot of ingredients, but Christmas is a time when it seems to be worth spending a bit of extra time in the kitchen when the resulting dish is so delicious! Most of it can be prepared in advance and the final cooking and assembling can easily be done at the last minute.

It involves steaming **parsnips** and then mashing them with **cream** (it is a Delia recipe so cream and butter are key ingredients!) You then make a **sage and onion stuffing with fresh breadcrumbs** (and more butter!) The roulade itself is a bit like making a white sauce: begin by beating together **flour, butter and milk** in a saucepan and cook until it thickens. You then add **egg yolks and grated cheese** before folding through the whisked **egg whites**. Delia suggests Sage Derby cheese, but this is not easy to find. Her suggested alternative is Lancashire, but I have always used Double Gloucester. Of course, none of these are truly vegetarian cheeses (this is really a meat-substitute dish, vegetarianism has moved on somewhat in recent years!) and you might want to experiment with different vegetarian cheeses.

The roulade is baked in a Swiss-roll tin lined with baking parchment. First you scatter the stuffing over the base, then spread the roulade mixture on top. Bake at 200°C (Mark 6) for about 20–25 minutes. When it comes out you turn it onto another sheet of baking parchment sprinkled with grated Parmesan and chopped, toasted hazelnuts. Spread the creamed parsnips over the top and roll up.

As I am writing this recipe I realise that I haven't made it for several years. I must put it on my Christmas menu this year!

Rosemary McCormick

Cathedrals Cycle Route challenge – a summary of 2021

By A Cyclist

The challenge for 2021 is over until next year – discretion being the better part as far as this cyclist goes. I described the challenge in my last article, and this is by way of an update on progress during last summer and autumn. A description of the challenge and route can be found at <https://www.cyclinguk.org/cathedrals-cycle-route-challenge>

There are now 17 stamps or stickers in my Pilgrim Passport – I've included a sample page – a variety of colours and designs – top left is Christ Church Oxford – which vies with St Paul's for having nowhere immediately adjacent for leaving a bicycle – somewhat tedious. In contrast, Rochester (scallop shell – top left on the right hand page) allowed bikes into the nave and wins my vote as the friendliest of all. Southwark was pretty good too.

I have yet to visit Truro, and the stretch from Truro to Exeter is a 100-mile trip awaiting me in late April next year. I have worked my way up the western cathedrals from Exeter – Wells – Bristol – Gloucester – Hereford and Worcester. Guildford was very frustrating – it's surrounded by dual carriageways and although easy to spot extremely hard to find an underpass to get across the A3. It turned out there was a minor competition between Chichester and Portsmouth as to which was nearer the sea – well, Pompey wins hands down for me – with a SW gale blowing you might be with Hornblower.

The wettest day was between Gloucester and Hereford – the stamp of Christ Church got rather soggy and the ink has run on one or two other stamps – I had been hoping for a photograph taken next to the Elgar and bike statue, but not a soul was about to ask to take the picture. To finish off the year, whilst away in York I cycled between the cathedrals of Bradford and Wakefield – a cold, crisp day which was mostly on a greenway – the West Riding welcomed me in style – this gives me a link in the chain for next year – to York in one

direction and to Sheffield in the other. A spiritual and physical challenge – most satisfying.



Bennett Centre – Fish 'n' Chip Supper

The supper on 12th November with music from Crossing the Rockies was enjoyed by all attending. The band – who had volunteered to play just for their supper – welcomed the chance, post Covid

lockdowns, to play for a real audience rather than a virtual one.

During the meal, David Daniels, for the Centre's management team, identified that a number of requests for a large projection screen and blinds for the Great Hall had been made, and the provision of the blinds would now be the next fundraising project for the Centre. The formal launch of the appeal will be in the New Year once specifications have been finalised, but we expect the cost to be around £3,800.

Many thanks to those who attended or supported with donations, and also Barnacle Bill's, who supplied some great fish and chips.

Pete Connew

Prophet and Poet

Many of you will have heard a reading on marriage at a wedding service from *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran. Another prose poem from the book is on the theme of children, and is sometimes requested for a baptism service.

Gibran was born in 1883 in Lebanon. His family emigrated to the United States in 1885, but he returned to Beirut for his education, and thence back to Boston. He saw himself as a poet and an artist, illustrating many of his writings. He eschewed the description of himself as a philosopher, though all his works are deeply thoughtful and reflective. He and his family were Maronite Christians, but he was deeply influenced by the Sufi tradition in Islam, and other religious and psychological schools of thought. *The Prophet* was first published in 1923 and has remained in print ever since. Gibran died in 1931, so his books are now out of copyright and are available in many editions. *The Prophet* has been translated in over one hundred languages (even Cornish!) and has become one of the best-selling books of all time.

If you have not come across this wonderful little book, then do seek it out. If you know it, and have not seen any of his other writings, then look for *The Garden of the Prophet*, and *Jesus, Son of Man*. In the 1920s, when he was first published, his sympathy for all spiritual traditions was seen by some Christians as heretical and threatening. In our present age I find him profoundly relevant in our troubled world. The fact that his native Lebanon has seen so much suffering is particularly poignant. This quotation reminds us of the importance of realising our true spiritual nature.

You are not enclosed within your bodies, nor confined to houses and fields.

That which is you dwells above the mountain and roves with the wind.

It is not a thing that crawls into the sun for warmth or digs holes into darkness for safety,

But a thing free, a spirit that envelops the earth and moves in the ether.

Kevin Tingay

Christmas Rush

That time again,
my trolley's full
Buying all the Christmas fare,
A turkey crown, a rib of beef,
Crisps and nibbles,
lots to spare.

Christmas crackers
and serviettes,
Paper for wrapping
and cards to send,
Nuts and oranges,
figs and dates
The list goes on,
there seems no end.

In all this rush
it's good to pause
And think about
that special Day,
When shepherds watched
and angels sang
As a Baby lay in a bed of hay.

Megan Carter



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.

Sam Doubtfire

DECEMBER 2021 SERVICES

Sunday 12th December Third Sunday of Advent

8.45am	Morning service	Zoom	Link in pew sheet
9.45am	Holy Communion	St John's	

Sunday 19th December Fourth Sunday of Advent

8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's	
8.45am	Morning service	Zoom	Link in pew sheet
9.45am	Holy Communion	St John's	
11.15am	Carol Service	St Katharine's	
6.30pm	Carol Service	St John's	

Friday 24th December Christmas Eve

11.30pm	Midnight Communion	St John's	
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Saturday 25th December Christmas Day

9.45am	Christmas Communion	St John's	
11.15am	Christmas Communion	St Katharine's	

Sunday 26th December St Stephen - First Sunday of Christmas

8.45am	Morning service	Zoom	Link in pew sheet
9.45am	Morning Service	St John's	

Thanks for all your commitment during the past year
and best wishes to all for Christmas and the New Year



from Colin & Marian and family at the Vicarage

JANUARY 2022 SERVICES

Sunday 2nd January Second Sunday of Christmas

8.45am	Morning service	Zoom	Link in pew sheet
9.45am	Morning service	St John's	
11.15am	Morning service	St Katharine's	

Thursday 6th January Epiphany

10.30am	Holy Communion	St John's	
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Sunday 9th January Baptism of Christ First Sunday of Epiphany

8.45am	Morning service	Zoom	Link in pew sheet
9.45am	Holy Communion	St John's	

Sunday 16th January Second Sunday of Epiphany

8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's	
8.45am	Morning service	Zoom	Link in pew sheet
9.45am	Holy Communion	St John's	
11.15am	Holy Communion	St Katharine's	

Sunday 23rd January Third Sunday of Epiphany

8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's	
8.45am	Morning service	Zoom	Link in pew sheet
9.45am	Holy Communion	St John's	
11.15am	Holy Communion	St Katharine's	

Sunday 30th January Presentation of Christ in the Temple

8.45am	Morning service	Zoom	Link in pew sheet
9.45am	Holy Communion	St John's	

Sunday 6th February

8.45am	Morning service	Zoom	Link in pew sheet
9.45am	Holy Communion	St John's	
11.15am	Holy Communion	St Katharine's	

Services note

Please note that if Covid guidance changes, then service arrangements may need to be varied. Any updates will be posted on the weekly pew sheet and on our website www.stjohnsfrome.com

DIARY DATES – DECEMBER 2021 /JANUARY 2022

December

Wed	14	6.30am	Carols at Frome Station
		Day/Eve	Frome College Christmas Concert (SJ)
Fri	17		St John's School end of term service (SJ)
Sat	18	pm	Wedding (SJ)
Sun	19	11.15am	Carol Service (SK)
		6.30pm	Carol Service (SJ)

January

Wed	14	7.30pm	Alpha course starts (HT)
Sat	15	10.00am	Worship Committee Meeting (SJ)
Sat	21	9.00am	FACT prayers (SJ)
Tues	25	11.00am	Julian Meeting (SJ)

Carols at Frome Station, 14th December

As has become traditional, members of churches across Frome will be gathering to sing carols at Frome Station for the early morning commuters on Tuesday 14th December at 6:30am. This has always been very well received by those taking the early trains and is a great witness to the community. The more singers we have the bigger the impact so do come!



The Alpha course

In January, HOPE Frome and Villages will be hosting Alpha. The course will begin on Wednesday 12th January and will be a combination of in-person and online sessions run over 10 weeks. All are welcome!

Hospitality *Whether it's a group of friends gathered around a kitchen table, or a quick online catch-up, times of connecting are important. It's no different at Alpha. Whether in person over a meal or virtually with a cup of tea, all sessions start with a time to connect, relax and build friendships.*

Talk *The talks are designed to engage and inspire conversation. Each talk is around thirty minutes long and given by a speaker or played as a video. They explore the big issues around faith and unpack the basics of Christianity, addressing questions from Who is Jesus? And How can we have faith? To Why and how do I pray? And How does God guide us?*

Discussion *One of the most important parts of any Alpha: the chance to share thoughts and ideas on the topic, and discuss in a small group. There's no obligation to say anything and there's nothing you can't say (seriously). It's an opportunity to hear from others and contribute your own perspective in an honest, friendly and open environment.*

When and where? *From 12th January 2022 on Wednesdays from 7.30pm. The first meeting will be held at Trinity Church Hall, Frome.*

To join in or for further information please contact Sarah Williamson on fromezoomalpha@outlook.com or [07722 386491](tel:07722386491)

Help needed: We need volunteers to help with the following roles:

- prayer team
- technical help
- table leaders/helpers.
- catering – we will host several meals over the course

We would like to involve as many churches as possible across Frome and the villages. If you would like more details or to chat about helping out at Alpha, do contact Sarah Williamson – details above.

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The Whole Christmas Story – Jo Swinney

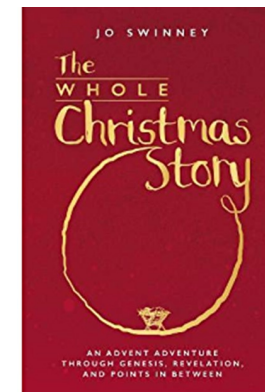
This is an inspiring book providing a short bible passage and devotional for each day, starting on December 1st and continuing to Epiphany (January 6th). It could be used for personal study and/or a home group – it would also be a lovely Christmas gift for family and friends of faith or none.

The book brings a whole new perspective to the Christmas story, starting with the book of Genesis and ending in Revelation. There is a range of bible passages from the familiar to the less familiar, all carefully chosen to illustrate a point. It traces the great biblical metanarrative of creation, the fall, waiting in hope, salvation through Jesus Christ and our new life in Christ, along with the promise of an eternity with God, and it anchors the whole with illustrations from the author's own life, candidly disclosing times of brokenness as well as wholeness and healing. There is a focus on creation and environmental issues arising from her time serving with A Rocha International.

As we emerge from a time of challenge and crisis in the post-COVID era, this is a book which radiates the hope and light of the gospel, communicating in a contemporary theme. The author draws you into the challenges we face both personally as well as on a wider scale, and signposts to the hope offered in the Good News of Jesus 'Emmanuel', which means 'God with us'.

I warmly encourage you to buy several copies of this book! You will be inspired and encouraged!

Dr Richard Loveless



Smile Lines - Christmas Camels

In Jane's Christmas drawing, two of the camels were approaching the inn, over which was pictured a large star. The third camel and its rider were going directly away from it. "Why is the third man going in a different direction?" her mother asked.

Jane replied: "Oh, he's looking for a place to park."

'Far from the Madding Crowd's Ignoble Strife

Thoughts on a country churchyard

'Would you like to be buried in the Vicar's garden?' said my father to me one day in 1955. As a 13-year old I had no wish to be buried anywhere for a long time, but I kept quiet as I realised my father wanted to try out his opposition to a proposal to extend the local churchyard, which would soon be full up. I said there was plenty of room on the north side of the church, but this was dismissed: no one ever got buried there. The Vicar insisted he did not need all his two acres of garden so the first burials soon took place there.

The first grave as you go in is of a boy I had attended school with, who had married at 19 but died suddenly leaving a widow and a small child: 'Sleep well my darling' is engraved on the plain stone. Whenever I see the stone, I wonder why I survived and he did not. Several other graves recall those who died too early: farmers' sons that my brother and I played with or their sisters we fancied. All the stalwarts of the village, as I recall them in the 1950s, are buried there. No cremations; no dissenters; my grandparents and other local farmers, the heads of the nurseries, the village schoolmaster, the quarry owners and managers, their wives and children. The old village organist, who went on playing into his 80s, is buried with his two unmarried sisters. The only tenor in the 1950s choir, a clerk from Cardiff, is also there, as is the only alto, widow of Farmer Tom. Jones the Nursery is also there, as is his daughter and the delightful Dutchman she married, a 1940s refugee from the German occupation of his country. The other two Nurserymen, Ball and Palmer, are also there: Palmer for years gave us a lift in his van to hear Handel's *Messiah* every Good Friday.

The largest grave befits the man buried there: that of the Royal Marines colonel who read the lessons in a booming voice for 20 years. He had retired to the village with his sophisticated wife, a local artist in watercolours, and treated the villagers as he had treated the

men under his command, in a kindly but patronising way. His widow fulfilled his wishes to have a gravestone appropriate to his rank.



By 1960 the choir had become very depleted: singing sunk even further when the one-manual pipe organ I occasionally played was ousted to make room for a growing congregation. This reminded me of the time when Vicar Noel got angry with me experimenting with the limited number of stops on this old organ. As I was playing a hymn during a Sunday School service he marched across in full canonicals to spoil my fun and extinguish the 4' Lieblich Gedacht.

The next priest, Vicar John is also buried there – not the one who spoilt my organ playing – but I wondered for a long time why his wife Joan was not buried with him. My sister solved this mystery recently by saying that she had heard that Joan was still alive, 50 years after her husband had died. She was living in the old vicarage again as it has now become a care home. Looking on the website this week I see that Joan is listed as one of the sick. She must be nearly a hundred.

Two close graves reminded me of an incident that caused some gossip. The wife of a church member started an affair with another church member. This became public knowledge and caused a fist fight between the two men in the local pub. After a few months of confusion, the lady concerned stopped the affair, returned to her husband, and everybody pretended nothing had ever happened.

In my childhood the village squire – who was also called Lewis – had

the big house and the money that went with his family. His grave reminded me of when I took my father for a drink in my first break from University. Squire Lewis was propping up the bar in the village pub, as he often did. He saw my father and shouted. 'Another Mr Lewis: we have the most patriotic name in the country: short for London, England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland.'

The grave of the local District Guide Commissioner reminded me of a behaviour pattern of the high church Vicar Noel that probably only I knew about. The Guide Commissioner was a Low Church lady, who gave a large sum of money to the church every year, on which the PCC relied. She hated the Sanctus bell to be rung during Communion and had threatened to go elsewhere if she heard it again. At the very last minute before each service the Vicar would turn to me, as altar boy, to say 'OK for Sanctus Bell today' or 'No bell today' depending on whether the lady in question had come to the service or not.

As you get further from the churchyard entrance, the names become less familiar, reflecting families that moved into the village since I left. The village has changed greatly since the 1950s. The farms have been merged and many farmhouses converted into homes for the wealthy. The village is three times the size it was and the social makeup is now much more towards the professional classes, who commute to Cardiff, Bristol and even to Birmingham each day. The congregation, which grew in the 1970s, has now reverted to its old size. The parish itself has been merged into a wide area ministry which has two priests instead of seven in the 1950s.

You may ask, 'Why write about them, if no one buried here was famous and few visit their graves?' The answer is an important lesson for us all: as George Eliot says: "that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs."

Chris Lewis

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A message from Somerset Bus Partnership

Over the past decade, public transport has not been a priority for Somerset County Council. Bus journeys in the county have fallen by 43% over the past decade, and we now have the second lowest bus journeys per head in the country, and our bus services have the lowest satisfaction score.

But the government's Bus Back Better strategy has prompted a major rethink, with £3 billion of funding for bus improvements to be shared out between transport authorities across England (outside London). Somerset County Council has responded by developing an ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), and is asking the government for a £163 million grant to fund it. See <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport-strategy>. (The BSIP document can be found under the National Bus Strategy Section.)

Even if the full amount of the Somerset bid is not granted, it is a recognition by Somerset County Council that its bus services need major improvement. Transport is the biggest emitter of carbon emissions in Somerset, accounting for 44.1% of Somerset's total emissions. Encouraging a switch to public transport and away from single occupancy private cars will reduce our carbon footprint.

Somerset Bus Partnership was set up so that the voices of bus users from across Somerset are heard. We now have over 80 'bus representatives' who ensure we understand and reflect the needs of towns and parishes across the county. We still need some more representatives. Check if your parish still needs a representative: <https://www.somersetbuspartnership.co.uk/representative>

Somerset Bus Partnership will continue to work with bus users and will hold Somerset County Council to the ambitious and worthy goals in the Somerset Bus Improvement Plan.

If you would like to get in contact with us, drop us an email: somersetbuspartnership@gmail.com or follow us on Facebook, or via our website: <https://www.somersetbuspartnership.co.uk>

Peter Travis, Co Chair – Somerset Bus Partnership

Inspired to Read

The Mitford Murders by Jessica Fellowes

I have a big pile of unread books waiting for me to open them – many different authors and genres – but at this time of year there is nothing I enjoy more than to sit in front of the fire with a cat on my lap and a good detective novel. Jessica Fellowes has so far published five books in her *Mitford Murders* series, and I shall certainly be adding her latest one to my Christmas wish list.



About the Author

Jessica Fellowes began her career as a journalist, writing articles for *The Mail on Sunday* before becoming Deputy Editor of *Country Life*. She is the niece of the creator of *Downton Abbey*, Julian Fellowes and has written several companion books to the popular television series.

From the cover

Louisa Cannon dreams of fleeing London, and most of all her dangerous uncle. Her escape is a job at Asthall Manor, where she becomes nursery maid, chaperone and confidante to the Mitford sisters, especially sixteen-year-old Nancy.

But then a nurse – Florence Nightingale Shore, goddaughter of her famous namesake – is killed on a train, and Louisa and Nancy find themselves entangled with a murderer who will do anything to hide their secret ...

A short extract

Just behind her, the grand department store Peter Jones had put a tree in every window that faced out on to the street, red and green ribbons carefully tied onto the branches and wooden decorations hanging down from the dark green firs: miniature painted rocking-horses,

spinning silver stars, golden eggs, striped candy canes. Each item a perfect facsimile of a child's fantasy brought to luscious life now that war and rationing was over.

This may not be great literature – there are passages which are not that well written – but it is a good detective story in the Agatha Christie tradition with, in my opinion, an interesting mix of fact and fiction. The murder on a train of Florence Nightingale Shore, a nurse recently returned from duty with the Army Nursing Staff in France, was never solved and has been the subject of several books and even a TV series. She was the goddaughter of Florence Nightingale, hence her name, and one article claims that she was the richest person ever to be murdered on a British train (which seems a rather strange claim to fame!).

In her novel Jessica Fellowes includes several of the facts of the case. The victim was seen off at Victoria Station by her close friend Mabel Rogers, and just as the train was about to leave (its destination was Hastings) a young man got into the same compartment. Further down the line, at Polegate, three workmen entered the same carriage, and they raised the alarm. It was later revealed that a man resembling the man seen in the compartment by Mabel Rogers had been seen jumping down from the train at Lewes where the platform was shorter and the particular compartment was not pulled up alongside. The theft of Miss Shore's jewellery and the fact that she had been hit with a blunt instrument are also part of the fictional investigation. Jessica Fellowes introduces the Mitford family. Much of the novel is set at their family home of Asthall Manor in the Cotswolds where the fictional central character Louisa Cannon is employed as a nursery maid after she escapes the controlling influence of her brutal uncle who has been trying to involve her in some of his criminal dealings. As one might expect from Ms Fellowes, she creates a lively household within which the relationships between family and staff will be very familiar to anyone who has enjoyed *Downton Abbey*, and the period detail is well-researched. Louisa is the link between fact and fiction. At the beginning of the book she is on the same train as Florence



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Nightingale Shore (no spoilers though) and she meets a young railway policeman, Guy Sullivan, who becomes involved in trying to solve the crime. Louisa becomes the confidante of 16-year-old Nancy Mitford, and the two girls help Guy track down the killer – so at least in this book the murder is solved.

Jessica Fellowes has so far written five books in this series, and in each one a different Mitford sister takes centre stage so I am confident in predicting that there will be a sixth book! I hope you enjoy them as much as I do!

My plans for the next few issues are:

February: *The unlikely pilgrimage of Harold Fry* by Rachel Joyce.

March: *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson

April: *The House by the Dvina* by Eugenie Fraser.

If you have any thoughts about these books or would like to suggest a title for future reading, please remember that the magazine deadline is the 15th of the month!

Rosemary McCormick



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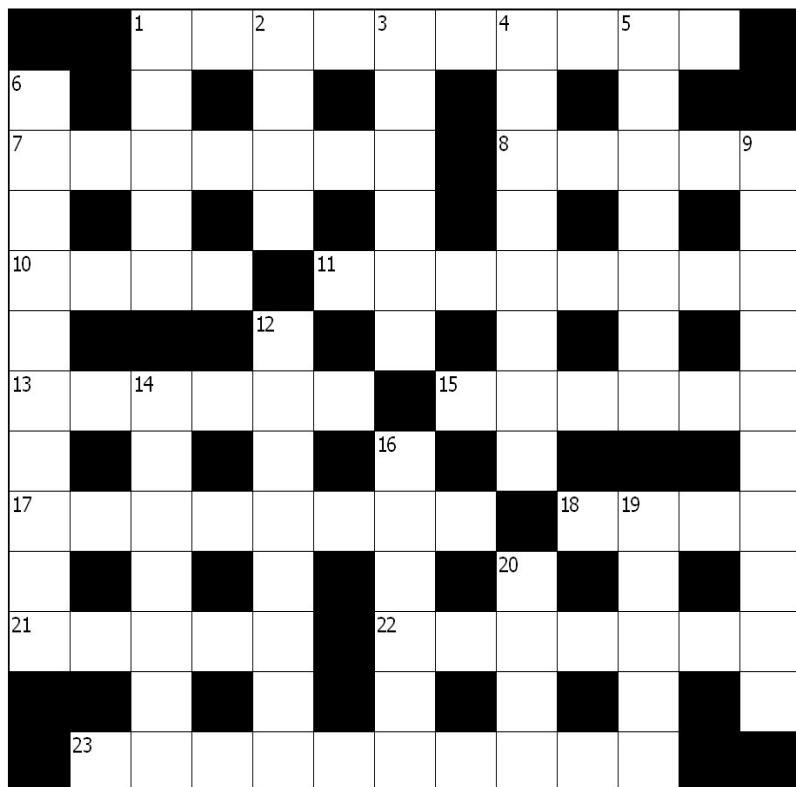
DECEMBER WORD SEARCH

Christmas is nearly here! Two thousand years ago the Jews were longing for the coming of their Messiah. The Old Testament had promised that when He came, He would preach good news to the poor, bind up the broken hearted, proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, comfort all who mourn and to bestow on His people a crown of beauty instead of ashes. Jesus did all those things. He was and is the Son of God, and whoever has seen Him has seen the Father. Whoever believes in Him will have the best gift of all – His Spirit within them, which gives them eternal life.

O	R	S	H	O	U	U	G	U	I	S	T	
U	E	T	R	O	G	N	N	W	O	R	C	
J	I	H	J	T	N	S	E	N	A	B	N	Messiah
O	E	N	G	H	I	S	W	E	M	E	A	broken
D	K	S	R	O	G	L	H	K	E	A	I	heart
O	A	T	U	U	N	E	O	O	S	U	R	freedom
C	P	R	I	S	O	N	E	R	S	T	E	darkness
E	R	O	K	A	L	M	V	B	I	Y	H	favour
H	N	F	E	N	S	E	E	N	A	R	T	prisoners
S	G	M	O	D	E	E	R	F	H	A	A	comfort
R	U	O	V	A	F	S	E	H	S	A	F	mourn
E	R	C	D	S	B	E	S	T	O	W	M	bestow
												crown
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												ashes
												Son
												God
												Jesus
												seen
												Father
												whoever
												longing
												thousand



DECEMBER CROSSWORD



The Bible version used in this crossword is the NIV.

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)

Answers to November's crossword:

ACROSS: 1, Charioteers. 9, Immoral. 10, Cairo. 11, SAE. 13, Inns. 16, Firm. 17, Accuse. 18, East. 20, Ogam. 21, Judith. 22, Seba. 23, Msgr. 25, Den. 28, Inane. 29, Entreat. 30, Chrysoprase.

DOWN: 2, Human. 3, Rare. 4, Oils. 5, Ecce. 6, Raising. 7, Citizenship. 8, Commemorate. 12, Assail. 14, Sat. 15, Scouse. 19, Sabbath. 20, Ohm. 24, Seeds. 25, Deny. 26, Nero. 27, Star.

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SERVICES ROTA FOR DECEMBER 2021

Date/Week	Services	Readings	Duties for the 9.45am service at SJ				St Katharine's
			Readers	Prayers	Sidespersons	Sac	
Sunday 5 December Second Sunday of Advent	8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Holy Communion</u>	Malachi 3.1-4 Philippians 1.3-11 Luke 3.1-6	M Alsbury	J Caudwell	M Smitherman J Davies		8.45am Zoom service 11.15am Holy Communion
Sunday 12 December Third Sunday of Advent	8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Holy Communion</u>	Zephaniah 3.14-end Philippians 4.4-7 Luke 3.7-18	N McCormick	A Crook	A Crook R Frooms		8.45am Zoom service
Sunday 19 December Fourth Sunday of Advent	8.30am Holy Communion 8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Holy Communion</u> 6.30pm Carol Service	Micah 5.2-5a Hebrews 10.5-10 Luke 1.39-45 (46-55)	The Hudson Family	C Alsbury	C Holland G Fone		8.45am Zoom service 11.15am Carol Service
Friday 24 December Christmas Eve	11.30pm Midnight Mass	To be confirmed	To be arranged				
Saturday 25 December Christmas Day	9.45am Holy Communion	To be confirmed	To be arranged				11.15am Holy Communion
Sunday 26 December First Sunday of Christmas John, Apostle & Evangelist	8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Morning Service</u>	1 Samuel 2.18-20, 26 Colossians 3.12-17 Luke 2.41-end	To be arranged				8.45am Zoom service
Sunday 2 January 2022 Epiphany	8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Holy Communion</u>	Isaiah 60.1-6 Ephesians 3.1-12 Matthew 2.1-12	B Essex	A Crook	D Daniels J Osborne		8.45am Zoom service 11.15am Holy Communion
CA - Vicar: Colin Alsbury JC - Lay Reader: Janet Caudwell RF - Lay Reader: Ross Frooms			Thurs 2 December - 10.30am Holy Communion				

SERVICE ROTA FOR JANUARY 2022

Date/Week	Services	Readings	Duties for the 9.45am service at SJ				St Katharine's
			Readers	Prayers	Sidespersons	Sa	
Sunday 2 January 2022 Epiphany	8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Morning Service</u>	Isaiah 60.1-6 Ephesians 3.1-12 Matthew 2.1-12	B Essex	A Crook	D Daniels J Osborne		8.45am Zoom Service 11.15am Morning Service
Sunday 9 January Baptism of Christ First Sunday of Epiphany	8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Holy Communion</u>	Isaiah 43.1-7 Acts 8.14-17 Luke 3.15-17, 21-22	R McCormick	C Alsbury	K Yeaman M Smitherman		8.45am Zoom Service
Sunday 16 January Second Sunday of Epiphany	8.30am Holy Communion 8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Holy Communion</u>	Isaiah 62.1-5 1 Corinthians 12.1-11 John 2.1-11	K Yeaman	L Bushell	G Fone J Davies		8.45am Zoom Service 11.15am Holy Communion
Sunday 23 January Third Sunday of Epiphany	8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Holy Communion</u>	Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10 1 Corinthians 12.12-31a Luke 4.14-21	S Keyes	J Caudwell	A Crook B Essex		8.45am Zoom Service
Sunday 30 January Presentation of Christ in the Temple	8.30am Holy Communion 8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Holy Communion</u>	Malachi 3.1-5 Hebrews 2.14-end Luke 2.22-40	C Holland	A Crook	J Bruges C Holland		8.45am Zoom Service
Sunday 6 February Fourth Sunday before Lent	8.45am Zoom Service <u>9.45am Holy Communion</u>	Isaiah 6.1-8 (9-end) 1 Corinthians 15.1-11 Luke 5.1-11	E Gilbert	C Alsbury	R Frooms J Davies		8.45am Zoom Service 11.15am Holy Communion
CA - Vicar: Colin Alsbury JC - Lay Reader: Janet Caudwell RF - Lay Reader: Ross Frooms			Thurs 6 January - 10.30am Holy Communion Sun 16 January - 8.30am Holy Communion Tues 25 January - 11.00am Julian Meeting				

DECEMBER SUDOKU

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YOUR MAGAZINE TEAM

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We have tried to get all the key contacts on these lists; if you have any corrections or suggestions to be added to the list please contact the editors.

