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December 2025

Each year the John Lewis Christmas advert has become something of a cultural moment. This year's offering, *Where Love Lives*, tells the story of a father and son who struggle to find the right words for their relationship. On Christmas morning, the father discovers a gift: a vinyl record of Alison Limerick's 1990s classic, *Where Love Lives*. Finally, father and son embrace, wordlessly expressing what they could not say aloud. The advert closes with the tagline: "If you can't find the words, find the gift." It's a moving reminder that gifts can speak when words fail. Yet as Christians, we know that at Christmas God did something even more profound: He gave us the Word itself, made flesh. St John's Gospel begins with those majestic lines: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:1,14). Where human language falters, God's gift of Jesus speaks volumes. In Christ, God communicates His love not through symbols or gestures alone, but through a living presence among us.

The John Lewis advert shows a son reaching out to his father with music, bridging a gap of silence. At Christmas, God bridges the infinite gap between heaven and earth. The gift of Jesus is not simply a token of affection, but the very presence of God in our midst. Jesus is both the Word *and* the Gift - the message and the medium. He is the one who makes the Father known, who embodies love in action, who reconciles us when words are not enough.

January often feels like a quieter, more subdued month after the festivities. Yet the gift of Christ is not seasonal. The Word made flesh continues to dwell among us, offering light in our darkness and hope in our weariness. As we step into a new year, we are called to carry that gift forward—to embody love in our own relationships, to speak words of kindness, and when words fail, to let our actions communicate God's grace.

And as Epiphany reminds us, the Magi brought gifts to the Christ child, recognising Him as King. Their journey shows us that the right response to God's gift is to offer ourselves in return. So as 2026 approaches, may we bring our lives as gifts to Christ - lives of worship, service, and love—trusting that He remains the Word who speaks, and the Gift who saves.

May Christ, the Word and the Gift, dwell richly in you this season and throughout the new year.

God bless

Tuesdays at 09.15 Morning Prayer on Zoom. See Joyce for details

Sunday 7th December **Advent 2**

10.00 Holy Communion

Readings: Isaiah 11: 1-10

Matthew 3: 1-12

16:00 Blue Christmas

Sunday 14th December **Advent 3**

10.00 Holy Communion

Readings: Isaiah 35:1-10

Matthew 11:2-11

18:30 Carol Service

Thursday 18th December **School Nativity**

16:30

Sunday 21st December **Advent 4**

10.00 Holy Communion

Readings: Isaiah 7:10-16

Matthew 1:18-25

Wednesday 24th December **Christmas Eve**

16:00 Christmas Celebration

23:30 Midnight Mass

Readings: Hebrews 1: 1-4

John 1:1-14

Thursday 25th December **Christmas Day**

10:00 Holy Communion

Readings: Isaiah 9:2-7

Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

Sunday 28th December **Christmas 1**

10:00 Holy Communion

Readings: Isaiah 31:15-17

Matthew 2:13-23

Sunday 7th December 16:00 Blue Christmas- A service for anyone who finds Christmas a difficult time of year, whether through illness, bereavement, relationship difficulties, job worries or any other reason. It is a quiet reflective service with an opportunity to light a candle and place a prayer star on the tree.

If you have any **prayer requests**, please contact Revd. Katrina Robinson-Brown. In November we will be praying for people who live on: Laburnum Grove, Laurel Bank, Lea Terrace and Lidgett Close

Eco tip for December: A Sustainable Christmas dinner

Food production is the biggest cause of tropical deforestation as trees are cleared to meet demand for crops such as palm oil that is used all over the world. During the festive season an estimated 42 million plates of food are thrown away in the UK each year^[2]. Reducing waste, helps to reduce demand. Cut waste by planning ahead - be realistic about how much food you need, freeze food if you are able to, and use up leftovers. Instead of buying new disposable plastic wrap (clingfilm), use Tupperware or plastic food containers saved after takeaways), aluminium foil, and wax cloth covers to keep leftovers nice and fresh! If you're visiting friends or family, remember to take some containers with you so you can help share the leftovers and take them home._

Baby and Toddlers every Tuesday morning term time

Christmas Coffee Morning 10am-noon
Saturday 13th December, with the band

18th December School nativity 16:30
24th December: The Christmas Celebration at 16:00 is for everyone of all ages, especially families/children and will feature the Christmas story, lots of Christmas carols/songs and maybe a surprise or two!

Draw results:

November Draw Results:

1st prize: No. 56, Ian Ambler, £15
2nd prize: No. 47, Gill Millman, £10
3rd prize: No 45, Robin Newall, £5

St Aidans Charity Shop – Open:

Monday-Friday 10am-4pm
Saturday 10am-1pm

Donations for the refuge

Any items of food, household cleaning materials or toiletries are gratefully received by the Refuge. The Refuge have limited storage space so at the moment these donations are all that can be managed. Please can any use by dates be checked on donations.