

WEEKLY NEWS



Come, Jesus, be with us

MATTHEW 1.18-25

In a dream, an angel tells Joseph that Mary's child is from the Holy Spirit. He is to take her as his wife and name the child Jesus. He will not only be Immanuel, God with us – as prophesied by Isaiah – but the one who saves his people from their sins.

In the midst of the festive season, it is so easy to overlook the one at the heart of Christmas – Jesus. This week's readings have Jesus very much at the centre and remind us of the good news of his coming, news that was even better than expected. We will explore what Jesus' presence with us means, and how we can help others to know the Jesus who comes to be with them.

How to care for your real Christmas tree

If you want your tree to last as long as possible this year, the following should help:

Cut off about half an inch from the bottom of the trunk. This opens the pores of the tree. Then place it outside in a cool shaded place, standing in water until required.

Once you have brought it in, place it in a water-holding stand, well away from direct heat such as radiators. Top up the container every day – you will be amazed how much water the tree drinks. These ideas come from the British Christmas Tree Growers Association (BCTGA)

SUNDAY 21ST

DECEMBER 2025

ADVENT 4

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 7.10-16

PSALM

PSALM 80.1-8,18 - 20

SECOND READING

ROMANS 1.1-7

GOSPEL

MATTHEW 1.18-25

SERVERS

PETER HENRY

DAVE GILL

FIRST READING

RITA JAGGER

PSALM

ALASTAIR ROSS

SECOND READING

PETER HENRY

INTERCESSIONS

CHRIS ROSS

SIDES PERSON

LINDA FIRTH PAULINE
CHESLETT

JUNIOR CHURCH

ANTHEA GEE (L) & FIONA
LAMB (A)

Collect Advent 4

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

THIS WEEKS HYMNS

Processional

From heaven you came

Gradual

Immortal, invisible

Offertory

Jesus the name high over all

Communion

Jesus, name above all names

Lord Jesus Christ

Recessional

Lo he comes, with clouds descending

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

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 behaviour; to strive for heaven's values of justice, peace, equality, love and harmony.

As we approach a New Year, we would do well to respond to Micah's words: *What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

In your prayers this week....

Anne and her family; Anthony; Jean Angell; Lesley; Piper Fletcher; Alyson Healey; Peter Jeffery; Terry Marsden; Michael Parker; Maralyn Pawson; Ruben; Carol Sharp; Karen Spencer; Vanessa Starsmore; Christopher, Stella and Will Streidling; Victor Smyth; Kelly Swift; Christine Russell; Lisa White.



This weeks flowers are
Christmas Flowers

If you would like flowers in church either in memory of a loved one or to celebrate a special day please speak to Angela W

Quotes

If you pray for another, you will be helped yourself. - Yiddish proverb

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give. - Duane Hulse.

Strange to see how a good dinner and feasting reconcile everybody. - Samuel Pepys

Of all the awkward people in your house or job there is only one whom you can improve very much. - C S Lewis

From the Parish Prayer list:

For the needs of our church; Rosevale View; Saffron Close; Scar Head Road; Smiths Yard; South View; Spring Bank; Spring Garden; Spring Terrace.

ECO CHURCH AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT



This Christmas, try wrapping presents in reusable materials like scarves, tea towels, or recycled paper. It reduces waste and adds a personal touch!

Next week

SUNDAY 28TH DECEMBER

2025

CHRISTMAS 1

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 63.7-9

PSALM

PSALM 148

SECOND READING

HEBREWS 2.10-18

GOSPEL

MATTHEW 2.13-23

SERVERS

DAVE GILL

ANTHEA GEE

FIRST READING

PAUL HEALEY

PSALM

GLENIS MCCARTHY

SECOND READING

DAVE GILL

INTERCESSIONS

PETER HENRY

SIDES PERSON

KEVIN HENRY & JACKIE GILL

JUNIOR CHURCH

DONNA (L) & ALYSSA (A)



DIARY

Monday

9:30 Morning Prayer in church

Tuesday

10am Coffee Morning
11.30am Midweek service of Holy Communion

Wednesday

4pm Crib Service
11.30pm Midnight Mass

Thursday

10.30am Holy Communion

Friday

Saturday

10am Coffee Morning

Sunday

10.30am Holy Communion

H	L	T	H	G	I	R	T	B	A	L	E		Born	Crucified
I	M	A	K	A	U	T	J	U	S	T	R		Virgin	Pierce
Y	I	I	M	L	N	U	A	T	C	R	M		Immanuel	Hands
O	N	L	E	E	E	D	O	O	D	B	U		Bethlehem	Feet
G	O	R	H	U	R	A	S	E	L	U	T		Ruler	Gloat
I	D	D	E	N	I	G	R	I	V	G	E			
G	N	I	L	A	E	H	N	S	P	S	E		Israel	Rise
M	A	V	H	M	L	D	D	L	I	H	B		David	Dead
F	B	A	T	M	J	M	E	R	E	O	I		King	Abandon
E	A	D	E	I	F	I	C	U	R	C	A		Just	Decay
E	D	E	B	L	A	B	A	N	C	T	I		Right	Realm
T	I	E	E	D	E	A	D	Y	D	E	T	F		
													Healing	
													Blind	
													Deaf	
													Lame	
													Mute	

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

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)

This Christmas, do you have enough?

At the opening of Bach's Cantata No. 82 a solo bass voice begins to sing the aria 'Ich habe genug' - (I have enough) – a paraphrase of Simeon's Song 'Now Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace... for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'

Simeon – the bass voice – realises that he is complete, he has enough, now he has beheld the infant Jesus, even though our salvation has yet to be completed in the adult Christ. Bach's paraphrase, slow and meditative, takes, as it were, the words out of Simeon's mouth into the witness of the singer, reminding all who listen that this is a timeless truth: in Christ I have enough.

The rest of the cantata – another four movements covering a total of about 25 minutes – takes up the theme of longing to being united fully with Christ. That is enough, that is completion.

Enough. Complete. These words probably rarely fall from our lips as an experienced truth, either in relation to what we have, what we want, and importantly, who we are. And yet we've assented to this concept of the all-sufficiency of God in countless hymns that we've sung Sunday by Sunday since, well.... forever. Christ 'my all in all'.

At best it remains an aspiration, for we live at a time when the whole weight of our culture is to divert our baptism promises, our reliance on God into reliance on stuff, gewgaws in infinite variety.

No more so than at Christmas, when we are urged to splurge, and then splurge some more. 'Is this present good enough for our Jo? Maybe I should buy him something else as well.... And do you think a turkey and beef will be enough? Maybe another two dozen pigs in blankets?'

I'm not trying to be a kill-joy here. Our best times are around food, with friends, and Christmas is the one time of the year that we make an effort to be with friends and family. But the whole of so-called western civilisation is posited on the fact that we have to have more, and it reaches its anxious climax at Christmas.

Any advert you happen to catch will convince you of this truth; western capitalism depends on you buying stuff, needed or not. It tells us: "You will never feel complete, be complete, unless you have this product. And then let me draw your attention to this, a 'must have'"...

But the fantasy world which supports this compulsion to 'must have' is that the earth has infinite resources, and we can go on forever fulfilling the fantasy of all our wants being satisfied from Amazon or Temu or wherever. We're unwilling to face the fact of the earth's finite resources, either for ourselves or our grandchildren. It is only God who has infinite resources.

As Christians we're supposed to be alive to this lie, that the gewgaws of this world can fulfil us. But many of us still get sucked into the myth of stuff as being the be-all and end-all of life.

Thank God, then, for the irritant of our faith in this materially obsessed world. It reminds us that in Christ 'I have enough'. Let me just slow down and take that in again. In Christ I have enough. From Genesis to Revelation the message is 'God will provide, and I will have enough'.

I often pray the words of St Teresa of Avila as a reminder, as a brake on my own unfettered wants. It's more needed than ever at Christmas, when God disturbs all our complacencies by breaking into this world in human form, and proving to us in the life of Jesus that God is enough. If we're counter-cultural enough to call ourselves Christian, maybe it's a prayer we all take to heart, to mind, to soul.

Let nothing disturb you, nothing affright you; All things must pass, God never changes. Patience achieves all things. Those who have God lack nothing- God alone suffices. (Teresa of Avila)



Christingle

This years Christingle service is being held at 4pm this afternoon if you would like a copy please speak to Peter. Each book is £15.00

Remember your loved ones this Christmas

You're invited to honour and remember those dear to you by adding their name to our Memorial Tree in the church entrance. Tags are available on the table — please take one and add your message with love.

Fresh from the word 2026

If you would like a copy please speak to Peter. Each book is £15.00

Prayer List Update

As we approach the New Year, it's a time to reflect and renew our prayer list.

A new list will begin in January. If you know someone who would like to be included, please speak to Anthea or Peter.

All names currently on the list will be removed as we start afresh, so please let us know if you would like any names to be re-added.

Thank you for helping us keep our prayers thoughtful and up to date.

Church Flowers

If you have ever wondered how our flower rota works, it is actually very simple. The flowers in church each Sunday are given as a gift – an offering from members of the congregation.

A flower rota is displayed on the noticeboard in the Community Room, showing all the Sundays of the year. You are welcome to add your name at any time.

Flowers may be placed in church in memory of loved ones, to mark personal celebrations, or for church festivals and special occasions. They bring beauty to our church and greatly enhance the atmosphere of our worship space.

We also have a flower fund, and anyone is welcome to contribute. Donations may be given to celebrate birthdays, wedding anniversaries, or other special events.

Our Flower Co-ordinator is Angela Wilkins. Please speak to her if you would like to arrange flowers in church for a special occasion.

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 24th December - Crib service 4.00pm

Wednesday 24 December – Midnight Communion, 11.30pm.

Thursday 25 December – Short Christmas day service, 10.30am.

Christmas Eve

4pm

Crib Service

11:30pm

** Joint service at Christ Church with
the Ryburn Benefice and St. Pauls **

Christmas Day

10:30am

** A short reflective service of Holy
Communion on Christmas morning **



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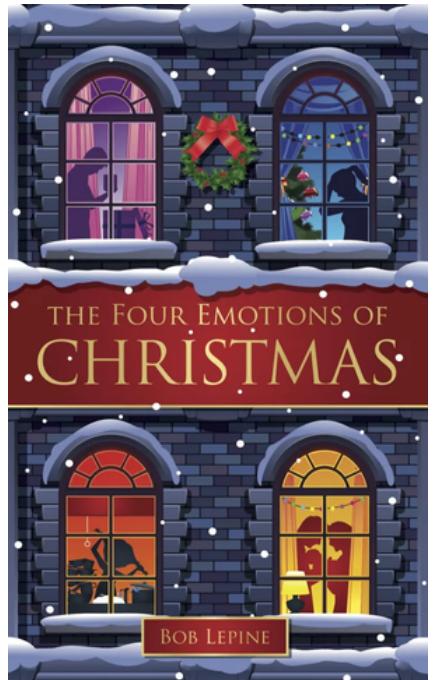
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Church News 2025 Year A

The Four Emotions of Christmas
By Bob Lepine, 10 Publishing, £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.



Smile Lines

That 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."



Church News 2025 Year A

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**Ordinary people Sharing God's love in our world.
Growing in faith. Living by prayer. Loving God's word.
Living Loving Learning.**