



The Parish of Stockport and Brinnington
ST MARY'S - ST THOMAS' - ST LUKE'S



Artwork by Deborah Noble

Welcome to the last edition of our parish magazine for 2022.



WARMEST THOUGHTS AND BEST WISHES
FOR A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS AND A VERY
HAPPY NEW YEAR

Whatever you are doing over the festive season, if you are at home or going away — spending time with relatives and friends or just being on your own — we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

What a difference a year makes— this time last year we announced that Lynne was to become the Bishop of Barking leaving us on the 16th January 2022 and this year we are delighted that a relatively short interregnum is coming to an end and we prepare to officially welcome the Rev Chris Blunt as our new Rector on the 9th January 2023.

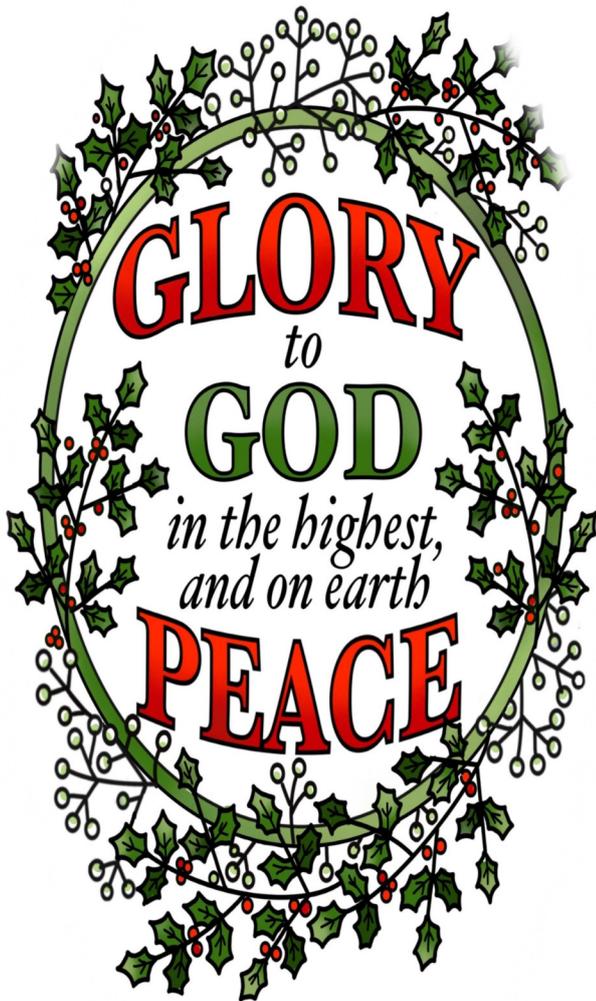
It has certainly been a year of change during 2022—not only with Lynne moving to the Diocese of Chelmsford - but with Jess (our Associate Minister) moving to pastures new as vicar at St Saviours, Great Moor and our various ordinands moving on too—as they must for further training and ordination. The Parish Ministry Team shrank somewhat leaving Marie (Curate) with Brenda (Reader Emeritus) holding the fort with some welcome support from the “home team” as well as visiting clergy, lunch-time speakers etc.

Details of all our Advent & Christmas 2022 services and other activities are now available and can be found in this magazine as well as “on line” - information given correct at time of publication / printing but as ever may be subject to amendment. So do check for updated information.



Artwork by Francesca Ross

We are delighted to be able to welcome back during December various groups (some not seen since the start of Covid) and hope that as many of you as possible will be able to join us (and them) at either St Mary's, St Thomas' or St Luke's— Everyone Welcome.



Luke 2:14

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’.



Diary Dates—Christmas Programme 2022



Saturday, 3rd December	St Mary's Mini Fayre	St Mary's in the Marketplace	10.30am
Sunday, 4th December	Holy Communion	St Thomas' Church	9.30am
		St Mary's in the Marketplace	10.30am
		St Luke's, Brinnington	10.30am
	Ex-Services Association with Stockport Sea Cadets Carol Service	St Mary's in the Marketplace	3.00 pm
Tuesday, 6th December	Lunch-time Service	St Mary's in the Marketplace	12.15pm
Thursday, 8th December	Mayor of Stockport Carol Service with St Joseph's School	St Mary's in the Marketplace	12.30pm
	Beechwood Cancer Care Christmas Carol and Dedication Service	St Mary's in the Marketplace	7.00pm
Friday, 9th December	AGE UK Stockport Carol Service with Warren Wood School	St Mary's in the Marketplace	1.30pm
Sunday, 11th December	Holy Communion	St Thomas' Church	9.30am
		St Luke's, Brinnington	10.30am
	Stockport Homes—Toy & Gift Service	St Mary's in the Marketplace	10.30am
	Stockport Youth Orchestra Concert	St Mary's in the Marketplace	7pm
Tuesday, 13th December	Lunch-time Service	St Mary's in the Marketplace	12.15pm
Friday, 16th December	<i>Vernon Park School Rehearsal</i>	St Mary's in the Marketplace	9.30am
		No public access	
	Carol Concert featuring Offerton Methodist Choir	St Mary's in the Marketplace	1.00pm
	Foodie Friday	Carol Singing outside St Mary's	6.30pm
Sunday, 18th December	Holy Communion	St Thomas' Church	9.30am
		St Mary's in the Marketplace	10.30am
		St Luke's, Brinnington	10.30am
Monday, 19th December	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols with the Bishop of Stockport	St Thomas' Church	7.30pm
Tuesday, 20th December	Tuesday Lunch-time service	St Mary's in the Marketplace	12.15pm
Wednesday, 21st December	Vernon Park School Carol Service	St Mary's in the Marketplace	9.30am
Saturday, 24th December Christmas Eve	Christingle Service	St Luke's Brinnington	3.30pm
	Midnight Communion	St Thomas' Church	11.30pm
Sunday 25th December Christmas Day	All Parish Service	St Mary's in the Marketplace	10.30am
Monday, 26th December Boxing Day	Bank Holiday CLOSED		
Tuesday, 27th December	Bank Holiday CLOSED		



Heating over winter....

It is without doubt of great concern to all of us—heating our homes—as is heating our church buildings with energy prices being so high.

However, we aim to provide a warm welcoming space for people to drop in for a brew and a chat at St Luke's Brinnington—every Monday between 2pm —4 pm. Everyone welcome.

&

St Luke's are also open 9.45am —11.15am for their weekly coffee morning—again everyone welcome.



Heating all our premises to "toastie" temperatures is going to be highly unlikely this year as we are like so many others having to watch the pennies and we certainly can't leave our heating on all the time and will be carefully controlling the thermostats!

Even with some grant aid being available to help us, times are financially hard for us too—but we will do the best we can to protect the fabric of our buildings and keep us as "comfortable" and as "warm" as possible—not always easy especially in our Grade 1 Listed buildings.

Some good news however—in that the Church of England has already committed £15m to help churches to cover the increased cost of heating and lighting this winter.

We understand that £300k will be available to the Diocese of Chester— but we don't know yet how we are to apply for funding (but apply we will when we do) or of course have any idea as to how much we may qualify to receive.

It is a comfort the know that the Energy Costs Grant is there to help Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) cover the increased cost of heating and lighting —and Dioceses will also be able to use some of their fund allocation to make additional targeted hardship payments for clergy and other employed ministers to cover household bills, in particular energy costs.



Warm Spaces



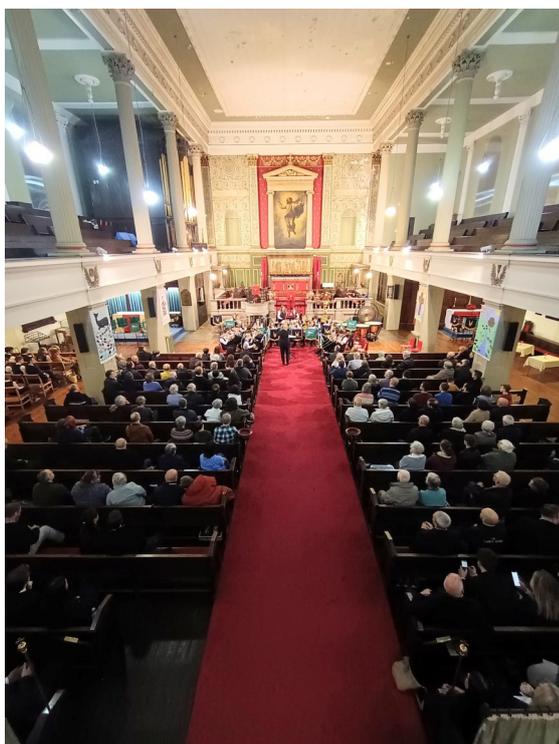
One Stockport Local Fund

Our thanks to Marie for applying for and being awarded a £1k grant towards activities at our Parish Centre at St Lukes.

From November 2022 to March 2023 there will be many warm spaces open every day of the week in Stockport. These spaces are open to everyone—just drop in during opening times and relax without any pressure to buy something.

Information available form:

www.stockport.gov.uk/warm-spaces



Joining us at St Thomas' for a Remembrance Concert on the 12th November the WFEL Fairey Band with the Stockport Schools' Brass Bands.

Stockport Schools Brass Band is an independent partner organisation to Stockport Music Service who we have been delighted to support in various ways over the years. The band provides the opportunity for players in the Stockport area to learn to play a brass instrument and to play in one of bands. Players are accepted from the age of 6 years to 19 years old irrespective of ability. There are beginner groups and training groups for those who have never played before and for those who have just started to learn as well as Junior, Intermediate and Senior bands. Players have the chance to perform in concerts and the older members as appropriate the chance to join organised trips abroad.

Stockport Schools Band was formed in 1978 and since that time many hundreds of young people have been part of that organisation. Many of these have gone on to play for leading Brass Bands or Military Bands or have taken up roles as professional musicians. Many more have continued there playing with other Brass Bands or simply as a hobby, enjoying and benefitting from the many recognised benefits of playing music.

What can we do to help support some future young musicians in Stockport and Brinnington?

Well, we are delighted that Marie has been able to discuss this issue with the headteacher at St Paul's School where we hope to be able to identify a couple of children who would benefit from our support by providing help with instrument hire and transport cost.

A small price to pay to start young musicians on the ladder of success and the Trustees of the Harold Beard Fund are also keen to help.



St. Mary's in the Marketplace
Tuesday Lunchtime Service
12.15pm
Guest speakers in Advent

29th November
 6th December
 13th December
 20th December

Christine Rablen
 Jeb Beatty
 Jess Piper
 Will Rubie



Stockport Ex-Services Association
with Stockport Sea Cadets
Carol Service

Sunday, 4th December 2022

3pm

Stockport Parish Church

(St Mary's in the Marketplace)



Stockport Parish Church [St Mary's in the Marketplace]
 Churchgate Stockport SK1 1YG

Christmas Mini Fayre

Saturday, 3rd December 2022
10.30am—2pm

Cakes & Preserves
 Jewellery
 Christmas Gifts

Please note there will be no books, bric-a-brac or craft stalls at this event.

Raffle
 Chocolate Tombola

Play a Game (with Stockport Heritage Trust)

Our Host Café will be serving festive themed food
 e.g. Turkey sandwiches and mince pies

Everyone Welcome | Free Admission



Thursday,
 8th December

Mayor of Stockport Carol
 Service with St Joseph's
 School

St Mary's in the
 Marketplace

12.30pm



Beechwood Cancer Care
 Christmas Carol and
 Dedication Service

St Mary's in the
 Marketplace



7.00pm

Monday,
19th December

Service of Nine
Lessons and Carols
with the Bishop of
Stockport

St Thomas' Church

7.30pm



Mary's Christmas

Canon Paul Hardingham considers the mother of Jesus

As Jesus' mother, Mary plays a crucial part in the Christmas story. It begins with Gabriel's visit to her: *'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.'* (Luke 1:30,31). This conversation takes us straight to the heart of what Christmas is all about. God was doing something unique, that had never happened before! *'God was beginning, at this divine and human point, the New Creation of all things. The whole soiled and weary universe quivered at this direct injection of essential life.'* (CS Lewis).

This child unites heaven and earth: the eternal God entered time and space and became a baby, both a real human being and fully divine. It reminds me of the sci-fi film *Fantastic Voyage* (1966) in which a team of surgeons are shrunk to the size of blood cells and injected into the veins of a patient to perform lifesaving surgery. The Christmas message affirms that God has entered the bloodstream of humanity to put things right with Him on the inside. We can know Him personally and make sense of His world.

God chose an unknown, frightened teenage girl to bring about this new beginning for the world. Her response is the pattern for us, as we welcome God's special gift into our lives this Christmas: *"I am the Lord's servant" Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled."* (Luke 1:38).



Mary gave an unqualified Yes to all that God wanted to do in her life. It was a costly decision, which risked both shame and scandal. Yet she was ready to obey God and trust His plans for her life, despite her many questions. Is the same true for us this Christmas?

Sunday, 11th December	Holy Communion	St Thomas' Church	9.30am
		St Luke's, Brinnington	10.30am
	Stockport Homes—Toy & Gift Service	St Mary's in the Marketplace	10.30am
	Stockport Youth Orchestra Concert	St Mary's in the Marketplace	7pm



**Friday 9th December
Christmas Carol Concert
at 1.30pm**

We would love you to join us at our
Christmas Carol Concert
at the beautiful
St Mary's Church in the Marketplace
[Churchgate SK1 1YG]

We are very pleased to be joined by the Doing Dementia Differently Intergenerational Choir and Warren Wood Primary School Band and Choir.

There is no need to book, and we look forward to seeing you there.



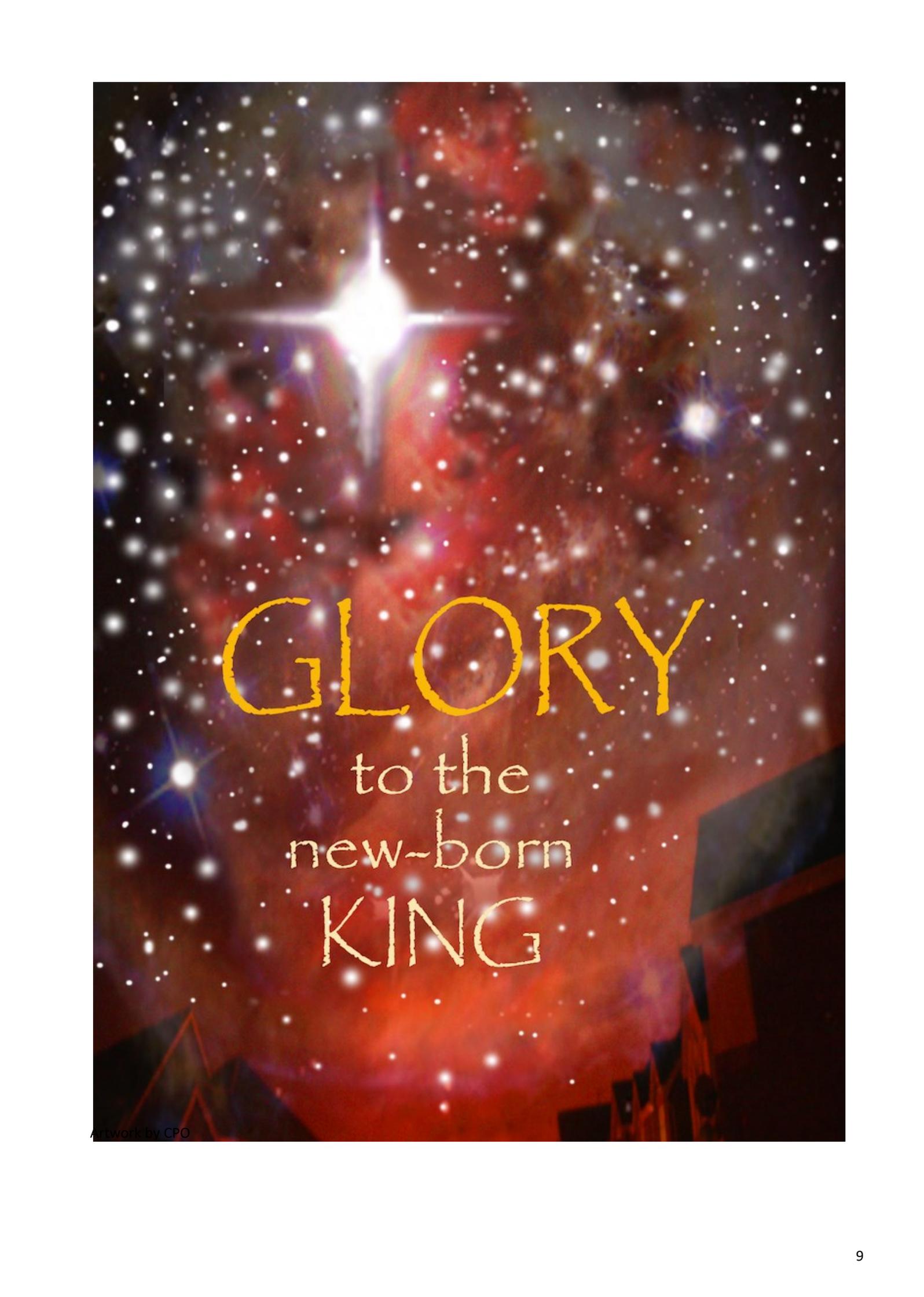
Please bring along a gift
(unwrapped) suitable from
new born to 18 years of age
- for distribution where
needed most. Thank You


**Carol Concert
featuring
Offerton Methodist Choir
at
Stockport Parish Church** (St Mary's in the Marketplace)

**Friday, 16th December 2022
1pm**

Retiring collection in aid of
The Christie Charitable Trust
& St Marys in the Marketplace





GLORY

to the
new-born
KING

Christmas and St Luke's Gospel

It is to St Luke's wonderful gospel that many Christians turn as the year draws to a close and Christmas approaches, for it is to St Luke that we owe the fullest account of the nativity.

Luke alone tells us the story of Mary and the angel's visit to her, and has thus given the Church the wonderful Magnificat of Mary.

Luke alone tells us the story of Simeon's hymn of praise, thus giving us the wonderful Nunc Dimittis. Imagine an Anglican evensong without the Nunc Dimittis.

Luke alone tells us the story of how the angels appeared to the shepherds and how the shepherds then visited the infant Jesus. So – imagine Christmas cards and nativity scenes every year without the shepherds arriving to visit baby Jesus. Imagine school nativity plays without our children dressed as shepherds or sheep. So – thank you, Luke!

What makes it so amazing is that Luke was not a Jew! The man who wrote the fullest nativity story, and indeed more of the New Testament than any other single person, was a Gentile!



Thank Dickens for Christmas as you know it!

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount of our modern Christmas celebrations can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens.

When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later.

So, for instance, in A Christmas Carol, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity (!).

And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In 'A Christmas Carol' there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present. Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported 'a pretty German toy' that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society.



Who is the Baby?

Canon Paul Hardingham

A little girl was examining a Christmas crib with her grandmother and commented, 'Grannie, it's really nice, but there's one thing that bothers me: is the baby Jesus ever going to grow up? He's the same size He was last year!!' The birth of Jesus must be the most well-known birth in the world, but are we really growing in our understanding of this story?

The angels announced, 'Do not be afraid. 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.' (Luke 2: 10,11). The birth of a baby is a time of great joy and excitement and Jesus' birth is good news for *all* people! He is none other than the king of the universe, who has come as our Saviour. To experience this joy, we must let go self-centredness and living as our own saviour. His deliverance and wholeness *is* a real cause for joy!

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.' (Luke 2:14). We may feel anything but peace with God, ourselves, or even with those closest to us at Christmas. How can a Jewish infant born to a peasant family in first century Palestine be the source of peace between God and man in the 21st century? Jesus came to establish such peace through His death on the cross. Trusting the Prince of Peace in our lives brings peace with God. If we ignore this message of Christmas, we won't benefit from it. As the carol says, 'Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King.'

Nigel Beeton writes: Micah 5:2-4 contains the prophecy about the birth of Jesus that was quoted by the scribes and chief priests when Herod enquired about the location of that event. Micah revealed that this was to be Bethlehem Ephrathah, or fruitful Bethlehem. Her 'fruit' was to be the Saviour of Mankind!

Bethlehem Ephrathah

Bethlehem Ephrathah
Though small you be
Your fruit shall be a ruler
Who'll rule for Me

When she who is in labour
Comes to give birth
Then shall her offspring's greatness
Fill all the earth.

For He shall be a shepherd
O'er all His sheep
In God the loving Father
In peace they'll sleep

O Bethlehem Ephrathah
His name we'll praise
For He began before all time –
The Ancient of Days!
By Nigel Beeton



*Lord Jesus Christ,
may we never cease
to wonder at your birth,
when heaven touched the earth
and you came
to be among us;
our Saviour and our God.*



Artwork by Paul Judson

The 'wonder' of the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem

The Ven. John Barton

Shepherds in first century Palestine would have been attuned to the wonders and ravages of nature: star-lit nights, cold and heat, storm and calm, and the unwelcome attention of predators, both animal and human. They would have been more aware than we of human dependency on the seasons, and more respectful than us of the precarious nature of existence. Fear, as well as appreciation, would have shaped their religious sensitivities.

Some think the shepherds near Bethlehem may have been guarding sheep for the Jerusalem Temple, which used them as part of the sacrificial ritual of Judaism in those days. Yet the kind of work shepherds did and the hours they had to keep barred them from orthodox religious observance; they were regarded as uncouth and untrustworthy and were not allowed to give testimony in law courts.

It was typical of St Luke (the only New Testament writer to refer to the shepherds) to put them in the forefront of his narrative. Luke is the writer who favours the underdog: tax collectors, sinners, women, old and poor people and non-Jews all figure favourably in his account. Deliberately he sets before us shepherds as the first Christmas worshippers. They already knew how to *wonder*.

William of St Thierry wrote: "A man who has lost his sense of wonder is a man dead." The 19th Century scientist Michael Faraday wrote: "Let us consider... how wonderfully we stand upon this world. Here it is that we are born, bred and live, and yet we view these things with an almost entire absence of wonder..." This is no plea for anti-intellectual faith, but rather for the discovery of an extra dimension. Wonder is the prime ingredient of worship, and we need to recover it and use it. It takes practice.

William Blake encouraged us to look into the ordinary and see the extraordinary:

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower:
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour...*

The late Michael Mayne, Dean of Westminster wrote, "A sense of the sublime leads to a sense of awe, which is I suppose that combination of wonder and fearfulness you may feel in the presence of what takes your breath away. It is not afraid in the sense of feeling scared, but rather an awe-struck sense of amazement that the ordinary is rather more extraordinary than the extraordinary... it is not the rabbit out of the hat but the rabbit out of the rabbit that is so surprising..."

So, in the astonishing story of heaven-come-to-earth in Bethlehem, of divinity in a cowshed, it is *shepherds* who receive the revelation. Not priests, not presidents, not philosophers. "An angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified." For all they knew it might have been bad news. "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord'."

The response of the shepherds was to go and see. Not to question or even to reason. The main constituent of their belief was already *wonder*. They were accustomed to marvelling, for they were surrounded by a world of marvels. So, they went to look. And as they looked, they marvelled. Later, they were to return "glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard."



How Father Christmas got where he is today

One person you are bound to run into this Christmas season is Father Christmas. These days he seems to frequent shopping malls and garden centres. If he looks tired, just remember that he has been around a long time and gone through a lot of transformations.

Father Christmas wasn't always the red-suited, white-bearded star of the retail trade that he is today. He began life as Nicholas, born way back about AD260 in Patara, an important port on the southern coast of what is now Turkey. When his parents died and left him a fortune, Nicholas gave it away to the poor. He became a bishop of the nearby city of Myra, where he almost certainly suffered persecution and imprisonment at the hand of the Roman Emperor Diocletian.

Nicholas was a serious theologian: he was a participant at the First Council of Nicaea, which formulated the Creed which we still say today. He even, reportedly, slapped another bishop in a squabble over the exact nature of the Trinity.

Nicholas died in Myra about AD343, but the stories of his generosity and kindness were just beginning. One enduring tale tells of the three girls whom he rescued from certain prostitution by giving them gold for their dowries. When the father confronted him to thank him, Nicholas said he should thank God alone.

In the UK, Nicholas became the basis for Father Christmas, who emerged in Victorian times as a jolly-faced bearded character. Meanwhile, Dutch and German settlers had taken him to America with them as Sinter Klaas and Sankt Nicklas.

It was in America that Nicholas received his final two great breaks into real stardom. The first was when the Rev Clement C Moore, a New York Episcopal minister, turned from his life-work of writing a Hebrew/English lexicon, to write a fun poem for his children one Christmas. His 'The Visit of St Nicholas' is now universally known by its first line: 'T'was the Night Before Christmas'.

From Clement Moore we discovered that St Nicholas is round and pink-cheeked and white-bearded, and that he travels at night with sleigh, reindeer and a sack of toys on his back. It was Clement Moore who also revealed that St Nicholas enters houses down chimneys and fills children's stockings with toys and sweets.

So how did we find out that Father Christmas wears red? That was the US Coca-Cola advertising campaign of 1931, who finally released the latest, up-to-date pictures of Father Christmas: wearing a bright red, fur-trimmed coat and a large belt.

These days, it is good that Father Christmas uses reindeer and doesn't have to pay for petrol. In order to get round all the children in the world on Christmas Eve, he will have to travel 221 million miles at an average speed of 1279 miles a second, 6,395 times the speed of sound. For all those of us who are already exhausted just rushing around getting ready for Christmas, that is a sobering thought.

Reflections on the Christmas Story

Tony Horsfall

Matthew 1:18 Joseph's dilemma

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit...."

It is not clear at what point Mary told Joseph the news of her pregnancy, but when she did it came as a bombshell. What should he do, knowing the child was not his? Could her story be true? He was however a righteous man, and he sought God for direction rather than acting impulsively. God spoke to him through a dream, confirming that the child was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and this gave him the courage to stand by her, and take her as his wife. It was a brave decision, but he now knew that the child would be the One to save people from their sins.

It is easy when we have difficult decisions to make to be impetuous or hasty, but the best decisions are made slowly and with prayer. When you are making important choices ask God to guide you clearly, and to give you the courage to do what is right.

Matthew 1:22 Long-awaited Immanuel

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us')... And Joseph gave Him the name Jesus.

The plan of salvation is intimately connected to the Old Testament, and was the fulfilment of prophecies made long ago. God was sending His Son into the world that we might be saved. God is with us – this astonishing, mind-blowing truth underpinned Joseph's straight-forward trust in Him. Today as you get on with your life, pray that the wonder of knowing that God is with you will never be far from your awareness.

Luke 2:1-7

Bethlehem

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... so Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

This is perhaps the most familiar picture we have of the Christmas event—but remember what was happening. This was no ordinary child. In Jesus God became a human being and dwelt among us, perhaps the greatest miracle (and mystery) of all. As you visualise the scene again, let worship arise in your heart: *'From heaven you came, helpless Babe, entered our world your glory veiled.'* Emmanuel, God with us! The Servant King, worthy of all our adoration and love.

LORD God, in this season please help me to live in the wonder of your upside-down Kingdom where your love for us compels you to become helpless, vulnerable and dependent. May your Kingdom come in and through my life today.

Luke 2:8-12

The Shepherds arrive

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. 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.

The first visitors are not VIPs but humble shepherds who have been summoned by an angelic visitor. For those who have eyes to see, there hidden in the manger beneath the blankets is the Son of God, the one sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world. Very few of those crowded into Bethlehem that night were aware of what was happening. Only those with faith could recognise the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah. It is the same today.

Lord, I pray for eyes to see where the glory of Heaven touches earth. May I be alive today with the truth that the Saviour, rescuer, King Jesus has been born 'to us' and that there is joy in this for all people. May my life reflect that glory even in a small way in my interactions with people, so that in this Christmas season the good news of great joy will be known.

Luke 2:13-15 **Angel hosts**

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

The darkness of the Judean hillside was lit up by the appearance of a great angelic choir, messengers sent to herald the birth of the Saviour. Their song breaks the stillness of the night, first in praise of God for his act of mercy in sending the Son, and then in proclamation of the peace the child will bring to earth. The shepherds now decide to do the unthinkable -leave their flocks, and head off into town to see the new born King. Such is the drawing power of the Saviour.

Sometimes there are things we too must leave behind if we are to follow his call, but whatever sacrifice is needed, it will be worth it just to find him for ourselves.

Luke 2:16-20 **Mary ponders**

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ... Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen...

The shepherds became the first evangelists, proclaiming the good news... That was their response, and it should be ours too.

But for Mary there followed a time of reflection. Exuberant witness and quiet contemplation are not opposites. They are in fact good companions in the spiritual life.

Thank you, LORD Jesus, that you are still found when we search for you. May I be willing to share the discovery I've made with others at this time. But I also want to know you better in my inner life, too. Please give me that balance of active following and heart-pondering reflection, especially in this Christmas season.





Roggiel here with my Christmas special edition...

First of all may I wish everyone a most enjoyable Christmas whatever you are doing—I don't know what Mummy is planning for us but I assume at least for the most part we will be in Stockport and Mummy will be spending quite a bit of time at church.

I'm not allowed to go to church services—Mummy says I sing out of tune—although I have a beautiful doggy voice—it just doesn't seem to be appreciated! BUT I suppose that I can be a little disruptive especially when I get excited and start barking, and it is quite nice sat under the television (one of my favourite dens) waiting for Mum to get home—not that I really like being left “home alone” of course.

Are you ready for Christmas? What a silly question that is—we will be ready for Christmas when it's Christmas and we've run out of time.

Mummy has gone quite mad this year and we have had printed our own Christmas cards—and a few calendars—then decided to take a few days away and take the cards with us to write and post. These are two of the photos used—all include me as you would expect. I think I should be a model but Mummy says I would hate having to have my hair brushed properly every day—and I think she might be right for I don't really enjoy grooming sessions—other than running off at the first opportunity.



Is it too early to wish you a Happy New Year—perhaps I will wait until next month to do that—but I suspect January will be a new start in many different ways. For the Parish of Stockport and Brinnington it will be welcome to Uncle Chris as he joins us as the new Rector—not long now everyone. But it's countdown to Christmas first—I am thinking of asking Santa if I could have a new jumper—but I would be more than happy to do without and for Mummy to get gifts for the Toy and Gift service instead. Of course I hope she will do both!



A letter to Santa— or maybe not!

I'm a big boy now and I don't really think that Santa needs to worry too much about me—but wouldn't it be nice to think that a character dressed in red does actually fly around the world giving gifts to children (and doggies) everywhere. That's an awful lot of magic needed and the north pole must be very big to store all the pressies— or does Santa order from Amazon—like Mummy does.

Realistically (don't tell the children—but I suspect Santa in my case is represented by Mummy and Auntie Isobel), AND that Santa alone just couldn't cope with demand—the supply chain just isn't quite as it needs to be—we have an economic crisis going on— with rising fuel costs and the general cost of living getting worse by the day. I rather think that all the elves in the world would struggle to provide everyone with a gift this Christmas even if they make toys all year round, shop on Black Friday and on-line with next day delivery. Still we have helped in some way ourselves (not that I was there to see the boxes personally) with our Shoe Box gifts for Teams4U. I can't wait for an update from Auntie Margaret as to how all the arrangements to get them off to Wrexham and beyond went this year. I hope my two boxes will make someone feel happy at least.

To be absolutely honest I don't really need anything for Christmas—just to be with Mummy. Although I might just say however that a new jumper would be nice—the kind I can put on over my harness and still attach the lead. I don't need any toys—not really—but a few treats always most enjoyable (providing they are the ones I like of course). What does Mummy want for Christmas—just to be with me she says. Would be nice if Morrisons deliver the Turkey—(there may well be a shortage I have heard) but it is ordered so we will have to wait and see.

If you could ask Santa for anything—for yourself or anyone else—what would it be? I'm asking for some pressies to give to Stockport Homes at the Toy and Gift service— but I am not relying on Santa alone— I still think Santa needs help— so I have already asked Mr Amazon and Mummy's credit card to provide some lovely soft cuddly toys and warm clothes. Next day delivery of course—but at least at St.Mary's by the 11th December.

u

I am a little concerned that there could really be a shortage of chicken, turkeys and the like—and that I may have to become a vegan dog or at least a vegetarian one.

We received a letter in Wales—from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Animal and Plant Health Agency) - forgive me for not knowing there was such a thing. But there appears to be great concern about Avian Influenza (bird flu) in kept birds—not that we have any thankfully and those that did live next door have long since moved away—

but we are asked to keep an eye out for any dead birds and had a survey form to complete. Those who do keep birds having to register them—even if kept as pets.

They asked us to look out and monitor ducks, birds of prey, swans, geese and even gulls. Poor birdies—I hope my “friends” in the garden keep well. I’ve seen our Robin, the Blackbird gang, couple of Magpies and plenty of Sparrows and they seem to be just fine. Only the one gull—now that is a little worrying but they must be around somewhere.

Someone telephoned Mummy to see if we wanted Sola Panels (something about a government scheme) - not much sola about the weather that morning—the rain was pelting down “sideways”—I refused to go out. Wind power would be better— and it was so cold—but then it is autumn I suppose.

Not quite “In the bleak mid winter” frosty winds and all that—well okay it was 9 degrees or thereabouts the computer said. Then Mummy reminded me that the computer was “off- line” so actually it didn’t know and there weren’t enough bars showing on the mobile to get a signal.

The next day was bright and sunny—still a bit on the cold side and I needed my jumper for walkies— but the sky was bright blue with no clouds in sight — the sea was blue too rather than murky grey—with waves lapping on to the beach—the tide was out—all that lovely sand. I would love to have gone down and run and run and run—but sadly Mummy said that she couldn’t manage the steep pebbles and I wasn’t allowed to go on my own. Please Gwynedd Council could

you find some money and replace the ramp—the original washed away a few years ago but still very much missed.

It’s been really cold but I have enjoyed my mini-holiday—as has Mummy—and although we will be returning to Stockport well before Christmas—I’m looking forward to returning to Wales soon and maybe living here in the not too distant future. If/when we do move I will miss writing to you all each month, but then I can start to use my Facebook account and who knows I may get a social media following—not that I really understand what that is all about.

For now it’s business as usual. I hope to see you around—and will be back here next month—to see in the New Year.



Hugs and kicks

Roggie D

The first Christmas card was commissioned by Sir Henry Cole in 1843: Robins on cards started because 150 years ago postmen wore red tunics and were nicknamed “Ronins”.

Was Jesus really born on 25th December?

Almost certainly not. But the story of how that date came to be chosen as His 'birthday' is one that stretches back long before His birth.

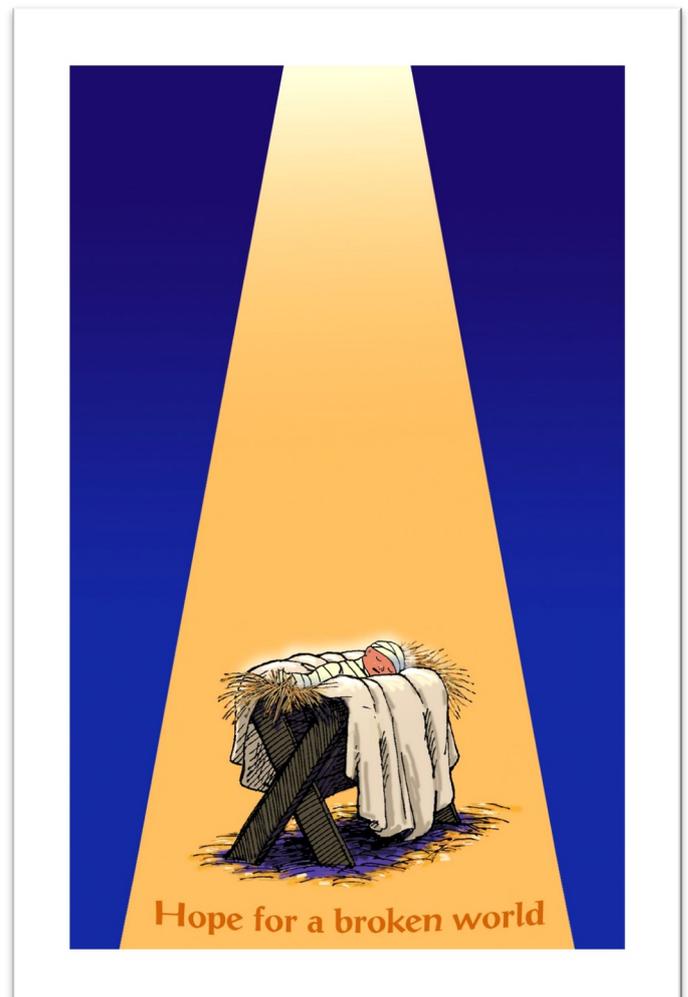
it seems to have started on the Greek island of Rhodes in 283 BC. That year the solstice fell on 25th December, and it was also the year that the Ancient World's largest Sun God stature – the 34 metre, 200 tonne Colossus of Rhodes, was consecrated.

By 46 BC, Julius Caesar had made 25th December the official winter solstice.

In AD 274, the Roman Emperor Aurelian chose the winter solstice to be the birthday of the Sun God. He also decreed that *Sol Invictus* (the unconquered sun) was 'Lord of the Roman Empire'.

Fifty years after that, and Constantine had become the first pro-Christian Roman Emperor. He wanted the Church to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on 25th December. Perhaps it was that to him, Jesus was more or less the same person as the mighty Sun God. Or perhaps he felt that the ancient sun god's association with goodness, light, warmth and life would help ease the people's transition from paganism to Christianity. Whatever the reason, the Church went along with it, and chose 25th December to be the date of Christmas. And in an ancient mosaic in the crypt of St Peter's Cathedral, Jesus is portrayed as adorned with sun rays and riding in a chariot – just like *Sol Invictus*.

As for the huge, bronze 200 tonne *Sol Invictus*? He fell over during an earthquake and was sold off for scrap metal in 654AD by an enterprising Arab scrap merchant. Meanwhile, Jesus lives on...



Your Countdown to Christmas

So are you ready for Christmas?

Find the perfect cards.... But hurry! If you don't already have a favourite charity, try the Combined Charities Christmas Shop at <http://www.christmas-cards.org.uk/> for ideas.

Your Count-down dates to Christmas might include:

– 30th Nov – 4th Dec: Write your Christmas cards. Start with the 'must-sends' first, so the pressure eases off. Draw up your Christmas present list.

– 5th & 6th Dec: A good time for the children to make home decorations. Also, start shopping for presents...

– 12th & 13th Dec: Unless your family tradition dictates otherwise, this would be a good weekend to bring the tree home

– Week of 14th – 18th Dec: A good time for a cleaning day to get the house ready for decorating... and finish shopping for presents.

– 19th/20th Dec: Time to pull things together – decorate the tree and the house and finish wrapping the presents you will give out personally.

Choose a colour theme for this Christmas. Red? Gold? Purple? Silver? Then use it on everything – from your candles, tree baubles and wrapping paper, to table napkins and Christmas cards and lights.

Plan your Christmas lunch. Try and think of everything that you will need on the day – and make sure you have it ordered or bought in good time.

Set aside enough time for those shopping trips – and prepare a list so that you don't waste time.

Plan your budget – don't let Christmas 'fever' make you reckless. Be careful you don't go over any overdraft with your bank – the penalties are expensive! Also, really and truly, beware using credit cards if you can't pay them off quickly

Pick the perfect tree. Bear in mind that an artificial tree is not just for Christmas, but for life.... all that non-renewable plastic will spend eternity in some landfill site. So why not branch out and look for the real thing. For more options, visit The British Christmas Tree Growers Association.

www.christmastree.org.uk

Learn some party games. For games that are easy, slightly harder and fiendishly hard, visit: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/words/puzzles-and-games>

Hang a wreath. You can buy one or get creative with a mixture of foliage from your garden.

Practical details: Make sure you have Christmas tree lights that work, a clean oven, a stock of candles and matches, and spare batteries.

Fill those Christmas stockings – a must for Christmas mornings. Cleverly planned, they might even delay the time when exhausted parents are awoken from slumbers....

Wrap those presents – what you get and how you wrap it will say a lot about your attitude towards the person you are giving to! So select your presents and wrapping materials with care, use only sharp scissors, and put your Sellotape on neatly. Adding some ribbon is well worth the effort.

Enjoy those Christmas markets and fayres – is there a house-bound neighbour or friend you could take along?

Display your cards with style. The simple ideas are often the most stylish. So have fun with wooden clothes pegs, sprayed gold, and peg your cards along ribbon that can be looped from one end of a curtain pole to the other.

Deck the halls – especially yours. Would your front entrance hall take a small tree, wreath, or maybe just a bowl of pretty sweets? Run a garland up the bannister. Add some ivy and some fairy lights.

Donate to charities who help the homeless and the migrants.

Sing carols – and play carols at home. Remind your family what it is really all about.

The trip to Bethlehem. Dig out your nativity set, and start Mary and Joseph and the donkey at the top of your stairs – moving them a bit closer to the manger downstairs each day. And don't forget to start the wise men on their way, from another part of the house. (Beware your dog eating anyone on the way!)

Think about decorating your table – you could use holly and ivy and narcissi and snowdrops... and lots of red ribbon. But if you use poisonous plants, be very careful around the children and pets.

Give your pets some extra care. If you have a curious dog or cat, avoid tinsel on the tree – your pets could choke on it. Keep a watchful eye on the turkey bones on Christmas Day – and dispose of them safely. If they splinter in your pet's throat on Christmas Day, you could easily double the cost of your Christmas with just one visit to the vet.... Don't leave scraps of wrapping paper around if they might be eaten. Finally, ensure your pets can find a quiet place to rest if all the family is there.

Go crackers. In 1847 the confectioner Tom Smith invented the Christmas cracker. Legend says that he spotted a beautifully wrapped French bon-bon and had a 'eureka moment'. In effect, he said to himself: 'What that bon-bon really needs is a tiny plastic key-ring, a groan-inducing pun on a piece of paper, a tissue paper parody of royal headgear, all wrapped up inside an exploding toilet roll.' The rest is history.

Plan the Boxing Day walk. By then tempers will be frayed and thankyou letters will be looming. A good long walk that includes some lovely scenery will do you all good.

Read your children the Christmas story. There are any number of excellent children's books which tell it with wonderful illustrations.

Make sure your neighbours are all right – is there anyone who could use a helping hand? Anyone needing a lift to church?

On Christmas Eve/Christmas, make time to have a family reading of the Nativity stories in Matthew and Luke. As a family, make time to praise God for the gift of Jesus!



Twisty the Tree

I called my new tree 'Twisty'
I just could not resist –
The crown on which the angel sat
Had got a little twist!

We gave it lots of water
As we are meant to do
And kept it cool till it was time
To bring dear Twisty through.

Residing in our living room
Despite his twisted end
Bedecked with globes and tinsel
He was our Christmas friend!

We watered Twisty daily
And talked to him a lot
The fact he never answered back –
It mattered not a jot!

Then, soon enough, came Christmas Day
And all around our tree
Were wrapped and ribboned Christmas gifts
With love to you and me.

For twelve days after Christmas
We kept him while we could
With twinkling lights and verdant leaves
Our tree just looked so good!

But Twelfth Night came upon us,
And, though it broke my heart,
The Christmas season ended –
T'was time for us to part.

We took off all his pretty lights
We stripped our Twisty bare
We took him to the garden
And left him lying there.

Until came bin collection day
And, though it seemed a sin
We cut him into pieces, small
And put him in the bin.



The moral of my story, sad it
Is (it seems to me),
So that you don't shed bitter tears as well,
Don't name your Christmas tree!

By Nigel Beeton

This month's drawing is 'The Virgin and Child' by Raphael (1483-1520).

Raphael was a talented artist from a very early age, but this drawing belongs to a time when he was in Rome from 1510-12. The finished painting is known as the Mackintosh Madonna, after its last owner.

This drawing, or cartoon, was the first stage in creating that work: it is in black chalk with heightening marks of white. When an artist made an initial drawing like this, he would then prick the cartoon with holes and then sprinkle charcoal powder over the drawing to reproduce the design on the canvas below. The pinholes on this drawing are still clearly visible. Sadly the final painting has been damaged through time, but here in the cartoon we see that first stage: a sensitive and balanced picture of mother and child: Mary warm and caring, Jesus laughing and alive.

During Advent we think of the preparations God made for the birth of the Saviour. We celebrate God's work of creation and how He chose a people for His own. Within that people He looked for a holy remnant and then finally a loving heart in the assent of Mary to be the mother of our Lord. These preparatory steps were as vital for our salvation as the artist moving from idea to sketch to the finished work.

Each stage is important; each stage a revelation of life and love. Vasari wrote of Raphael that in his paintings 'the flesh palpitates, the breath comes and goes, every organ lives, and life pulsates everywhere.' Even this preliminary drawing displays that life and vitality. It is a life we celebrate at Christmas in the birth of a child who turns to us, as he does in this work, as a sign of joy and love.



Christmas crackers were invented by Tom Smith in 1847. He was a sweet shop owner who had seen French bonbons wrapped with a twist of paper at each end. Originally they just had a motto inside and it wasn't until he put a toy and "bang" that it caught on.



The story behind the hymn: Good King Wenceslas

Each year at Christmas we sing about good King Wenceslas looking on the Feast of Stephen... ever wonder who on earth he was? Here are three of the five verses...

Good King Wenceslas looked out on the Feast of Stephen

When the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even.

Brightly shone the moon that night, tho' the frost was cruel

When the poor man came in sight, gathering winter fuel...

Bring me flesh and bring me wine; bring me pine logs hither;

Thou and I will see him dine when we bear them thither.

Page and monarch forth they went, forth they went together,

Through the rude winds' wild lament, and the bitter weather...

In his master's steps he trod where the snow lay dinted;

Heat was in the very sod which the saint had printed.

Therefore Christian men, be sure wealth or rank possessing,

Ye who now will bless the poor, shall yourself find blessing.

This carol was 900 years in the making... and started with a brutal murder in Bohemia.

For Wenceslas was a real person, the Duke of Bohemia, who lived in the early 10th century. He seems to have been a rare ruler, in that he was just and had compassion for the poor. His goodness made him enemies, and when he was only 22, he was assassinated on the steps of a church in Prague in 935.

But that was not the end of Wenceslas. Deeply mourned by the common people, he was soon considered a martyr and a saint. A cult of Wenceslas grew up in Bohemia, influencing the High Middle Ages idea of the *rex Justus* – or 'righteous king' – that is, a monarch whose power stems mainly from his great piety.

The story of Wenceslas came to England sometime before 1853, when Queen Victoria's envoy to Stockholm sent some rare books to a friend, John Mason Neale, Warden of Sackville College, East Grinstead. Here Neale found the story of Wenceslas in an ancient poem by Czech poet Václav Alois Svoboda. Neale published his translation as a carol in 1853. He made the 'Duke' into a 'King', as a later Pope had conferred the regal title on Wenceslas.

The carol tells the poignant story of a young king and his page braving harsh winter weather in order to bring food, wine and fuel to a poor peasant on the Feast of St Stephen (26 December). The journey is terrible, and the page only gets through by following in the king's footprints, step by step, through deep snow. There are themes here of following Christ, through suffering, to do good to the poor.

If the story is ancient, so is the melody that Neale chose for his carol – it goes back to Finland in 1582.

Good King Wenceslas... today, a millennium after his brutal murder, he is still remembered in Prague, where a statue of him stands tall in the middle of Wenceslas Square. His goodness is not forgotten.



Christmas Quiz

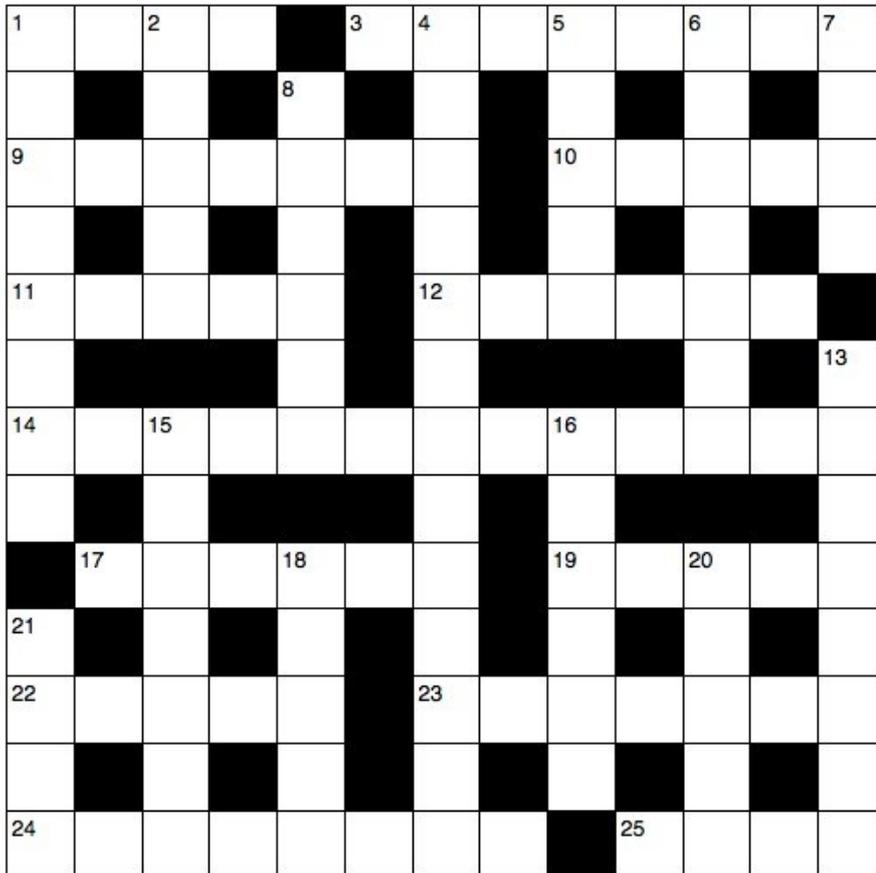
- How did No Vac Novak become No Match Novak?
- 35 years ago ITV wanted a detective story set within 50 miles of the Midlands to rival BBC's Agatha Christie stories. What did they choose?
- Which rock star who died in January and would do anything for love, but not that?
- What unexpected occurrence at the Winter Olympics caused problems in the icy setting?
- He would have celebrated his 100th birthday in March and was one of a duo who wrote The hippopotamus song mud, mud, glorious mud
- What was the career of the President of Ukraine before he entered politics?
- At the Oscars Will Smith had an incident with the comedian, Chris Rock, What film did Smith go on to get an Oscar for?
- What were the following "gates"? Why are they called "gates"? Partygate – Tractorgate – Beergate
- In May a footballer's shirt was sold for the record breaking £7.1 million. Whose was it?
- What were two places outside the UK that gained city status?
- There was a television series this year called Which film features the line, "Infamy, infamy, they've all got it in for me."?
- A surprise guest of Her Majesty for tea over the Platinum Jubilee was Paddington Bear. Who voiced Paddington in the Ukrainian language version of the film?
- The actor who played the Revd Timothy Farthing passed away this year. What comedy series did he appear in?
- At the age of nearly 90, he published an autobiography looking back on his years in show business in 2018. Its title was *Bernard Who? 75 Years Of Doing Absolutely Everything* – and its advice was simple. "Do your best and be grateful for every single job". Who was he?
- Which actress was ordered not to quit a science fiction series by Martin Luther King?
- Where did Dan Snow reportedly urge tourists to visit instead of (or possibly as well as) Stonehenge?

Produced by: David Pickup





Artwork by Deborah Noble



December Crossword

Across

- 1 'How long will you — your face from me?' (Psalm 13:1) (4)
 3 'Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the — he bore'(Hebrews 13:13) (8)
 9 Posh sin (anag.) (Romans 8:15) (7)
 10 Solemn pledges (Matthew 5:33) (5)
 11 Italian term for full orchestra (5)
 12 'For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not — the cry of the afflicted' (Psalm 9:12) (6)
 14 Prescience (1 Peter 1:2) (13)
 17 Where a Hindu holy man lives (6)
 19 'If he found any... who belonged to the Way, whether — — women, he might take them as prisoners' (Acts 9:3) (3,2)

- 22 Fragrance (2 Corinthians 2:15) (5)
 23 Vine hen (anag.) (Jonah 1:2) (7)
 24 Precious stone decorating the twelfth foundation of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:20) (8)
 25 'Will you keep to the old path that evil men have — ?' (Job 22:15) (4)

Down

- 1 'Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with — — ' (Numbers 20:11) (3,5)
 2 'You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, " — — murder"' (Matthew 5:21) (2,3)
 4 One of Paul's many hardships endured as a servant of God (2 Corinthians 6:5) (13)
 5 'We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, — inwardly' (Romans 8:23) (5)
 6 Changed (Daniel 6:8) (7)
 7 'My yoke is — and my burden is light' (Matthew 11:30) (4)
 8 Recoil (Revelation 12:11) (6)
 13 'O Lord, you have — me and you know me' (Psalm 139:1) (8)
 15 ' — to me the joy of your salvation' (Psalm 51:12) (7)
 16 Express sorrow (Isaiah 16:7) (6)
 18 'Then he said to Thomas, " — out your hand and put it into my side"' (John 20:27) (5)
 20 'God has said, " — will I leave you; — will I forsake you"' (Hebrews 13:5) (5)
 21 Son of Onam and brother of Shammai (1 Chronicles 2:28) (4)



Wordsearch



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.

Messiah

Broken

Heart

Freedom

Darkness

Favour

Prisoners

Comfort

Mourn

Bestow

Crown

Beauty

Ashes

Son

God

Jesus

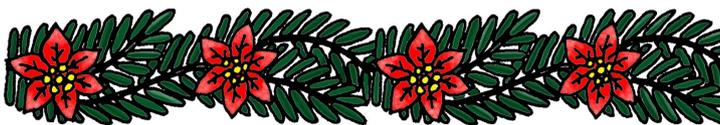
Seen

Father

Whoever

longing

thousand



Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer was created as part of a marketing campaign by the Chicago Montgomery Ward department store in 1939.

The band 'Slade' still make around £500,000 a year royalties from their single "Merry Christmas Everybody"



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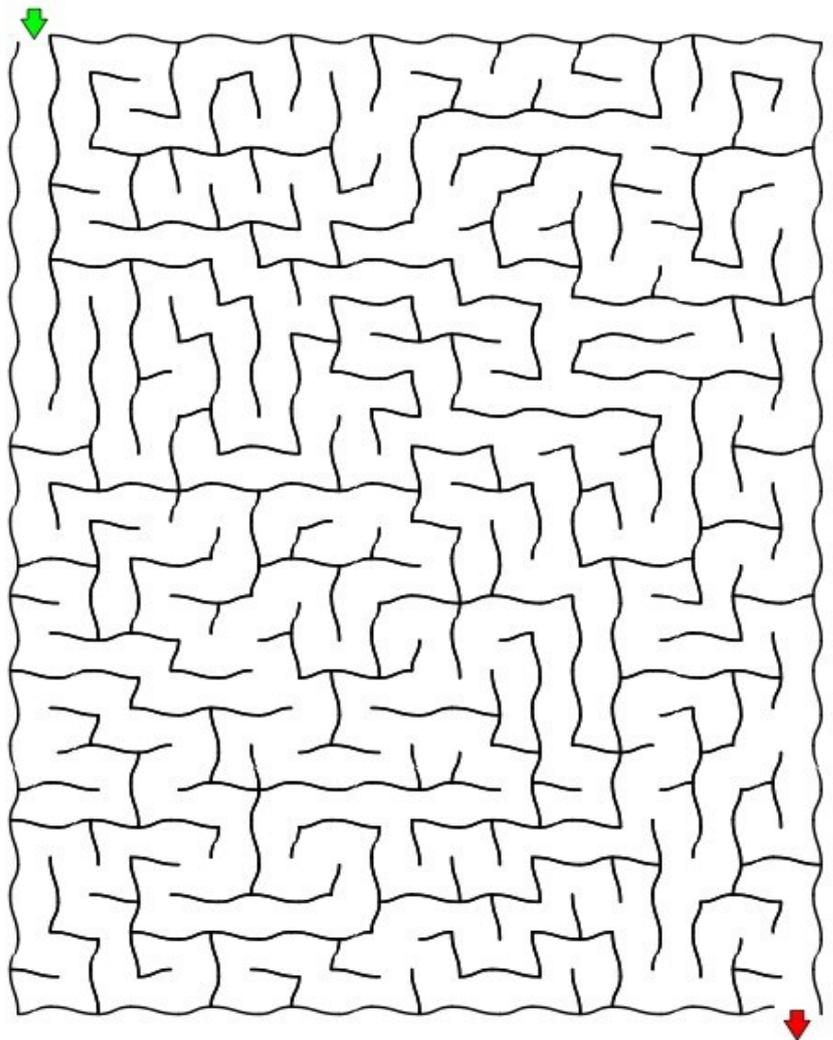
Sudoku

The abbreviation Xmas isn't just lazy writing, the X is the Greek letter for chi, an abbreviation for Christ.

© 2008 KrazyDad.com

Maze

Father Christmas was originally dressed in green although there was a red coloured version in the USA. It was when a-Cola adopted the red clothed version for their marketing that it became the standard version all over the world

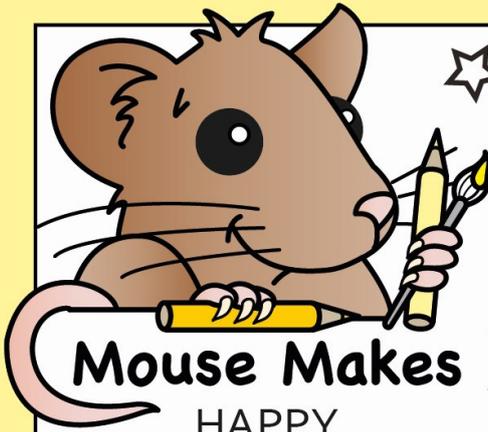


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h	n	g	p	r	a	y	e	r	t	n	r

God	Romans	Mary
temple	holy	Israel
duty	Elizabeth	name
incense	prayer	burn
Jerusalem	childless	angel
rescue	pregnant	son
gracious	invaded	baby
cousin	Zecharaiah	John

Created by Francesca Ross





Mouse Makes

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

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

Answer the questions, colour the picture and colour one star each day until Christmas.

Where was Mary's baby born?
Why were Joseph and Mary there?

What did Mary dress her baby in?

Where did Mary lay her baby and why?

Why were the shepherds afraid?

What good news did the angel tell?



What did the shepherds do after they had seen the baby?

Who appeared praising God, what did they say?

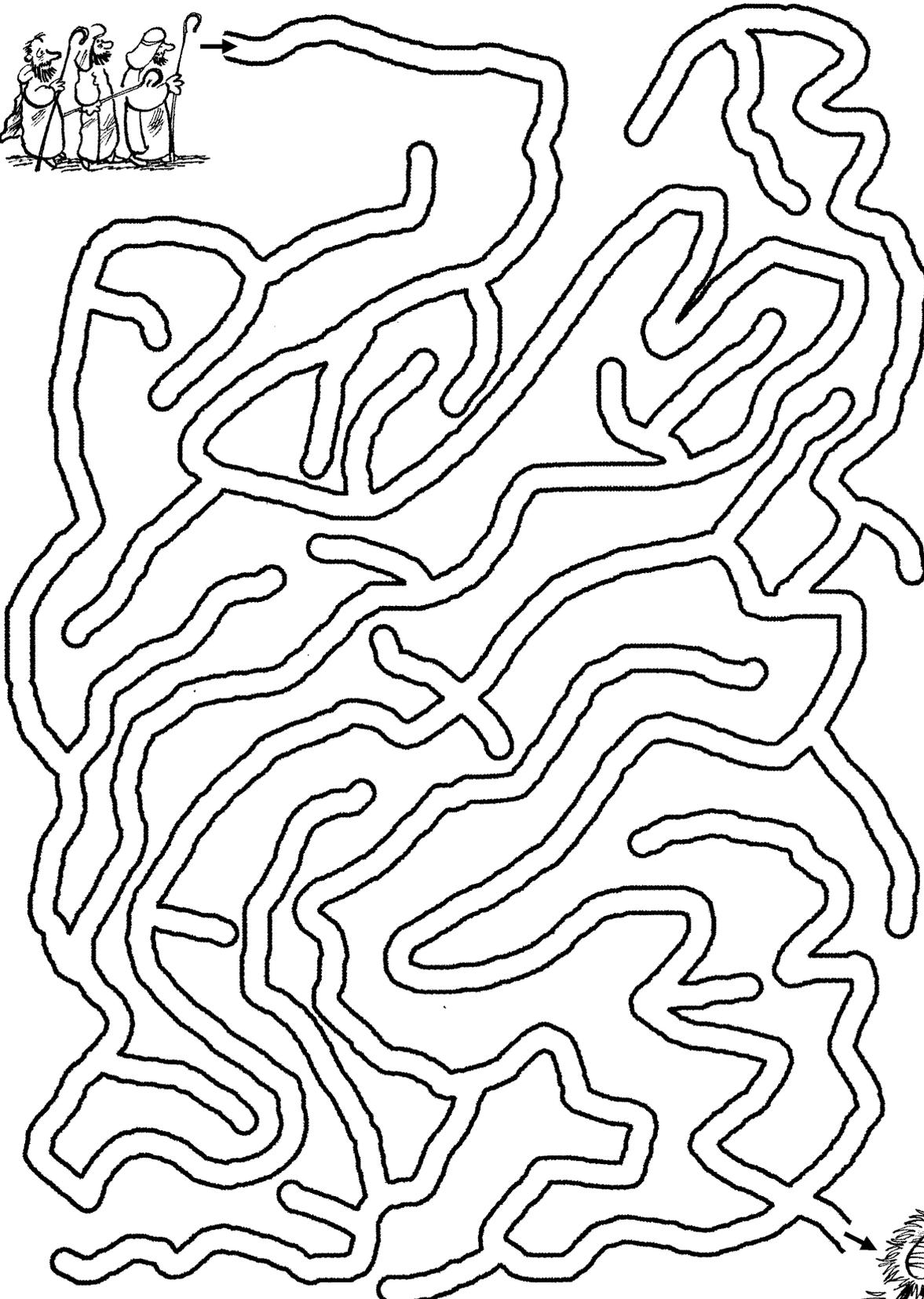
G B A B Y N G O O D A B L F
 V O S H E P H E R D S A V I O U R
 D A Y T M A R Y N E N F R R O
 S C H R I S T E P G L T D
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 E A E I S I G N
 E T D E



ALL • DECREE • JOSEPH • DAVID • BETHLEHEM • MARY • BIRTH • SON • LAID • MANGER
 INN • SHEPHERDS • FLOCK • NIGHT • LORD • GLORY • GOOD NEWS • JOY • DAY
 SAVIOUR • CHRIST • SIGN • BABY • GOD • PEACE • ANGELS • GO • SEE • TOLD • PRAISE

The Christmas Journey

The most wonderful story of all time tells of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Some angels gave the good news of Jesus' arrival to shepherds in nearby fields. Can you help the shepherds find their way to the manger?



Christmas Quiz 2022 answers

- No Vac Novak became No Match Novak because Novak Djokovic was due to play at the Australian Open but prevented because he had declined a covid vaccination.
- 35 years ago ITV wanted a detective story set within 50 miles of the Midlands to rival BBC's Agatha Christie stories. They choose to the Morse stories.
- Meatloaf was the rock star who died in January and would do anything for love, but not that.
- It snowed at the Winter Olympics caused problems as the organisers had not expected it.
- Actor and singer Michael Flanders would have celebrated his 100th birthday in March and was one of a duo who wrote the hippopotamus song *Mud, mud, and glorious mud*.
- Before he entered politics the President of Ukraine was a comedian.
- At the Oscars Will Smith had an incident with the comedian, Chris Rock. Smith go on to get an Oscar for the film called *King Richard*
- Partygate was the furore about parties held in Downing Street.
- Tractorgate was the alleged incident when an MP looked at inappropriate material online during a session of the House of Commons.
- Beergate was a political controversy concerning allegations that an event in Durham in April 2021 could have been in breach of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. The police, after investigating, cleared the attendees.
- Controversies are often named "gates" after the Watergate scandal.
- In May footballer Diego Maradona's shirt was sold for the record breaking £7.1 million.
- The two places outside the UK that gained city status this year were Ramsey on the Isle of Man and Stanley in the Falklands. Before you google it the Isle of Man is not part of the UK.
- There was a television series this year called *The line*, "Infamy, infamy, they've all got it in for me!" comes from *Carry on Cleo* 1964 and was spoken by Kenneth Williams.
- A surprise guest of Her Majesty for tea over the jubilee was Paddington Bear. Paddington was played by Ukrainian President in the Ukrainian language version of the film.
- The actor who played Rev Timothy Farthing passed away this year. He was Frank Williams in the BBC television sitcom *Dad's Army*. He became a prominent lay leader in the Church of England.
- At the age of nearly 90, Bernard Cribbins published an autobiography looking back on his years in show business in 2018. Its title was *Bernard Who? 75 Years of Doing Absolutely Everything*.
- Nichelle Nichols who played Uhura in the Star Trek franchise was ordered not to quit a science fiction series by Martin Luther King.
- Dan Snow reportedly urge tourists to visit Durham instead of (or possibly as well as) Stonehenge.

Hope you enjoyed the quiz and remembered some of these events and people from 2022



Thanks to everyone who has contributed to our parish magazine this year—and although we do pay the required subscription—thanks to everyone at Parish Pump Ltd—for their regular supply of articles, notable events, art work, puzzles, etc.

H	I	D	E		D	I	S	G	R	A	C	E
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	A	S	H	R	A	M		M	E	N	O	R
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1	5	7	3	2	4	8	6	9
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6	8	9	1	5	7	4	3	2
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7	4	6	2	3	9	5	8	1
3	9	2	5	8	1	7	4	6
9	7	1	6	4	3	2	5	8
8	2	3	7	1	5	6	9	4
4	6	5	8	9	2	3	1	7

c	o	u	s	i	n	v	a	d	e	d	l
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p	r	e	g	n	a	n	t	u	s	l	a
j	o	h	n	s	x	b	o	b	g	e	e
s	o	d	u	t	y	i	e	i	a	e	l
h	i	r	e	s	c	u	e	t	m	b	i
z	e	c	h	a	r	a	i	a	h	u	y
j	n	a	r	o	m	a	n	s	q	r	u
h	n	g	p	r	a	y	e	r	t	n	r

Date for your diary:

Monday, 9th January 2023 7pm

Service of Induction Rev Chris Blunt—Rector of Stockport and Brinnington.

All Welcome



Contract us at: **St Mary's with St Andrew's Parish Office**
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Churchgate, Stockport, SK1 1YG

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