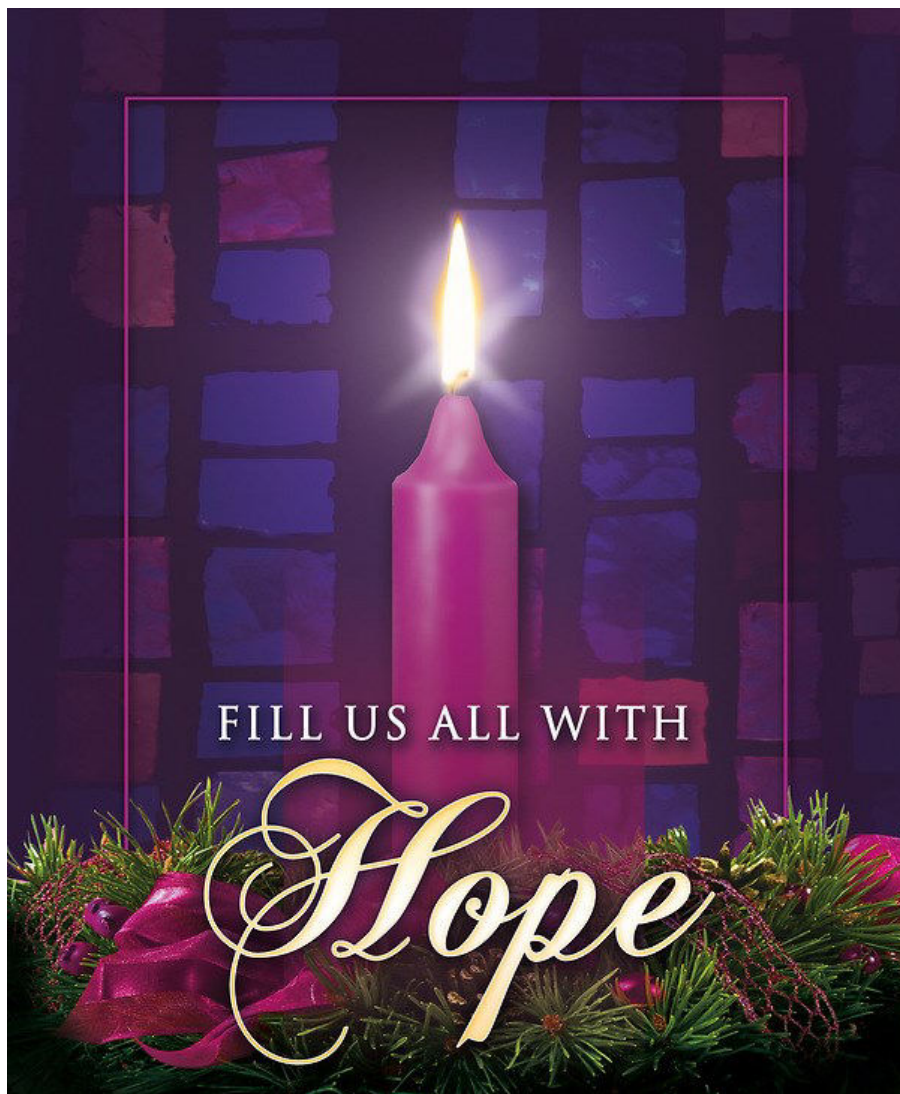


St. Faith and St. Laurence Harborne



DECEMBER 2025



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
BIRMINGHAM

USEFUL NUMBERS (See also back cover)

Priest- in-Charge: REVD. DAVID PARKER **Mobile:** 07532 338961
Email: davidparker124@btinternet.com
PCC Vice-Chair CAROLINE MOSLEY **Email:** caromosley1@gmail.com
Mobile: 07887552123

Task Group Chairs

Church Estate Task Group DAVID ARKELL 429 2772
Mission: PAULINE SITFORD **Email:** pauline.walkersend@gmail.com 427 7005
Socials: DAVID GLANVILL **Email:** davidglanvill@yahoo.co.uk 682 8360
Communications: CAROLINE MOSLEY **Email:** caromosley1@gmail.com
Mobile: 07887552123

Eco Church : CORINNE TREACY–Parish Environment Contact **Mobile:** 07752640151

Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator: SALLY GRIFFITHS **Mobile:** 07940 758396

E-mail: sallyegriff@gmail.com

Vulnerable Adults Contact: Sue Glanvill **Mobile:** 07934 933629

E-mail sue_granvill@yahoo.co.uk

Parish Identity Verifier: CORINNE TREACY **Mobile:** 07752640151

Our Safeguarding policies pack is available in the Hall, in the church and on our website. Safeguarding posters and Promoting a Safer Church with our Parish Policy Statement posters are on display in the Hall and Church together with some leaflets. If you have any concerns about the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, please speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team or to Revd. David Parker. Concerns may have then to be passed to the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser in confidence. In an emergency contact police, Social Care Services, or for a child, the NSPCC helpline 0800 800 5000

ACTIVITIES

Women's Fellowship: HELEN HAYWARD **Mobile:** 07940133941

Stay and Play: Thursdays 9.30am- 11am
HILARY SHAYLOR 454 0451

Lesson Readers Secretaries:
(10am) BRENDA STOTT 681 9339
(6.30pm) DIANA LEADBEATER 427 1930

Planned Giving: CORINNE TREACY (TEMPORARY) **Mobile:** 07752640151

Flower Rota: ANITA TIPPIN 454 7586

Transport DAVID GLANVILL **Email:** davidglanvill@yahoo.co.uk 682 8360

Co-ordinator: (Please contact David if you need, or can offer lifts to church)

Uniformed Organisations

Scout Association Ring 0345 300 1818 and ask for 293rd Birmingham Scout Group

GSL Leader: TOM McARDLE

Beavers: Monday, 6pm EMMA CAWSEY

Cub Scouts: Wednesday, 6pm MATT CAWSEY

Scouts: Tuesday, 7.15pm Leader: KEVIN PAYNE

Guides: Wednesday, 7.30pm **Guider:** AMANDA JONES 01384 636928

Brownies: Wednesday, 6pm-7.30pm **Brown Owl:** JANET JONES 429 8167

Rainbow Unit: Wednesday, 4.45pm-5.45pm **Leader:** JANET JONES 429 8167

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Aspects of life at St Faith and St Laurence

Morning Prayer – is normally said Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at 8.30 am in the Lady Chapel. We use Common Worship Daily Prayer, all are welcome to come and join in.

Task Groups – The church has a number of task groups enabling areas of church life. These are listed on the inside cover of the magazine with the contact details of the chairs. If you would like to be a part of a groups please contact the relevant chair. All are welcome to join.

Stay and Play meets on Thursday between 9.30 and 11am in the Hall to give a chance for people with young children to meet and the children to play. All are welcome. Cost £2 per family.

Planned Giving In order to continue, the church relies on the financial support of the congregation and parishioners. It costs over £1500 per week to operate. We encourage people to give regularly through some form of Planned Giving, and to Gift Aid their giving if they pay income tax, so the parish can reclaim tax on the donations at no extra cost to the donor. Each person must decide how much they can afford to give.

The recommended method of planned giving is by direct debit through the Parish Giving Scheme as this reduces bureaucracy and improves our cash flow but still leave the giver in control of their contributions. Some people prefer to pay by Standing Order or using weekly or monthly envelopes. Details of all these methods are available from Loleta Atkinson or Corinne Treacy.

Choir and Music Our church has an excellent musical tradition. Mark Lawrence, is our Director of Music. Please speak to Mark if you would like to support the music in any way, particularly if you are able and interested to sing with others whilst we find new ways to keep our tradition going.

We support **Recycling**. We have a special collection on the first Sunday of every month when we collect ALUMINIUM cans and foil which can be sold and the money raised is donated to our Mission Partners in Chile (through USPG) Relevant collection boxes will be located in the narthex. Please bag your foil etc. and leave it in the relevant box. We **CAN'T ACCEPT** yoghurt pot tops, shiny sweet wrappers, plastic bottle caps or chocolate wrappers. Local supermarkets have battery recycling facilities in this area.

Home Communion There are several people who are unable to get to church, either permanently or temporarily, and to whom David or Sally take communion in their homes. If you would like to receive communion at home, or know someone who might, please speak to David or Sally.

'easyfundraising'

Next time you shop online, think of St Faith and St Laurence and raise free donations with 3,000+ retailers:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stfaithandstlaurence>

Women's Fellowship meets on the first Tuesdays of the month from March to December. Meetings are held in the Committee Room at 2pm. We have talks on a variety of subjects.

Prayer Ministry Team

Prayer ministry is offered during the 10am Communion on the 1st Sunday of each month. People can receive prayer for themselves or for any situation that is important to them. It takes place in the Lady Chapel during the distribution of communion.

Foodbank

We collect food for the Quinton Foodbank. There is a box in church and food can be placed there at any time. The list of things that are needed is in church and in the hall. Food is distributed from St Boniface Church on Wednesdays. Vouchers are required to receive food.



Call in for Coffee time together over a cuppa on a Wednesday morning from 10.30 -12.00. if needed we can arrange for someone to collect you and then take you home. If you are passing, do call in, or bring a friend, all are welcome.





Dear Friends,

We have just a few weeks left of 2025. Globally, 2025 has been characterised by instability, with ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, Ukraine, and Sudan. The world also struggles with the accelerating impacts of climate change. Summer 2025 was the warmest on record for the UK.

In the middle of November, the Met Office issued a rarer amber warning for rain across a swathe of the West Midlands and Wales, stretching across the East Midlands too. Storm Claudia was set to bring heavy downpours and strong gusts of wind. West Midlands Fire Service confirmed it had rescued many people from vehicles who were trapped due to conditions caused by Storm Claudia!

At the beginning of 2025, Donald Trump was inaugurated for his second non-consecutive term, becoming only the second U.S. president in history to do so. He took immediate and decisive action upon returning to office, issuing a series of executive orders to reverse his predecessor's policies.

Following the passing of Pope Francis in April 2025, a papal conclave convened at the Vatican to elect his successor. On May 8, the cardinals chose American-born Cardinal Robert Prevost, who took the papal name Leo XIV. His election marked a historic moment for the Catholic Church as he became the first pope from North America.

Dame Sarah Mullally has been named as the new Archbishop of Canterbury designate - the first woman to be chosen for the role. Women were first ordained priests in the Church in 1994, while the first female bishop appointments followed 20 years later in 2014. Dame Sarah Mullally was formally nominated in October 2025 and will be installed at Canterbury Cathedral on March 25, 2026.

Finally how has St Faith and St Laurence flourished throughout 2025? One key characteristic of a good church is a loving community. I believe that our church has a genuine, welcoming community and how we do show love for God and one another with a spirit of grace and humility. Pastoral care is providing guidance, compassion, and practical help to meet the needs of our congregation—body, mind, and spirit—fostering a deeper connection with faith and one another.

Pastoral care helps individuals navigate life's challenges by providing a safe space for them to share their struggles and seek guidance, encouraging their spiritual journey and deepening their connection to God.

Jesus said “Love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind” and “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

So we look forward to the peace of Advent and the joy of Christmas.

Sally

PCC Report

The PCC met on 11th November and reviewed a number of matters. Now that the gutters work has been completed (on time and under budget), we agreed that our next project should be to replace the chairs in the Hall and Committee Room – we can fund this thanks to the very generous legacy from Priscilla White.

As planned, the Birmingham Jesus Vision Church have now started using our buildings on Sunday afternoons, and seem to have settled in well.

Following the recommendations of the Mission Task Group, the PCC agreed to give £800 each to the following three charities: Birmingham City Mission, Shelter Box and Target Ovarian Cancer. We will also give £100 to A Rocha UK. With the £1500 we sent previously to Malawi from parish funds, this makes a total of £4000 in Away Giving this year.

We also discussed our contribution to the diocesan Common Fund for 2026, noting that, despite the recent grant of £17.8M (over 6 years) from the Church Commissioners, the diocesan board of finance expects to have a deficit of over £800k next year, and agreed to increase our contribution from £46k to £50k.

David Parker

REPORT OF THE CHURCH ESTATE TASK GROUP



The main front steps to the church from the pavement have been re-laid and are now secure. New external lights to the car park have been fitted and a second notice board has been erected near the car park entrance which will contain eco-church and environmental information. The main church and hall boilers have been serviced and the church alarm system checked. In the garden a large box hedge has suffered badly from box moth caterpillar infestation during the long summer drought and will be removed shortly.

David Arkell (Chair)

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Deanery Synod met on the 8th October at St Hilda's, Warley Woods. The meeting was attended by Bishop Michael, Jan Smart (Diocesan Secretary) and Andy Winmill (Diocesan Director of Mission) members of the Executive Council. They were there to give a presentation to the Synod on the recent National Church funding award for CofE Birmingham and give members an opportunity to share their comments, reflections and questions.

Before the main business of the meeting, the Bishop led the commissioning of Blessing Jegede, Reader at St Germain, Edgbaston as the Deanery Warden of Readers. This important role is to support, promote and develop Reader Ministry as part of a team of other Deanery Wardens and in co-ordination with the Diocesan Warden of Readers.

The Bishop went on to speak about the National Church award of £17.8m to CofE Birmingham. This is a result of a bid by the Diocese for vital resources to continue the vision behind the Transforming Church project to grow churches at the heart of every community in the Diocese. This funding is not meant to redefine the vision, but rather to reinvigorate existing plans and ambitions that have been in place for many years.

There are four key pillars to the strategy supported by the funding:

1. Sustainability - enabling the diocese to get back to being financially sustainable. The Common Fund has dropped significantly since Covid and the Diocese is running at an operating deficit of £1m each year. The funding will give breathing space to work with parishes to create sustainable plans for Common Fund giving.
2. Leadership - the funding will enable the diocese to create and develop a "leadership pipeline" across all the church traditions in our diocese. This would include lay and ordained ministry with an increase in curacies and from currently underrepresented groups.
3. Parish Growth - funding to enable parishes and oversight areas to flourish. There will be Mission and Discipleship Enablers to help parishes to work to develop mission projects. This is not a central programme but will be parish lead. Applications for seed funding can be made for these projects.
4. Revitalisation and Church Planting – the funding will support projects for the revitalisation of existing churches and the planting of new ones, particularly in areas of significant need and to create a younger and more diverse church. Several such projects are already planned and underway, but full details are not yet ready to be published. The national church has set aside extra funding for later bids in this area.

Without this funding, the diocese would face a difficult future marked by budget cuts, reduced ministry, and diminishing mission. It provides an opportunity to get back on track and to see growth and flourishing across all parishes and the diocese.

The meeting then broke into smaller groups, based on oversight areas, to discuss the proposals. Comments and questions were then brought back to Bishop Michael, Jan and Andy.

Finally, we broke into houses to elect to the Diocesan Synod. There was one vacancy for the house of clergy and one vacancy for the house of laity. The house of clergy also voted for the clergy vacancy on the Warley and Edgbaston Deanery Synod Standing Committee.

See also: <https://www.cofebirmingham.com/news-stories/funding-awarded-to-church-of-england-birmingham-from-the-national-church.php>

Caroline Mosley

Growing Gifts, getting there...!

It's been a year since I wrote 'A New Hope' about beginning a journey towards becoming more involved in the ministry at our church. Progress has been patchy. There have been delays and disappointments. However, I began the Growing Gifts course in September. The course aims to train and empower lay people to lead worship or preach on an occasional basis. In agreement with David Parker, I've chosen preaching. (More information can be found at: www.dio.org.uk/growinggifts).

This is a scary step. I don't feel equipped or ready for this role. Thankfully the Growing Gifts course, especially the others in my group, are helping me to explore, learn and take a few risks. Their faith, support and encouragement, along with the course content and skilled facilitators, are enabling me to realise new possibilities.

St Faith and St Laurence is a special place to me. Both the building and the people in it. The welcoming and acceptance of others, how we can pull together, the ways in which we help those who are struggling physically or mentally, the laughter. It's somewhere that, however I'm feeling, makes life that bit better. Whether it be in the service or in a word of kindness. Thank you for that.

I'm still unsure where this journey is taking me, whether this is what I'm being called to do. But I think I need to try...and perhaps most importantly, trust God.

Bronwen

My Church - stories of lives changed in local churches.

'I've never left a Sunday service without feeling lighter and better inside.'

After spending a sleepless night trying to console her newborn baby, exhausted mum Paris walked the streets outside her home in tears until an encounter with a local church changed her life forever.

35 year old Paris, originally from Iran, moved to England two years ago with her husband on a student visa. Here she explains how her life has changed since stepping into Christ Church in Freemantle, Southampton.

"When my baby was 40 days old and had cried the whole night from colic, I was exhausted and in a very bad state. I put her in a baby carrier and walked the streets and found myself staring into a school yard for no reason. Somebody asked me to move on and respect their space. That was so embarrassing for me, and I stepped aside. As I walked on, I saw the door of Christ Church was open, I went in, and a kind lady invited me to have a warm cup of tea. A few minutes later, another kind woman, came and told me she was the priest of the church. At that time, I didn't even know what a priest was. I could see she was speaking kindly to me, even though my English language was bad. She told me she knew my country, and she knew Iranian people locally. Suddenly I realised after months of being alone during pregnancy and after birth, with my language getting worse every day, I was talking with someone again.

She invited me to a Sunday service, I was surprised, even though I wasn't a Christian she was happy to invite me to the church. When I went the next week, the same lady who had invited me for tea sat beside me during the service and helped me follow along. People greeted me and welcomed me warmly, it was what I needed at that time, as I was going through very hard days.

From the next week I went with more eagerness, looking forward to Sunday. A month or two later the church gave me a Bible in my own language as a gift. By then my girl's sleep had improved, when she slept, I would read the Bible, always excited to learn more. From reading it I discovered how kind the God of Christianity is, and how much I needed this God.

Finally, four months later my baby and I were baptised on the same day. The lady who invited me in for a cup of tea is now the godmother of my baby.

I feel my life has truly become a thousand times more beautiful since becoming a Christian. I used to think 'what is the point of this life'. But now I have a loving God one who I can praise with hymns, songs and music. For me my church feels like a safe place, a second home. What I look forward to is peace and comfort, I've never left a Sunday service without feeling lighter and better inside."

From darkness to light.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.

(From 'Christ, be our light' by Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957)

Bernadette Farrell is one of the best-known hymn writers of our time. She was interviewed on *Songs of Praise* in a programme in which Pam Rhodes looked at the work and inspiration of women hymn writers.

'I always write for the moment; says Bernadette. I now know why the words of 'Christ, be our light'¹ are so easy to learn. The hymn was written for a congregation who, to begin with, would be in almost total darkness.

The new Roman Catholic church of St Gabriel in Upper Holloway, North London, was being consecrated, and they would be singing this new hymn by the light of the paschal candle, the large candle first lit at dawn on Easter Day. As the hymn was sung, candles positioned all around the walls of the new church would be lit, so that the congregation would be introduced to their new home. Finally, the light of the paschal candle would light little candles held by the congregation.

They as Bernadette had intended, were the 'light of the world'. With very little rehearsal everyone soon knew the chorus and was able to use their eyes not to read the words, but to watch the light spread. It must have been moving and spectacular.

Since then, 'Christ, be our light' has been translated into many languages, including Chinese and Vietnamese. However, the response to the first time it was sung gives its writer the greatest satisfaction. After that service, people from St Gabriel's and their visitors from neighbouring churches began to discuss how they could help the many homeless in the area. They had their new building, and they knew that many people who would come for an hour on Sunday to worship there had no homes to go back to. They could come into the warm for a smile and a chat, but that night the congregation thought of a way that they could really help them in their new church. Above all, people living in hostels, bed-sits, or out on the streets need a place to wash, shower and find clean clothes.

So now, built into the roof of the church hall are six showers each for men and women. It was like an answer to prayer, and although Bernadette claims no credit, she secretly hopes that her hymn may have been part of it.

Andrew Barr

A Christmas story with a difference

The late Cardinal Hume was preaching one Christmas morning in a small parish in North London. To the surprise of many, he didn't mention the birth of our Lord. Instead he told the congregation the true story of what happened in a concentration camp during World War II.

The people had to queue, waiting for their turn to enter the chambers of death. When the doors closed, the cut-off point came as a young Jewish girl was standing alone crying, naked and shivering with fear. The next time the doors opened she would be the first in. She was clutching tightly her only worldly possession, a small rag doll.

Everyone around her was understandably preoccupied with their own worries. No one even noticed her shaking and shivering. No one, that is, except the German guard whose job it was to mercilessly shunt these unfortunate people to their death. The guard was so moved by her crying that he immediately took off his own clothes, took her hand and stood next to her without saying a word.

Instantly the little girl's face lit up. She stopped crying and when the doors of the chamber reopened they both entered together hand in hand.

The Cardinal made the point that this is exactly what Christ did 2000 years ago. He broke into our human situation and as St Paul says, 'He has taken our hands and removed our sinful condition'.

Brian D'Arcy

A prayer for the children of Bethlehem

Lord Jesus, born in Bethlehem,
we pray for the children of the Middle East
who look up at night to see the same stars
on which you gazed with hope and wonder.

May all who share the same sky
learn to share the same land,
making peace and seeking justice.
Fill our hearts with compassion this Christmas,
and make of us people who bring good news,
in our homes,
in the lands of your birth,
and in every place where children play,
under the mercy of heaven.

Amen.

Christmas in Heaven

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below.
With tiny lights like heaven's stars reflecting the snow.
The sight is so spectacular please wipe away the tear
For I'm spending Christmas with Jesus this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear
But the sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here.
I have no words to tell you the joys their voices bring
For it's beyond description to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me; I see the pain inside your heart
But I am not so far away, we really aren't apart.
So be happy for me, dear ones, you know I hold you dear
And be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I sent you each a special gift from my heavenly home above,
I sent you each a memory of my undying love.
After all love is a gift more precious than pure gold.
It was always most important in the stories Jesus told.

Please love and keep each other as my Father said to do.
For I can't count the blessing of love he has for each of you.
So have a merry Christmas and wipe away that tear.
Remember I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

(This lovely poem was written by a 13-year old boy named Ben. He died of a brain tumour he had battled with for over four years. He died on 14 December 1997'. He gave this poem to his Mum before he died.)

Brian D'Arcy

"No-one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." **Nelson Mandela**

Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.
Martin Luther King

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE NEWS

The committee and members of the Circle would like to thank so many who have supported their special events. During this year we have held 2 Coffee Mornings, a Cream Tea for St George's Day in April and a Soup and Puddings afternoon in September and have raised £1,500 for Birmingham Hospice.

We do enjoy organising these events and it is so lovely when we are supported so we'll - thank you all.

The Friendship Circle is a community group who meet in the Committee Room of St Faith and St Laurence Church on the 3rd Monday afternoon of the month at 2pm.

We have a variety of talks on interesting subjects together with occasional meals out, and we support a different charity each year.

In 2026 we will be adopting Cerebral Palsey Midlands.

Our first meeting in 2026 will be a New Year's Party on Monday, 19th January at 2pm when we will be presenting Birmingham Hospice with this year's proceeds.



If you like being with friendly people and enjoy supporting charities we would be very pleased to welcome you.

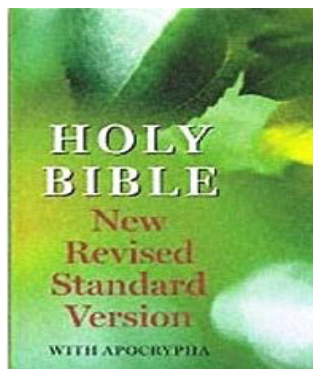
For further information please contact:- **Helen Hayward. 07940133941**

Sometimes, upon a Christmas day
I wonder if there's any way
That Christmas might be quite a treat
For those who have a few more feet!
I really love my Christmas socks
That fill, each year, my Christmas box
O Santa, festive stocking filler,
I wish I were a caterpillar!

Nigel Beeton



READINGS FOR DECEMBER



December 7th Advent 2

10am Holy Communion Isaiah 11:1-10, Romans 15:4-13, Matthew 3:1-12

6.30pm Evensong 1 Kings 18:17-39, John 1:19-28

December 14th Advent 3

8am Holy Communion Isaiah 35:1-10, James 5:7-10, Matthew 11:2-11

10am Christingle-Toy Service Readings to be confirmed

5.30pm Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

December 21st Advent 4

10am Holy Communion Isaiah 7:10-16, Romans 1:1-7, Matthew 1:18-end

6.30pm Evensong 1 Samuel 1:1-20, Revelation 22:6-end

December 24th Christmas Eve

4pm Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Communion Isaiah 52:7-10, Hebrews 1:1-4, John 1:1-14

December 25th Christmas Day

8am Holy Communion As Midnight

10am Holy Communion Isaiah 9:2-7, Titus 2:11-14,
Luke 2:1-14



December 28th Christmas 1

10am Holy Communion Isaiah 63:7-9, Hebrews 2:10-end, Matthew 2:13-end

The 12 Days of a Green(er) Christmas

On the first day of Christmas

Buy a real Christmas tree from a sustainable source. After Christmas plant it, or take it to a local recycling centre

On the second day of Christmas

If you need some new Christmas lights or electrical goods don't bin the old ones, donate them or take them to your local recycling centre.

On the third day of Christmas

Buy recycled Christmas cards, send an e-card or make your own.

On the fourth day of Christmas

There's nothing worse than smiling a grateful thanks for a present you don't really want, so give consumable presents, buy a membership or an experience day or go for a luxury meal and/or the theatre.

On the fifth day of Christmas

Are you buying presents that use batteries? If so, why not add recycled batteries and a charger?

On the sixth day of Christmas

When shopping use your LOAF
(Local, Organic, Animal friendly and Fairtrade)

On the seventh day of Christmas

Buy eco-crackers or, in the best Blue Peter tradition, make your own. all you need is a few toilet tube rolls, newspaper and some small gifts people might actually want.

On the eighth day of Christmas

Go for a walk, decorate a tree for wildlife (suet balls etc), but make sure it's where the birds can see the cat coming, or use twigs to create a 5 pointed star and find other natural things to decorate it with.

On the ninth day of Christmas

Use the wrapping paper recycling test: scrunch it up into a ball, if it stays in shape you can recycle it. Alternatively use magazine articles the recipient will enjoy reading and they get two presents for the price of one.

On the tenth day of Christmas

Where possible freeze leftovers rather than binning them.

On the eleventh day of Christmas

Had time to read all those magazines you subscribe to over the festive period? Why not pass them on to a friend?

On the twelfth day of Christmas

Make a New Year's Resolution to get in touch with the seasons and/or seek out local adventures. Or simply make your own eco-resolution (and keep to it!)

Environmental & Sustainability Calendar for your diary

December 2025 and January & February 2026

December

- * December 2nd – **‘Giving Tuesday’** – A global day of generosity that celebrates giving in all its forms (volunteering, donating, sharing, organising or campaigning.)
- * December 5th – **‘World Soil Day’** – A day to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources.
- * December 25th to January 5th – **‘12 Days Wild’** - 12 Days Wild is a festive nature challenge, encouraging you to do one wild thing a day from the 25th December to the 5th January.

January

- * January 1st to 31st – **‘Veganuary’** – This global campaign encourages people to try a vegan lifestyle for the entire month of January. It helps participants reduce their food-related carbon footprint and experience the health and ethical benefits of a plant-based diet by providing extensive resources and support.
- * January 23rd to 25th – **‘Big Garden Birdwatch’** – Few days to encourage you to sit back, relax and spend an hour watching and recording the birds in your garden or in your local park.
- * January 26th – **‘World Clean Energy Day’** - A day dedicated to raising awareness about clean energy solutions and promoting the transition to sustainable energy sources.
- * January 28th to 29th – **‘Sustainable Foods Conference’** - This essential conference brings together food industry leaders and policymakers to tackle one of the planet’s toughest challenges: creating a sustainable food system.

February

- * February 1st to 28th – **‘Show the Love’** – An annual celebration of everything we care about and want to protect from the worst impacts of the climate crisis.
- * February 2nd – **‘Wetland Day’**– Observed annually on February 2nd, this day raises awareness about the importance of wetlands (like marshes, swamps, and peatlands) for global biodiversity, water purification, and their huge capacity for carbon storage.
- * February 15th – **‘World Whale Day’** - Commemorated on the third Sunday of February, this observance works to raise awareness for whales and related species. It highlights the threats they face from human activities.

All or Nothing - Rising from the Ashes



Paris, January 2019: I find myself outside Notre-Dame Cathedral, which I'd previously visited. There's a long queue of tourists waiting to enter; I say to myself, I'll go in next time.

There was no next time. Three months later, on 15th April, fire severely damaged the cathedral, forcing its closure for five years. No one was killed - a fire-fighter and two police officers were injured - but the symbolic status of Notre-Dame for the city of Paris, for the French nation (believers and non-believers alike) and countless others beyond its borders, was such that it felt like a tragedy, an utter disaster.

I think of the London parish church destroyed by bombing in 1940 (with extensive loss of life) then rebuilt and re-opened to much fanfare in 1959. Also I recall another fire which destroyed Longford Cathedral in Ireland, on Christmas Day 2009, restored in 2014.

I made my long-awaited return visit to Paris in September. Along with my fellow-pilgrims, we attended High Mass on Holy Cross Day at the stunning Basilica of Sacre Coeur on Montmartre. The highlight of our weekend was to visit, and have a guided tour of the restored Cathedral of Notre Dame. Its joyful re-opening was on 8th December 2024, to immense international interest. The date is symbolic: the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is one held in great esteem by French Catholics.

Having watched on TV the rebuilding since the fire, it was a truly special occasion to be able to enter again the magnificent Gothic masterpiece. Those of us who had visited before the fire, agreed that our first Impression on entering was one of amazement at the transformation.

Besides the beautiful stained glass windows, my main interest was hearing again the magnificent Grand Organ.

Like the Virgin Mary statue that emerged from the blaze miraculously unscathed, the organ somehow managed to avoid significant damage in the fire. It was structurally intact, but remnants of the collapsed lead roof filled its cavernous pipes and the cracks between its keys. The thick, yellow powder posed no threat to the instrument's machinery, but the dust needed to be removed for another reason: it was toxic to humans. It took many months of painstaking cleaning and decontaminating of 8,000 pipes, 115 organ stops and numerous other musical components. The restoration process involved more than 30 artisans who spent months dismantling the organ and restoring its electrical and mechanical components before the deep-clean. They were among more than 2,000 craftspeople in total to be involved in the cathedral's restoration, many using traditional methods from generations ago. Tuning the organ took another six months. To tune an organ, one needs a perfect ear and, typically, complete silence, the latter of which proved nearly impossible to find on the highly specialized construction site. To accommodate this, one team started tuning the pipes by day, while another team perfected the work through the night after construction teams had left. These nocturnal artisans were assisted by the four organists of Notre Dame, each of whom was intimately acquainted with the unique character of the organ's sound from years spent playing the instrument.

Back at our hotel, our local guide introduced us to a friend Denise, who had witnessed the fire. "On April 15, we were just coming home from doing our shopping. The phone rang. It was 6:45 p.m. It was a friend who lives close by, said to me, 'the cathedral is on fire!' We rushed to our balcony, where we saw the first flames. The base of the spire was white hot. The fire-fighters arrived late because the bridge across the Seine was blocked. When they arrived, they had a 98-foot-long (30 meter) ladder and short water hoses. It seemed ridiculous. I shouted from the balcony: 'Why such short hoses? Why not take the water from the Seine?' The reinforcements arrived with a ladder 295 feet (90 meters) tall and a system that allowed them to pump water straight from the Seine. The fire-fighters were heroic.

They understood that the roof would collapse but that the towers needed to be saved. The heat on the balcony was unbearable. If the bells had dropped, the cathedral would have been destroyed. It was apocalyptical, like in a horror movie. Journalists and TV teams were on our balcony. There was such turmoil. It was not until the next day that I truly realized what had happened, and tears came to my eyes. The spire was gone. I hadn't had a bad dream. I was distraught."

It was a special privilege to hear Denise's personal account of that historic night.

Peter Stokes

Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made
By singing 'Oh how beautiful!' and sitting in the shade
While better men than we go out and start their working lives
At grubbing weeds from gravel paths with broken dinner knives
There's not a pair of legs so thin, there's not a head so thick,
There's not a hand so weak and white, nor yet a heart so sick,
but it can find some needful job that's crying to be done
For the Glory of the Garden glorifieth every one.

Nothing could be more apt than the above words as I surveyed a patch of ground offered to me on retirement in January 2005. I had always been a keen gardener embracing not just ornamentals but a small range of fruit and vegetables in various homes as our family moved during our working lives.

A common hobby but one that gives the mind a degree of peace, quiet and an escape from the increasing demands of a busy job, family and the bombardment from an aggressive political and media atmosphere. A retreat.

There is a limit to the joys of sorting through cupboards and drawers with a blitz of cleaning immediately post retirement. Volunteering and travel came into the plan ahead but I soon realised I would be bored.

My first sight of plot 82 was a shock. Untended and covered with weeds even in winter and on a gentle slope towards a stream it looked huge at 200 square yards. Our site was originally used during WW2 and over the post-war period underwent a number of different guises and leases from the Calthorpe estate via the Education Committee of BCC. There is a particular difference in this allotment site compared with those usually seen from a railway carriage ie a field divided into equal sized plots and shapes.

In 1965, a government committee under the auspices of Professor Harold Thorpe the Head of the Geography department, University of Birmingham, began looking into the future of allotments as the number post-war had fallen by around 55%. The conclusion was they should be retained, no longer a source of cheap vegetables for the 'labouring poor' but as a worthwhile form of recreation under the new title of Leisure Gardens with facilities for all the family. (HMSO mnd.4126).

In 1972 two parcels of land were joined, with Chad Brook running between the two, and the whole site then developed in sympathy with the ideals and style suggested by Professor Thorpe. This includes a tarmac roadway winding its way around the site connecting plots, with trees and shrubs planted along the banks of Chad Brook. A timber pavilion with toilets and a large storeroom occupies a central position overlooking very pleasant communal spaces planted with small groups of trees. There are 8 groups of tool sheds (most now very dilapidated) water standpipes with electricity and water supplying the pavilion.

As a result of the overall design, many plots vary in size and shape. The Leisure Garden was formally opened in 1975 and proved extremely popular.

We have a lease from BCC/Calthorpe until 2100 but who knows what the future holds. We will definitely be long gone! Sadly, there are few remaining sites in the country with this original concept at its heart.

As I contemplated this large unkempt patch in the soggy and very cold weather, a encouraging voice said "I'll help you". My husband, not a natural gardener, but who enjoys his food could see the potential. His construction skills and extra strength have proved invaluable, and so another chapter of our lives together was born. A 'straight line man' versus a more artistic 'wavy and rounded' approach by myself was interesting, but common sense prevailed and in straight lines we planted and sowed! So much easier to weed and spot the edibles.

Battle commenced and with it much backache, cramp and reassessment of our venture, but also contact with curious fellow plot-holders who came to view the newcomers and offer encouragement. Some became good friends over time and many moved on to pastures new.

Oh Adam was a gardener, and God who made him sees
That half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees,
So when your work is finished, you can wash your hands and pray
For the Glory of the Garden, that it may not pass away!
And the glory of the Garden it shall never pass away!

(Verses from 'The Glory of the Garden' by Rudyard Kipling.)

Lesley Arkell



Music for Advent and Christmas



I hope you will be able to with us for some of the special music coming up for Advent and Christmas. Thanks to the brave and loyal singers of the Singing Group, we will be singing psalms, hymns and short anthems for the season. On the evening of Advent Sunday (30th November) we will have a service of readings and music, with Advent hymns, monastic-style plainsong chants and seasonal organ music.

Advent hymns are probably my favourite as a seasonal collection. Many of them are quite plain and reflect that Advent aspect of waiting and hoping. Then at the Christingle Service (14th Dec, 10 am), there's a more glittery and folksy style of song for the candles, oranges and sweets. The early evening on the 14th (5.30 pm, to be precise) sees the solo verse of 'Once in Royal David's City' which opens the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

I am glad to say that our Singing Group will join with my choristers from West House School Chorale for a great mix of Christmas carols, songs and hymns to accompany the readings, telling the story of Christmas. Please join us in the congregation if you can.

On Christmas Eve, there is the Crib Service at 4pm and the Midnight Communion at 11.30pm; lastly, the Communion on Christmas Day at 10 am. Lots of chances for Christmas singing!

This year has seen our Singing Group consolidate and grow in confidence. We would like to invite anyone who enjoys singing and thinks they can find (most of) the notes! We practise for about 15 mins each Sunday morning, which is just enough time to go through the hymns and a short anthem or psalm. Do talk to one of the current singers or to me if you think you would like to join us.

Mark Lawrence, Director of Music

Two Advents

Quietly dignified, lovingly attentive, the young man leads his fiancé, mounted on a donkey, along the hot, dry, dusty road to Bethlehem. Their destiny, a life of simplicity and toil: humbly and obediently they have accepted the responsibility for bringing the priceless gift to an impoverished world.

City centres teem with frenzied crowds persuaded by the marketing teams to purchase sophisticated gifts guaranteed to bring lasting joy. Crowds rush headlong through an arid Advent, deceived by a mirage, poignantly ignorant of the one perfect gift - God's free gift of love.

Twinkling lights and festive decorations seduce the unwary to purchase more than they can afford. Carols blast from every shop door proclaiming love, peace and joy. Harassed mothers and covetous children contradict the illusion and speak of tension - while the retailing magnates smile at their success.

There are no twinkling lights in Bethlehem, no welcoming hotel room, no special provision for the world's Saviour. The birth pains begin in a quiet stable, the animals alone witnessing the love and peace of the arrival of Jesus.

Just one bright star tells of the joy of the world - but the world isn't looking.

It was first said in the Bible.

Few people realise that many of the sayings which they use today had their origin in the Bible. Here are some examples:

- If you say, "I escaped by the skin of my teeth" you will be quoting something from the book of Job 19.20.
- And if you feel something is "no more than a drop in a bucket" you will find this in the prophecy of Isaiah 40.15.
- If something happens "in the twinkling of an eye" this comes straight from 1 Corinthians 15.52.
- If someone tries to find "a scapegoat" tell them to look at Leviticus 16.10.
- And if you say "A little bird told me" you will find it comes from the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes 10.20.
- And if someone sighs and says there's "no rest for the wicked" you could point them to Isaiah 57.21.
- How many people will say "the writing's on the wall" without knowing that it comes from the book of Daniel 5.5.
- And the expression "pride comes before a fall" can be found in Proverbs 16.18
- The saying "by the sweat of your brow" comes straight from Genesis 3.19.
- And "out of the mouths of babes" is in Psalm 8.2.
- And finally, if after all this you are near your "wits end" you'd better have a glance at Psalm 107.27.

Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer



A ground breaking ceremony took place on November 5th as work began on the landmark, which will be open to the public in 2028. The project has been backed by more than 20,000 supporters and £40m raised from donors across the world. The founder Richard Gamble said: “I am delighted we are creating a monument that will share a million stories of hope and that people will be able to discover Jesus, who listens to and answers prayer. We have faced many delays and challenges. I believe the timing is perfect.

“Everyone at Eternal Wall is deeply grateful to the thousands of people who have backed this project according to their ability – for every pound donated, every hour volunteered, and every prayer offered to bring us to this point.” “This is the moment to build a landmark of hope... a lasting testimony to the power of prayer, preserving the Christian heritage in our nation.”

About 120,000 answered prayers have already been submitted or pledged from 125 countries, with 250,000 the target for opening day. They include stories of healing, marriage reconciliation and addiction recovery, amongst many other topics. Land for the site was donated by IM Properties, owned by Midlands-based businessman Lord Edmiston. Lord Edmiston said: “Eternal Wall is designed to remind our nation, and people everywhere, of God’s goodness.” “It is a testament to present and future generations of the creator of the universe who has answered numerous prayers over centuries past and still is answering them today. “If we don’t remember the God who stood by us in our darkest hours as a nation, then we are condemned to have a future absent of his divine guidance and protection. I am therefore proud that my company has had the opportunity of being a significant donor to this project.” Approximately £5.7m is still needed to make the site fully operational including car park, visitor centre and landscaping costs. Donations are welcome to help us continue this vision.

Adopt-a-Bear Project

Take 50 pre-loved bears, gather your friends together and - with a little love and creativity turn them into £500 to support a good cause - Birmingham Hospice. This is the story of the Adopt-a-Bear Project.

Back in the Summer, the Birmingham Hospice Harborne Fundraising Group set ourselves the ambitious challenge of collecting 50 pre-loved bears, dressing them to the nines and offering them for adoption at our Spring Fayre supporting Birmingham Hospice.

The bears have been collected from all over the country and have each spent a happy day in our teddy bear “spa” getting spruced up and pampered before being introduced to our talented team of 16 volunteer knitters, sewers and crochet experts from the Harborne Village WI. We have been working together since the Summer to create our collection of 50 bears who are now all immaculately dressed in their unique, handmade outfits. Two adorable rag dolls and a cheeky monkey also somehow got in on the act?

Each bear will carry their own adoption certificate with their chosen name and a little insight into their character to help them to make friends with their new owners quickly. We are asking for a suggested donation of £10 each, so be kind - bears have feelings too! Our bears will be lovingly gift wrapped once adopted, making them perfect as presents for all ages. After all - every one loves a teddy bear don't they - especially when they are supporting such a good cause?

You can read all about the Adopt-a-Bear Project, see lots more photos of our teddies on www.heartupcycling.co.uk. If you fall in love with one of them, please do contact me on heartupcycling@gmail.com to place a reserve on your bear before the Spring Fayre takes place.

Our teddies will be eagerly waiting to find their new home at the Spring Fayre to be held in the Church Hall at St. Faith and St. Laurence Church on 21st March between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm. As well as our “Adopt-a-Bear” stall, we will also have delicious home made cakes, handmade crafts and gifts, spring bulbs, a tombola and raffle and children's activities. Come along and join the fun!

Margot Harbot - Heart UpCycling



Christmas Carols - From Village Green to Church Choirs



English Christmas carols are a hotchpotch, like the English themselves. Perhaps that's why they are so popular. They have the power to summon up a special kind of midwinter mood, like the aroma of mince pies and mulled wine and the twinkle of lights on a tree. It's a kind of magic.

How did they get that magic? Most of these songs were not composed as Christmas carols. Many were not 'composed' at all. Almost all did not begin life with the words they have now. Some didn't have words at all. Several evolved from folk songs: some are evolving still. Many of the most 'English' carols have at least one ancestor in another country, in the mountains of Austria, or nineteenth-century America, or a Pyrenean hillside, in Lutheran psalters, handsome volumes of illuminated plainsong or sturdy hymnbooks from Finland, first opened by the flickering light of a fire in some stone hall one dark evening, deep in the sixteenth century.

The origins of the word 'carol' are almost as murky as the history of some of the tunes themselves. Most European languages, living and dead, have been quoted as the source of the words, though most writers agree that there is a dash of French in there somewhere.

The glory days of the English carol tradition were the dark, ancient times of dances round the fire and festivals of cakes and ale. Congregational singing, beginning in the sixteenth century with the Reformation, led eventually to the carol being allowed inside the church, and to the distinctive sound of the eighteenth-century Christmas, a sort of mixture of folk music and Handel. Nineteenth-century clerics played a crucial role, writing and translating a large chunk of our repertoire, and unearthing and arranging all kinds of Christmas melodies from ages past. Their high-church, Anglo-Catholic style was hugely influential, embracing not just traditional carols, many of which might otherwise have remained hidden. They rediscovered modes and draped them with the beauty of holiness. They did for mediaeval music what Gilbert Scott did for Gothic architecture and Tennyson did for the legend of King Arthur: Victorianised it, but saved it. It's all a bit 'Merrie England'. Amis's Lucky Jim would have recognised it. In some ways they were the Henry Higgins of the English choral tradition, scrubbing away all traces of the accent of the street or the field.

Many of us have a favourite carol. Many including myself, would choose 'In the bleak mid-winter' for its beautiful words and how they perfectly compliment the Harold Darke tune.



Christina Rossetti



Harold Darke

When Christina Rossetti wrote her poem sometime after 1850, she had no idea that it would be set to music or sung as a carol. A devout high Anglican, Christina was a very pious and intense person, even by Victorian standards. She had at least one unhappy love affair and was never to marry. Her great love was an artist, James Collinson, a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood - a group of artists who aspired to great moral seriousness. But their engagement was broken off in 1850 when he joined the Roman Catholic Church. Much of her later poetry is pervaded by a sense of melancholy and the recurrent themes of unhappy or frustrated love.

Christina turned more and more to her devotion to God. Her brother, the artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti, conveyed her quality of mystical yearning when he asked her to sit for his portrait of the Virgin Mary.

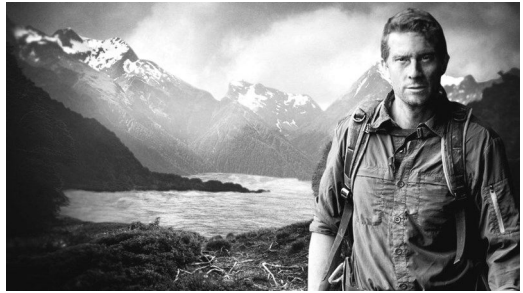
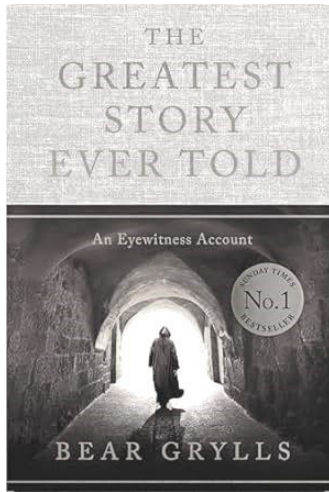
But Christina was to show herself to be much more than merely an obedient, artists' model. In her yearning for love and fulfilment she turned to writing, and perhaps this yearning was never more intensely expressed than in this carol, the last verse of which can move grown men and women to tears.

The other ingredient that makes this carol so popular is the tune. There are in fact two well-loved tunes. The oldest is *Cranham* by Gustav Hoist. It is the one usually sung by congregations. But in 1911 a young London organist, Harold Darke, wrote the tune that choristers prefer and, strangely enough, this is the only tune to have been asked for by name over and over again on the voting forms for the nation's favourite carol.

How utterly astonished Christina Rossetti would have been to know how many of us are still being drawn to a deeper understanding of Christmas by her poem.

Peter Stokes

Book Review-*The Greatest Story Ever Told* by Bear Grylls



This book is the story of the life of Jesus, written as a thriller. It is told from the perspective of five different people that knew him well. Grylls is one of the most famous adventurers in the world and has written over 100 books, but this one was different, he said "I literally woke up one morning and knew I was going to write this thing, with utter conviction" and "I couldn't have not written it".

Although he is a high profile personality, he has a quiet but real faith and admits he hasn't got all the answers. Despite being told by my family that it was hardly holiday reading, I really enjoyed it. It was pacy, easy reading with very short chapters. Grylls wanted the book to be faithful to the Gospel stories and there's no dialogue from Jesus that is made up, it is all in the New Testament. However, the words were not that familiar to me as they were from versions of the Bible using everyday language, but sometimes different translations bring a fresh perspective. The way the book was written, chronologically and in the cultural setting of the time really brings the story to life.

The thing I didn't like was the use of Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic names for people and places, it wasn't really necessary, for instance Jesus is referred to as Yeshua. They can be figured out though, and there is information at the end of the book. Grylls wrote the last words on the back cover before he'd even started the book, 'May the light and love of the Almighty fill your life with truth, peace and strength. Nothing can ever steal Christ's presence from you.'

I'm not surprised it's a number one *Sunday Times* bestseller. It will appeal to believers and non-believers alike and would make a great present.

Sally Churchus

The Everlasting Turkey



1. On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me. I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.
2. On the second day of Christmas, much laughter could be heard as we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.
3. On the third day of Christmas, people came from just next door, the turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.
4. On the fourth day of Christmas, came relations young and old. We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.
5. On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried, but we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.
6. On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died. the children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.
7. On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love, he did wince when he sat down at the table - and was offered turkey mince.
8. On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter, for he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alka-seltzer.
9. On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto, he knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.
10. On the tenth day of Christmas, we were drinking home-made brew, anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.
11. On the eleventh day of Christmas, our lovely tree was moulting, and with chilli, soya and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.
12. On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips, the guests had gone, the turkey too – **WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS.**



*In towns and villages
In tower blocks and terraces
Christ is waiting to be born*

*In palaces and shanty-towns
In high streets and back-streets
Christ is waiting to be born*

*In the vastness of the universe
In the intimacy of our hearts
Christ is waiting to be born*

*Come, Lord Jesus
Come into our homes
Come into our lives
Come and stay*

(From the Iona Community)

**A time to
Delve deeper into
The loVe of God -
Emmanuel
Not spending
Too much money**



Beavers Church Visit.

On the 22nd September, the beavers came over to Church to do some gardening and also to find out a bit more about the Church which David and Sally talked to them about .They were split into two groups half went into Church and the other half stayed in the garden. They were changed round later so that both groups had a chance to do gardening and learn about the Church. In the garden they cleared some of the ivy from the trees and on the ground they also planted some bulbs in the south side garden of the church.

They are hoping to come and see them when they have grown. All this goes towards their community badge and others as well. It was good to see them at the remembrance service on 9th September and to have them take part. This should give them something to remember and give them an idea of what it is all about. Looking forward to seeing them again when the bulbs have come up.

Malcolm Adey

A Christmas version of 1 Corinthians 13

If I decorate my house attractively with twinkling lights, holly and baubles, but do not show love to my family, I am just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking Christmas treats, special meals and arrange an impressive table layout on Christmas day, but do not show love to my family, I am just another cook.

If I go off to help in a soup kitchen, sing carols in a nursing home and give generously to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I attend parties, visit friends, see a Christmas show and even sing in the church choir, but do not focus on Jesus, I will have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to care for those in need. Love is kind, even when harassed and tired.

Love doesn't envy when looking at what others have. It doesn't tell other people to get out of the way; instead it is thankful they are there to be in the way.

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Computer games will break, clothes will wear out and gifts will get lost; but giving the gift of love will endure.

Say it with flowers

It is a delight to give or receive flowers when love or appreciation is shown, often on a special occasion. Flowers give pleasure.

Appreciative comments are frequently heard about the floral arrangements in Church, specially at festivals such as Christmas, Easter or Harvest but also week by week throughout the year. The absence of flowers during Advent and Lent adds to the sombre note of those seasons.

We are inviting you to help us make sure that our floral tradition continues by making a donation to the Flower Fund on one of your special occasions. Perhaps you have a big birthday, an anniversary or the birth of a grandchild to celebrate or would like to give flowers in memory of someone you remember with affection.

If so, place your donation in an envelope clearly labelled **Flower Fund** in the box at the back of the church. Please include a note, giving details of the name of the person commemorated or the occasion celebrated and the relevant date if you would like your gift to be acknowledged in the pew sheet.

We will always do our best to **say it with flowers**.

The Church Flower Arranging Group

Service Guide for Cold Days

Ah, the changing seasons! As we head into winter, you may find the following advice useful.

If you find your vicar has frosted over, resist the urge to pour hot water on him/her. The sudden temperature change could cause their specs to crack.

Check the tyres on your vicar's car. If they're not worn out, you may need to consider getting him/her a couple more churches to look after.

If you find the baptism water is freezing in the font, avoid adding antifreeze or salt. A drop of left-over Malibu from last Christmas will lower the freezing point, and leave baby with a pleasant coconut smell.

If the congregation is starting slowly in bad weather, do not use jump leads. call the RAC.*

If the church door has frozen up, do not be tempted to think "Oh, it'll be jolly to have the service outside today." God is telling you to go back to bed.

If you clear the snow from the churchyard, you may or may not be responsible for people slipping over. But if the Church Warden ends up with hypothermia from clearing it, check the insurance. Quick.

Anglicans may need a faculty to clear snow from the churchyard. The Chancellor of the Diocese is always happy to advise on these matters.

If the congregation is huddling too closely together, you may consider lighting a second tea light.

** Other organisations available for restarting broken down congregations.*

Eg AA, Green Flag, Holy Trinity Brompton

Chris Price

A lighter note.....

While shepherds watched
Their flocks by night
All seated on the ground
The angel of the Lord came down
And glory shone around.

The Union of Shepherds has complained that it breaches health and safety regulations to insist that shepherds watch their flocks without appropriate seating arrangements being provided, therefore benches, stools and orthopaedic chairs are now available. Shepherds have also requested that due to the inclement weather conditions at this time of year, they should watch their flocks via CCTV cameras from centrally heated shepherd observation huts.

Please note, the angel of the Lord is reminded that before shining his / her glory all around she / he must ascertain that all shepherds have been issued with glasses capable of filtering out the harmful effects of UVA, UVB and Glory.

Chris Price

As John McEnroe once said, 'You cannot be serious'

Some tourists touring the north of England stopped to visit a Priory. The Prior gave them a tour of the buildings, ending in the kitchen, where one monk was making fish and chip's. One tourist said brightly: "You must be the fish friar," to which the monk gravely replied, "No, I am the chip monk."

No men

An elderly woman died last month.

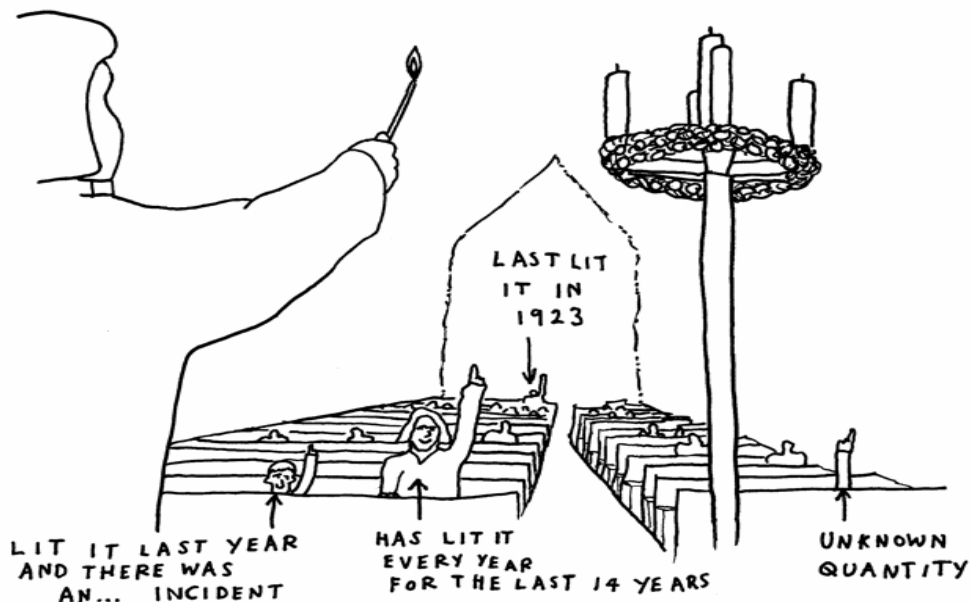
Having never married, she requested no male pallbearers. In her handwritten instructions for her memorial service, she wrote, *"They wouldn't take me out while I was alive, so I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."*

The Map

Yesterday T bought a world map and pinned it to the kitchen wall. I gave my wife a dart and said to her "Throw this and wherever it lands, I'm taking you for a holiday". It turns out that we are spending three weeks behind the fridge!

ADVENT

DURING THE SUNDAYS IN ADVENT THE VICAR MUST CHOOSE SOMEONE TO LIGHT THE ADVENT CANDLE. IT IS ONE OF THE YEAR'S MOST DIFFICULT DECISIONS



**THE PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT FAITH AND SAINT LAURENCE
HARBORNE B17 8RD**

At the junction of Balden and Croftdown Road

Registered Charity Number 1134152

SERVICES

SUNDAY 8am HOLY COMMUNION 2nd, 4th and 5th SUNDAYS

10am FAMILY COMMUNION 1st, 3rd and 5th SUNDAYS

SERVICE OF THE WORD 2nd and 4th SUNDAYS

4pm ZOOM EVENING WORSHIP 2nd SUNDAY

6.30pm EVENSONG and SERMON

1st, 3rd and 5th SUNDAYS

6.30pm HOLY COMMUNION 4th SUNDAY

MORNING PRAYER: MONDAYS, TUESDAYS and THURSDAYS-IN LADY CHAPEL

WEDNESDAYS:11am HOLY COMMUNION-IN LADY CHAPEL

CHURCH CONTACT

Mobile: Email: ssfaithlaurence@gmail.com

MINISTRY TEAM

Priest- in-Charge: REVD. DAVID PARKER

Mobile: 07532 338961

Email:davidparker124@btinternet.com

Licensed Reader: SALLY GRIFFITHS Ed.D., M.Ed.

Mobile: 07940 758396

E-mail: sallyegriff@gmail.com

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH:

Churchwardens: CAROLINE MOSLEY Email: caromosley1@gmail.com

Mobile: 07887552123

DAVID GLANVILL Email: davidglanvill@yahoo.co.uk 682 8360

P.C.C. Secretary: HELEN SETCHELL

Email: ssfaithlaurence@gmail.com

P.C.C. Treasurer: LOLETA ATKINSON

471 1248

Electoral Roll:

DEE COYNE

Email: deeb15@hotmail.co.uk

Director of Music: MARK LAWRENCE

Mobile: 07752 900456

Bell Ringers Leader: CORINNE TREACY

Mobile: 07752640151

Church Hall Bookings: Please contact Judith Bennett 07983400846

Email: Judith.e.bennett48@gmail.com

Church Hall may be contacted in an emergency on: 428 2406

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

Editor: Peter Stokes Mobile: 07980346350

E-mail: peterstokes@talk21.com

Advertising Manager: Corinne Treacy Mobile: 07752640151

Email: corinneftreacy@gmail.com

PARISH WEBSITE:- www.saintfaithandsaintlaurence.co.uk