

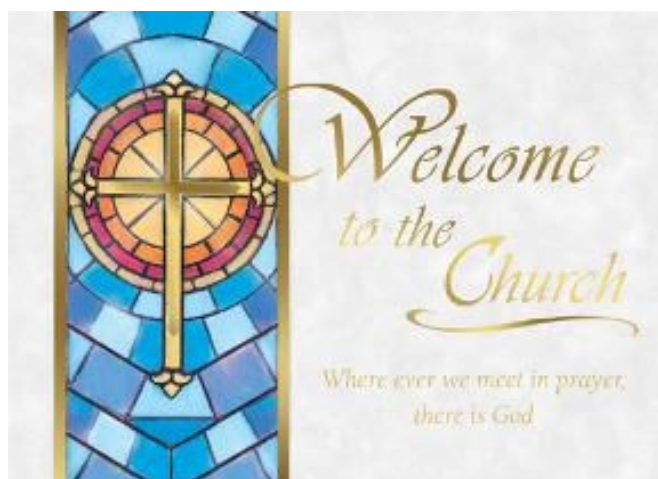


MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE
PARISH CHURCH OF
St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, RUNCORN.
www.runcornstmichaels.org.uk

ISSUE 188

DECEMBER 2025/JANUARY 2026

Growing Together



In GROWING TOGETHER THIS MONTH:
HUMOUR NEWS

PUZZLE PAGE

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY
CELEBRATIONS

The Reality of Christmas

A clean stable, floor strewn with fresh hay. Pristine animals with starry night sky and parents to be locked in warm embrace, anticipating the arrival of the child who would arrive just as immaculately dressed. This is the scene painted all those centuries ago by St Francis of Assisi as he laid the foundations for what we now know as the popular Nativity Image. This image, used in modern culture over the world, has given hope, together with a dose of mysticism at this Holy time of year. But, as well intended as St Francis actions were, this scene was probably way off the truth of what that night was actually like and indeed, in reflecting on the true reality of this night, we see a much clearer reality of the need for charity in the world today.



Let's take the journey that Mary and Joseph went on. First and foremost it would highly likely have been freezing cold, with the threat of bandits all around. Furthermore, cold and discomfort coupled with lack of sleep and food would have made this somewhat uncomfortable. Then the stable itself, a stone manger, with smelly animals and dusty floors. This is the truth of the original scene, and to the world around us today this is Very Important.

Around us here In Runcorn we have a quarter of children living in poverty, high unemployment rates, and a very heavy use of our food banks. As a local Vicar, I am constantly trying to work out how to best link into our community and be able to provide for people who are far less fortunate than we are, a lot of whom hide their poverty in secret. Poverty that reflects the Holy Family.

My prayer this Christmas is that you help me to pray for and reflect upon the need to minister to those who like the Holy Family would struggle at this Holy Season. Please can I ask, where possible, could you listen closely to the community around you and where able, help show the true meaning of Christmas by showing the generosity of the innkeeper and not the harshness of the journey to the stable.

Amen

with every blessing,

Revd George

Remembrance Sunday

On Remembrance Sunday 9th November, during the service Tom Booth a member of the congregation laid the Poppy Cross Wreath at the altar. At 11.00am as part of the service we had the Act of Remembrance. This is where we remember the people who died during the wars, especially the members of this congregation. The young members of our congregation, over the weeks, have worked hard and made poppies as you can see from the photograph. At the end of the service Revd George our vicar, invited them to distribute them to the congregation. They were in various sizes and colours red, purple and white. Personally I would like to thank them on behalf of the church. What a good job they did in making the poppies and making the service special. **THANK YOU**



Elderly and depressed this winter? Try going to church

Older people with depression can see a bigger improvement in their mental health if they start going to church than if they engage in charity work or sport. Research from the London School of Economics found that joining a religious organisation is the best way of combatting depression. It may be both that having a faith gives benefit, and also because meeting up with other people of faith gives a sense of belonging. The LSE also found evidence that membership of some political and community organisations may have a poor impact on an older person's mental health.



DECEMBER CHURCH SERVICES

Wednesday 3rd December
10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 7th December (2nd Sunday of Advent)
8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Café Church



Wednesday 10th December
10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 14th December (3rd Sunday of Advent)
8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 17th December
10.00am Holy Communion

Friday 19th December (Christingle)
6.00pm for 6.30pm start



Sunday 21st December (4th Sunday of Advent)
8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion
4.00pm 9 Lessons and Carols

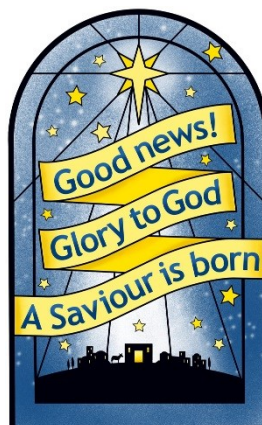


Wednesday 24th December (Christmas Eve)
10.00am NO SERVICE
11.00pm Holy Communion

Thursday 25th December (Christmas Day)
8.45am Holy Communion
10.30am Family Holy Communion



Sunday 28th December (The Holy Innocents)
8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion



BIBLE READINGS FOR DECEMBER

Sunday 7th December
Isaiah 11: 1-10
Matthew 3: 1-12
Luke 1: 26-38

Sunday 14th December
Isaiah 35: 1-10
Matthew 11: 2-11

Sunday 21st December
Isaiah 7: 10-16
Matthew 1: 18-end

Wednesday 24th December
Hebrews 1: 1-4
John 1: 1-14

Thursday 25th December
Isaiah 9: 2-7
Luke 2: 1-14

Sunday 28th December
Jeremiah 31: 15-17
Matthew 2: 13-end



Sunday 4th January
Isaiah 60:1-6
Matthew 2: 1-12

Sunday 11th January
Isaiah 42: 1-9
Matthew 3: 13-17

Sunday 18th January
1 Corinthians 1: 1-9
John 1: 29-42

Sunday 25th January
Acts 9: 1-22
Matthew 19: 27-30

Fundraising Committee

Thank you for your support over the recent events, especially at our monthly Tea & Toasts. On a bright note, with your help and support, you have helped the Maintenance Appeal Committee raise over £220,000 since September 2005.

Thank you for your continuing support.
The Maintenance Appeal Committee would like to wish everyone

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
A
PROSPEROUS 2026

JANUARY CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 4th January (Epiphany)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Café Church



Wednesday 7th January

10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 11th January (1st Sunday of Epiphany)

8.30am **NO SERVICE**
10.30am Holy Communion



Wednesday 14th January

10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 18th January (2nd Sunday of Epiphany)

8.30am **NO SERVICE**
10.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 21st January

10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 25th January (3rd Sunday of Epiphany)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion



Wednesday 28th January

10.00am Holy Communion



**A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A
PROSPEROUS 2026
FROM GEORGE & JEANETTE ROACH
AND FAMILY,
THE CHURCHWARDENS,
CHRIS CHALLONER AND ROBBIE LITTLER ,
TO ALL THE PEOPLE
WHO READ OUR CHURCH MAGAZINE.**



THANK YOU

Wendy Sefton would like to thank the people who have helped some young person, who might not get anything this Christmas to get a shoe box. We did slightly better than last year and they collected approx **23 boxes** from church, plus the ones that some people have done on line. So again, a **BIG THANK YOU** from Wendy Sefton



Police Band Concert

On Saturday 29th November we had the Cheshire Police Band and Corps of Drums in church to give us an excellent concert. There was a good selection of music played by the Band and the Corps of drums which was enjoyed by the audience of approx: 100 people. This marvellous event that raised **£1354** for vital church funds



Community Café

As you know our Community Café has now been running for a couple of months and Emma, who runs it, would like to thank the people who have supported the venture so far and Emma hopes to see more of you in the New Year.



Prayer for Christmas 2025

Dear Father,
Christmas is coming. It's all such a rush – planning, shopping, spending, wrapping, posting, stressing! What's it all about? Lord, help us, in all the rat-race busyness, to make time to focus on that baby at the centre of it all. That baby who is Your Son, who was with You in the beginning and who, with You, created all things; that baby who brings life and light and hope and salvation; that baby who was and is Jesus, who God, made man. Lord, we thank You for that baby-gift to us – the greatest gift there has ever been. Thank You that because He came, grew up, lived, died and rose again, there is light in the darkness of this world's mess – light that can never be put out, that evil can never overcome. Jesus is the Light of the World. Putting our trust in Him, we thank You Lord, for Christmas – for Your grace and love for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



December Birthdays

Congratulations to Lisa Littler whose birthday is on December 2nd, to Alex Crombie whose birthday is on December 5th, to Colin Keam

whose birthday is on December 7th, to Ruth Lawton whose birthday is on December 9th, to Angela Keam whose birthday is on December 10th, to Graham Aylett whose birthday is on December 12th.

January Birthdays

Congratulations to Dave Crowther whose birthday is on January 13th, to Jim Goffin whose birthday is on January 22nd, and to Roy Barlow whose birthday is on January 24th.

Are you dreading some Christmas presents?

Do you expect to like all the presents you will receive this year? Not if last year was anything to go by... It seems that many of us expect to unwrap at least one item that we do not want this Christmas. What do you do with those weird gifts? Some of us admit to dumping them – straight into the bin. (Yet we are very polite about it – and pretend delight so that we do not hurt anyone's feelings.) A better way of getting rid of unwanted presents is to either donate them to charity or our church members can donate them to our church for a stall we will be having at the February Tea & Toast.

Elderly and depressed this winter? Try going to church

Older people with depression can see a bigger improvement in their mental health if they start going to church than if they engage in charity work or sport. Research from the London School of Economics found that joining a religious organisation is the best way of combatting depression. It may be both that having a faith gives benefit, and also because meeting up with other people of faith gives a sense of belonging. The LSE also found evidence that membership of some political and community organisations may have a poor impact on an older person's mental health.

Activities at St Michael's Church

St Michael's Maintenance Appeal Committee

Tea & Toast in the Church Hall

Next Tea & Toast is on 3rd January & 7th February
@ 10.00am to 12.00 noon

Admission: £2.00

Community Café

In the Church Hall every Wednesday from 12.30pm—3.30pm. A place to relax, have a natter, try some crafts and of course a cup Tea or Coffee.

Crafters Group

Crafters Group meets in the Church Hall every Tuesday from 10.00am to 12noon.

Everyone welcome, especially newcomers.



VML

Sing-along sessions on Tuesday nights @ 7.00pm in the Church Hall. So come along have a cuppa and a sing-along for just £2.

10 Fun Facts about Christmas trees

Even before the time of Christ, evergreen trees were seen in winter as a symbol of fertility.

It was the 16th century monk, Martin Luther, who is credited with the idea of having lights on Christmas trees. He added candles to his tree, to look like stars in a forest.

Windsor Castle got its first Christmas tree in 1800, brought by Charlotte, wife of George III.

It was in 1835 that the term 'Christmas tree' was first used in English.

It was in the 1840s, when Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, began bringing trees inside, that led to their popularity throughout the UK.

It was Woolworths who first sold manufactured Christmas tree ornaments – back in 1880.

The tree in London's Trafalgar Square has been a gift from the city of Oslo, Norway since 1947.

The world's tallest Xmas tree, at 221ft high, was erected in a Washington shopping mall in 1950.

In a survey of the nation's favourite smells, real Christmas trees came eighth, just behind the sea, but ahead of perfume.

About five million real Christmas trees are sold in the UK each year.

Why is the vicar wearing white today?

You may have noticed that the Minister who officiates at Church Services may wear a long, thin scarf which is called a stole. This can be white, **purple**, **red** or **green**. White is for festive occasions like Christmas and Easter, christenings and weddings. **Purple** is worn during Advent and Lent, when we bring to mind our sins and seek God's forgiveness, in preparation for the wonderful seasons of Christmas and Easter. **Red** at Pentecost, symbolises the fire of the Holy Spirit, and on Saints Days it signifies that many of them (and some today) were martyred because they were Christians. **Green**, marking growth and hope is worn for the rest of the year. So, white for 'best', purple for penitence, red for the Holy Spirit and the blood of the Martyrs, and green for growth. You will also spot the same changing colours for items on the Altar-Table at the beginning and end of the Service of Holy Communion. The Burse is a flat, square case holding a linen cloth called the corporal, on which the vessels used in Holy Communion are placed. The Veil covers them until they are used. The vessels are called Paten and Chalice. The Paten is like a plate on which the bread is placed. A bowl, called a Ciborium, may be used for the same purpose. The Chalice is a cup for the wine. Because the bread and wine represent the Body and Blood of Christ, which He sacrificed for us when He was crucified, we handle them with care. The minister's ceremonial robes, called vestments, and the vessels all point to something greater. In one of St Paul's letters in the New Testament, he explains in these words that receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion has past, present and future significance: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Christmas Unwrapped!

All of us have received unwanted gifts at Christmas. For Joseph the gift of a child, as recorded in Matthew chapter 1, was not something he really wanted. Although he was engaged to Mary, her pregnancy would be grounds for divorce. Not surprisingly, with the associated social disgrace, Joseph wanted to divorce Mary quietly (Matthew 1:19). However, God intervened in a dream: '*The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means, God with us.*' (1:23). In a scary and uncertain world, what does the message of *Immanuel* say to us today?

God is present with us

God assured Joseph that He was working in all that Joseph was going through. The eternal and creator God entered time and space as a baby. This baby is both uniquely divine but also fully human. This means that we can know God personally, not just know about Him. The Holy Spirit is committed to making Jesus' life and character real in us, and bringing meaning to our circumstances, just as He worked in Mary's life.

God is on our side

Christmas touches some raw nerves in our lives, including stress, family rows, loneliness and financial pressures. However, God does not remain aloof from our experiences. In Jesus he enters our world of hopes and fears, joys and disappointments. He understands what we are going through, as He is alongside us. By the cross and resurrection, He gave His life that we might know His love, joy, peace and forgiveness.

For Joseph, as well as us, the Christmas message is one of hope in an uncertain world. It is a time to re-consider the claims of *Immanuel* ('*God with us*') as we entrust ourselves to Him for the coming year.

We send an estimated 900 million to 1 billion Christmas cards in the UK each year. Royal Mail delivers around 150 million. On average, each person in the UK sends and receives about 17 cards. This year the final Royal Mail Christmas posting dates are as follows:

Wednesday, December 17th: **2nd Class and 2nd Class signed for**

Friday, December 19th: **Royal Mail Tracked 48**

Saturday, December 20th: **1st Class and 1st Class signed for**

Sunday, December 21st: **Royal Mail Tracked 24**

Tuesday, December 23rd: **Special Delivery Guaranteed.**

(It is best to post as early as possible to avoid the last-minute rush.)



The Nicene Creed: The Church and the Future

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

'We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church': The Creed affirms the four marks of the church, defining a truly orthodox Christian community:

one: despite the many different churches and traditions, there is only one Church to which we all belong. *'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'* (Galatians 3:28).

holy: the church is a holy community set apart for God (*ekklesia*, lit *'called out'*), whose mission is to reflect God's holiness in worship and live out His love in the world.

catholic: this doesn't refer to the Roman Catholic church, as the word means *'universal'*, reminding us of the unity of the church across the whole world and all denominations.

The church aims to apply the same gospel in whatever situation, context or culture it finds itself.

Apostolic: The apostolic ministry of the church (*'apostolos'*) is one of being sent to communicate the good news of the gospel: *'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.'* (Matt 28.19).

'We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins': As baptism is as sign of belonging to the church, it can only happen once. The issue addressed in the Creed is that of Christians who left during persecution, but wanted to be accepted back by rebaptism. It affirms the principle *'one Lord, one faith, one baptism'* (Ephesians 4:5). Today, those baptised as children, theologically can't be re-baptised to demonstrate an adult commitment. However, they can be confirmed or reaffirm their baptism vows.

'We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come': The Creed ends with a statement of hope, that we will share in Jesus' resurrection life after death.

It is not simply about the immortality of our soul, but the resurrection of our bodies. They will be transformed to fit us for life of heaven for eternity: *'The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable...it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.'* (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

What's the Big Idea? An Introduction to Books of the New Testament: Philippians

This letter was written to Christians in the Macedonian city of Philippi when Paul was in prison, probably in Rome (60-62 AD). His primary purpose in writing was to thank them for the gift they had sent him upon learning of his imprisonment. However, he also uses the letter as an opportunity to report on his situation; to encourage the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of circumstances; to exhort the church to live in humility, fellowship, and unity; to commend Epaphroditus and Timothy to them; and to warn them about



false teaching. This included Judaizers who were persuading the Philippians to submit to circumcision. The central message of Philippians focuses on joy (the word occurs some 16 times!). For Paul, joy isn't simply an emotional response to favourable circumstances. True joy is to be found through a relationship with the resurrected and glorified Christ. Death ceases to be an enemy, because through it we can more fully enjoy the presence of Jesus. This joy is also rooted in an expectation of the return of Jesus, which gives urgency to the task of sharing the gospel. So, Paul begins his letter by thanking the Philippians for their partnership together in the work of the gospel through the offerings they have sent. Paul also powerfully appeals to the Philippians to be of *'one mind'* in pursuing humility and unity. He gives the example of Jesus himself ***'who made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant'*** (2:7) to the point of dying the death of a common criminal. *'Therefore,'* say Paul, *'God exalted him to the highest place'* (2:9). This 'Jesus attitude' is the one that all believers should share.

Recently in November we welcomed **two children** into the Church Family through Baptism. Please pray for the children that they may grow up to love and follow Christ. Also please pray for their parents and Godparents, and pray that they may seek to know Christ and to worship. Also we welcomed **one adult** into the Church Family through Baptism, please pray for him they may grow up to love and follow Christ.



Your help is needed

The Vicar is looking for someone to help spearhead the mission to knit or find knitters who can assist with the production of knitted poppies ready for a Remembrance display next year. If you know of anyone who can assist with the mission of making a minimum of **500 poppies** please see the Vicar, or contact him **01928 832734** and leave your name and contact number or by email with your details to vicar.smaaruncorn@gmail.com



St Michael's Toy Appeal 2025

This years toy appeal at St Michael's for the Mayor of Halton's Toy Appeal was a huge success. There were more toys donated than last year by members of the congregation. So on behalf of our vicar Revd George Roach and the Churchwardens I would like to give a huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who donated toys. These toys will given to the under privileged children of this borough and will put a smile on a child's face on Christmas morning. **Colin**



Prayer for the New Year, 2026

Dear Father, Lord of all time,
Here we are! Another New Year! So many mixed emotions for different people, for different reasons. For some, the reluctance to leave a year which brought joy and happiness; for some the relief of leaving behind a difficult year; for some, sadness at moving into a year where a loved one has never been; for some, apprehension and insecurity about what might lie ahead in this world of polarisation, conflict and confusion about what is true.
Lord, help us to take time at the start of 2026 to refocus our hearts, minds and spirits – to tune into you, our un-changing God.
Help us to be calmed and encouraged by the promise of Jesus that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The safe Way. The ultimate Truth. The Life, your gift, to be with you for all eternity.
You promised never to leave us or forsake us. When we put our trust in you, through what Jesus did on the cross, we are secure, we are accompanied, no matter what the New Year brings.
We can go forward, safely. Thank you, in Jesus' name, Amen.



By Daphne Kitching



Peaceful mind

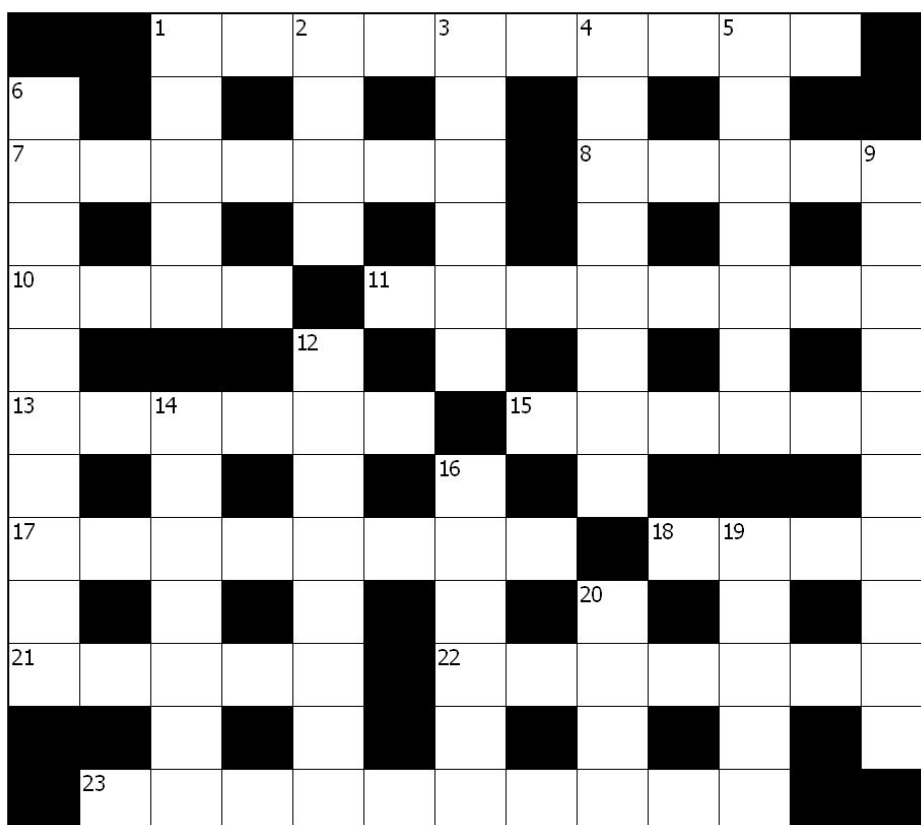
The Bible tells the story of Jesus and His disciples in a boat. The wind blows, the waves rise, and the disciples are stressed. Like them, we also get hit by storms in life. Like them, we can't control what comes our way. But like them, we can know that Jesus is also with us.

Why not take a moment to ponder these promises:

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for
You alone, Lord, make me dwell in
safety.
(Psalm 4:8)

The Lord gives strength to His people,
the Lord blesses His people with peace.
(Psalm 29:11)





CROSSWORD CHALLENGE

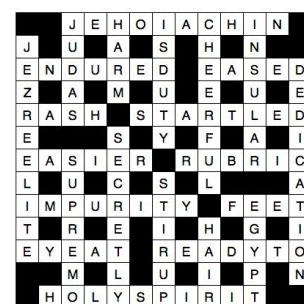
See how you get on with this crossword. There is no prize, but whoever gets it back to the Editor by January 22nd will be entered on a Roll of Honour in the next edition of *Growing Together*.

Across

- 1 Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)
- 7 David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14,15) (7)
- 8 They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries (5)
- 10 Small deer of European and Asian extraction (4)
- 11 Seized control of (Numbers 21:25) (8)
- 13 Terror (Luke 24:5) (6)
- 15 First World War heroine shot by the Germans in Brussels, Nurse Edith (6)
- 17 Stormy (8)
- 18 A bitter variety of this, together with lamb and unleavened bread, was the Passover menu for anyone unclean (Numbers 9:11) (4)
- 21 Arson (anag.) (5)
- 22 How John Newton described God's grace in his well-known hymn (7)
- 23 Habitation (Isaiah 27:10) (10)

Down

- 1 and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8) (5)
- 2 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as ... as a lion (Proverbs 28:1) (4)
- 3 One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)
- 4 He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19,20) (8)
- 5 City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)
- 6 Offer your bodies as living , holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1) (10)
- 9 Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)
- 12 One who accepts government by God (8)
- 14 Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual (Exodus 30:1) (7)
- 16 He asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) (6)
- 19 Are (Romans 13:1) (5)
- 20 You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will ... his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21) (4)



Crossword answer
November

ROLL OF HONOUR

Two people got the crossword answer and they were
Jim & Shelagh Goffin,
& Wendy Sefton



December 2025
& January 2026



Please Pray



Please remember the following people in your prayers throughout this month.

Graham & Nicola Aylett George Done

Barbara Done Helen Browne

Also please remember in your prayers anyone that you know who are housebound or in hospital.

If you would like us to pray for someone close to you then let the Pastoral Care Team or vicar know.

....and the recently bereaved, especially any families known to you

Roy Johnson

Betty Cartwright



Eating alone 'bad for pensioners' health'
Pensioners who eat at home alone are more likely to suffer from poor nutrition and health. So says new research. It has found strong links between dining solo and diets of poor quality, with fewer fruit, veg and meat. This can lead to weight loss and frailty. Researchers at Flinders University in Australia are instead highlighting the importance of community-based initiatives – such as neighbourhood meal groups, intergenerational dining programmes, or local café partnerships to mitigate the harms of eating alone. As one researcher explains, "Food is more than the nutritional benefit it provides. Sharing a meal is an important social activity that can influence appetite, dietary variety, and overall well-being for older adults."

INFORMATION

Revd George Roach
01928 832734

Email: vicar.smaaruncorn@gmail.com
Not on a Tuesday

Churchwardens

Chris Challoner 01928 761704
Robbie Littler 07718 133018

Also if there is a Safeguarding issue please email Duncan Prince on safeguardingsmaa@gmail.com

If you want to book a wedding, baptism or funeral please phone this number 07718 133018 and ask for Robbie

Or can go to our website:
www.runcornstmichaels.com

The Seven Deadly Sins: Pride

Our new series looks at the 7 Deadly Sins, a list compiled by Pope Gregory 1 in AD 590 to describe the nature of sin. This month we consider pride, 'the beginning of all sin' (Augustine). Pride is preoccupied with self and denies the need for others or God. We see it present in the first sin, when Adam and Eve wanted to become like God (Genesis 3:5).

What does pride look like? Jesus told the story of two men, a Pharisee and a tax collector, who went to pray in the Temple (Luke 18: 9-14). The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' (11,12). He illustrates how pride is essentially putting ourselves in God's place and believing we can run our own lives. It's subtle and self-deceptive and eats away our lives: 'Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.' (Proverbs 16:18).

So how do we deal with pride? The answer is humility. The tax collector stood at a distance 'he would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' (13). This man was right with God, because he acknowledged his sin and his need for forgiveness. Humility is being realistic about ourselves, and acknowledging our total dependence on God. We develop it by giving ourselves wholeheartedly to God and repenting of our desire to do things our way: 'Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up.' (1 Peter 5:6).

So how do we deal with pride? The answer is humility. The tax collector stood at a distance 'he would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' (13). This man was right with God, because he acknowledged his sin and his need for forgiveness. Humility is being realistic about ourselves, and acknowledging our total dependence on God. We develop it by giving ourselves wholeheartedly to God and repenting of our desire to do things our way: 'Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up.' (1 Peter 5:6).

'Humility is not in thinking less of yourself, but in thinking of yourself less' (Rick Warren).