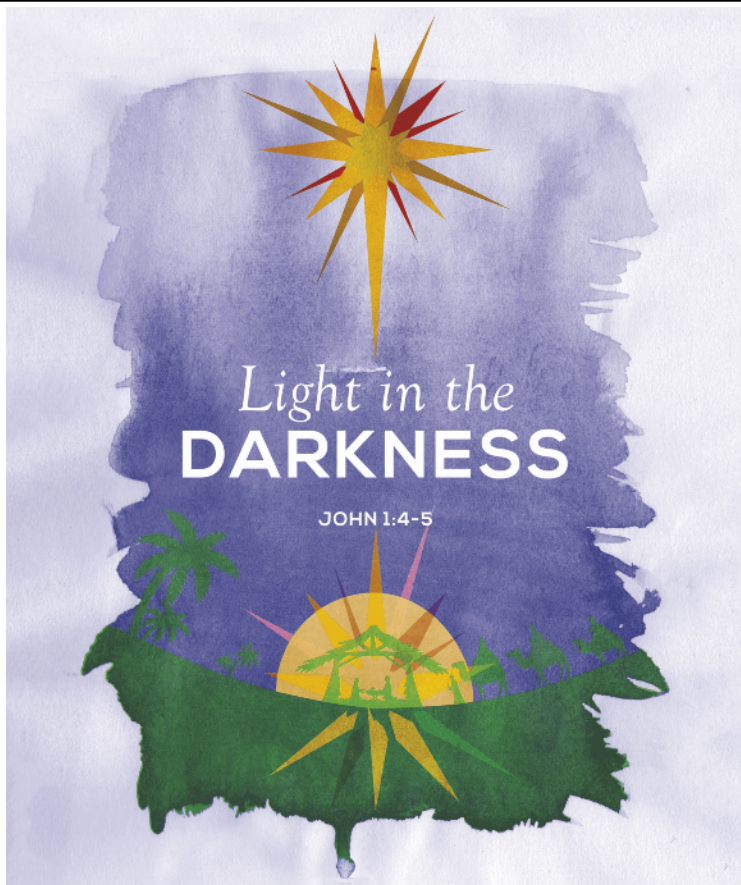


HOPE HERALD

News, views & comment from
St James Church, Hope

November / December 2021



What's
inside

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St James Church, Hope

Sunday Services

9–30 am Holy Communion (Anglican)

11–30 am Elim Church Worship

Special services at Christmas

December 5th: 09:30 am Christingle service

December 12th: 09:30 am Gift day and service of
nine lessons and carols

December 19th: 16:30 pm Joint carol service with
Elim Church

December 24th: 18:00 pm Christmas Eve service

December 25th: 09:00 am Christmas Day service





From The Vicar

Nov/Dec 2021

AS CHRISTMAS and the end of the year approaches, I find myself looking back on the year that has been. It has been challenging for so many of us here, but our own challenges pale into insignificance when we see what the people of Afghanistan or Ethiopia have endured and continue to endure.

We are so very blessed in this country with free education for our children, clean water at the turn of a tap, a justice system that while flawed is not completely corrupt, a national health service that has worked and continues to work so hard to care for and cure any who are in need, no matter their position or finances.

We should be thankful for all these many blessings and many more besides, but we should also continue to seek to make things better and fairer here, while

also seeking to help those who have not been so blessed in other parts of the world, whether they flee here seeking safety from the terrors at home or need help in that place to survive and thrive there.

At Christmas we remember Christ coming into the world as a helpless babe, leaving His Fathers side in paradise that He might save us. We had nothing to offer in return, but it was done not for reward, but out of love and a recognition of our need.

Mary and Joseph were willing to give up everything to help in God's plan, even becoming refugees, fleeing to



Egypt, a foreign land, to keep their new born babe son safe from the dan-

gers of a jealous and cruel despot in their homeland. We should be ready to follow the example of God and Mary and Joseph, to give generously to help those in need and those who flee tyranny, thinking not just of our own safety and comfort, but of the needs of those not as fortunate as us. That we might this Christmas give to those who have nothing to give in return, not out of mutual benefit, but simple in showing love to them and God shows His love to us. Amen

God bless you and keep you.

May you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year. And may you give generously as you have been generously given to.

Gareth

Sudan coup: New threat to religious freedom

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL is warning of a new threat to religious freedom in Sudan, following a recent military coup in the country.

Sudan's transitional government took significant steps towards increasing freedom of religion. They determined that Islam would no longer be the state religion, and abolished the death penalty for apostasy – converting from Islam to another faith.

Islamic law was imposed by the Sudanese dictator Omar al Bashir after he seized power in 1989.

Al-Bashir has been indicted for war crimes in Darfur by the Hague.

In that growing climate of intolerance towards Christians, some churches were closed, demolished, and burnt down. Christians who shared their faith with Muslims risked being accused of incitement to apostasy or blasphemy. Some Church leaders were arrested.

That background of intolerance has continued, even under the transitional government.

Release International has been calling for full

religious freedom in Sudan – and says that it will continue to do so. “We need only glance back a few years to Sudan under a hard-line Islamist government, to be genuinely concerned about what Sudan could be like again.”

Sudan was declared an Islam-only state by the dictator Omar al-Bashir when he seized power 32 years ago in 1989. Al-Bashir's government destroyed churches, arrested pastors, and bombed Christians in the Nuba mountains.

Be kind to your neighbour

THIS CHRISTMAS, why not make an extra effort to be kind to your neighbours? It seems that neighbourly distrust has grown more than fivefold since the summer of 2020, with one in five of us now saying that relations in our community have soured.

On the plus side, there are still 25 per cent of us who report greater trust in our neighbourhoods. But on the debit side, now 22 per cent of us, up from just four per

cent, have reported a deterioration.

The research was carried out at University College London (UCL), who found that one in five of us now feel less cohesive with our neighbours, feeling that we have fewer shared values with them.

As one researcher put it, “Much has changed over the last 18 months, with limits to our freedom, how we interact with others, and changes to how we shop and travel. Perhaps

these restrictions have caused some to feel less satisfied with life in their community.”

Proverbs 11:12 advises: ‘Whoever derides their neighbour has no sense, but the one who has understanding holds their tongue.’ Proverbs 27:10 advises: ‘Do not go to your relative's house when disaster strikes you— better a neighbour nearby than a relative far away.’

From the Churchwardens

ALMOST ADVENT, what happened to summer? The older we get, the more quickly the time seems to pass by and we ask ourselves the question "Where does all the time go?" The answer of course is; delve into your memory box and see what has shaped your life: the friends you've made, the moments you've experienced, the family, the good times and the occasional bad times. Life is, as they say a rich tapestry and an individual experience.

We must start this month reliving the first of our joint services with the Elim Church held on remembrance Sunday. All the worries and trepidation; will everyone respect the solemnity of the occasion? Will the St James congregation accept the music of the Elim musicians and singers? Will the hymns be ac-

ceptable to everyone? I have to tell you, it went like a dream. No snags and no hiccups.

The overwhelming reaction we received afterwards was; Brilliant, really enjoyed it and, can't we do it more often? For those who weren't able to attend, The Elim church streams all of their services on YouTube, so if you log on to You Tube UK and search for "Salford Elim Church" You will find a link to "When Will War End?" From there you will be able to watch and listen to the whole of the Remembrance Sunday Service.

The next joint service is scheduled to take place on December 19th at 4:00pm in the form of a carol service. Do try to join us, you will be more than welcome.

The Sound system in church is about to have a complete up-

grade, once again at the behest of the Elim church. No more "clicking" from the neck microphone, no more loss of volume when someone turns slightly away from the mike and no more trip hazards caused by our existing cables. Once again the Elim church will be financing the bulk of the conversion. We have so much to thank them for!

The Coffee Money raised between the services has been sent as usual to St James Hospital Lesotho and the following thank-you letter was received from them; ***"Please thank the congregation and PCC at St James Hope for the kind donation of £150. Your church's support for the hospital is appreciated"***. (£50

was donated at the coffee stall and a further £100 donated from

church funds, sanctioned by the PCC.)

Our Harvest Festival raised £300, plus numerous donations of food and toiletries, all proceeds going to Salford Food Parcels.

I would like to leave you with one of the most poignant Thought for the Week messages to be included in our weekly Pews News over the last few weeks:

The other evening I found myself staggering alone under a load that was heavy enough to crush half a dozen strong men. Out of sheer exhaustion I put it down and had a good look at it. I found that it was all borrowed: part of it belonged to the following day; part of it belonged to the following week—and here was I borrowing it that it might crush

me now! It is a very stupid, but a very ancient blunder.

F. W. Boreham

All for now. God Bless

Bob & Trevor



Who is 'Santa Claus'?

ON THE whole British people are happy with the title 'Father Christmas', a suitably neutral name for the central character in children's Christmases, writes *David Winter*.

In America, however, and by a process of cultural indoctrination increasingly in other English speaking countries, the same red-coated and bearded fellow with his sack of presents is known as 'Santa Claus'. They are, of course, one and the same person, distantly related to a bishop in Turkey in the fourth century (hence the red coat and

hat – a cope and mitre originally). His name was Nicholas, and he was known as a patron of children, who would from time to time distribute gifts to them.

From that comes the practice of giving presents at Christmas. We can't give them to Jesus on His birthday, so we give them to someone else, in love and gratitude. That, at least, is the theory. Quite how the massive commercialisation of such giving developed probably owes more to smart marketing than Christian generosity.

It's not Nicholas's fault, of course, nor of the Dutch Christians who took the practice to America as migrants 300 years ago.

In any case, his feast day, 6th December, is when 'Christmas' presents are handed over in Holland.



LATE EXTRA: behold the Lamb

I HAVE a daughter who lives in Derbyshire. Her garden is huge – about three times the size of our churchyard – and she also owns the large field which is adjacent to it. Of course, with the great Chatsworth estate just around the corner, she would hardly think of calling herself ‘landed gentry’!

Last year a local farmer asked if he could graze his sheep on her field and she readily agreed in order to save herself the job of having to mow it. Some of the sheep were less than a year old and there was one in particular which attracted her attention and her affection. She gave it a name (Dinky, on account of its size) and used to pet it a lot because it had been bottle-fed after a difficult birth. That was last year.



In the Spring of this year, the grateful farmer turned up with a gift in recognition of the help she had given him. It was a whole side of lamb, beautifully butchered; enough to

feed her and her family for some considerable time. She thanked him very much, but said that she could not possibly eat any of it without knowing beyond any trace of doubt which of the sheep it was. What she was afraid of, of course, was that it might be little Dinky, who had never seemed fit enough or strong enough to be capable of becoming anything else. The farmer assured her that Dinky was still alive and that if she didn’t believe him, she could go and have a look for herself.

William Blake is known to most people as the man who wrote the words of the Last-Night-of-the-Proms anthem ‘Jerusalem’. He wrote many other poems, two of which you may also have come across. ‘The Tyger’ (‘tyger, tyger, burning bright, in the forests of the night...’) was one which people of my age were made to learn by heart at school. ‘The Lamb’ {‘little lamb who made thee...’) has been set to music by John Tavener and pops up frequently in Christmas carol services, especially in places which still have a strong choir. It’s not an easy piece, being full of the discordant,

clashing sounds John Tavener puts in all his works.

In ‘The Lamb’ Blake praises God for having created such a delicate, beautiful and vulnerable thing, for clothing it in such a soft and comfortable coat and for providing it with everything it needs (see Psalm 23). Verse 2 of the poem reminds us that this same God came into the world as a lamb, a thing of beauty destined to be slaughtered for our sakes.



There is something about Christmas carols which appeals to people who don’t feel the need to attend church regularly. They are an essential part of the Christmas celebration and of the jolly all-round togetherness of it. Many of them, however, contain sombre, even sad references to the work Jesus has been given to do and to the reasons for his being born.

Make no mistake, God means us to rejoice in the revelation of his love,

lavishly given so as to be lavishly shared. That love is not something we can deserve or earn by any effort of our own invention. Our survival depends on it and the loving way in which it is given is the wonder at the very heart of it. If by keeping Christmas we can charge up our desire to be generous and selfless too, and to help those who cannot help themselves, we should welcome it.

Speaking for myself, as far as I can see I am on course for a good Christmas. I shall be meeting up with people I care about who care about me. I shall be wined and dined with all moderation and delightfulness. My income is lower now than it has ever been, but so are my outgoings. The unfolding year has given me many blessings. I am in reasonable health thanks to some unknown person who



keeps making appointments for me to have this, that and the other checked out without me asking for them. It's the best part of two years since I saw a doctor and getting to see one is only marginally less difficult than breaking into the vaults at the Bank of England. I have no idea who is interested in my well-being, but I'm quite happy to do as I'm told.

None of this has anything to do with my deserving to have a better or a quieter life than anybody else. So am I in for a good time or not? Yes and no, for even the most satisfying, welcome things going on around me have the same edge to them as the carols I mentioned earlier. I am not able to forget those who are sad, lonely and in desperate need,

whose torments will not and cannot be set aside, let alone resolved, through two or three days of having fun.

I hope you have been haunted lately, as I have, by pictures of Richard Ratcliffe on hunger strike in protest at the unjust and insensitive treatment his wife Nazanin is receiving from the Iranian authorities holding her captive, and at the apparent inability of our own government to do anything on her behalf. This poor man is so torn between concern for his wife and for the daughter they share that frustration, desperation and unutterable sadness are etched into his face. I just pray that whatever Christmas means to do for me, it will do for him instead.

DGB

Haiti still struggling after earthquake

THE RECENT 7.2 magnitude earthquake and Tropical Depression Grace that hit Haiti (in August) left 2,189 people dead, with a further 12,200 injured, and at least 129,000 homes either damaged or completely destroyed.

Following the disaster, All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain launched an appeal to support those affected. They have sent emergency food supplies (including rice, oil and beans), water purification tablets, sanitary equipment and temporary

shelter materials. Additionally, they have sent seeds and tools for the winter agriculture season.

This Christmas, if you would like to support the Haiti Emergency Earthquake Appeal, please visit allwecan.org.uk/Haiti.

The annunciation to the shepherds



IN THAT REGION there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock?

In the Old Testament shepherds were greatly valued and treated with respect. Patriarchs, prophets and kings had all tended sheep. Job, a rich man, owned 14,000 sheep. David was tending sheep when he was called by God and anointed by Samuel.

But as the Israelites settled in towns and cities and turned to farming, attitudes towards the shepherds changed. As the New Testament opens, shepherding had become a dirty, lonely life, away from civilisation. Shepherds could not observe the daily rituals of their faith, and so they had a low status in society, looked down upon by orthodox Jews.

But out in the countryside with just the hills and the plains and the open air,

Bethlehem has today. But in the fields at night, there were shepherds, watching and alert, ready for any eventuality. And so, they were the first to hear of the birth of a Saviour.

The Annunciation to the Shepherds' is a painting by Sano di Pietro. He was born in Siena in 1406 and died there in 1481, but he has left us a legacy of beautiful and sensitive paintings.

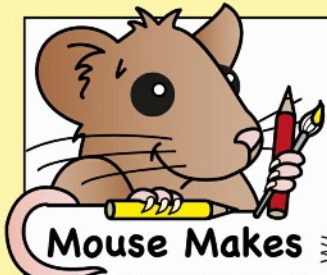
Here we see the human details: two shepherds huddled by the fireside with their dog, all three looking up to see the angel, and a spear by the side to ward off thieves and predators. The sheep are safely in their pen, black and white fleeces huddled together for warmth. In the sky the angel appears, bearing an olive branch in one hand and with the other pointing to Bethlehem in the distance.

St Luke tells us that it was there that God's message was proclaimed and heard. Cities and towns had walls and barriers, as

Luke has already told us of another annunciation, with Gabriel visiting Mary. Artists loved to portray this scene and often showed a lily, the symbol of purity, in their paintings. Here there is the olive sprig, a symbol of peace to reinforce the angelic message of peace in the birth of the Saviour. Luke goes on to tell us how Jesus brought new meaning and peace to all those like the shepherds who were nobody in the eyes of people, but everything to the eyes and heart of God.

Jesus in His teaching often turned to the theme of sheep and shepherds, with parables about lost sheep, gates to the fold, and hireling shepherds. Just as the faithful shepherds were prepared to give their lives to protect the flock, so Jesus the Good Shepherd gave His life for the world – a death that would bring the peace and reconciliation shown in that olive branch held by the angel. At this Christmas time we rejoice with the heavenly host to proclaim the birth of this Prince of Peace and we commit ourselves to that work of peace and shepherding.

Junior Page



Mouse Makes

Colour the tree then colour in one star each day until Christmas. Leave the large star at the top of the tree to colour in on Christmas day!

What's on the Christmas Tree?

A STAR
shows the way to Jesus
Read Matthew 2:1-12

ANGELS
bring messages from God
Read about Gabriel's message in Luke 1:26-38

LIGHTS AND CANDLES
remind us that Jesus lights our way to God
Read Luke 2:29-32

PRESENTS
remind us of God's special gift to us ... **JESUS!**

Presents at Christmas under the tree,
A red Christmas stocking waiting for me,
But what really is Christmas,
What is it about?
Just look and the Bible and you will find out!
It's about **JESUS** - the best present of all,
JESUS our Saviour,
God's gift to us all!

"For God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life." John 3:16

The laws about Christmas

The laws about Christmas *And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.* Luke 2:7

BETHLEHEM was busy that first Christmas. This year Christmas Day is on a Saturday, and we get two Bank Holidays on the Monday and Tuesday. There are some peculiar legal rules about Christmas that are more significant when Christmas Day falls on a normal working day.



The courts are closed, so you could not go to court if you wanted to. No writ, warrant to enforce a judgment or order is al-

lowed on a Christmas Day. So, while you may pretend you are not at home to unwelcome relatives, you do not have to hide from a court officer wanting to evict you or take your goods.

Curiously, there is no law to say you cannot work on the big day. The only law that protects shop workers is the Christmas Day (Trading) Act 2004, which imposes a ban on Christmas Day trading for large shops, over 280 square metres in size, in England and Wales.

If you get bored on Christmas, you can eat as much as you like, but you cannot go outside and shoot pheasants or any other game. The Game Act 1831 makes it illegal.

Christmas has other particular laws around it. It is against the law to sell Christmas crackers to anyone under

12, because of the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015, s.31.



Also, and this is frustrating for many, it is against the law to make or use a slide from snow or ice in the metropolitan area, under the Metropolitan Police Act 1839.

This, as always is a light-hearted comment and you should always take proper advice. Spare a thought and a prayer for those who are homeless or fear the knock on the door from a bailiff or debt collector. If you need advice or help, don't hang about, contact someone, one of the debt charities like Christians Against Poverty.



CROSSWORD ANSWERS

DOWN: 1 prey, 2 orderly, 3 oddly, 4 endure, 6 model, 7 greatest, 8 finish, 13 straight, 15 normal, 17 feeding, 18 decent, 20 blind, 22 tripe, 23 itch.

ACROSS: 1 proposed, 5 smog, 9 ended, 10 dwindled, 11 prayer, 12 inlet, 14 trying, 16 shifts, 19 amber, 21 either, 24 grimace, 25 idiot, 26 tide, 27 strength.

“The Angel Gabriel to Mary came.”

CHRISTMAS is upon us again, with the story of shepherds, wise men and angels. Angels have captured the imagination of many. Even Robbie Williams has sung about them! The other day my four year old grandson asked me, “what is an angel?”, and I tried to come up with a simple answer, saying, “angels live with God, and sometimes are sent to earth”, he replied, “are they aliens?” So, here is a little bit more about angels!

In the Bible, angels appear fairly early on in the first book of the Old Testament. The Hebrew word for angel is “malach”, meaning “messenger” or “someone sent”. (In some Semitic languages today, the root word is used for an SMS/text message!). The Old Testament uses “malach” for both human and non-human messengers –qualifying the non-human messengers by using the term, “messenger of Yahweh”. Sometimes, the messenger(s) was clearly recognised as coming from God, and sometimes not. In the Book of Numbers (Num. 22), Balaam’s donkey sees an angel with a sword standing in the middle of the road, and

veers aside. Balaam cannot see the angel, and beats the poor donkey for changing course. Sometimes angels are associated with fire – such as when an angel appears as a flame of fire, speaking to Moses from the Burning bush (Ex.3, v2). While angels were seen as God’s servants who delivered messages on His behalf, they could also be sent by God to inflict punishment, for example when the besieging Assyrian army was destroyed (Is.37.v36). When God is described as the “Lord of Hosts”, “hosts” is the Hebrew word “Saba’oth”/” Tzva’ot” meaning “armies”. In Jewish tradition, angels of Yahweh are spiritual beings, of no gender, but often assuming the human form of a man (very patriarchal!). Very occasionally, the Old Testament refers to different grades of angels. The two we are most familiar with are the “Seraphim” (from the Hebrew meaning, “burning ones”), mentioned in Isaiah, and the Cherubim (meaning “ones who bless in Hebrew”), familiar from the vision of Ezekiel, and described as those who surround God’s chariot.

Only in later Old Testament literature do angels develop wings. This may be related to the time the Hebrews spent in exile, when they came across winged spirits in Persian Zoroastrian religion. Alternatively, the wings may have come from a desire to portray the angel having travelled from the heavens to the earth.

In the New Testament, angels appear throughout, from Jesus’ birth to His Resurrection and to the last Book of Revelation. The Greek word, “angelos” is used (our word “angel” derives from this, and it appears in words starting with “evangel-“, meaning “true message” or “Good news”). The angel, Gabriel appears to Mary. Gabriel’s name is Hebrew and means, “the Strength of God”. While Mary is congratulated on her faithfulness (Luke 1v38); her uncle, Zechariah, the High Priest, is punished for his lack of faith (Luke 1v20).

The angel (Matt.28 v2 and Luke)(or two angels (Luke 24v4 and John)) wait at the Empty Tomb to announce the good news that Jesus has conquered death.

As in the Old Testament, angels may go unrec-

ognised. In the Book of Hebrews (Heb.13.2), we are exhorted to extend hospitality to all for by doing so, we “have entertained angels unaware”. The Bible makes it clear that angels are created beings, and therefore should not be worshipped.

Prior to the 3rd century AD, Christian art showed angels with no wings (except for the Seraphim and Cherubim, who had multiple wings and faces!). The halo we are so

familiar with in Christian art, seems to have also come via Persian Zoroastrianism also, where it appears from 300 BC. In Christian art, the halo only appears from the 5th century onwards.

In Islam, Arabic differentiates between human messengers (“*rasul*”) and spiritual ones (“*melach*”). Gabriel is one of the most important, and is called “*Jibril*”. He is considered to be the angel responsible

for revealing God’s teaching to humanity. He appears to the prophet Mohammed revealing the words of Allah in the form of the Q’uran, on the Night of Power. Angels are also mentioned in the Hadith.

However you perceive angels to be, may the angels’ message of “Peace on earth and goodwill towards all people” be in all our lives this Christmas.

Bob Hedley

We three kings of Orient are... what?

“A COLD COMING they had of it at this time of the year, just the worst time of the year to take a journey, and specially a long journey, in. The way’s deep, the weather sharp, the days short, the sun farthest off, in *solstitio brumali*, the very dead of winter.”

It was 1622, and the Bishop of Winchester, Launcelot Andrews, was preaching a magnificent sermon to King James I. Reckoned one of the best preachers ever, Launcelot Andrews’ words were later taken up by T S Eliot and transformed into his wonderful poem ‘The Journey of the Magi’. What a vivid picture – we can see it all! The camels’

breath steaming in the night air as the kings, in their gorgeous robes of silk and cloth-of-gold, and clutching their precious gifts, kneel to adore the baby in the manger.

Yet the Bible does not give us as much detail as some people think. Tradition down the centuries has added a great deal more. For instance, we know from St Matthew that the magi were ‘wise’, or learned men of some sort, but we do not know if they were kings or not. The Bible tells us there were several; tradition has decided upon three, and even named them: Balthasar, Melchior, and Caspar (or Gaspar). But the Bible does tell us that the magi

gave baby Jesus three highly symbolic gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Gold stands for kingship, frankincense for worship, and myrrh for anointing – anticipating His death.

There is a lovely ancient mosaic in Ravenna, Italy, that is 1,500 years old. It depicts the wise men in oriental garb of trousers and Phrygian caps, carrying their gifts past palm trees towards the star that they followed... straight to Jesus.



Trees: thoughts on Winter

IT FEELS LIKE a never-ending job. A couple of years ago, we moved into a house with a garden that backs onto the East Lincs. The garden is full of trees, and that bit of the East Lincs has trees whose branches stretch over into our garden. A month ago it all looked great. Today is different. Leaves continually tumble to the ground. No



sooner do I brush them away, the next day I need to start again.

The trees stand like bare skeletons. Winter is coming and I know that once the Christ-

mas lights are packed away again, that familiar feeling of loss will creep up on me again. It does every year, that longing for spring, a longing for life.

So I found it helpful to read 'Wintering' written by Katherine May recently. I would recommend it to any who struggle with the dark nights at this time of year.

In one section of the book, she wrote about the trees, reminding me that even as the leaves fall, the buds of next year's crop are already in place, waiting to

erupt. Most trees produce these buds in high summer, and if you look carefully you can see them now, protected from the coming cold by scales, but there all the same. It's just that I rarely see them, I'm too overwhelmed by the feeling of the tree's deadness. But every tree is in bud, waiting with everything ready to produce another year of beauty, shade and colour. They are just preparing 'to put on a new coat and face the world again.' (p79).

Reading this gave me hope, redirected my gaze from the loss to prospect of new life again. I need to do this regularly, to stop myself getting overwhelmed.

This week I led the third funeral in as many months for another of our older church members. They had all grown frail, but they were loved by us and we feel poorer without them. We feel their loss.

But in the midst of grief and loss at the funerals, we read together Paul's words in his letter to the Corinthians:

"We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day

by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16)

Each of the folks we buried had lost all their 'leaves', they were weak and fragile. But each had the buds of eternal life within them. And as they died, their inward renewal became permanent. The old season had passed, their new season of full life was beginning again.

In just a few short months, the trees will be full of colour again, nature's testimony to hope in the midst of death. So it will be with us when our time to die and pass into eternity trusting in Jesus comes.

We will miss our three friends, but we celebrate the hope they had and now enjoy at the start of their eternal springtime.



Neil Hudson
(*Elm Church*)

The history of Christmas

THE BIBLE does not give a date for the birth of Jesus. In the third century it was suggested that Jesus was conceived at the Spring equinox, 25th March, popularising the belief that He was born nine months later on 25th December. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, encouraged Christians worldwide to make Christmas a holy day in about 400.

In the early Middle Ages, Christians celebrated a series of midwinter holy days. Epiphany (which recalls the visit to the infant Jesus of the wise men bearing gifts) was the climax of 12 days of Christmas, beginning on 25th December. The Emperor Charlemagne chose 25th December for his coronation in 800, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose. In England, William the Conqueror also chose 25th December for his coronation in 1066, and the date became a fixture both for religious observance and feasting.

Cooking a boar was a common feature of mediaeval Christmas feasts, and singing carols accompanied it. Writers of the time lament the fact that the true significance of

Christmas was being lost because of partying. They condemn the rise of 'mis-rule' – drunken dancing and promiscuity. The day was a public holiday, and traditions of bringing ever-green foliage into the house and the exchange of gifts (usually on Epiphany) date from this time.

In the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity.

Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England's Puritan rulers made the celebration of Christmas illegal for 14 years. The restoration of Charles II ended the ban, but religious leaders continued to discourage excess, especially in Scotland. In Western Europe (but not worldwide) the day for exchanging gifts changed from Epiphany (6th January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, there was a sense that the significance of Christmas was declining. Charles Dickens was one of several writers who sought to restore it. His novel *A Christmas Carol* was significant in reviving merriment during the festival.

He emphasised charity and family reunions, alongside religious observance. Christmas trees, paper chains, cards and many well-known carols date from this time. So did the tradition of Boxing Day, on 26th December, when tradesmen who had given reliable service during the year would collect 'boxes' of money or gifts from their customers.

Father Christmas dates from 17th century England, where he was a secular figure of good cheer (more associated with drunkenness than gifts). The transformation of Santa Claus into today's Father Christmas started in New York in the 1880s, where his red robes and white beard became potent advertising symbols. In some countries (such as Latin America and Eastern Europe) the tradition attempts to combine the secular and religious elements by holding that Santa Claus makes children's presents and then gives them to the baby Jesus to distribute.



Yer avta laff

Hymns for the road

IF YOU MUST speed on the road during this Christmas season, at least sing these hymns loudly as you go:

at 45 mph.... 'God Will Take Care of Me'

at 55 mph.... 'Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah'

at 65 mph.... 'Nearer My God to Thee'

at 75 mph.... 'Nearer Still Nearer'

at 85 mph.... 'This World is Not My Home'

at 95 mph.... 'Lord, I'm Coming Home'

at 100 mph.... 'Precious Memories'



New Bank

MOTHER decided that ten-year old Cathy should get something 'practical' for Christmas. "Suppose we open a savings account for you?" she suggested. Cathy was delighted. "It's your account, darling," mother said as they arrived at the bank, "so you fill out the application." Cathy was doing fine until she came to the space for 'Name of your former bank.' After a slight hesitation, she put down 'Piggy'.

Grandfathers

I WAS talking to my young Sunday School class, and a four-year-old boy suddenly asked me: "Miss, do you have a grandfather?"

I replied, "I used to have two, but they both went to Heaven to be with Jesus."

He thought, shook his head sadly, and said, "One of my grandfathers hasn't gone to Heaven."

(Long pause while I tried to decide how to proceed.)

"He's gone to Bexhill-on-Sea."

ONE NIGHT Freda went carol singing. She knocked on the door of a house and began to sing. A man with a violin in his hand came to the door. Within half a minute, tears were streaming down his face. Touched, Freda sang every carol she knew – and some she didn't. The man continued to weep gently throughout her performance. "I understand," she said softly at last. "You are remembering your happy childhood Christmas days."



"No, not exactly," he replied in a choked sort of voice. "I'm a musician!"

Puzzle Page

2		1		8		7		
8	4	7	2			6		
				7	5	2		
7	3			2	6	4	5	
			5		8			
	6	4	1	3			2	9
		6	7	5				
		2			1	5	3	6
		5		6		1		2

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Difficulty level: Easy.

S
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			8	2				
						3		7
	4				3	8	5	
		6	3	5		7		2
5				1				3
1		3		7	9	5		
	2	9	5				6	
6		5						
				9	2			

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Difficulty Level: Medium

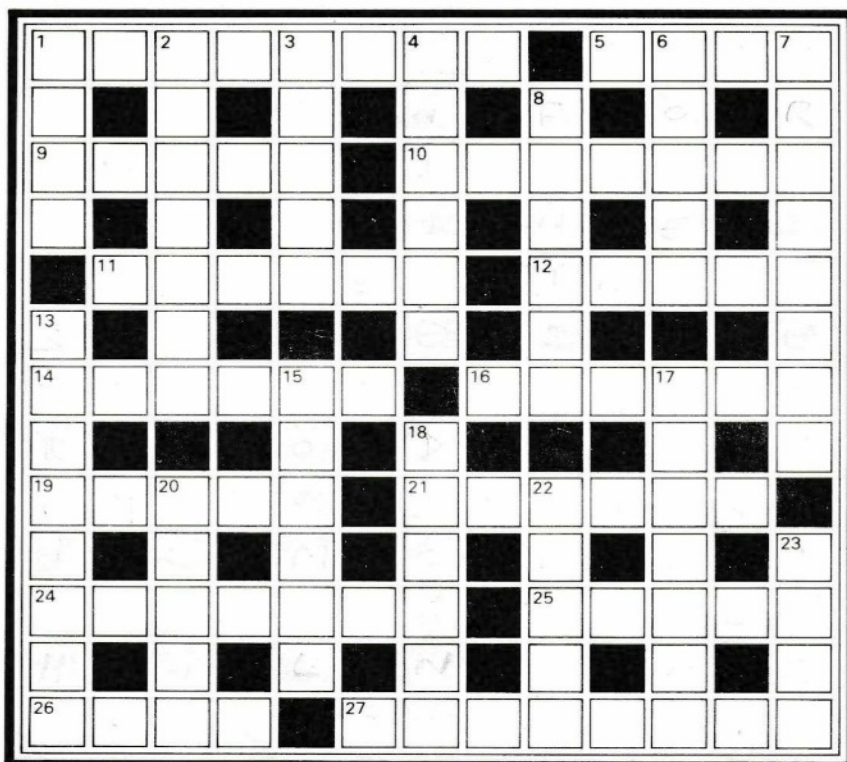
WORDSEARCH

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

Two thousand years ago the Jews were longing for the coming of their Messiah. The Old Testament had promised that when He came, He would preach good news to the poor. He was and is the Son of God, and whoever has seen Him has seen the Father. Whoever believes in Him will have the best gift of all – His Spirit within them, which gives them eternal life. **The words to find are:**

Messiah, Broken, Heart, Freedom, Darkness, , Favour, Prisoners, Comfort, Mourn, Bestow, , Crown, Beauty, Ashes, Son, God , Jesus, , Seen, Father, Whoever, longing, thousand.

Crossword No 39



ACROSS

1. Offered marriage (8)
5. Smoky fog (4)
9. Finished (5)
10. To grow less (7)
11. A religious request (6)
12. A creek (5)
14. Attempting (6)
16. Changes position (6)
19. A yellowish colour (5)
21. One of two (6)
24. To pull a face (7)
25. A fool (5)
26. Ebb and flow (4)
27. Power (8)

DOWN

1. An animal hunted by another (4)
2. Neatly arranged (7)
3. Strangely (5)
4. To last (6)
6. A pattern to be copied (5)
7. Most huge (8)
8. To come to an end (6)
13. In a right line (8)
15. Usual (6)
17. Supplying with food (7)
18. Respectable (6)
20. Unseeing (5)
22. Nonsense (5)
23. An irritation (4)

A few clues may be a bit cryptic
Answers on page 11

THE COMMUNITY HALL

Regular activities using the facilities

WEDNESDAY

Rainbows & Brownies 17.30 - 19.00 (weekly in term time)
(Contact: Sylvia McGreal 01617980057)

THURSDAY

Archery 13.00 - 15.00 and 19.00 - 21.00
(Contact: Dominic Vaughan 01612116563
or 07934080596)

FRIDAY

Archery 19.30 - 22.00 (Contact as above)

SUNDAY

Little Gems Sunday School 9.30 - 1.30 am (monthly 1st Sunday)
(Contact: Sylvia McGreal 01617980057)

BOOKINGS

Booking requests, whether for regular or occasional events should be addressed to Mrs Sheila Jones who can be contacted on 01617892863 or 07845492109.

NOTE

**The Hall will be closed over January & February 2022
for refurbishment works**



STAFF

Vicar of St. James & St. John

Rev. Gareth Thomas
91 Broomhall Road,
Pendlebury,
M27 8XR
Telephone: 0161 925 0059



Churchwardens:

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55 East Lancashire Road,
Swinton,
Manchester,
M27 5LY
Telephone: 0161 794 2702

Mr R Hedley
12 Bishop Road
Pendleton
Salford
M6 8PX
Telephone: 07493599241

SERVICES:

Sunday	9.30 am Parish Communion (Little Gems: 9.30 am, first Sunday in the month) (Family Service: 9.30 am third Sunday in the month)
Wednesday	10.00 am Holy Communion

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals etc. by arrangement with Rev. Thomas who may be contacted by telephone, or in person at Church on Wednesdays from 10-30am

Hall Bookings: For bookings and enquiries about the Parish Hall ring Mrs. Sheila Jones on 0161 789 2863 or 07845492109

E-mail for all church issues: Stjames.hope@gmail.com

Website: stjameshope.co.uk