



The Taizé
Annunciation Window

A candle in....

THE

WINDOW

News and Views from the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames

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Comfort and Joy

Now to the Lord sing praises,

All you within this place,

And with true love and brotherhood

Each other now embrace;

This holy tide of Christmas

All other doth deface:

*O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

Incarnation

Paul Sheppy

As a child, Christmas in church was about shepherds in the fields and angels singing of a baby in a manger. It was about wise men and gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. I didn't like it when the reading was from John's gospel – all that stuff about the Word which seemed dull and remote. Where was the crib? Where were the ox and the ass? Where were Mary and Joseph? All that John told us was that "the Word became flesh". Boring!

It was St Francis of Assisi who introduced the kind of crib scenes that eight centuries later still conjure in us some of the wonder of Christmas. We see the small family in the simple stable and the carols we sing are far more likely to tell the story from the perspective of Matthew (the wise men) and Luke (the shepherds).

Of course, there are exceptions. "Of the Father's heart begotten" is a wonderful expression of John's big-scale picture and for me, at least, it is a favourite. Nonetheless, the domestic story holds sway for most people. Churches that have a service of nine lessons and carols generally follow the lead of King's College, Cambridge, and in the candlelit darkness we hear a solo treble singing "Once in Royal David's city."

The danger is that we can leave it all there and allow the candlelight to become fairylight and the wonder of Christmas to become the "magic" of Christmas. I am not sure that this is something that St Francis would have entirely approved of. His vision was far too realistic. There is no magic in renouncing wealth and living without possessions; there is something wonderful, however, in poverty chosen for the enrichment of others.

And here we begin to tap into the meaning of Christmas. One of the earliest Christian hymns is found in a letter of St Paul where Christ is described as having become poor for our sake. Christmas is the celebration of God's self-impoverishment, so that all that is left is the weakness and the power of love – love that is wounded and scarred by rejection but which holds firm and loves to death and beyond.

The Fourth Gospel says that the Word became flesh. When God speaks most clearly, it is in this human being. It is not in magic or miracles that we best know God, but in the life of Jesus – who is as human as we are. The emotions, longings, desires, frustrations, pains and joys that we experience are faced and known by Jesus. There is no magic escape hatch for Jesus by which he can avoid what we go through.

An early Christian teacher put it like this: "What has not been taken on cannot be saved".

We might express it differently: if all our human experience is to have integrity, there cannot be any short cuts – for us or for God. That Christmas reading from John's gospel says that we are to become children of God – to become expressions of all that is good, self-giving and loving. We need that reminder to restore to Christmas its earthed nature.

When we speak of the "Incarnation", we are using a Latin word to say what John says: God is en-fleshed. It is what Matthew and Luke tell us too: life begins in birth, and in the baby in the manger something wonderful begins which no amount of words can fully explain or properly express.

As we hear and (I hope) sing along with our favourite carols this Christmas, we can look beyond the magic. We can kneel at the manger and be caught up in the wonder that God's purpose is to be incarnate in us too.

The new born child

Georges de la Tour*

Marian Ward



This picture by the French Baroque painter, Georges de la Tour, 'The Newborn Child' is sometimes referred to as 'The Nativity of Christ'. What are we looking at here? Is this an image of THE NATIVITY? If so, where are the rejoicing angels in the night sky, the stable with star, Christ in a manger? Gone are the animals and adoring shepherds and the saintly halos.... but isn't that what the Nativity is all about? These are the images that symbolise the Nativity for us as depicted on our Christmas cards and acted out in countless nativity plays. This joyous, celebratory aspect of The Nativity is epitomised for me by a spectacular performance at the Crystal Cathedral in California. It was stunningly enacted with live sheep, donkeys and camels, angels careering across the arena and a cast of hundreds. But is this the true meaning of the Nativity?

In this painting by de la Tour we have 3 figures lit by a mysterious light source surrounded by total darkness. It is a scene of quiet drama: a shared moment of intimacy between two generations of women contemplating the miracle of birth. A young woman gazes down at the rigidly swaddled baby laid in her lap. The light on the sleeping child's face reflects back onto an older woman, whose raised hand seems to bestow light or blessing. The ambiguity of the light source adds mystery to the scene. The traditional blue of Mary's gown has been replaced by a glowing red which suffuses the whole picture and lights up the darkness. In this interpretation, the older woman is said to be St. Anne, Mary's mother, replacing Joseph as a companion to Mary. It is a very simple scene, but one of extraordinary power. Mary's face, at first seemingly impassive seems to show a tremulous realisation of the wonder of what has happened and what is to come. The stillness is palpable. It's a very private moment of tenderness and wonder which encapsulates for me the meaning of Christ's Nativity: vulnerable humanity is held in the warm protective embrace of God. A gift of light in the darkness.

* George de la Tour (1593 - 1652) was a French painter famous for his use of chiaroscuro (light and shade) and heavily influenced by the naturalism of Caravaggio as interpreted by the Dutch School. His paintings are mainly religious or genre scenes. This painting is in the Museum of Fine Arts in Rennes.

Countdown to Christmas



There's something very special about the Advent Sundays leading up to when Jesus was born. Join in with these activities as we prepare for and celebrate Christmas – and as we remember the Comfort and Joy that Jesus brings to us all.



Date	What brings joy today?	Who needs comfort today?
29th Nov, the First Sunday of Advent	<p>Counting down with excitement</p> <p>Look at your Advent Calendar – just 2 days until you can open the first door! Give a jump for joy or fist bump your family at the excitement of looking forward.</p>	<p>Those who are anxious about Christmas</p> <p>Look at the floor. Some people are anxious about Christmas. Ask God to be close to them in the coming days.</p>
6th Dec, the Second Sunday of Advent	<p>Being able to give presents to others</p> <p>Christians sometimes call Jesus 'God's gift to us' – that's why we give gifts to each other at Christmas. Make a list of the people your family will give gifts to this Christmas. Thank God for each person.</p>	<p>Those worried about money</p> <p>Christmas can be expensive. Some people are worried that they do not have enough money for gifts or food. Could your family help by giving a gift to your local foodbank?</p>
13th Dec, the Third Sunday of Advent	<p>Access to water</p> <p>Count the number of taps in your home. Pour yourself a glass of water and give thanks for access to clean water for washing, cooking, drinking, and cleaning.</p>	<p>Children of the world</p> <p>Pour a glass of water. Add a teaspoon of mud to it, stir and place it in your kitchen. In some parts of the world children only have access to water like this. Each time you see your glass today, pray for agencies like Water Aid, trying to bring clean water to children across the world.</p>
20th Dec, the Fourth Sunday of Advent	<p>Health and people who care</p> <p>Draw a rainbow. Around it write the names of your local doctors, hospitals and pharmacies. Colour a heart by each one to show you are thankful for them.</p>	<p>People who are feeling sad</p> <p>Find a sticking plaster. Draw a sad face on it. Stick the plaster onto your bathroom mirror to remind you to pray for people who are sick or sad.</p>
Carol Service	<p>The gift of music</p> <p>What's your favourite Christmas Carol? Record your family singing it and send it to your wider family and friends.</p>	<p>Those who can't get to church</p> <p>Some people will be sad that they can't go to a carol service. Make a poster of your favourite carol to put in the window to cheer everyone up.</p>
Christmas Eve	<p>Everything that makes Christmas exciting</p> <p>Gather round your Christmas tree and look at the decorations. Tell each other which is your favourite and why.</p>	<p>Those who are home alone</p> <p>Do you know someone who will be home alone this Christmas? Surprise them with a phone or video call.</p>
Christmas Day	<p>The gift of God's love in Jesus</p> <p>Today we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Light a candle (safely) and sing Happy Birthday for Jesus before you open your presents. (Remember to blow the candle out!)</p>	<p>People who have no homes</p> <p>Some people don't have their own homes where they can celebrate Christmas. Pray for charities like Crisis who will provide safe space for them to eat and sleep today.</p>

Date	What brings joy today?	Who needs comfort today?
Boxing Day	<p>Those who serve us in shops, cafes, and entertainment</p> <p>Go for a walk with your family. As you pass shops and cafes, thank God for the people who serve us in them. (If there are no shops or cafes near you, think of the ones you last visited.)</p>	<p>Those who have no work to do </p> <p>Some shops and cafes have closed because of the Covid crisis. This means people no longer work there. As you pass closed shops and cafes on your walk, ask God to be close to the people who used to work in them.</p>
27th Dec, 1st Sunday of Christmas	<p>Wider family who love us, grandparents, etc </p> <p>Look at your Christmas cards. Find the ones that came from grandparents, aunts, uncles and godparents. Thank God that they love and care for you and your family.</p>	<p>Families who cannot be together</p> <p>Find a jigsaw puzzle. The pieces need to join together to complete it. Some families cannot be together this Christmas. As you put your puzzle together, ask God to be with families who have been separated during the holidays.</p>
28th Dec	<p>The children in our family </p> <p>Make a chain of paper dolls. On each doll, write the name of a family you know and all the children and adults in it. Put the dolls in a place where you can see them and thank God for the people they represent.</p>	<p>Those who are grieving for loved ones this Christmas</p> <p>Make another chain of dolls. During this year some people died, and their families are sad. As you write the names of people who have died on the dolls, talk about something you remember about each person.</p>
29th Dec	<p>Holiday time to be together</p> <p>Shout out 'Group Hug' and get everyone in your household to either have a household huddle or hug themselves tight. Thank God that you can be together at holiday time.</p>	<p>Those who are hungry </p> <p>Open your fridge or food cupboard and look at what's inside. Some people have very little food and very little money to buy more. Next time you go to the supermarket, buy some extra tins to put in their Food Bank collection.</p>
30th Dec	<p>Remembering all those journeying to find out about faith</p> <p>Some people who visited Jesus followed a star to find their way. Make or draw and decorate a large star. As you hang it on your front door or in a window pray for people who want to know more about Jesus. </p>	<p>People struggling with illness of whatever kind</p> <p>Hospitals don't close over Christmas. They carry on caring for people who are ill. Send a card to your local hospital to thank the staff who were working over the holiday.</p>
31st Dec	<p>For all the good things the past year brought to us</p> <p>Have a family huddle with your favourite hot drinks. As the drinks cool, tell each other the things you have really enjoyed in 2020.</p>	<p>Those who have found this year very difficult</p> <p>Squeeze your hands into fists until it feels uncomfortable. 2020 was uncomfortable for some families. Slowly open your hands and ask God that 2021 would be less difficult for them.</p>
1st Jan	<p>For the good things in store this year</p> <p>Draw around your hand. Inside it write or draw the things you are looking forward to in 2021. </p>	<p>People worried about the future</p> <p>Draw around your other hand. Some people are worried about 2021. Draw hearts inside this hand and ask God to hold the people and their worries.</p>
2nd January to Epiphany	<p>That Jesus is for the whole world</p> <p>How many countries can you and your family name? Jesus came to be God's Good News for all the countries of the world. Jump for joy that Jesus is God's Good News for you too.</p>	<p>Those in the Middle East</p> <p>Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth. He came to bring peace but today there are many conflicts in that part of the world. Find the two towns on a map. Place your fingers on them and pray for the people who live there.</p>

Incarnation and Care for the Environment

Revd Jennifer Brown

When we think about the incarnation – that is, the birth of Jesus – the focus is, unsurprisingly, on God becoming human. We emphasise Jesus' humanity in part because it helps us to relate to Jesus; it makes God accessible and approachable and, without doubt, that is one of the things that the incarnation does and, I believe, was meant to do. But this attention to the fact of God being made human in Jesus for humanity is too limited. There is more to the incarnation than that.

In Jesus, God became more than just human. In Jesus, God entered into and became a part of creation. After all, human beings aren't separate from creation. We are part of the created order. And so, in the incarnation, the Creator becomes part of the creation. For many centuries, Christianity has, quite wrongly in my view, made a distinction between the material and the spiritual, emphasising that spiritual is good and implying, or sometimes outright declaring, that things physical and material are bad or somehow less important and meaningful than things spiritual. The incarnation tells us that this distinction between spiritual and material is false. If God wanted us to think that only the spiritual mattered, he would have come in another way. The birth of Jesus shows us that God has embraced this material creation of his. Through the incarnation, God takes the ordinary stuff of the material world, in this case flesh and blood, and makes it holy. We see Jesus do this again towards the end of his earthly ministry, when he takes ordinary bread and wine and makes them holy and extraordinary as his own body and blood.

So, does any of this matter? It does. Because this godly embrace of the created order and things ordinary and material is an indication that the whole of creation matters to God. The story of the nativity, in a subtle way, suggests this. Luke tells us that the new-born Jesus was laid in a manger, an animal's feeding trough. A manger indicates that there were probably animals around and Christian art has typically depicted the scene with an ox and a donkey standing somewhere near. This is almost certainly a visual representation of Isaiah 1.3: "The ox knows its master, and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." It is these simple, 'dumb' beasts who are attuned to God, even more than God's own chosen people. And these animals, as representatives of the wider creation are a reminder that the incarnation is not for us humans alone.

Knowing that God cares deeply about all creation and that all creation is embraced in the incarnation should make us, as Christians, recognise our responsibility to care for creation, too. The earth and our fellow creatures are not merely the stage and audience for the drama of salvation. They are included within it. We, the Church, are Christ's body on earth. And so, like Christ, we should not disdain the material creation but cherish it, reflecting God's love for creation in our own lives and working for the good of the earth and our fellow creatures alongside our own.

“ One of the strange things about living in the world, is that it is only now and then that one is quite sure one is going to live for ever and ever and ever. One knows it sometimes when one gets up on a tender, solemn dawn-time and goes out and stands alone and throws one's head far back and looks up and up and watches the pale sky slowly changing and flashing and marvellous unknown things happening, until the East almost makes one cry out and one's heart stands still at the strange, unchanging majesty of the rising of the sun – which has been happening every morning for thousands and thousands and thousands of years. One knows it then for a moment or so. And one knows it sometimes when one stands by oneself in a wood at sunset and the mysterious deep gold stillness slanting through and under the branches seems to be saying slowly again and again something one cannot quite hear, however much one tries. Then sometimes the immense quiet of the dark -blue at night with millions of stars waiting and watching makes one sure; and sometimes a sound of far-off music makes it true; and sometimes a look in someone's eye.”

An excerpt from 'A Secret Garden' suggested by Elizabeth Dawson

A Shudder of Angels

From the Bible Reading Fellowship, based in Abingdon

Watching over their flocks of screens by night
The security guards monitored the lonely hours
In the high-rise office blocks, not far from Bethlehem.
But there was nothing to report.
No break in; no break out.
All was safe.

Night watchman work is strange occupation.
No skill required other than to stay awake while others sleep;
To keep alert and guard against the unexpected.
It's an unattractive job with antisocial hours,
Serving the great financial houses
That feed the Temples of Mammon.

And so they watched, on duty, in silence and in solitude;
While digital images flickered, the CCTV jumped channels and eyelids drooped;
As black and white movie stars from yesteryear came out to grace the TV screen
But there was nothing to report.
No break in; no break out.
All was safe.

Until that night - the night that changed everything.
when suddenly the electric sparked, lights flashed,
The pictures danced and grew bright with strangeness.
When every screen faltered, froze and then faded into a dazzling brightness.
Was this a break in or a break out?
Something was happening.
There was something to report.

Alarm bells rang inside the watchmen's heads but they couldn't move,
Entranced by what they saw. For, lo,
A great shudder of angels appeared in each and every monitor.
A fearful sight that told them not to be afraid.
Something glorious has happened, they said;
But not up in the luxury penthouse suites above;
Nor within the vast executive board rooms below; -
Nor yet in the open-plan office spaces elsewhere in the building;
But in the basement;
Among the dirt and debris, swept out of sight.

Something had come to overturn from underneath
The well-oiled machines of human commerce;
To redistribute wealth and wisdom and wonder;
And reconcile accounts for all.
They should go. Now. Abandon their soulless work.
Go and discover the new thing,
Wrapped in strips of computer packaging
And lying in a cardboard box.

So they broke out and found the one who had broken in.
An intruder bathed in neon from the street lamp outside.
And it was just as they had been told.
Without identity badge or appointment,
He had by-passed all the normal protocols
And was in the building,
Undoing their security and ours.

As one day he would go on to unbalance the old statements,
Turn profits into losses
And re-audit the transactions of all our lives.
Now this was something to report
A break in; and a break out.
Something had happened.
And from now on the world's security would never be safe again.

Angels across Abingdon

*Margaret Horton
Jenni Collins*

As Christmas approaches a number of us across the parish have been wondering how we could help to spread the Christmas message and to cheer up the dark days of December. We thought it would be nice to put up angels and stars in our windows - rather like the rainbows of the first lockdown. If the idea of creating something fills you with dread, there are dozens of angel templates online, but a cardboard star covered with tin foil would look just as good. It would also give something for children (and adults) to look out for as we take our exercise around the town.

So please get creating and decorating!



A shepherd remembers

Susan Gee

So long ago, yet I remember still
the light, waterfalls of
radiance tumbling, rippling,
falling in hues of gold and pearl,
so bright my eyes burned as it
turned stones to silver and
etched each twig, each leaf with
glints of gold.
The sheep, humped, motionless,
were drenched in luminescence,
the ordinary transfigured,
as were we.

So long ago, yet I feel still
the awe, the fear which
gripped and transfixed us, until
out of the light,
flowing from glory,
a voice spoke,
and the voice and the message
were one with the light.
The message of hope fulfilled was
beyond our dreaming,
and hope came to our hearts
that dark night.

So long ago, yet I hear still
the music, as one voice
became many, wave upon wave of
glorious, joyous harmonies,
an exquisite and rapturous song
filling earth and heaven and all
between, giving glory to God and
bringing peace to the world.
The song died away,
the heavenly vision faded,
yet our hearts burned as we
left the fields to seek
the Christ child.



Food Bank Christmas 2020

Linda Hobbs

URGENT

The Abingdon Food Bank continues to be very busy, demand for help continues to grow and we anticipate more families and individuals will be needing assistance as Christmas approaches. Last year Abingdon Food Bank gave parcels of Christmas food to over 200 people, this year we expect to see an increase in that number.

Despite the restrictions of Covid-19, staff and volunteers at Abingdon Food Bank still intend to distribute boxes of Christmas food, these boxes are in addition to the bags of food they would normally have been allocated. Boxes contain some of the “extras” intended to make Christmas meals special.

The plan is to pack the boxes during the week beginning the 13th December, with distribution later that same week.

In order for this to be accomplished, Christmas contributions should ideally reach the Food Bank, before the 11th December. Obviously, any donations received after that date will still be used, but for inclusion in the Christmas parcels, please aim for this date.

If you wish to donate, goods can be left in the Parish Centre, I will then collect and deliver contributions to Food Bank. At the moment the Parish Centre is open on Monday and Wednesday but it is better to ring beforehand to check. If anybody has difficulty in getting to the Centre, please contact me and I can arrange to collect.

If you would prefer to give a financial donation the link is,

<https://cca.churchsuite.co.uk/donate/fund/njbejebi>

You can also donate using online banking:-

Reference ‘foodbank’ Christchurch, 61580368. 60-01-01

All the churches in the Parish have been very generous in their support of the Food Bank, support which is appreciated by staff and volunteers and obviously those people the Food Bank assist each week.

Items of food needed for Christmas parcels:-

Tins:- ham, salmon, potatoes ,carrots, ,peas, fruit.

Gravy granules,Cranberry Sauce, stuffing mix, Christmas Pudding, custard.

Mince pies, jars of pickles/ chutney, cheese crackers, sweet biscuits, cakes, sweets, chocolates, crisps and savoury snacks, toiletries

Thank you to everyone for your continued support, without donations we would not be able to help those families and individuals in Abingdon continuing to experience Food Poverty.



Cartoon by Jim Godfrey. Included with permission. See also page 23

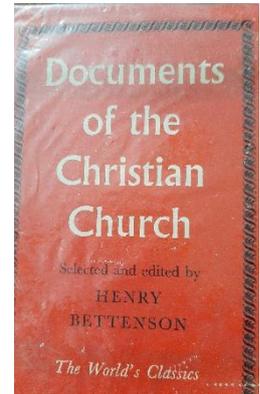
St Polycarp Lives – Eighteen Centuries Later

Elizabeth Simpson

I was fascinated to read the two different accounts of this Early Church Father in last month's edition of Candle in the Window. I would have named him myself had I not felt the urge to offer Rabbi Hugo Gryn.

I first came across St Polycarp when pursuing Religious Studies (as the subject was then called) at my College of Education. My tutor had said we needed to buy 'Documents of the Early Church' as resource material for ourselves (when teaching) and source material for our studies.

The piece about Polycarp was taken from Martyrium Polycarpi (A letter from the Church of Symna. The first Martyrology.) The account of Polycarp's martyrdom is vividly told and has stayed with me all these years.



Briefly, because some of this was explained by Sok Han Yong in last month's issue, after Polycarp's arrest the Roman Proconsul urged Polycarp to, 'Have respect to thine age... Swear by the genius (the spirit) of Caesar' (thus declaring he was a god). 'Repent, Say, "Away with the atheists!"' (An epithet applied to Christians because they refused to worship heathen idols and they had no images or shrines of their own.)

Polycarp 'looked with a severe countenance on the mob of lawless heathen... looking up to heaven he groaned and said, "Away with the atheists" '. I think either he or the letter writer had a strong sense of humour even in catastrophe

Polycarp refused to swear the oath; he said he had served God for 86 years, he had never been deserted by God - how could he deny God now. Polycarp was accused of scorning the lions and was finally burnt at the stake. Such was his courage, his trust and his faith that he told his executioners there was no need to nail him to the stake, he would not move.

My tutor, a gentle and sensitive man, mused that it was very cruel to do this to an old man who couldn't have had many more years.

As so often happens, (we see it even today), the Proconsul was obliged by the shouting and demands of the mob, to carry out the sentence.

How fortunate for us this letter was written. As a result Polycarp's faith is still influencing people today.

The Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore said:

I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.

The American poet, Mary Oliver said:

If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy, don't hesitate. Give in to it.

Hark the herald angels sing...Glory to the newborn King!

Charles Masheder

One of the things, very sadly, we will miss out on this year is singing carols but please note we are all encouraged to sing two verses of Silent Night on our doorstep on December 17th at 8pm. We can of course sing in our homes but not in church.

My reminiscences are full of carol-singing in the nights before Christmas, often collecting for good causes. In the 'dark ages' when I was a boy my Mum would lead us round the village usually two or three nights; it was a social activity too as someone would welcome us at the end into their home where we would be fed and 'watered'. Interestingly my Dad as the Vicar did not participate and that may just have been that he thought carols should wait for Christmas Day and the annual Carol Service was *always* after Christmas.

Later, as a Curate in Chingford (edge of East London) I was visiting a lady whose husband's funeral I had taken and we got talking about musical instruments. When she learnt that I played the piano, she offered to lend me her piano-accordion. Bit by bit I taught myself the carols and the accordion became a regular feature as we walked around the streets, hopefully with enough adults to keep the younger element well focussed.



When I moved out into the Essex countryside, I found there was a great tradition of singing to everyone in the three original villages of the Benefice of 'The Lavers'. It had been going on for decades and lasted eight nights. Originally the Rector had been clear it was simply to remind people of the true meaning of Christmas but those that heard were so keen to contribute financially that donations were not sought but accepted; by the time I joined, the collection for charities was integral to the exercise. The accordion was greatly welcomed by the singers! I remember one night it was snowing and I had to keep brushing the snow off the keyboard... far less harmful than rain! Another night, there was no answer on a door, so we all trooped round the back only to be faced through the window with the owner stark naked!!

As another parish had been joined to the Benefice we increased to nine nights! Some nights there were just a few of us (one night just Felicity and me but we were soon joined by others) but once there were as many as forty. I worked out that between eight and ten was probably best as the villages were far-spread and we had to move by car every few houses, Each night we would be welcomed on our way by mulled wine and mince pies and often a good donation; I think on my last year that we raised £2,000. People would tell us if they were going to be out and would leave their gift in a safe place. Each night we would be well entertained. We not only sang but would give a leaflet with a message & Christmas services.

In the Ray Valley Benefice (near Bicester) carol-singing continued but never more than three nights...again the accordion was very welcome. No getting into a car, I was 'burdened' by the weight of the instrument, in one village it was more or less three hours with that weight on my poor shoulders. As in Essex the feeling among the singers and those listening was always so warm and loving – and especially when the weather was adverse. In one village we started in the only big house where we were royally entertained and the evening always went downhill after that!

In 2015, we moved to Dorset and the accordion was still useful but only indoors. In the village pub, after a Parish Christmas dinner, I would take up the accordion and get everyone singing along. The first time it caused a real sensation and we were soon on the village Facebook! I also led carol-singing at the 'oldie's' Salt and Pepper lunch and at the local Pop-In-Place Christmas Celebration for many older and isolated people. So now it is Abingdon and the only time the 'squeeze-box' came out last year was for the Christmas Lunch for the Wednesday Church people. This year? – yes, I have decided that Musson Close will be 'treated' to Silent Night at 8pm on December 17th. I do hope you will be on your doorstep joining in too, whether you regard yourself as a Herald Angel or not!

A very joyful Christmas to you all as we leave this very strange year behind!

Sinterklaas – the joys and shadows

Gwen Bevington

For an almost complete non-traveller, I feel a strange attraction to the Netherlands. I've had some good Dutch friends and, for twenty years, a great Dutch son-in-common-law. Plus, our other son-in-law and daughter have a wonderful (Dutch) vicar.

It's been a privilege to be involved many years (sadly, not in 2020) with the annual Sinterklaas event that Margreet arranges near to 5th December - the eve of the Feast of St Nicolas. Word has got round, so people know it's good: children tumble out of the woodwork to fill the local community centre, tucking into healthy snacks, working on the craft activities for which Margreet provides materials and ideas (always including home-made lanterns). While we clear up, Margreet gathers the children for stories of St Nic(h)olas. Then it's out into the now-darkened streets, holding up our lanterns to process the long way round to church. (One year my husband, allocated to bring up the rear, fell so far behind that he found himself with grandson and someone else's toddler at the end of a footpath in total darkness, completely lost.)

The children have brought carrots or potatoes with them. At church, they leave their shoes in the vestry, stuffed with vegetables to feed St Nicolas's reindeer, and return to church for a short time of worship. It's magic, when you're three or four, and it's your first time, to find the reindeer have taken your carrots and Sinterklaas has left sweets in your shoes.

The event is a fine example of bespoke, bridge-building work with local families; some of us in Abingdon were thinking (before covid) about ways we could open our building to welcome in our neighbours, including children. And it's all very sweet and lovely. Only...

Only, Margreet and our daughter tell us that in Holland, Sinterklaas celebrations have become very controversial. The traditional side-kick (Santa's elf?) is Zwarte Piet (Black Pete) – a figure now widely seen as racist, as he has been played by white people with blacked-up faces, exaggerated red lips and curly wigs. Some people think him harmless, a part of Dutch culture that should be treasured; others are hurt or ashamed, and want him dropped. This year, some Piets are being played with white sooty faces (following all those trips down chimneys to fill shoes with sweets).

Things are changing. One survey shows support for the traditional depiction of Piet falling, from 89% in 2013, to 55% recently (*The Observer*, 15.11.20). Does this parallel attitudes here to, say, Rhodes's statue on Oriel College? In 2013, even "liberal" white people mostly thought it misguided to try to airbrush tangible evidence of our past, which, like it or not, has happened and cannot be undone. The Black Lives Matter movement has changed them: the past is not just a white past - black people were there, and their descendants have a perspective. Many black people need evidence that white people want to understand that perspective, to hear their voice.

Black people in the Netherlands say that they feel diminished by the traditional depiction of Zwarte Piet. I look at my cherished family December customs and am appalled that so many of them started on the back of sugar and slavery.

Margreet doesn't mention Piet when she leads the Sinterklaas event. Later on, the children may hear of him, consider and appraise. They may realise that fun things can have sinister undertones; that humans will often find celebration and repentance going hand-in-hand.

GB

Junior Church

Sue Pemberton for the Junior Church leadership team.

November has been a busy month with lots of special Sundays!

We started by celebrating All Saints Day. We began by thinking about traditional saints that we might have heard of and tried to remember where we might see some saints in St Helen's – it's so long since we've been there! We then discovered that saints are people called by God who try very hard to live the way He wants. We can all do this, so we are all called to be saints. The traditional saints provide us with good examples, and it was suggested the children might want to find out about some of these. Jemima particularly liked St Philomena.



The following week the theme was remembrance. Perhaps some of us have experienced the death of a friend, relative or pet. It's OK to be sad when we think about this, but we can also be thankful for their lives, and we know that Jesus will comfort us when we're sad. It's also good to remember happy times from the past, and to give thanks for them. The children were asked to draw or paint a picture of someone or something they want to remember, and to say a 'thank you' prayer for it. Jemima remembered her Junior Church friends Julia and Charlotte as she hasn't been able to see them for ages. Miriam remembered surfing in Guernsey.

Last week we celebrated Christ the King. Jesus didn't quite fit our normal image of a king. The story of the judgement of the sheep and the goats reminds us that we can all be sheep and help other people. The children were asked to write a cheering, colourful letter to someone who might need cheering up. For a fun activity, it was suggested that they might want to transform a teddy or other toy into a king or queen. We loved King (Penguin) Percy from Maia and Lily!



We continue to meet via our Facebook Group although we are planning to start Advent with a Zoom meet up. Some members of the congregation have commented that they would like to see what the children are doing. Whilst we need to keep the Facebook group private, we are hoping to be able to put the presentations used on the St Helen's website. This will also make them available to any visitors to the website.

Maria Boulding says in her book 'The Coming Of God':

She (Mary) said her 'Yes' to the Beyond, she let go of her securities, faced the misunderstanding, bore the shame, accepted her own bewilderment and risk. She was herself reborn to a new existence, that she might bring forth life for many. There was a joy for her, and in the newness of life she danced with the Beyond that was within.

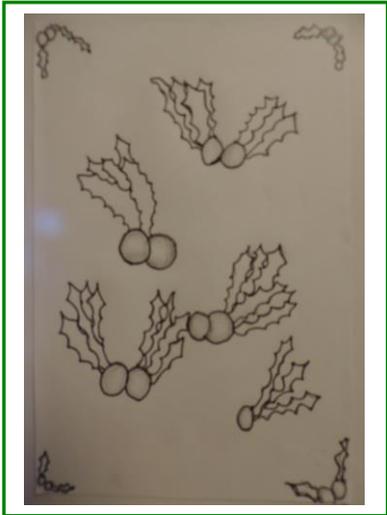
Happy Christmas from Junior Church



Lily's reindeer
"My favourite things about Christmas are Jesus, presents and Rudolf!"



Miriam's Christmas picture



Some Christmas holly from Jemima



A present from Maia

Lily's Favourite Christmas joke.
Q: "What do you get when you eat too many Christmas decorations?"
A: "Tinselitis."

Autumn Colours and a Puzzle

Pictures from Marian Ward, Barbara Nettlefold and Rob Rutherford



What is this?
Marian would like
to know! We can
pass it on.



An update: Trinity Learning ‘Peaceful Activity Packs’

Nicola Williams



Many of you will remember the trial Peaceful Activity Packs we sent out to children from two local schools back in July. The idea behind the packs was to find simple resources and activities that would support good mental health, were easy to do, and could be done independently by children or together with family members.

The trial packs were well received and the concept behind them formed the basis of our grant bid to the National Lottery Coronavirus Community Support Fund. In mid-October, we were excited to learn that our bid had been successful!

The funds awarded have enabled us to continue and extend the Peaceful Activity Packs to provide three packs each for six children from three local primary schools. In addition to this, we are now also able to provide three packs each to twenty-four children from Kingfisher School who would usually benefit from regular visits from the Trinity Learning Kingfisher Singing Group.

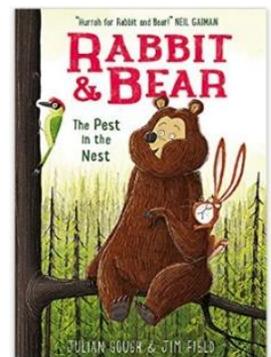


Recent conversations with headteachers in the area highlighted however that the current need for support and encouragement was still great and it became apparent that schools needed more packs than the lottery funding would cover.

In order to meet these additional demands, Trinity Learning Trustees agreed that some of the donations made regularly and generously to Trinity Learning by St Helen’s church could be used to provide additional packs which has allowed us to send out packs to an additional 18 children. In total, Trinity Learning will be sending out three packs each to sixty children.

Singing, sticking and sketching with our new packs

Our second Peaceful Activities Pack, which is currently going out to primary school pupils, is based around an excellent book called ‘Rabbit and Bear: The Pest in the Nest’ by Julian Gough and Jim Field. This funny story gently explores how being kind and looking at problems from another perspective can help different personalities to live together. The book is beautifully illustrated and the other items in the pack include drawing pencils, a sketchbook, stickers and stencils to help encourage children to have a go at drawing their own animals and plants.



Our first pack for children at Kingfisher school is based around music and provides colourful scarves, bells and shakers to wave and play along with the rhymes and songs our volunteer Kingfisher Singing group are beginning to video to allow children and their parents to access them from home. These children all have significant needs and limited mobility so the resources are carefully selected to be suitable, and fun for them. More details about the packs are available on our website at <https://trinitylearning.org.uk/>.

Thank you

We would like to say a big thank you to The National Lottery Coronavirus Community Support Fund, the UK Government and St Helen's Church for their funding and thank you for all the support we receive from volunteers. All of this enables us to continue to be here for children, their families and local schools throughout Covid19.

If you are interested in volunteering with TrinityLearning we currently have volunteer roles available involving singing, storytelling, craft making and preparation, walk planning and gardening. All of these roles are suitable to do whilst isolating! To find out more please email: nic.trinitylearning@gmail.com. TrinityLearning is a registered charity number: 1182742.

Advent plans!



December is usually a really busy time for TrinityLearning as we welcome many local schools into Trinity Church to perform their Nativity plays and concerts. Although this year is very different, we still want schools to have accessible resources for sharing the Christmas story at school or at home in case of lockdown.

With that in mind TrinityLearning's workshop leader, Taz, has created some short videos telling the Nativity story from the perspective of Mary, the shepherds and the kings. These versions of the Christmas story have been specially written for children to learn to tell themselves. We have used a method devised by Storytelling Schools where children hear the story, map the story and step the story before finally telling the story themselves. Taz briefly explains the different stages in her videos which are suitable to use with children of all ages. We would like to thank Storytelling Schools for giving us permission to use their method for learning stories in our videos and if you'd like to know more about them the Storytelling Schools website is at <https://storytellingschools.com/>.



In addition to these storytelling videos, Taz has also created some great video and print guides for simple Christmas crafts. These all promote positive ideas such as sharing and giving and can all be made from readily available or recycled household resources. The crafts and stories can all be downloaded from the TrinityLearning website. Please do send us a photo of your craft if you have a go at any. We'd love to make a gallery to display the best!

TrinityLearning's Christmas stories and crafts can be found on our website at <https://trinitylearning.org.uk/christmas-storytelling/>.

TrinityLearning is a registered Charity, number 1182742

Christmas 'down under'

Sue Pemberton

Twenty five years ago I set off for a year's job exchange in Adelaide, South Australia. I arrived the day before Christmas Eve and left shortly before the following Christmas. Here are a few memories of mid-summer Christmas in the southern hemisphere.

On the way, I had a brief stopover in Singapore. I had never been anywhere like it before and I remember wandering jetlagged along Orchard Road shopping street, completely overwhelmed by heat and the most over-the-top Christmas decorations I had ever seen. The famous Raffles Hotel was wrapped up to look like a giant parcel. The following day I went on a boat trip round the harbour aboard a Chinese junk tastefully decorated with plastic holly.

Christmas Eve in Adelaide saw us heading to the beach on a warm sunny day. On Christmas Day we had a traditional lunch, but slept it off under trees in the garden rather than in front of the fire. On Boxing Day I went to stay with friends up in the Adelaide Hills and we ate dinner out on the deck listening to a CD of carols drifting through the window, and to the cockatoos calling in the trees.

The following November I was told I had to go to the Christmas Pageant, an Adelaide tradition dating back to 1933. Everyone set out early to get a good place along the street, many with a picnic breakfast. Eventually a huge parade of amazing floats came along accompanied by people dressed as snowmen and snowflakes, and culminating in the arrival of Father Christmas in full regalia on his sleigh. How hot he must have been on a fine summer day! Just before I left Australia I went to a carol concert in the local park with picnic tea. Australian fire engines have red rather than blue lights, and towards the end of the concert a red light was spotted moving through the trees - Father Christmas's sleigh! We were asked to sing Jingle Bells very loudly to guide him in and the man himself came running into the clearing where we were sitting, hurling sweets into the crowd and ho-ho-hoing as he came. The children went wild!

Having Christmas in the middle of the summer holidays felt weird, as did singing 'In the Bleak Midwinter' in 30+ degrees of heat! However, my Australian New Year's Eve did not go to plan. On the day, torrential rain fell non stop and the planned city centre celebrations and fireworks were cancelled. We went out for a meal in the city centre and got soaked running across the pavement to the car. Driving back up into the hills was like ascending a waterfall, and when we arrived at my friends' house the power was off. We saw in 1996 by candlelight, huddled round the wood stove in jumpers listening to celebrations on a battery-powered radio. Much more like home!

Christmas 1940

Silvia Joinson

We had a houseful. Living on the outskirts of Oxford we were a safe refuge for those in areas being bombed. So, besides my mother and me, we had two grandmas from London and an uncle and aunt and three cousins from Bristol. My father at Bletchley Park and grandpa, a chef at the United Service club in London did not get time off. One evening, the uncle who was rather accident prone, managed to lock almost the whole family into one room; everyone else knew that door had to be treated gently! The two grandmas, me and the eldest cousin were the only ones free as my mother issued instructions on where to find tools. These were unfortunately in the garage which was joined to the house but did not have blackout and the air raid warden lived next door to make it more difficult.

Funny the things you remember!

The Joy of Laughter

Putting faith in a sense of humour

Rod Hunt

In a round of golf one member of the elderly foursome had been going on rather miserably about his aches and pains. After a listening to his long list of ailments one of his friends said, 'Look on the bright side, Andy. At least you're still on the right side of the turf.' The laughter that followed, immediately lightened Andy's mood and he played the nine holes without any further moans. Laughter is good medicine. It connects people together, reduces tensions, builds healthy physical and emotional well-being, strengthens the immune system, boosts mood, diminishes pain and protects one from the damaging effects of stress.

As a small boy going to church in the 1940s (BCP Mattins or Evensong) was, I thought, a solemn, staid and rather joyless experience. It seemed to me that the cold, damp, fusty-smelling church of All Saints, Liddington, which I attended with my formidable Aunt Marion, was a far cry from Judea and the sunlit shores of Lake Galilee where Jesus conducted his ministry and proclaimed the good news. Aunt Marion must have sensed what I was feeling because, one morning, just before the service started, she leaned over and whispered. 'Did you know The Rector has a picture of Adolph Hitler glued on his lavatory seat?' Was it naughty of her? Probably! But at that moment, I realised that it is not disrespectful to laugh in church and often the comical and humorous is often a 'yin' to the solemn and serious 'yang'. So did Jesus and his disciples laugh, have fun and recall funny moments during their ministry? I like to think so.

Laughter, then, is one of the ways, in which we can experience joy and feel happiness; and, by the same token, laughter is a way to leaven and lighten our journey towards spiritual joy.

So how about religious jokes? Perhaps we might regard them simply as a condiment – a little touch of salt and pepper - to season our faith. I never fail to laugh at the story of the old woman in a remote village parish who approached the newly appointed vicar and gushed, 'Oh Vicar, we're so grateful to you. We didn't know about sin until you came to the village.'

Sermons can also be a good butt of gentle humour. How about the one where a lady says, 'I did enjoy your sermon, Rector. So much of it applied to someone I know.' Or the little boy, comparing two preachers, says, 'I prefer Rev Jones. When he says 'in conclusion' he concludes, but when the Rev Smith says 'lastly' . . . he lasts!' And I like the amusing aphorism – 'It is easier to write ten sermons than to live one.'

There's one about the Wedding Feast at Cana. The morning after the celebration an old man, who had imbibed rather too freely, had a terrible hangover. Calling his wife to the bedside he croaked. 'Oh Judith, will you bring me a cup of water, please . . . and don't let that young man *anywhere* near it.'

My father was clerk to a rural district in Wiltshire. I always enjoyed his humorous story about the hilltop village of Buttermere. One December, the Diocesan Bishop was due to visit the village for Evensong. As the Bishop arrived, mid-afternoon, it had begun to snow and during afternoon tea with the Vicar and his wife, an enormous blizzard of 'white out' proportions blew in across the downs. With great difficulty, the Bishop and Vicar waded through deep snow to the bitterly cold, empty church and by 6.30pm, not a soul had turned up. They were about to abandon the service when out of the snow the lone figure of an ancient shepherd appeared at the doorway. 'Ah, my dear fellow,' the Bishop said. 'In view of the inclement conditions . . . and as you are the only attendee, perhaps we should abandon the service this evening.'

'My Lord,' the old man replied, wagging an admonitory finger. 'If I had a hundred sheep I'd feed 'em; but if I only had *one* sheep, I'd still feed 'un.'

'Very well,' replied the chastened Bishop, and so the entire Evensong service - the Magnificat, the Nunc Dimittis, the Confession, the prayers and responses, as well as the bishop's address - was conducted.

'I trust you were suitably *fed* by the service,' said the freezing Bishop with ill-disguised acerbity as he bid the old shepherd farewell.

'My Lord,' the old man replied, again wagging his admonitory finger. 'If I had a hundred sheep I'd feed 'em; and if I only had *one* sheep, I'd still feed 'er . . . but I wouldn't give 'er the *whole load!*'

Dear Lord.

*Endow me with a sense of humour.
That I may laugh often and love much.*

Pinocchio and the King

Tony Richmond

C'era una volta . . .

“Un re!” – diranno subito i miei piccoli lettori.

No, ragazzi, avete sbagliato. C'era una volta . . . un pezzo di legno.

Joe was reading the story of Pinocchio during lockdown to his daughter 10-year-old Lizzie. Joe can never resist starting off pronouncing these words in Italian.

And then in English: Once upon a time there was . . . “A king!” my little readers will quickly shout. No, guys, you are wrong. Once upon a time there was . . . a piece of wood.”

And Joe went on to tell how the carpenter makes the piece of wood into a puppet, who can become a real boy if he proves himself to be brave, truthful, and unselfish. But Pinocchio is naughty and his nose grows longer and longer the more lies he tells. He ends up with donkey ears and a tail before his conscience (Jiminy Cricket in the film) gets the better of him, he repents, saves his “father” the old carpenter from danger and eventually is restored as a real boy.

While Joe was telling the story, Lizzie was idly turning over the pages of a newspaper. “This is rubbish,” she suddenly exclaimed.

“What is?” asked Joe.

“It says here that Christmas is cancelled,” said Lizzie angrily. “They can’t cancel Christmas. Christmas is just Christmas like winter is winter.”

Joe explained: “I think it means that Christmas will be different this year, if we can’t go shopping or have parties . . .”

“That’s nothing to do with it,” Lizzie protested. “Jesus was born at Christmas and it’s his birthday, and you can’t cancel that.”

“Yes,” said Joe, but it’s all very well for us. Our family are together in this house and we have food and hot water and television and WhatsApp and so on. But many others are lonely, or hungry and cold because they have lost their jobs, or they are suffering from Covid-19 or they are mourning their granny or granddad who might have died from the virus.”

Lizzie was quiet for a moment, thinking about what her Dad had said.

She was clearly working something out in her young mind. At last she said: “So, it’s really really sad for them. I’m going to give my Christmas money for some poor child who needs it more than I do . . .”

“That’s very nice,” said Joe, but Lizzie wasn’t finished.

“. . . to show that Christmas is not cancelled,” she said. “Avete sbagliato, newspaper, with your long nose and donkey ears. Christus natus est. Abbiamo un re.”

“Where did you learn the Latin?” asked Joe, amazed. Lizzie just smiled and went on her way, humming her favourite carol.

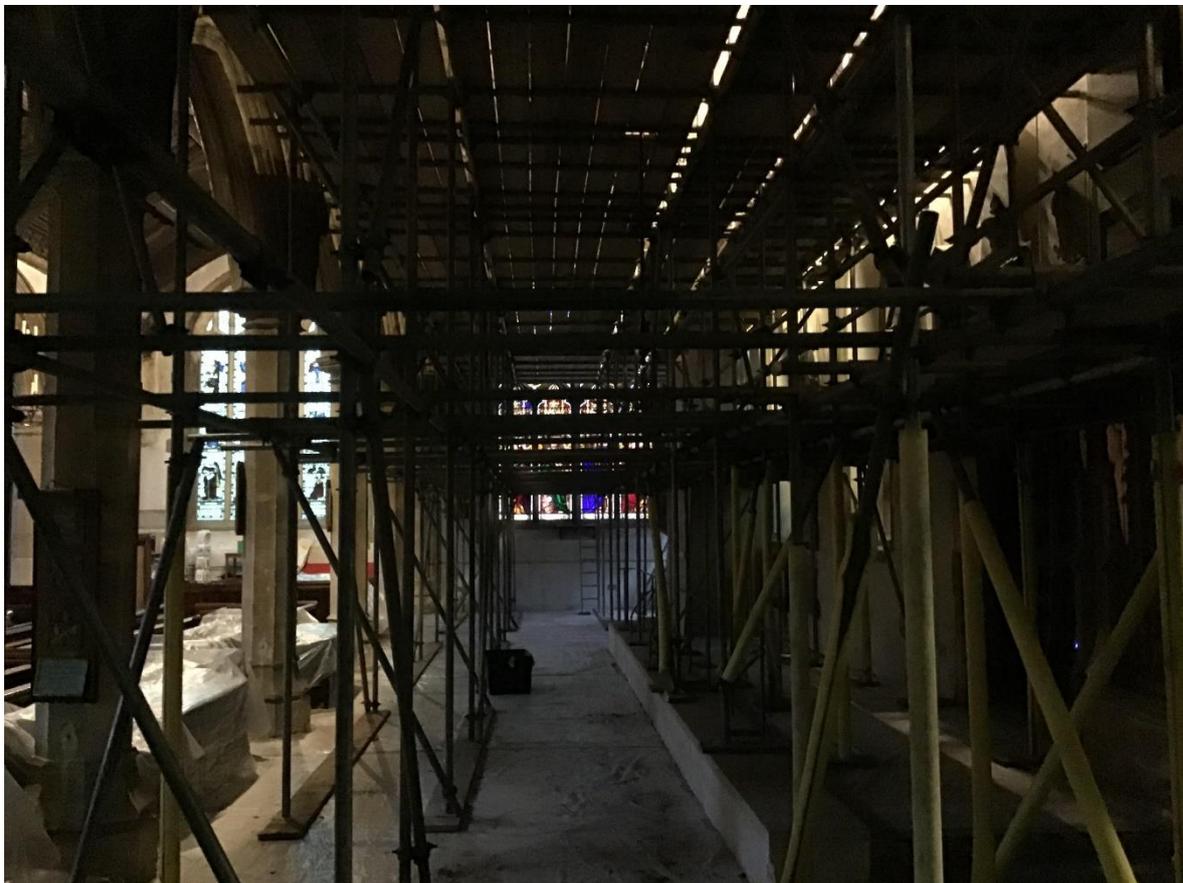


See an advert for Piccolo Teatro [here](#):

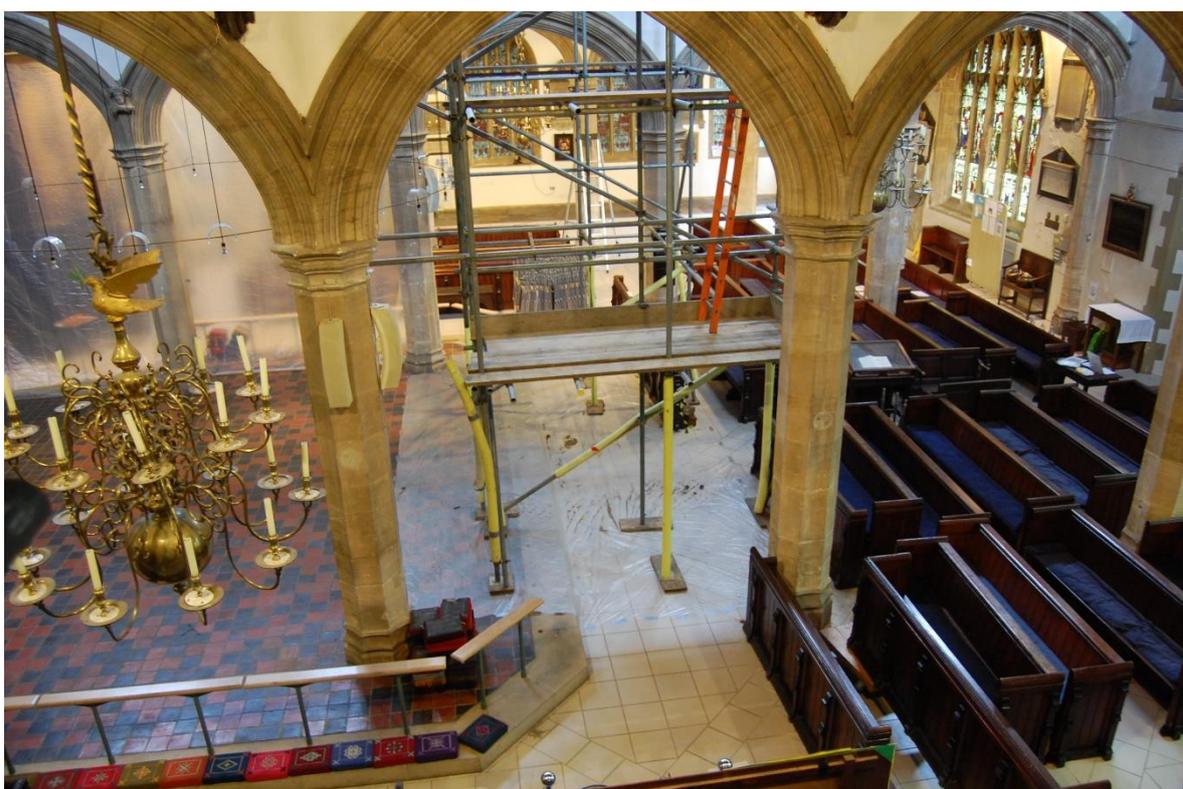
The state of the Church!

Pictures by Norman Dawson and Linda Hobbs

You probably know that St Helen's Church is undergoing repairs. This started with a fall of plaster. It is now full of pipes and they're not all organ pipes....



But at least you get a nice view if you go up to inspect the font cover suspension..



Notices, some urgent!

Royal School of Church Music Big Christmas Carol Service! Saturday 12th December 6pm

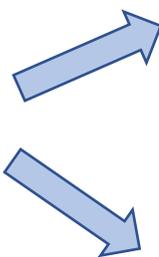
There will be VERY special guests as readers. The service will be available on YouTube.

All details on the website - <https://www.rscm.org.uk/>

Church Twinning

John Clare has Christmas cards with cosy scenes of Abingdon, priced at £4.50 for a packet of 10, to raise money for Church Twinning with our fellow Christians in our twin towns. The Church Twinning Committee thinks Brexit makes it especially important to keep in touch with them.

Packets can be ordered from John Clare (01235 525898), for home delivery or collection. Also available from Elizabeth Simpson. (01235 524978).



From John Barton:

I thought you'd like to know that my book A History of the Bible will be Radio 4's book of the week from 21 December, so the last episode will be on Christmas Day! (They read an abridgement for twenty minutes a day, so it will be very selective.)



Perfect gift for Christmas 2020!

TRYING TIMES £5

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS
VIRUS VERSION

PRIDE GREED LUST ENVY GLUTTONY WRATH SLOTH

Cartoons for a pandemic by Jim Godfrey

includes p&p!

Trying Times book with over 30 hilarious cartoons

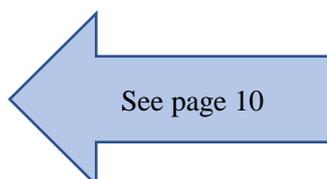
Finding something to smile about is vital in the midst of adversity. Jim Godfrey's cartoons are a real tonic in testing times.
The Rt. Revd. Dr. Stephen Croft, Bishop of Oxford

PROUDLY SUPPORTS
Action for Children

We can post books to you or, send us your greetings, and we will 'play Santa'!

Email Jo at: church.office@wesleymem.org.uk for booking form or text 07979 767630

All profits will go to Action for Children.





Social media can be a great time waster and a source of fake news, but at its best it can enable creativity to flourish. Such creativity has resulted in wonderful gift and resource for Advent 2020. The idea was raised in mid-September and within a week or two, hundreds of people had offered to contribute items. The result is “Advent Online”. This website is organised as either a resource library or an advent calendar which has words, pictures or music for each day of Advent and can be used by individuals or groups.

“This resource will be different because it will reflect the different way that the whole world will be walking towards Christmas. Reduced materialism, reduced socialising, reduced family gatherings mean that there will be space and time unlike other years. Advent Online hopes to offer something into that space that will reflect the beauty, the universality, and the hopefulness that the Christian faith has to offer the entire world, by drawing them closer to the birth of Christ, and close to the message of Emmanuel; that God is with us.”

Explore here to see what you can find: <https://adventonline.faith/>.

Gavin Collins is named Bishop of Dorchester

24 November 2020 – the Queen has approved the appointment of the Venerable Gavin Collins, Archdeacon of the Meon, as the next Bishop of Dorchester.

Gavin, 53, was educated in Law at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He then worked as a solicitor in the City of London before training for ministry at Trinity College Bristol. Having grown up in Sussex, Gavin is a life-long and active supporter of Brighton and Hove Albion, which he says, proves he is a person of great faith.

The Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft said; “I am delighted that Gavin has accepted the invitation to be the next Bishop of Dorchester. Gavin is known for his warmth and approachability, and he is passionate about the mission of the church. He’s experienced in bringing churches, local authorities and civil society organisations together for the good of all, and is clear about the issues rural communities and towns face. I am very excited about what Gavin’s appointment means for the Diocese of Oxford.”



For more information and to hear a conversation with Gavin Collins click [here](#):

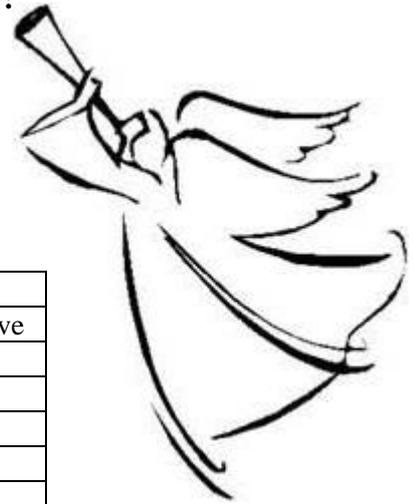
Happy Christmas

Rod Hunt

In this quiz each clue is a familiar double-worded item, person, place or saying - the first letter of the *first* word is **H** and the first letter of the *second* word is **C** as in **Happy Christmas**.

- 1 Elevated seat for a baby
- 2 Tough luck to do with dairy product?
- 3 Limbs put in and shaken all about
- 4 Not entirely inebriated?
- 5 A pair of rhyming iambic pentameters
- 6 A way of tucking in sheets used by nurses
- 7 Fowl - cramped living quarters?
- 8 East End boxer 'oo floored Ali
- 9 Person who enjoys being fired
- 10 Squatter crustacean
- 11 Two shillings and sixpence
- 12 Short whip for riders in the pink
- 13 Carle's very famished larva
- 14 Head-wear much favoured by Hilda Ogden
- 15 Errol Brown 70s pop group -*You Sexy Thing*
- 16 Bakery item that's angry & flustered
- 17 Very rude, extreme foundation rubble
- 18 Former US first lady and presidential candidate
- nee Rodwell
- 19 People lined up passing a bucket
- 20 Incomplete bird is not quite ready
- 21 The shires close to London
- 22 Visit from the doctor
- 23 Very posh cookery
- 24 Brand of naïve enthusiastic Christianity
- 25 Tree whose shade is enjoyed by blacksmiths?
- 26 Angelic songsters
- 27 Top drawer, best possible quality etc
- 28 Home of the Mappa Mundi
- 29 No options - take it or leave it
- 30 Horse-drawn transport sounds good looking!
- 31 "You must have the body" (*Lat*)
- 32 A sooty creator and also a sweep
- 33 TV hospital drama
- 34 Prussic acid - HCN
- 35 Discoverer of Tutankhamun's tomb
- 36 Posh frocks
- 37 Seen in the sky every 76 years or so
- 38 Chasm in Idaho cut by the Snake River
- 39 Anglicanism long way 'up the candle'
- 40 Forced removal of crofters in C18 Scotland

Can you identify the musical carols?

Eluned Hallas

	PASSAGE
1	Sing in exultation, Sing all ye citizens of heaven above
2	Fall on your knees, O hear the Angel voices
3	Come and sing your song to Him
4	In heav'n the bells are ringing
5	And all the souls on Earth shall sing
6	Now I hear the sound of music clear A page is singing with a voice of silver
7	From Angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold
8	Let all, their songs employ
9	And praises sing to God the King
10	Seraph quire singeth, Angel bell ringeth
11	Hark! The herald Angels sing
12	Heavenly hosts sing: Alleluia
13	Sing lullaby
14	Then let us all with one accord Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
15	The playing of the merry organ Sweet singing in the choir
16	Of angels praising God, who thus Addressed their joyful song
17	Heaven sing: 'Alleluia' 'Alleluia' the earth replies
18	Let the organ thunder, While the choir with peals of glee Doth rend the air asunder
19	Neither say nor sing By, by, lully, lullay
20	Angels, singing 'Peace on earth'
21	Raise, raise your song on high While Mary sings a lullaby
22	Eleven pipers piping
23	All out of darkness we have light Which made the Angels sing this night
24	The angels sang when the baby born
25	Hallelujah, the church bells ring Hallelujah, the angels sing
26	As I hear, far and near, Sweetest angel voices

Answers to puzzles!

Happy Christmas quiz

Identify the carols

- 1 high chair
- 2 hard cheese
- 3 hokey cokey
- 4 half cut
- 5 heroic couplet
- 6 hospital corners
- 7 hen coop
- 8 Henry Cooper
- 9 human cannonball
- 10 hermit crab
- 11 half crown
- 12 hunting crop
- 13 Hungry Caterpillar
- 14 hair curlers
- 15 Hot Chocolate
- 16 hot cross (bun)
- 17 hard core
- 18 Hilary Clinton
- 19 human chain
- 20 half cock
- 21 Home Counties
- 22 house call
- 23 haute cuisine
- 24 happy clappy
- 25 horse chestnut
- 26 heavenly choir
- 27 high class
- 28 Hereford Cathedral
- 29 Hobson's choice
- 30 hansom cab
- 31 habeus corpus
- 32 Harry Corbett
- 33 Holby City
- 34 hydrogen cyanide
- 35 Howard Carter
- 36 haute couture
- 37 Halley's Comet
- 38 Horseshoe Canyon
- 39 high church
- 40 Highland Clearances

Most lyrics from Common Worship, others well known (I hope)

26	All my heart this night rejoices
25	Girls & Boys leave your toys (Zither carol)
24	The Virgin Mary had a baby boy
23	The Sussex Carol (On Christmas night, all Christians sing)
22	The twelve days of Christmas
21	What child is this
20	See amid the winter's snow
19	Coventry Carol
18	Unto us a boy is born
17	We Three Kings of Orient are
16	While Shepherds watched
15	The holly and the ivy
14	The first Nowell
13	Sing Jullaby
12	Silent Night
11	Hark! The herald, Angels sing
10	Past three o'clock
9	O little town of Bethlehem
8	Joy to the world
7	It came upon the midnight clear
6	Far away, what splendour comes this way
5	I saw three ships
4	Ding Dong Merrily on High
3	Torches
2	O Holy Night
1	O Come All Ye Faithful
	SONG

Useful Weblinks:

To take part in the Diocesan services led by the Bishops and to find live streams from other churches:

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19/livestream/>

Christmas Services: for the latest news see the church websites:

<https://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/>

<https://www.stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk/>

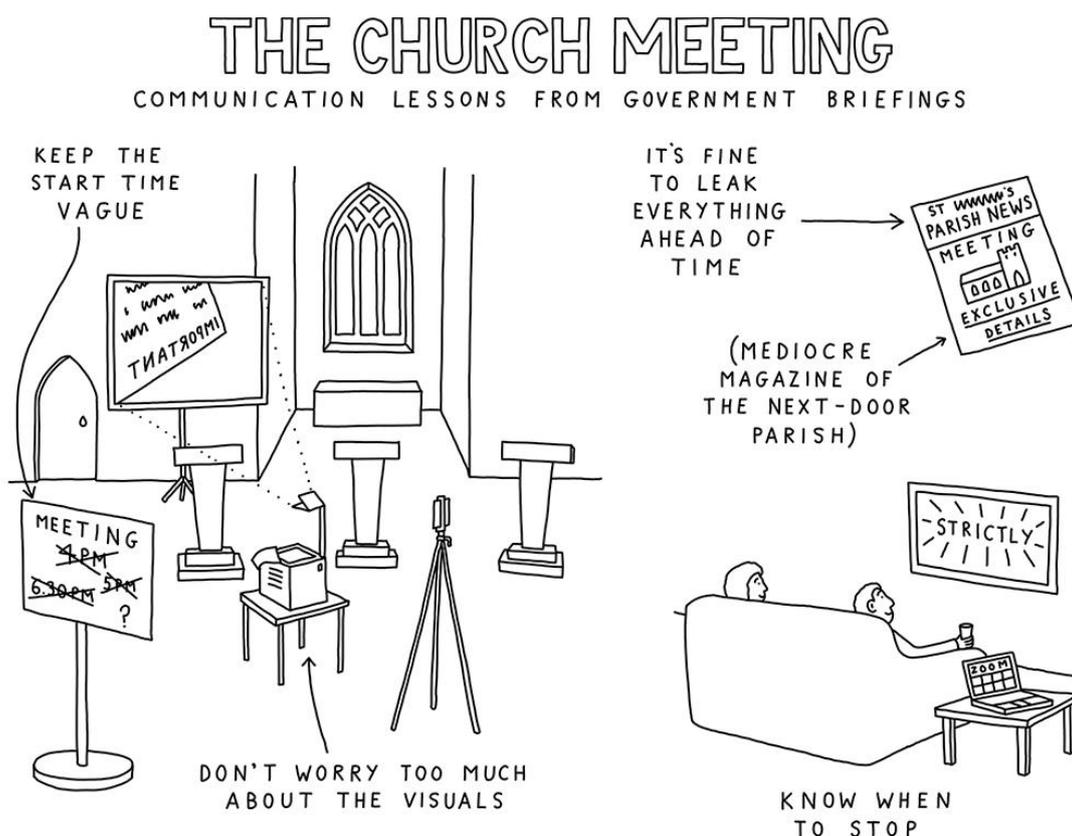
<https://www.stnicolasabingdon.org.uk/>

Page for Church of England links: services, daily readings etc

<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

FOOD BANK. The Abingdon Foodbank is still very busy and anxious to keep up the support even though churches are closed. **Northcourt Road (Christ Church) is open to receive donations on Tuesday and Friday mornings between 9.30 am and 1.00 pm.** See page 10 for their immediate needs. You can also make donations by sending a cheque made out to *North Abingdon PCC Christ Church*, clearly marked 'for Food Bank', you can also donate via CCA website at <https://cca.churchsuite.co.uk/donate/fund/njbejebi/foodbank> or the Parish office have details if you want to donate via online banking.

And finally, from Dave Walker of Cartoon Church:



Thank you and Happy Christmas to all contributors and to you for reading. The next issue will be in February.
Please get thinking and email ideas and contributions to Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk