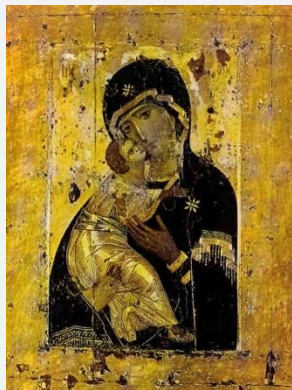


Issue 10:  
December 2022



The Virgin of Kyiv  
known by some as the  
Virgin of Vladimir

A candle in....

THE

# WINDOW

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

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Thanks to Norman Dawson for the picture.

Urgent! See the last page for a list of the items needed by the foodbank to make up Christmas parcels. Some of the listed events are happening soon too!

Less urgently, spend time enjoying the articles within.

## ‘Christmas is coming...’

*The Rev'd Dr Charles Miller, Team Rector of Abingdon-on-Thames*

We know how that carol continues: ‘the goose is getting fat...’. The problem is that it’s not just the goose. A recent news item highlighted the rising use of bariatric surgery among the population, designed to curb obesity. It’s alarming that its use is rising among children and teenagers. The fact is, too many of us consume too much, and in many cases our bodies tell the tale. With Christmas clearly ahead of us, the cloying provision of mince pies and other sweets on offer, plus the 24-7 advertisements already encircling us, we’re assaulted by incentives to consume. Our consciences will be massaged by the fact that retailers depend on Christmas trade, and that it will help grow the nation’s economy.

But there is a dark side to this gift-wrapping. The more we habituate ourselves to the cycle of earn and spend (or spend and rack-up debt!), use and discard, the more we redefine what it means to be human. ‘I shop, therefore I am’ is our age’s misguided contribution to humankind’s millennia-long search for self-understanding. Sadly, and ironically, the festival of Christmas has become complicit in this reduction of the gift of human-ness to the sphere of commerce, market economics and the satisfaction of material whims and fancies.

I wrote those paragraphs a number of years ago, well before any pandemic had forced us all indoors and shrunk the economy or before armed aggression had led to curtailment of affordable energy and compelling us all to turn down the heat. The whole nation is now forced into something like what the French call *decroissance* by which they mean not doing without croissants at breakfast (!) but a purposeful lessening or diminution in consumption of things, adapting a simpler life-style, for the sake of respecting and preserving the world and its resources. The climate-change issue has raised the stakes too, yet the ‘life-style’ (pardon the modern and trivial phase) of *decroissance* is deeply-rooted in Christian sensibility and experience.

Think, for instance, of the second chapter of St Paul’s Letter to the Philippians. St Paul describes how Christians’ bearing toward one another is meant to be formed by their life in Christ who ‘did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped tightly to himself but emptied himself and become a kind of slave’ (2.6-7). St Paul then goes on to speak of how Christ humbled himself, ‘even to death, death on a cross’ (8). You can see why we hear those words in Passiontide and Holy Week.

But that theme in the second chapter of Philippians (and probably not St Paul’s invention but a hymn sung by the first Christians) is a Christmas one too. Charles Gore, onetime Bishop of Oxford, once wrote on this passage from Philippians:

This ‘self-emptying’ of God in the Incarnation is, we must always remember, no failure of power, but a continual act of self-sacrifice [here he refers to Phil 2.7 and 2 Cor. 8.9]. Indeed God ‘declares His almighty power most chiefly’ in His condescension, whereby He ‘beggared Himself’ of Divine prerogatives, to put Himself in our place. (‘The Holy Spirit and Inspiration’ in *Lux Mundi*, 12 ed. [1891], p. 265, note 2)

That’s Bp. Gore’s own translation of St Paul’s phrase in Philippians: Christ *beggared* himself. Powerful. Alarming...Must *we too*?

Well, not like the Son and Word of God, for sure, since the saving task is His not ours. But we still can take a cue for our engagement with the material world and with one another.

In a lecture I heard a number of years ago the then Bishop of London surprised his audience by saying that “it’s better to be a communist than a consumer”. His point was that we become more fully human by sharing and by solidarity than by consuming, by letting-go rather than by self-indulgence. The first Christian community knew and practiced that in their way (Acts 2.44). How can we learn that anew for ourselves, and be more fully human for it?

Goodness, might we then even discover again “the real meaning of Christmas”?

## The Bible and its many versions

John Barton

I'm often asked which is the best version of the Bible. As I've spent my life studying the Bible, you might reasonably expect me to know. Yet as we'll see, it's rather like asking which is the best car: so much depends on what you want to use it for. The truth is that there isn't a Bible translation that's best for all circumstances and contexts. This may seem surprising, because almost all Christians have a favourite Bible, whether the King James (Authorized) Version, the New International Version, the Jerusalem Bible, or some other, and they usually think of it as the best one. Naturally I have favourites myself. We're spoiled for choice in English. Because English is now such a major world language, there are more translations of the Bible in English than in any other of the world's roughly 7,000 languages. (Only about a tenth of them yet have Bibles at all, however, despite the wonderful work of the Bible Societies, and of organizations such as Wycliffe Bible Translators.)

But it's not just that there *happens* not to be a best English Bible—not even King James, much as it's revered in the English-speaking world. There *cannot* be such a thing. This is because translation is an inexact art, and there can be as many good translations of any piece of writing—including the Bible—as there can be bad or inaccurate ones. Nearly all the English Bibles on the market are good translations—just different. Admittedly, most of them claim to be the best so far, but that's publicity for you. Publishers can hardly sell a Bible by claiming that it's perfectly adequate and much like many others!

One major reason why Bibles can differ so much, and yet be equally good, is that some follow what is called 'functional equivalence', and others 'formal equivalence'. These are equally reasonable but incompatible approaches. Formal equivalence is what at school we might have learned to call a 'literal' translation, where the text that's being translated is followed as nearly as possible 'word for word'. The King James Bible is like that: you can see the Hebrew (in the Old Testament) or the Greek (in the New Testament) beneath the English, which therefore is slightly strange even though, usually, comprehensible. Hence all those sentences beginning 'And', because that's how Hebrew sentences so often do begin, and the translators kept it that way even though it's not the usual way of writing a story in English. Or the sometimes very long and convoluted sentences in St Paul's letters—look at Ephesians 1:3-14 and try not to lose the thread. The New Revised Standard Version, which we use at St Helen's, stands in this tradition. It's modernized in language, but it's still basically the King James Version, revised and updated. It still sounds, even if rather more vaguely, like 'biblical English'.

Functional equivalence, on the other hand, is the technical term for looser styles of translation, where the translator tries to imagine how a sentence, or even a paragraph, would look if it had been written in English in the first place. This approach is normal in translating novels or film scripts, and applied with great skill when films are dubbed. Older members of our congregation may remember the biblical translations of J. B. Phillips (for example, *Letters to Young Churches*) in the 1950s. He made the Bible vivid and real by using the normal English of his time—now occasionally a bit dated, but that can't be avoided. This was the approach, too, of the New English Bible (later revised as the Revised English Bible), in which 'biblical English' was avoided, and the Bible sounded as if it had just been written. You couldn't see the original language showing through the English. Hebrew idioms such as 'and it came to pass that' became 'next it happened that' or just 'then', and in general most of the 'ands' were replaced with the sorts of connecting words we would use now: 'soon', 'after that', 'what is more'. As a result the Bible reads more like a modern book.

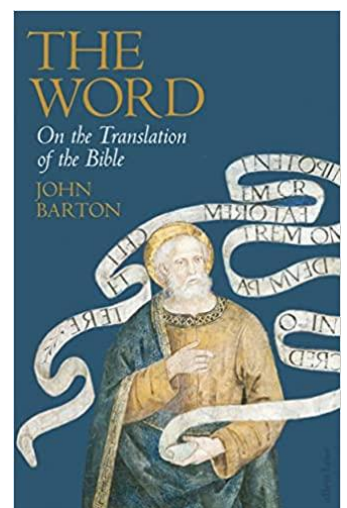
This is even more marked in the Roman Catholic Jerusalem Bible from the 1960s and its later revisions. Here St Paul at times even sounds rather chatty—perhaps an exaggeration. A way of remembering the basic principle of functional equivalence is that a Bible for the Philippines, made two centuries ago, already realized that figs, which crop up a lot in the Bible, were unknown there, and so substituted bananas. So to remember what functional equivalence is the formula to commit to memory is 'figs=bananas'. (A formal-equivalence translation would have to resort to a footnote explaining what figs are.) Similarly 'I stand at the door and knock' could mislead people in cultures where there are no doors

or locks, so a functional-equivalence translator might render it ‘I stand at the threshold and call’.

You can easily see the two approaches, formal and functional equivalence, by looking at *The Bible for Everyone* (SPCK, 2018). This is a new translation by two important biblical scholars, John Goldingay and Tom Wright, both currently living in Oxford. Goldingay’s Old Testament is very literal, and you can’t be in any doubt that it’s a translation from Hebrew. It uses the real Hebrew names for characters rather than the Anglicized ones we’re used to—thus Elijah is Eliyyahu, and Isaiah is Yesha’yahu. Wright’s New Testament, by contrast, follows functional equivalence. St Paul speaks here, as Wright puts it himself, rather like a modern lecturer, coaxing his audience into understanding him. (Almost all modern English translations tend to sound as though they were written by academics anyway, and there’s a reason for that: they nearly all were.) It’s fascinating to see both approaches between the same covers. Goldingay and Wright have very similar Christian beliefs, both being what I would call ‘moderate evangelicals’—I don’t know whether either would accept that description. But their versions contrast strongly. This isn’t because of any doctrinal divide, but because of their difference on the ‘formal versus functional’ issue. Neither claims that his approach is the only valid one, but both give cogent reasons for their own preference.

And indeed there are pros and cons of both types of translation. Functional equivalence gives us the sense that the Bible is speaking to us in our own language, which for Christians is both true and important. Surely what Jesus or St Paul said was couched in contemporary language, not in a special antique ‘biblical English’. One Classics specialist, writing about this point, reminds us that ‘Plato was modern to Plato’, and we could say the same about any of the biblical writers and those whose words they report. On the other hand, modern English dates rather fast, and can give the impression of casualness in speech. That’s not so appropriate for some biblical passages. Notoriously, versions such as the New English Bible and the Jerusalem Bible can sound a bit trivial, compared to the King James Version. Formal equivalence, however, can easily push the Bible too much back into the past, as if it were no longer relevant to us—a dusty old text we’ve moved on from. So that has its drawbacks too. Yet, more positively, it reminds us of the truth that the Bible doesn’t come from our world. Perhaps it *ought* to feel rather alien to our modern ways of putting things. It was modern in its day but it isn’t modern now, and that has a positive side: it’s long-established, traditional wisdom, to be respected for its antiquity even though it may seem strange. Here a literal translation can challenge us more than one adjusted to our modern ways of thinking. After all, we didn’t make the ideas in the Bible up for ourselves.

The two approaches battle it out, not only in biblical translation but among translators in general. To me it seems that both are right, and that we need Bibles of both types—which is one reason why I don’t believe there can be a ‘best’ English Bible. Some translations are better than others, in both styles, but which type we should use depends on what we want it for. For study, a literal, formal-equivalence version that sticks closely to the original wording is a good substitute for reading in the original languages. For reading in church, a moderately conservative functional-equivalence version helps us to recognize that the Bible is addressed to us, not just to people in the past. For a children’s service or junior church, a functional-equivalence version with a deliberately restricted vocabulary is needed, and happily there are many of those. There are even highly ‘literary’ versions that remind us that the Bible is not only vital religious writing, but contains high-quality literature too. An example is Robert Alter’s remarkable three-volume translation of the Hebrew Bible (2018). In English we are lucky enough to have Bibles of every type we need, and we should be grateful. ‘Horses for courses’, we might say, though it’s hard to translate that into Hebrew.



John Barton’s *The Word: On the Translation of the Bible* (Allen Lane/Penguin), was published on 3 November. John was a guest on ‘Start the Week’ on Radio 4 9am Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November. You can listen on ‘catch-up’.

## Advent Promise

Into the dim dark days at the waning of the year,  
into a bleak depleted land, colours drained,  
birds silent,  
He comes.

Into a bare unresponsive earth, where roots lie  
dormant and life is paused,  
into the cold grip of winter, a time of waiting,  
He comes.

Into our weariness and disappointments,  
our failings and regrets,  
into our dreams which lie in tatters,  
He comes.

Into our weakness and fragility, our uncertain hope,  
into our inarticulate yearning for something  
beyond our reach,  
He comes.

He comes,  
in the still silent hours of the night,  
speaking peace and love.

He comes,  
as light shining bright,  
banishing the darkness of fear and unbelief.

He comes,  
into hearts ready to receive him,  
filling our lives with his life, and  
redeeming us with his love.

*Susan Gee*



## Poetry and Faith: The Haiku

*Jen Brown*

Haiku originated in Japan, and has a very strict structure: 3 lines totalling 17 syllables (5/7/5), and as I was always taught, a haiku isn't a haiku unless it includes some mention of the natural world. The four haiku printed here aren't 'religious' poems. But a poem doesn't necessarily have to be religious in content to be a means for prayer or reflection on God. These poems are about the natural world. The language used (I hope) invites you to feel the warmth or the cold, to hear the wind, see the various colours, smell the green grass under the warmth of the sun. If you are someone for whom the natural world is a vehicle for contemplating the divine; if, through the creation, you encounter the Creator, then these poems – and other poems about the natural world – may provoke a sense of thanksgiving for what God has given in creation, or may provoke thoughts about our relationship to the wider creation and God's purposes for us in that relationship, or any number of other thoughts that move one on to thoughts of God.

### Spring's Haiku

Light grows, hints of warmth  
Ev'rywhere colour erupts  
The first signs of spring

### Summer Haiku

Hot sun and green grass  
Long days fade into warm nights  
We bask in summer

### Autumn's Haiku

Leaves rattled by wind  
Colours spinning and dancing  
Ballet of autumn

### Winter Haiku (Haiku of the north)

Crystal snowflakes fall  
Howling wind, early darkness  
Winter descending

俳諧

According to Google Translate, this is the Japanese script for 'Haiku'. Do write in if you can say more about this!

## Abingdon Church Twinning Weekend, 27-31 October 2022

Patrick and Sue Holligan

At the end of October Abingdon Church Twinning Group welcomed eleven visitors from Argentan (France) and Sint Niklaas (Belgium) for a weekend of events to exchange and promote ideas about how towns and their churches can become more environmentally friendly and support the work of the Eco Church (<https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk>). It was largely organised by Diane Livesley and Eileen Bontempelli under the heading “Christian Stewardship of the Environment”.

I was asked to give a short talk about the work of the One Planet Abingdon Centre for Extreme Climate (OPACEC) on behalf of its founder, Michelle Charlesworth, who was away. Sue and I also agreed to have two guests for supper on the Saturday evening. Here is a brief account of the events we were able to attend.

On the Friday morning we all met at Trinity Church to hear the Key Speaker, the Revd Dr David Gregory, Baptist Missioner for Science and Environment and convener the Baptist Union Environment Network (BUEN), talk about global climate change. David had worked for 15 years at the Met Office and the European Weather Centre in Reading before becoming a Baptist Minister and so was well qualified to give an up-to-date summary of the likely environmental impacts of climate change as preparations were underway for the COP27 meeting in Egypt. He even managed to include some audience participation as part of his talk!

We then heard about recent developments in Argentan and St Niklaas towards the work of the Eco Church. Lunch was provided by the Abingdon Eco-café and included short talks about the work of the Eco-café and the Larder. The afternoon was taken up with the planting of some trees along the River Ock.

Saturday morning was set aside for talks and discussions about the work of some local Eco groups. The activities of Abingdon Carbon Cutters (<https://abingdoncarboncutters.org.uk>) founded in 2008, were summarised by Anne Smart; I then talked about the setting up of the OPACEC (<https://oneplanetabingdon.org>) following the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 by Abingdon Town Council. The OPACEC represents a collaboration between various green groups in Abingdon which follows the sustainability principles of One Planet Living (<https://oneplanet.com>); it is based in the café below the Abingdon County Hall Museum. After lunch at Millets Farm a visit was made to Peachcroft Christian Centre to hear about the Ground Source Heat Pump which has recently been installed there.

On Saturday evening the visitors were invited to the homes of Christians interested in ecological matters. We were honoured to have the excellent company of Chris de Beer and his daughter, Lara, from St Niklaas. Chris works with the Belgian Prison Service and Lara is in her last year of a school for artists. The next morning (Sunday) Chris joined us for the 11.15h service at St Nicolas. The weekend finished with a short ecumenical service at St Edmunds Church in the evening followed by a buffet supper and farewell speeches in the St Edmunds Parish Centre.



Some of the participants in the twinning weekend. Photo: Eileen Bontempelli

## Bad news and good at Christmas

*Tony Richmond*

I'd like to tell you two Christmas stories. One is good news and the other is bad news. First, the bad news: It was Christmas Day, and every church in town was full of people rejoicing wildly. Now, the good news: It was Christmas Day, and nobody was at church. Not a soul.

Well, it happened like this: The church was full on Christmas Day and that was a bad thing. Why? Some years ago I visited a town in Bosnia just after the civil war had ended. The church was still standing, but most of the town was a ruin. I saw the rubble where the local mosque had been razed to the ground. The priest told me the story: During the time of so-called ethnic cleansing, Bosnian Muslim buildings had been smashed by shellfire. Bosnian Muslim homes had been destroyed. The wreckers would light a candle in the top floor, then turn on all the gas taps until the place went up with bang. And who was it doing these things? It was the Christians.

This was what the Christians had done to their Muslim neighbours, in a central European town, with ordinary people living in housing estates not unlike those here in Abingdon. And those same Christians went to church at Christmas to rejoice at the victory they thought God had given them. But it wasn't God's work. It was only when they stepped out into the snow, day after day in the cold dark months that followed, having destroyed their own electricity supplies, blown up their own reservoirs, smashed their gas pipelines, destroyed their own roads and telephone exchanges, it was only then that they began to realise what they had done. And now, they were ashamed. How could they, as good Christians, have allowed the devil to get them like that? Where could they now find the humility, the courage, to seek forgiveness and to rebuild not only their damaged town but the friendships and neighbourly community relations?

I think of that town whenever I hear about war and reprisals.

But then there is my good news story, about that Christmas Day when the church was empty. It happened to a friend of mine, a priest whose name was Bernard, who set off early in the morning for the Christmas service in a remote village in Tanzania.

There had been four or five years of drought. There was no food. People were close to starving. As he drove along, Bernard expected to find members of his congregation walking along the dust road, heading for church. But today the roads were empty. How odd, he thought. At last, an elderly couple whom he recognised, waved him down and climbed aboard. They pointed for him to drive not to the church but out to the fields.

Bernard was puzzled. He had come to take the Christmas communion in church, surely they knew that. But when they got to the church, there wasn't a soul there. So he did what the old folk were asking, and drove to the shamba, the communal fields outside the town, and there they all were, almost 300 people, who had been out from first light, ploughing and planting seeds. Cheers and liturgical shouts of welcome rang out as Bernard's car drew up at the field. After five years of drought, it had rained hard during the night. So the people set to work, planting their seed, on Christmas Day. It had to be done immediately, so that the seed would take root in the warm, wet soil. If they had gone to church first, it would have been too late. By mid-morning the heat of the sun would have dried the earth again. So Bernard took off his cassock and joyfully helped with the sowing and later that day, in the fields where they were, the people held their Christmas communion.

It reminded me of all those who had left their temples and synagogues and gone out into the wilderness to be baptised by John in the River Jordan, and to hear about the one who was to come.

The people in that Tanzanian village, watching for God's coming that Advent, saw the rain at Christmas as a sign of his life-giving presence among them. Can we also watch out for our own particular signs of God's presence among us this Advent?



## More Christmas Memories

When I first met Tony, he was 8 years old, with bright eyes and red cheeks, and wearing a yellow T-shirt that barely met his threadbare red cord shorts. It was a cold wet Autumn, and I appointed him as my “class monitor”, so that he could come from the playground into the meagre warmth of the school. He was always cheerful and ready to help me prepare for the day’s work. I learned that Dad had a serious lung condition, and Tony’s older sister had had polio so spent most of her time lying on the sofa. Mum worked hard to support the family.

Early in December, Tony asked for my help - to hide a 6d (old money) block of Cadbury chocolate bought for his sister’s Christmas present. It was safely stowed in my desk and locked away until the end of term, when we “found” some Christmas paper to wrap it.

A year later, when term had ended and all the children had gone home, I found on my desk a package – a half-crown (2s 6d) Rowntree’s chocolate selection box, labelled

*With Love,  
from  
Tony*

A costly gift.

Margaret Hoskins

## Christmas Presents in bygone years

Born during WW2 money wasn’t plentiful during my childhood, but nevertheless my memories are of very happy Christmases with bulky stockings containing among other things a tin of Gibbs toothpaste and a packet of sweet pretend cigarettes!!! My favourite gifts were a Rupert Annual, a pretend post office with stamps, postal orders etc, and cardboard dolls to dress in one of the many outfits you could cut out and clip on them.

Susan Scott

Born pre WW2 I had bulky plus 4 golf sock to open, which always had a toy musical instrument on the top to play, and alert everyone to the fact I was awake. A Rupert annual, a selection of sweets (before rationing) and the usual toys and novelties of the time available during the war years.

David Scott

## Christmas 1940

Living on the outskirts of Oxford we were a place of refuge for family members escaping from the bombing in Bristol and London. Christmas 1940 we had a full house. My father didn't get leave from Bletchley but we had both grandmas, an uncle and aunt and their 3 children in a 3 bedroom house (total 5 adults and 4 children) I remember getting a toy monkey sitting in the bottom of a big box from 'Fressor, my father's former tutor at Queens. The main incident I remember was when everyone except the 2 grandmas, me and the eldest cousin got locked in a bedroom when the latch broke. Frantic instructions from my mother about where to find tools. Unfortunately they were in the garage which did not have blackout and the air raid warden lived next door!

Silvia Joinson

## Christmas Sacks

Early Christmas morning my husband and I will be unwrapping the presents Father Christmas has left us in our sacks because some of us have never really grown up!

My Christmas sack is the same one Father Christmas left my presents in when I lived with my parents. When I was about twelve Mum decided to make my three younger sisters and I Christmas sacks out of some old white sheets. When they were made Mum and I sat by the fire in the evening and embroidered our names on them. I did mine and Angela's and Mum did Julie and Brenda's. That was almost 60 years ago and we all still have those sacks and use them at Christmas.

On Christmas Eve when I hang my sack at the end of the bed I always remember that Christmas when it was made. Mum died in 2020 and it is now especially good to have my sack and its memories.

Eileen Duckett

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## Faith Forum: Roger Wagner

Can you work out what is happening in Roger's picture?



Writing in the dust: from Roger Wagner's website with permission. <http://www.rogerwagner.co.uk/>



## TrinityLearning News

**New Chair** - TrinityLearning is delighted to welcome Katie Doney as our new Chair of Trustees. Katie has been a volunteer with us for many years, working on a range of projects and sharing our aim of helping to improve the quality of life in local schools and wider school communities. Find out more about Katie's appointment on our website at <https://bit.ly/3syQk39>

**Join us online for our AGM, 6pm Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023** - We have had another busy and exciting year. Join us for our AGM on Zoom on the 16<sup>th</sup> January at 6pm to find out more about what we've been up to and meet Katie our new Chair of Trustees. All welcome! If you would like to receive a Zoom link, or a copy of our Annual Report please email Nicola at [nic.trinitylearning@gmail.com](mailto:nic.trinitylearning@gmail.com).

**Thank you to Abingdon's Churches** –We are deeply appreciative of all the churches in Abingdon who support our work, especially those such as Saint Helen's who give regularly. It enables us to be more flexible in adapting to the changing needs of the school communities. Nicola, our Education Development Officer was thrilled to be invited to All Saints for their partnership supper with Trinity Church in November. The evening was well attended and it was great to be able to share some updates on our latest projects. It was lovely to see the strong links between the two churches, many of which have been built and strengthened through shared volunteering for TrinityLearning.

**Experience Easter** - It always seems bizarre to be talking about Easter before we have even reached Christmas but we are beginning to think about and plan for Experience Easter 2023 when we plan to be back in Trinity Church for the first time since 2019! Experience Easter is a series of reflective workshops, specially developed by TrinityLearning to allow Key Stage 2 children (7 to 11-year-olds) to access the Easter Story in a meaningful way. It is also an introduction to mindfulness, using stilling exercises and simple activities to allow the children to consider their emotions.

For the last 2 years we have provided the workshops online through our website at [https://trinitylearning.org.uk/experience\\_easter/](https://trinitylearning.org.uk/experience_easter/). For Experience Easter 2023 we hope to be back in Trinity Church with an adapted version of Experience Easter which will build on what we have learned through producing the online videos as well as lots of Volunteer Storytelling. We'll be sharing more about our plans in the new year but if you're interested in volunteering, please email Nicola at [nic.trinitylearning@gmail.com](mailto:nic.trinitylearning@gmail.com).

**Mindful Christmas Pauses** - Bringing us back to the current season, Taz Round, our Workshop Leader, has created some mindful Christmas Pause videos on our website. These videos explain how we can use our senses to help us slow down for a few minutes and enjoy a calmer Christmas. They can be used by all ages! We also have some storytelling guides to help you learn how to tell the Christmas Story. Find out more at: <https://trinitylearning.org.uk/christmas-storytelling/>

Back in the summer of 2022 we mentioned that we had completed a new project working with Larkmead School. Since then, we've reviewed the project and looked at all the feedback from the 170 or so students who took part. In this article we share an overview of the week and some of the feedback from the students who took part.

### **'Fun, mindful, calming and satisfying' – Larkmead pupils 'Make A Difference' with the Toolkit for Happiness**

Larkmead school's annual 'Make a Difference' (MAD) Week takes place every July and offers Year 12 students (6th formers) a chance to work on a project with a local charity, group or not-for-profit organisation. We were thrilled to be one of the local charities taking part this year with our Toolkit for Happiness workshops and in this blog our Workshop Coordinator, Taz takes us through the week:

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We began our week by introducing our new Toolkit for Happiness workshops to a group of enthusiastic Year 12s, who would then, in turn, run these workshops with the school's Year 7s. The Toolkit is designed to promote and support children's wellbeing and happiness by offering a range of ideas and resources that teachers can use with children or that children can use independently.

**Nature workshop** – our first workshop saw us outside, exploring nature and focusing on the small but wonderful things in our environment. Students made seed bombs and started to grow runner beans. Once the year 12s had experienced the workshop they then ran it with the year 7s in the afternoon with each member of the group taking on a different role - some presenting, some preparing resources and others helping pupils with the activities in small groups.



*“Being outside in nature and not stuck inside can make you feel better.”* Year 12 pupil

**Physical exercise** - our second workshop got us moving! We used balls, timers, ropes, chalk and more to make up games, set ourselves goals to beat and generally get exercising. The pupils made exercise cubes/dice which they could use to boost their mood through physical exercise anytime they needed to.

Some of us also had a little dance – but whether dancing, watching or just listening to the music, there were a lot smiles which certainly boosted our wellbeing.

*“It took my mind off things as I had fun with my friends.”* Year 7 pupil.



**‘Acts of Kindness’** - in our next workshop we made Kindness vouchers to give to our friends and family and talked about how we feel when we are kind to someone and when we are treated kindly.

Our activities for this workshop were to make a loom band for a friend and a thank you card for someone. This got the room buzzing with excitement as students were very keen to make and give, make and give!

*“I was stressed when I came here and it [making a loom band] has calmed me down”.* Year 7 pupil.

**Creativity Workshop** - this workshop involved creative games and some wonderful making. We used natural materials such as shells, fresh herbs, feathers and gems to make some fun and fantastic art pieces.

We also made a fortune teller to help give us ideas for things we could do to help our wellbeing and boost our mood.

*“I have something to make me happy when I am sad”* Year 7 pupil

*“The fortune tellers meant they had to interact which meant you got to talk to your group more.”* Year 12 pupil



Feedback from Year 7s and Year 12s was that this workshop was fun, mindful, calming and satisfying.



**‘Reflection and Relaxation’** – our aptly named final workshop on Friday was a time for everyone to pause and unwind, think about things they had enjoyed, relax and make a squeezey ball to squeeze when they are feeling stressed.

*“The relaxation was comforting and calm.” Year 7 pupil.*

The workshop most enjoyed by year 12 students was the ‘Physical Exercise’ and the Year 7 pupils found the ‘Reflect and Relax’ workshop the most fun.

The workshops were received and delivered brilliantly with so many students benefiting from the activities and ending the week well-equipped to help both themselves and others to improve their sense of wellbeing. We thoroughly enjoyed working with the pupils during our time at Larkmead school and are looking forward to working with some of the Year 12 volunteers again when we offer our Toolkit for Happiness to year 6 pupils in primary schools later in the school year.

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## This month’s Book Review...



## Christmas Crackers

*Rod Hunt*

**Collaborate, cooperate, connive, collude, to crack this Christmas collection of conundrums**

*Each answer is a double-worded name, place or expression where each word begins with the letter C: eg Songs sung at Yuletide - Christmas Carols*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 His trademark – a bowler hat, cane and funny walk                             |  |
| 2 Building in which Thomas Beckett was murdered                                 |  |
| 3 Ooh la la! Dance celebrated by Offenbach or Degas                             |  |
| 4 Transport up and down a mountain  |  |
| 5 Cornish poet  |  |
| 6 Prolific writer from Tyne and Wear - <i>Kate Mulholland</i> et al             |  |
| 7 30 <sup>th</sup> President of the USA   |  |
| 8 Gabriel Bonheur. Who? French couturier  |  |
| 9 Kids' game where fingers are all strung up                                    |  |
| 10 Item of furniture for an unprincipled starlet                                |  |
| 11 Onomatopoeic sound of a horse  |  |
| 12 Working class in garb and attitude   |  |
| 13 Smart-assed footwear from Holland  |  |
| 14 Principal sailor in charge of <i>The Endeavour</i> and <i>The Resolution</i> |  |
| 15 Fowl alarm clock   |  |
| 16 Home for down-and-outs, and place to sleep rough                             |  |
| 17 Drapes that are irresistible to the acting profession                        |  |
| 18 A fishy Cape in the Bay of Maine   |  |
| 19 Could be what a cow has for her tea  |  |
| 20 Limy, chalky substance?  |  |
| 21 Associate him with <i>Santa Maria, Nina</i> and <i>Pinto</i>                 |  |
| 22 The element C becomes a paper facsimile                                      |  |
| 23 Where one finds <i>Letters to the Editor</i>                                 |  |
| 24 Pretty Wiltshire village – funny place for a racing circuit!                 |  |
| 25 An exhausting solution to pollution  |  |
| 26 Runner in a classic 5000m, narrowly beaten by Zatopek                        |  |
| 27 Holiday boat on the river  |  |
| 28 Associate him with <i>The Twist</i> and ‘let’s twist again’                  |  |
| 29 Time piece on a railway train, perhaps?                                      |  |
| 30 Where a prisoner awaits execution  |  |
| 31 Bring money, take away goods   |  |
| 32 Places like Canterbury, Chester, York, Salisbury, Hereford etc               |  |
| 33 I’m a fully paid-up member, Comrade and Brother!                             |  |
| 34 Payment by plastic   |  |
| 35 Sounds like a tea dance - a Latin-American one!                              |  |
| 36 Drink invented by Doctor Pemberton in the 1880s                              |  |
| 37 Sounds like a social vehicle – actually it’s a perk!                         |  |
| 38 A direction in which a crash is inevitable                                   |  |
| 39 Quickly! Quickly!  |  |
| 40 ‘I’m only too aware of my station in life.’                                  |  |

For the answers, see page 17

## Events – December and January

### Advent and Christmas Services

December 6, 13, 20 (Tuesdays)	St Michael's	11am – noon and 7pm to 8pm	Advent Labyrinth Walks
December 18 <sup>th</sup> (Sunday)	St Nicolas'	6pm	Christmas Lessons and Carols
December 23 <sup>rd</sup> (Friday)	St Helen's	6.30pm	Christmas Lessons and Carols
December 24 <sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve	St Helen's	4pm	Christingle
		10.30pm	First Eucharist of Christmas
	St Michael's	3pm	Crib Service
December 25 <sup>th</sup> Christmas Day		6pm	Christmas Lessons and Carols
	St Nicolas'	4pm	Crib Service
	St Helen's	8am	Holy Communion
		10.30am	Sung Eucharist with all-age address
	St Michael's	10am	Sung Mass for Christmas Day
	St Helen's	10am	Holy Communion for Christmas Day

### Music and Drama

## Albert Park Singers Christmas Concert Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December @ 7pm

St Michael's Church, Park Road  
Admission Free - All Welcome



Come along and join us for our Christmas Concert. The programme will include festive carols and other songs; and violin, organ and tenor solo performances by excellent local musicians.

The concert will be followed by mulled wine & refreshments. Donations on the evening in support of St Michael's Church and 'Crisis at Christmas in Oxford'

*Albert Park Singers are a local community choir. Any queries, please contact Lesley Bosley at [Lesley.bosley@gmail.com](mailto:Lesley.bosley@gmail.com)*

### CiA Christmas carol singing

Come and join us on Saturday 17 December 2022 from 10 am to sing Christmas carols in Abingdon Market Place. Any musicians or choirs are also welcome. Sally Mears will be leading the singing. If you play a musical instrument and can come along, please let the CiA Administrator know.

LAMPS Collective are returning with **Bread & Starlight**, a one-woman show for Advent, at both Peachcroft Christian Centre and St Peter's in Wootton: Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, recalls the months of her pregnancy and a very special visitor. Touching on the themes

of mystery and miracle, what is temporary and what lasts, Bread and Starlight combines storytelling, song and space for reflection. Tickets £10. Friday, 9th December at Peachcroft Christian Centre, Abingdon, 7.30 pm <https://www.peachcroftcc.org/events/bread-and-starlight>  
 Also Sunday, 11th December at St Peter's, Wootton, 3.00 pm

Christmas Concert at  
 St. Nicolas Church  
 Market Place, Abingdon  
 Saturday 17 December 2022  
 @ 3pm  
 Programme: Flute and Piano



Featuring:  
 Flute/Piano: Claudia Martin  
 Accompanist: Chris Atkinson

Admission free  
 Donations welcome

AWARD-WINNING FEMALE A CAPPELLA CHORUS  
**HARMONY InSpires**  
 Invites you to an evening of  
**CHRISTMAS HARMONY**  
 at  
 St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH  
 Park Road, Abingdon OX14 1DS  
**5-7pm, Saturday 17th December**  
*(doors open to the public at 4.45pm)*  
 Tickets £10 per adult, accompanied children under 16 free.  
 Available in advance from the church, Harmony InSpires and Abingdon Bookstore, or on the door.  
 Proceeds to church funds.



Refreshments & raffle on the day  
 with proceeds to Harmony InSpires  
[www.harmonyinspires.org](http://www.harmonyinspires.org)



St Nicolas' December 18 @ 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm  
 Pavlova Wind Quintet Christmas concert  
 Pavlova Wind Quintet return for their traditional Christmas concert, including well known carols, lollipops and some surprises – Sleigh Ride, Rudolf the Red-nosed Reindeer, Let it Snow, Jingle Bells  
 Tickets: £10 from  
<https://abbeychamberconcerts.org/event/pavlova-wind-quintet-christmas-concert-3/> or on the door.

**CHRISTMAS CONCERT**  
 in aid of  
**The Abingdon Bridge**  
 wellbeing charity for 13-25 year olds

December 17<sup>th</sup> in the Unicorn Theatre at 2pm (families) and 4pm (Full one hour programme) followed by refreshments. Tickets: £10.00 or £2.50 for under 16s  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/christmas-concert-tickets-462552897167>



## Looking ahead to 2023

6<sup>th</sup> January 12.30: Epiphany Mass at St Michael's (tbc)

8<sup>th</sup> January 5.30pm: Epiphany music and readings, blessing of families at St Helen's

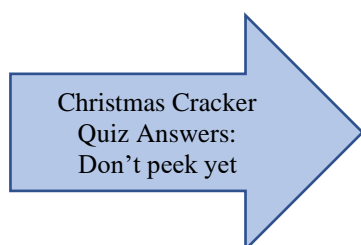
25<sup>th</sup> January 7pm: Patronal Service at St Michael's

### Week of prayer for Christian Unity: 18 – 25 January 2023

**Midday prayers:** These will take place in person at midday from Monday 23 to Friday 27 January 2023. As for last year, a prayer sheet will also be available for those who cannot attend in person. Further details to follow.

**Inter-church quiz:** Friday 20 January 2023, 7 pm, at Peachcroft Christian Centre. Each church can have one team of up to six people. Closing date for registration is 6 January 2023. Entry is £2/person and all proceeds will go to a local charity. To reduce the risk of Covid, teams are asked to bring their own drinks and refreshments.

**United Service:** This will take place on Sunday 22 January 2023, 3 pm, at Abingdon Baptist Church.



21 Christopher Columbus	20 calcium carbonate
22 carbon copy	19 cattle cake
23 correspondence column	18 Cape Cod
24 Castle Combe	17 curtain calls
25 catalytic converter	16 cardboard city
26 Chris Chataway	15 cock crow
27 cabin cruiser	14 Captain Cook
28 Chubby Checker	13 clever clogs
29 carriage clock	12 cloth cap
30 condemned cell	11 clip clop
31 cash and carry	10 casting couch
32 cathedral cities	9 cat's cradle
33 card carrying	8 Coco Chanelle
34 credit card	7 Calvin Coolidge
35 cha-cha	6 Catherine Cookson
36 Coca Cola	5 Charles Causley
37 company car	4 cable car
38 collision course	3 Can Can
39 chop chop!	2 Canterbury Cathedral
40 class conscious	1 Charlie Chaplain

## Useful Weblinks:

Services: for the latest news see the Parish Website:

[abingdonparish.org.uk](http://abingdonparish.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. **Northcourt Road (Christ Church) is open to receive donations on Tuesday and Friday mornings between 9.30 am and 1.00 pm.** You can also make donations by sending a cheque made out to *North Abingdon PCC Christ Church*, clearly marked 'for Food Bank' or via the Foodbank website <https://abingdon.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/> or the Parish office have details if you want to donate via online banking.

For the Christmas Hampers, donations of the following would be very welcome by December 9<sup>th</sup>:

Large tins of ham, tins of salmon, tins of potatoes or carrots or peas, gravy granules, cranberry sauce, stuffing mix, soft drinks, tins of fruit, crisps and savoury snacks, jars of pickles or chutney, crackers for cheese, sweet biscuits, cakes, sweets, tins of custard, jars of jam or chocolate spread, Christmas puddings (standard size), Toiletry gift sets.

And finally, from Dave Walker of Cartoon Church, and previously published in the Church Times.

## LEAVING CHURCH

SOMETIMES IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO LEAVE AFTER A SERVICE BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN HAVING SUCH A GREAT TIME. THESE ARE SOME OF THE TACTICS THAT THE CHURCHWARDENS ADOPT:



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**Thanks** to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published in February: ideas and contributions to [Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk](mailto:Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk)  
In the meantime, have a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.