

News & Views From St Mary's Church Ecclesfield



Church Magazine for
December 2016 & January 2017

www.stmarysecclesfield.com

Price 60p

First Words

The focus of December in Church is Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Jesus 2000 years ago, when God reached out to us, as one of us, to bring us home. Christmas is a time to celebrate with family and friends; it is a time to be generous in giving and gracious in receiving. It is also a time to turn to the God who turns to us in Jesus. Without Jesus our Christmas celebrations lose their focus and their heart. The best Christmas keeps Jesus at the centre.

It is a great privilege for us to welcome groups from the community as we host carol services and Christmas celebrations, and, later in December, when we welcome many of our neighbours into **their** parish church to celebrate Christmas.

This year our Christmas preparations begin a little early as Advent Sunday falls on the 27th November. In the morning we light the first of the candles in our Advent Wreath and begin the count-down which ends on Christmas Day when we light the last candle to celebrate Jesus' birthday (we will probably sing 'Happy Birthday' to Jesus as well!).

On Monday 5th December we will be pleased to welcome Ecclesfield High School into Church for their Carol Concert. On Sunday 11th December at 2pm we will have Christmas Crafts in Church aimed at Primary School aged children; later at 6pm there will be carols around the Christmas Tree (weather permitting - in case of rain or snow we will move into Church).

On Sunday 18th December at 4pm we will be holding our Christingle service and raise funds to support the work of the Children's Society.

On the evening of the 21st December at 7pm Jeni will be leading us in a "Service of the Longest Night".

On Christmas Eve, Saturday 24th December at 4pm we have the Crib Service, to which all are welcome, but the focus is on families with younger children, and at 6.30pm we are holding the traditional Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight (do arrive early) this is an opportunity to come to your beautiful and ancient parish church to sing your favourite carols. Is there a better way to kick off your Christmas celebrations? On the morning of Christmas Day there will be an all age Communion service.

Remember if you take Christ from Christmas all you are left with is 'm and s' and M&S won't save you!

Tim



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Mrs Ann Hackett (0114) 246 7159

Thought for the Month

Extremism seems to be on the rise at the moment, not only on the fringes but in the mainstream of life. We read of Western teens being radicalised by the hate-preachers of 'daesh' on the internet; we have seen a young MP and mother brutally murdered by a right-wing extremist. Many of us were shocked by the tone of the US presidential campaign and the language directed at women, immigrants and minority groups, including the president elect ridiculing a disabled reporter.

Religious extremists, political extremists of the right and the left, nationalists, all seem to have been on the rise in 2016, and 2017 seems to promise more of the same. How should the Church of Christ; how should disciples and followers of Jesus whose was birth as the Prince of Peace we are about to celebrate, respond?

As I have prayed about the world today and the direction it is taking, as I have

Continues over page

reflected on the Bible, especially on Jesus' words in the Gospels, it struck me that Christians need to be extremists too! But extremists in the same sense that Jesus was an extremist.

We need to be extreme in forgiving others, extreme in praying for our enemies and in doing good to those who hate us. The Church needs to be radical in its welcome to all whoever they may be, and we must try to be extreme in loving our neighbour, remembering that Jesus defined our neighbour as any person we are able to help.

As religion and politics divides, so the Church of Christ must reach across the divide and declare that we are all made in God's image, and that God's love in Christ is universal.

Jesus came to our broken and hurting world 2000 years ago to call us to the Father's love and to unite us as one family of God. He came to a divided and unjust world and He did not come in wealth and privilege. Someone once said that anyone, anyone at all can enter a stable, shepherds are welcome but kings may have to remove their crowns to get through the door.

Every year we tell the story of Jesus, born for us, reaching out to us, loving us despite our problems and our mistakes. He reminds us that we too are called to be children of His Father. If we want to know what it means to be a son or a daughter of God we look at Jesus, we make Him our model. We try to love as He loved and when we fail, we ask our Father for forgiveness and for the grace to start again.

When Jesus was born into our world 2000 years ago, the reception He received was less than friendly. The people of Bethlehem found no room for Him and Herod tried to kill Him; most simply ignored Him. But as the Christmas Gospel puts it:

To all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of a Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:12-14)

May God bless us this Christmas time, and may the light of Christ shine in us and through us as we enter the New Year.

Tim

Prayer for the month

Possibly the shortest prayer in the Bible is found in 1 Corinthians 16:22. It is one word long, *Maranatha*, and is written in Aramaic, not the usual Greek of the New Testament. Aramaic was the language spoken by Jesus and the disciples in their daily routine; Hebrew would have been used mainly in the Synagogue and the Temple.

This prayer though one word long in Aramaic is translated as two English words, 'Come Lord', and it expresses the early Church's eager longing for Jesus to return as Lord and King and Judge.

For me *Maranatha* is the prayer of the Advent season. We focus on Jesus arrival (that's what the word 'advent' means), His first advent 2000 years ago as the baby of Bethlehem, and His promised return when He will bring God's healing and justice to our world and to us.

Maranatha is a prayer of hope. It is hope for justice in a world where far too often evil flourishes and the wicked go unpunished. It is hope of healing (Revelation 22:1-2), God promises that in His kingdom every tear will be wiped away and every broken heart will be mended (Revelation 21:3-4).

When I pray '*Maranatha*' I am not only asking God to make this world whole; I am praying that He will transform me and make me the person that He calls me to be.

Christians are people of hope. Our hope is not some vague wish that things can be better somehow. Christian hope is placed in God and so it is also trust. We place our hope in God who has revealed the height and depth of His love of us in Christ. Because our hope is in Christ it is a firm and solid hope, not a mere wish.

In the early church, when Christians faced ridicule and opposition, when life was harsh, when the whole world seemed to be against them and when they had no one and nothing else to hope in, they turned to Christ. They placed themselves and their futures in His hands and they prayed 'Come Lord.'

Come Lord Jesus, come with mercy, come with healing, come with justice, come Lord Jesus *Maranatha*, **Amen**.

Tim

On what sort of dog a clergyman should own

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

I am absolutely delighted to hear that you are getting a dog. But be careful which variety you choose. First, your dog must be something substantial, but not prone to fighting or making amorous advances towards parishioners' dogs. A mongrel may be all very well for you as a curate, but think to the future when you are an incumbent. Get a pedigree. It sets a better tone at the Rectory.

It should also be a breed that sheds hair copiously, which should deter your more fastidious parishioners from bothering you at home. If it also drools, that is a bonus. I would recommend you do not get a sheepdog. They become neurotic trying to round everyone up as they roam round your lawn at the annual Summer Fete.

It can be quite useful giving your dog a name that - naturally, by coincidence - is remarkably similar to that of an awkward parishioner. Being able to bawl out commands to "come", "sit", and "stop that", along with the pet's name, can be cathartic to you, salutary to the parishioner concerned and instructive to the rest of your congregation.

Dogs keep every confidence you tell them, are infinitely sympathetic when you moan about the flower arrangers, and make an excellent audience when you rehearse your Sunday sermon on them. Just like my parishioners, my Labrador gives me a look of well-meaning incomprehension as I get underway, and within minutes slips into a peaceful doze, which continues until my sermon concludes.

When gentlemen of the road call, before you open the door, make a series of very audible commands that imply you are restraining a ravenous beast. That your ravenous beast is smiling and tail-wagging, is irrelevant. It will make your caller hesitate to ring the bell another time.

Dogs also provide an excellent excuse for terminating endless meetings, overlong phone calls, parish socials and even visits to the bishop. Even the hardest of hearts cannot stop you from dashing home to give your pet a toilet break, much, of course, as you would like to continue enjoying yourself with whoever it is you are obliged to flee from.

But do not take them to your church council meetings. When difficult decisions have to be made, you can never rely on them voting the way you want. My Labrador will wag her tail and agree with anyone.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

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Christingle 2016 - Sunday 18th December 4.00pm

The Children's Society

December is the most wonderful time for the Children's Society, as up and down the country Churches, schools, and children's organisations are holding their own Christingle Service.

Christingle was established by the Moravian Church in 1747 as a symbol of Christ's light and love. The Children's Society adopted it in 1968 and it has since become a popular family and community event.

The Christingle itself is made up of a lighted candle or glow stick (symbolising Jesus, the Light of the World) mounted on an orange (representing the world). A red ribbon or tape around the middle of the orange (indicating the blood of Christ) with four cocktail sticks bearing dried fruit and sweets to signify the four seasons and the fruits of the earth. These are given out to the children during the service.

Here at St. Mary's the Christingle Service is on Sunday 18th December at 4.p.m. The candles to save pennies in will have gone out to the children's organisations in the village, if you know of any other child who would like one please ask at church.

On Saturday 17th December at 10.0am a small team of willing helpers will make 140 oranges into the Christingles for the special service on the Sunday. I wish to take this opportunity of thanking everyone for their time in making this Christingle season so memorable for the children.



In 2015 we helped over 50,000 of England's most overlooked and rejected children, helping them to face the future with confidence.

In 2015 St. Mary's and friends raised an amazing £1,800 pounds through Collecting Boxes, Coffee Mornings and Donations. We wish to take this opportunity of thanking everyone for their generous giving.

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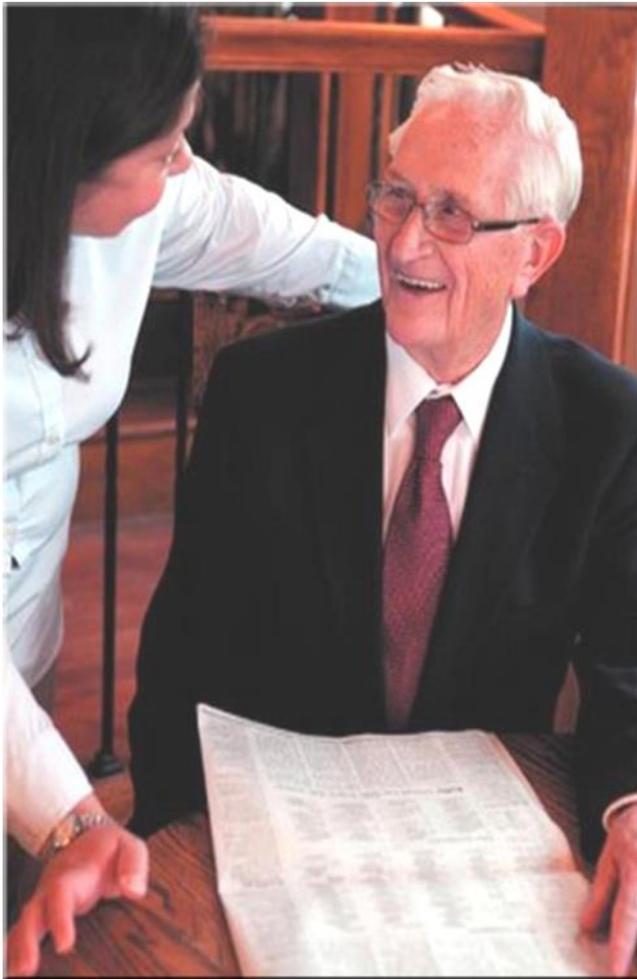
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Will You Remember Them

Archbishop of Canterbury calls for action to address “intolerable” persecution of Christians

The plight of Christian communities across the world, especially in parts of the Middle East, was highlighted by the Most Revd. Justin Welby, to the Muslim council of Elders during a conference in Abu Dhabi on 2nd Nov. He was leading a delegation of Anglican leaders to discuss “integration, religious freedom and flourishing societies”—he said the situation is “intolerable” and called on faith communities, particularly those in powerful positions of influence, to do more to hold governments to account.

In the opening keynote address, Archbishop Welby said, “Christians have more recently been on the receiving end of persecution both from militantly atheist and religiously intolerant regimes. It would not be over-stating matters to say that Christianity is both the numerically largest faith and the most persecuted”. He drew attention to the Middle East, where the very presence of Christianity is under severe threat, as well as North Korea and Eritrea where many Christians suffer under authoritarian government rule.

Holding up the UK as a model of faith communities flourishing alongside each other and in some cases working together, the archbishop added, “But the increasing integration of Muslim communities within British society, in which we rejoice, is in stark contrast to the increasing marginalisation of and outright hostility to Christian communities within many parts of the world, not least in significant parts of the Middle East.”

It is encouraging to see Archbishop Welby use his position and the meeting with the Muslim Council of Elders as an opportunity to advocate on behalf of the persecuted Church. He concluded, “The challenge then is --- to go much further and to establish practical steps to ensure this happens in the societies and countries we represent and live in.”

JD

In the words of one carol we are reminded:

He came to us that wars on earth may cease;
He came to bring us hope and joy and peace;
Worship, o nations at His feet today
For Christ is born.

If I Could Change Christmas

What a time Christmas is. It brings such thoughts, such memories. Memories of our own childhood excitement perhaps. Of simplicity and gratitude. Of traditions, to enjoy and continue sometimes, but hopefully not becoming a burden. I remember sitting behind two nurses on the hospital bus some years ago, bemoaning what was expected of them from the wider family. Where they were expected to go, what they were expected to do, when they really wanted to make changes. If only they could stay at home with their own families, make it simple, no expectations. It made me think. What pressures do we put upon one another at Christmas time?

I wonder how you would change your Christmas – if only you had a choice. For most of us, especially as we grow older, the celebrations do change and there can be a deep sense of loss, perhaps loved people are no longer with us. Maybe our own health and circumstances are now vastly different. Or our remaining loved ones no longer close.

Love and loss, delight and change, all creep into our consciousness at Christmas. Thinking of Christmas past can even taint the Christmas we are entering into. We might wish we were elsewhere, or with other people.

However much we are looking forward to Christmas - or even dreading it, it is good to remember that the reason for it still shines its God given light for us today. Remembering Mary approaching the birth of Jesus, Joseph taking up his role as earthly father, Jesus in the cradle. The cradle which led to the cross.

At St Mary's we hold an annual **Service of the Longest Night**, touching into all these themes. This year it is actually on the longest night, **21st Dec at 7pm**. A time of letting words flow over us and music gently bless us as we let go of the things that are so painful in order to go forward into Christmas with a lighter heart. Nothing will be expected of you. Do feel free to come.

Christmas Christ

We come before you with hearts full of memories. Memories of joy, of love, of lives shared and babies born, but also of sadness and loss too. The tide of life has brought all of these things into our lives, and it cannot be changed.

We pray today that as we reflect on your birth this Christmas, we may know you more fully and allow you to live in us by your Spirit and so enabled, love our families more deeply, love our friends more widely as years go by.

Our lives are what they are, and we are richer because of things we have experienced and people we have known and loved.

Give us comfort Lord and hope of continuing to share of ourselves for all of our Christmases yet to be

Amen

JF

Dennis Ogle

22-08-1922 – 28-10-2016

Those of you who knew Dennis will probably know that for several years he was the editor and publisher of the parish magazine. Quite how he came to this role is a bit of a mystery.

‘Tricia Impey re-started the parish magazine which had been abandoned some years earlier because it was costing the church money. A small group was formed to look at getting it going again - Alan Smith, Pat Blackburn, ‘Tricia Impey, Ann Walton and of course Dennis who said he would look after it.



Dennis with help from Ann Walton and a newly acquired laptop set about putting the magazine together. Dennis, ever the engineer, took to using the laptop like a duck to water. He always preferred to come to church to do the magazine rather than take the laptop and work on it at home. He said it was a bit like going to work with the social interaction that it brings - something we all miss when we retire.

Well - Technology has a habit of moving on and in due course the old printer copier needed to be replaced. This created a quite a few problems because the new machine could not cope with the layout of the magazine as it was – so the layout had to be changed and quickly. With a bit of help from me Dennis had the magazine back on track and didn't even miss the monthly deadline. Dennis's health took a bit of a setback in 2010 and in 2011 he had to give up the role of editor.

Following his retirement Dennis also worked as a volunteer for CAB the Citizens Advice Bureaux. Helping many people in the village with problems relating to: state benefits and tax issues, human rights and rights at work, housing rental and mortgage problems.

Dennis met his wife to be Kath at a Youth Club in school in Ecclesfield and they frequented the Rotherham Bath Dances. Dennis and Kath married on 20th June 1946 at St. Mary's and they were married for 57 years. They were about to return to Ecclesfield to where Dennis lived but sadly Kath didn't make it.

Dennis leaves behind a daughter Val and her husband Phil, a son Roger and his wife Gill and 4 grandchildren, Chris & Joanna, James & Kate.

Editor

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St Mary's - Weekly Services

8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP) - On 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month

10.00 am Services

1st Sunday of the month - Parish Communion with organ and choir

2nd Sunday of the month - Service of the Word with music group

3rd Sunday of the month - Parish Communion with organ, choir and music group

4th Sunday of the month - Parish Communion with organ, choir and music group

5th Sunday of the month - Sunday Celebration Services

12:00 pm Baptism Service

Baptism Service 1st Sunday of the month – (Except: August no baptisms)

4.00 pm Living Stones Service

An interactive service for children and families 3rd Sunday of the month

6.30 pm Evening Service

Except: 2nd Sunday of the month Holy Communion and 4th Sunday of the month
Prayer and Praise

Midweek Holy Communion – Thursdays at 9.30 am

Eva Ratcliffe Service - Wednesday at 10.30am

St Mary's - Activities & Groups

Church Office Opening times

Tuesday 9:30 am to 11:30 am

Wednesday 9:30 am to 11:30 am

Thursday 9.00 am to 12.00 pm

Coffee Shop

Tuesday 10.00 am to 12.30 pm

Friday 10.00 am to 12.30 pm

Bell Ringers

Tuesday 7.30 pm Bell ringing practice

Friday 7.30 pm Silent Bell ringing practice

Choir Practice

Friday 7.30 pm Choir practice in choir vestry

Music Group Practice

Thursday 7:30 pm Music group practice in church

Wedding Bookings

Thursday 7.15 pm to 8.45 pm wedding booking evening

Church Diary Items to Note for December 2016

Day and Date	Time	Item
Saturday 3rd	10.00 am	Children's Society Coffee Morning
Monday 5 th	7.00 pm	Ecclesfield School Concert
	7.30 pm	Baptism Preparation
Wednesday 7 th	1.00 pm	Mothers' Union Christmas Party
	7.30 pm	Baptism Preparation
Thursday 8 th	2.00 pm	Service at Hartwell House
	2.00 pm	MU Deanery Advent Service
Sunday 11 th	2.00 pm	Christmas Crafts
	6.00 pm	Community Carols around the Tree
Tuesday 13 th	7.30 pm	Time for God
	7.30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Wednesday 14 th	10.30 am	Service at Eva Ratcliffe House
Sunday 18 th	4.00 pm	Christingle Service
Wednesday 21 st	7.00 pm	Service of the Longest Night
Saturday 24 th	4.00 pm	Crib Service
	6.30 pm	Service of Lessons and Carols
Sunday 25 th	8.30 am	Christmas Day Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Christmas Communion

Church Diary Items to Note for January 2017

Wednesday 4th	1.00 pm	Mothers' Union Meeting
Sunday 8th	12.00 pm	Baptism Service
Monday 9 th	7.30 pm	PCC
Wednesday 11 th	10.30 am	Service at Eva Ratcliffe House
Thursday 12 th	2.00 pm	Service at Hartwell House
Saturday 14 th	9.00 am	Prayer Breakfast
Sunday 15 th	4.00 pm	Living Stones Service
Monday 16 th	7.30 pm	Fabric Team Meeting
Tuesday 17 th	7.30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Sunday 22 nd	6.30 pm	Service of Prayer and Praise
Monday 23 rd	7.30 pm	Ignatian Prayer in Church
Wednesday 25 th	10.30 am	Service at Eva Ratcliffe House
	12.30 pm	Mothers' Union Annual Lunch
Monday 30 th	7.00 pm	Deanery Lay Readers

From the Registers

Baptisms

6th November Lola Rose Johnson
6th November Ava Rose Whittaker
6th November Nancy Rose Kenyon

May they know the love of God in their lives and may all things of the Spirit live and grow in them.

Weddings

5th November Luke Stephen Mercer & Jade Louisa Staniforth
5th November Luke Thomas Hall & Katie Louise Shepherd
12th November Michael James Moore & Emily-Jane Dorr

May each be to the other strength in need a comfort in sorrow and a companion in joy.

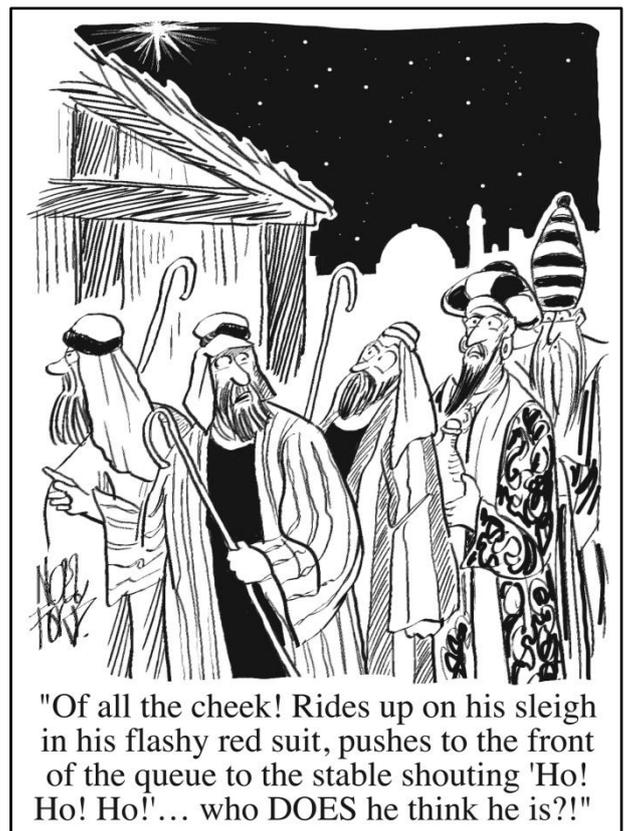
Funerals

9th November Dennis Ogle 94
30th November Kathleen Mary Stewart 96

Grant them, O Lord, refreshment, light and peace.

Flower Rota November 2016

4th Advent 2- No Flowers
11th Advent 3 - No Flowers
18th Advent 4 - No Flowers
24th Christmas Flowers



The Gardening Year – December 2016 & January 2017

I must make it absolutely plain that I am not one of those who believe that only organic manure are beneficial and all inorganic one are harmful. A great deal of controversy has raged on this point and there are some “experts” who hotly contend that no inorganic fertilisers should be countenanced in the garden. They even go so far as to claim that plants grown with such fertilisers have lower food value than those produced with organic manures, and may encourage disease in those who consume them. There is not the slightest evidence for any of these statements and both classes of manure have their value in the garden.

Essential Foods – it has been shown that something like fifteen or sixteen appear to be vital from the gardener’s point of view. However, the four most important foods are nitrogen, Phosphorous, potassium (potash) and calcium with magnesium running these a close fifth and sulphur, iron, boron, manganese, copper, zinc, and molybdenum tagging along somewhere in the rear. It is common to revere to the first four as major and the rest as trace elements. This is a fair enough description provided it is understood that all are equally essential to healthy plant growth and that what makes the first group take precedence over the second is simply that these elements are needed in greater quantity. The first four, nitrogen, phosphorous, potash and calcium are most likely to be deficient in soil and are in consequence those which the gardener will most frequently need to supply.

What each food does – Nitrogen has its most marked effect upon rate and vigour of growth and colour of foliage. When nitrogen is in short supply plants tend to be stunted, leaves are small and pale or bluish in colour. Add nitrogen in a suitable form and the rate of growth immediately increases and leaves become large, lush and dark green. Phosphorous also has a considerable effect on growth though not quite so markedly as in the case of nitrogen. Nevertheless when phosphorous very deficient there will be many of the symptoms of nitrogen starvation. Perhaps the most spectacular effect of phosphorous is on roots which grow freely when it is abundant but are poor and stunted when it is lacking. Potash is, however, the principal fruit forming fertiliser. When there is insufficient potash in the soil fruits tend to be poorly coloured and lacking in flavour faults which disappear directly potash is added, potash also has a striking effect on foliage for when it is deficient leaves particularly of fruit trees become scorched at the edges much as they would be scorched by drought or excessive heat. Calcium is the element which the gardener adds to the soil when he limes it; it enters into the constitution of all plants and is essential to them. Lime must be regarded as one of the major soil foods because of its importance in the soil itself where it flocculates clay and corrects acidity thereby stimulating bacterial activity and aiding the liberation of other plant foods.

Complete or balanced fertilisers – These terms are used to describe any mixtures of chemicals which provide nitrogen, phosphorous and potash in responsible quantity say 7% nitrogen, 7% phosphorous, 7% potash. These are the three most likely to be in short supply and in consequence that the so-called complete fertiliser is the best general standby for the gardener.

And finally I would like to wish all your readers and all at St. Mary’s a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Colin Williams

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The night before...

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, except Papa's mouse.
The computer was humming, the icons were hopping,
As Papa did last minute Internet shopping.

The stockings were hung by the modem with care
In hope that St. Nicholas would bring new software.
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of computer games danced in their heads.



Ian Smith ATT Anne Smith BA (Hons)

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Hotpoint

Some thoughts to ponder at this ‘giving’ time of the year...

Our children await Christmas presents like politicians getting election returns.

- *M Cox*

Charity gives itself rich; covetousness hoards itself poor. - *Anon*

A part of kindness consists in loving people more than they deserve. - *J*

Joubert

The word ‘alms’ has no singular, as if to teach us that a solitary act of charity scarcely deserves the name. - *Anon*

He who is not liberal with what he has, does but deceive himself when he thinks he would be liberal if he had more. - *W S Plumer*

Joy is the gigantic secret of the Christian - *G K Chesterton*

Kindness is a hard thing to give away. It keeps coming back to the giver. -

Ralph Scott

Silence: the art of conversation most appreciated when the Christmas Day feature film is on... – *W Hazlitt paraphrased*

Friends are God’s apology for relations. - *Hugh Kingsmill*

Every large family has its angel and its demon. - *Joseph Roux*

All happy families resemble one another; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. - *Leo Tolstoy*



Crossword Puzzle - Solution is here

L	A	M	E		O	B	T	A	I	N	E	D	
O		A			R		C		E			A	
O	M	I	T		M	E	R	C	H	A	N	T	
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A		O		S		T		P		B		T	
C	R	A	F	T	Y		P	L	E	A	S	E	
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A		C		E		T		H		L		E	
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A		A		C		O				C		E	
S	I	N	G	E	I	N	G			H	A	N	D

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Saint of the Month December – Birinus – 3rd December

An apostle to the English

Thousands of our churches are currently involved in various initiatives across the UK. If it is tough going at times, we should spare a thought for poor Birinus, a priest from Lombard, who was sent here on his own 14 centuries ago. Pope Honorius 1st gave him the daunting task of being the apostle to Wessex.

It was about 635 that Birinus first sailed across the Channel. He planned to convert all of Wessex, and then press on into the Midlands, where no Christian preacher had ever yet been. But once he began ministry in Wessex, Birinus found the West Saxons so pagan that he decided he better just stay among them.

So Birinus began his ministry, endlessly travelling around Wessex, and preaching to whomever he encountered. Gradually he became known, and his message began to seep through.

Then a great breakthrough occurred: the King of Wessex, Cynegils, asked Birinus for instruction in the Christian faith. His daughter was going to marry Oswald, the Christian king of Northumbria, and for political reasons Cynegils now wanted to convert. So Birinus taught and baptised Cynegils and his family, and in return they gave him the Romano-British town of Dorchester as his see, and Birinus became the first bishop of Dorchester.

It was an excellent strategic move: Dorchester was on a main road and river in the centre of an area of dense Anglo-Saxon settlement. From his new 'headquarters', Birinus spent his last 15 years going on to build many churches around Wessex, and to baptise many people. Towards the end of his life Birinus dedicated a church at Winchester, which later became the ecclesiastical centre of the kingdom. (There is no record of Wessex bishops at Dorchester after 660.)

Any lesson in all this? Bloom where God plants you, and be faithful to your calling, however tough things may look at first. Birinus' obedience and faith planted Christianity in a key part of Britain, and so helped shape British history for centuries to come.

The story behind the hymn:

All praise to Thee, eternal Lord

Editor: Martin Luther liked this early Christian hymn so much that he translated it from the Latin...

All praise to Thee, eternal Lord,
Clothed in a garb of flesh and blood;
Choosing a manger for Thy throne,
While worlds on worlds are Thine
alone.

Once did the skies before Thee bow,
A Virgin's arms contain Thee now;
Angels, who did in Thee rejoice,
Now listen for Thine infant voice.

A little child, Thou are our guest,
That weary ones in Thee may rest;
Forlorn and lowly is Thy birth,

That we may rise to heaven from earth.
Thou camest in the darksome night,
To make us children of the light,
To make us in the realms divine,
Like Thine own angels, 'round thee
shine.

All this for us thy love hath done,
By this to Thee our love is won,
For this we tune our cheerful lays,
And shout our thanks in ceaseless
praise.

Martin Luther 1483-1546



Next month it will be 2017, which will be 500 years since Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. His firm declaration began the Reformation, and Germany will be marking it in style, with an entire decade devoted to Martin Luther: monk, professor and church reformer.

Martin Luther had been just 14 years old when his father sent him away to school in Magdeburg, even though he was too poor to support his son there. So Martin had to earn his bread by singing in the streets. At first it was hard, but it taught Martin an invaluable lesson: the common people could be reached through singing.

Luther would remember this 'power' of song in later years, for as an adult, he often gathered a group of musicians in his house. He gave them hymns to play that he himself had arranged, set to the favourite tunes of the German people. Luther had a plan: to print and distribute these hymns throughout Germany.

Some of the hymns were adopted from earlier poems. This Christmas hymn, which appeared originally in Latin, may have been the work of Gregory the Great in the 6th century. By translating it, Luther was showing his determination to get the Christian message out to the common people in a language they could understand. German, not Latin, was the language of the Reformation.

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Crossword Puzzle (Solution is on page 21)

Clues Across

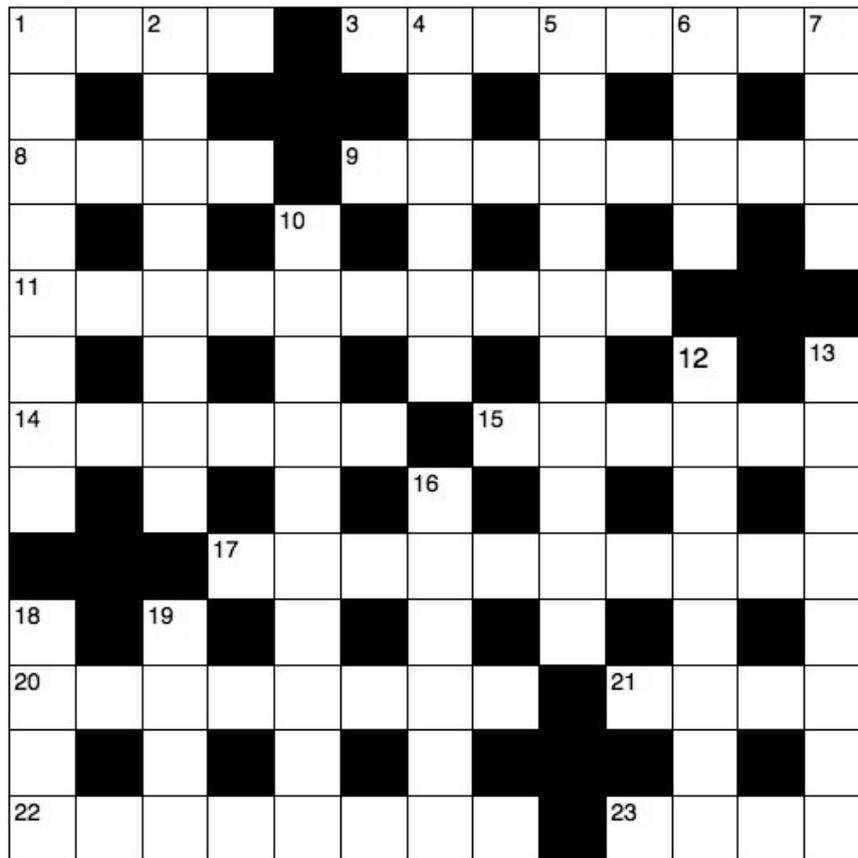
- 1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)
- 3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)
- 8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)
- 9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)
- 11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)
- 14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)
- 15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)
- 17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)
- 20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)
- 21 Rite (anag.) (4)
- 22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)
- 23 'The eye cannot say to the — , "I don't need you"' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

Clues Down

- 1 'Flee for your lives! Don't — — , and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)
- 2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)
- 4 'The tax collector... beat his — and said, "God have mercy on me, a sinner"' (Luke 18:13) (6)
- 5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)
- 6 'The day of the Lord is — for all nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)
- 7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)
- 10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)
- 12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)
- 13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)
- 16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and — ' (Acts 7:22) (6)
- 18 'Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)

19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)

Solution is on Page 21



That coin in your Christmas pudding...

There is a tradition, which dates from the Middle Ages, of putting silver coins into Christmas puddings. The first coins used were a silver farthing or penny. After World War One, it became a threepenny bit and then a sixpence. Finding one was supposed to bring you good fortune, but probably more likely to break a tooth as you bit into the pudding.

We now pay for most things with plastic or by tapping a mobile telephone. In future will people put old credit cards or phones in their Christmas pudding? I do hope not.

Other coins 'appear' at this time of year. Chocolate coins are traditionally given to children at Christmas time and in Jewish tradition during Hanukkah. It is said that one night Saint Nicholas climbed on a roof and threw a purse of money down a chimney, which landed in a pair of stockings that a little girl had hung up to dry. Good throw!

Prayers and Poems Page

Christmas Prayer

Father,

Thank you for creating us and for loving us so much that you sent Jesus to become one of us and to be our way to you. This Christmas may we know the love, peace, comfort and joy that only you can give, no matter what our circumstances. And may we reflect your light and love in this dark world to bring glory to you. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

By Daphne Kitching

The Leaping Baby

Baby within the womb was leaping
To hear the sound of Mary's voice;
Awoken from pre-natal sleeping
As His own mother much rejoiced.
Elizabeth and Mary's greeting –
Two women of the Spirit's choice!

“Much blessed are you among all women!

“Blesséd is He that you will bear!

“My babe with holy joy is brimming!

“He danced for joy to hear you there!

“Much blessed are you among all women!”

“Blesséd is He that you will bear!

“O why should I receive such favour?

“From thee, the mother of my Lord?

“The mother of our promised Saviour

“Oh why should I see such reward?

“Through thine obedient behaviour

“The future of mankind's assured!”

All we who hear the Christmas story
Rejoice, like John within the womb.
We have been born into Christ's glory
Into His light, from Satan's gloom.
All we who hear the Christmas story
We can have life beyond the tomb!

By Nigel Beeton

I heard the Bells on Christmas Day

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth,' I said
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men.'

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Mothers' Union

At the October meeting we welcomed Anne Kilner. Anne came to tell us about her son and his conversion to Judaism. Anne began by saying that Christopher was a normal boy brought up in a Christian family attending a Baptist Church with his mother. He was exceptional musical playing the cornet, piano, guitar and trumpet. When he reached about 16 they noticed that he seemed to be searching for something – but said he wanted to play in a band and they practised on a Sunday morning and so that brought a change to his church attendance.

The time came for University and off he went to York. Shortly after this he started to speak about Judaism – the family sent up arrow prayers, not knowing how to handle this. Anne's minister said that at the end of the day it is the same God. He then became vegetarian and dropped the name Christopher and began to use his middle name, James. The next thing was him coming home and asking for a new plate together with new knife and fork. Obviously in a family all the crockery had been used and so items had to be sterilised. It was Passover and he brought Matzo and asked for Jam and Cheese all through the time he was home.

Eventually he brought home a Jewish girl and introduced her to the family. After her only visiting one more time he rang to say he wanted the family to go to Scotland for the weekend and they discovered this was to meet Ruth's family as they were getting engaged. It was lovely to hear about the meeting of the families and how they met together in love and friendship. As would be expected then came a Jewish wedding which Anne described to us and brought photographs. The Rabbi was extremely kind in repeating the ceremony in English so that they could follow the service.

James and Ruth now live near to Jerusalem with four lovely children and are obviously very happy which is what we all want for our children. Anne now keeps special crockery, cutlery and cooking equipment especially for them when they visit and on these occasions she gives her kitchen over to them

Ruth's father died rather suddenly and after the funeral they came over for a memorial service when they laid a stone – each person there put a stone on the stone and do this every time they visit the grave as a sign of their visit. James came over for his own father's funeral and was given permission to enter the church to be with the family but not to take part in any ritual.

What a journey they have all been on together with wisdom and empathy playing a major part in the transition. We all thanked Anne very much for sharing her story.

SH

Contact Numbers for Local Groups ☎

Ecclesfield Rainbows

Gatty Hall
Tuesday 5.00 pm to 6.15 pm
Leader - Debbie
Tel: 07860 471793

Ecclesfield Brownies

Gatty Hall
Monday 5.30 pm to 6.45 pm
Leader - Mrs J Hutchinson
Tel: 0114 257 8609

Ecclesfield Brownies

Gatty Hall
Tuesday 6.15 pm to 7.45 pm
Leader - Mrs A. Kendall
Tel: 0114 246 8866

Ecclesfield Guides

Gatty Hall
Thursday 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm
Leader - Mrs C Topham
Tel: 0114 246 1289

Ecclesfield Priory Players

EPPIC Theatre
Monday 7.30 pm to 10.00 pm
Wednesday 7.30 pm to 10.00 pm
Secretary –Carol Travis
Theatre Tel No. 0114 240 2624

Ecclesfield Community Garden

Ecclesfield Park - Located between
Ladycroft bridge/stream and Bowling
greens. Open Wednesday + Saturday
10 am to 12 noon
Tel : Angela 0114 2461095

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Tel: 0114 246 3651
email: ecclesfieldlib@gmail.com

Ecclesfield Cubs

Scout Hut (off Yew lane)
Wednesday 4:45 pm to 6:15 pm
2nd Pack 6.30 pm to 8.0 pm
Leader - Mrs A Hancock
Tel: 0114 245 2780

Ecclesfield Beavers

Scout Hut (off Yew lane)
Monday 6.00 pm to 7.15 pm
Leader - Mrs J Steel
0114 246 0218
Thursday 6.00 -7.15 pm
Rachael Otter 0114 246 1752

Ecclesfield Scouts

Scout Hut (off Yew Lane)
Tuesday 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Leader - Bryony Hemming
Tel. 07983 719155
Group Scout Leader
John Otter Tel. 0114 246 1752

The Grenoside Singers

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with guests

Deeppcar Brass Band

and

Local Carol Singers

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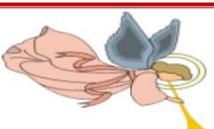
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