

News & Views From St Mary's Church Ecclesfield



Church Magazine December & January 2018

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Price 60p

First Words

As you would expect, December is largely taken up with Christmas services and celebrations. However we begin December on Advent **Sunday 3rd Dec, 6.30pm** with a special service of Advent Carols and Readings.

Christmas events begin on the **10th December** with Christmas Crafts at 2pm and Community Carols round the Tree (weather permitting) at 6pm.

On Monday 11th December I am pleased that we will be hosting Ecclesfield High School's Christmas concert (Church will be used for rehearsals throughout the day).

On the **13th December 7.30pm** we have our last Time for God of 2017; there will be an Advent theme. Everyone is invited, even if you have not managed to get to one of the sessions before. Time for God will continue in 2018 on the second and fourth Wednesdays every month during school term time.

On **Sunday 17th December at 4pm** we have our Christingle, celebrating God's love at Christmas and raising funds for a very good cause - the Children's Society.

On **Thursday 21st December at 7pm** there will be a short reflective service to mark the longest night of the year.

On **Christmas Eve** we have our Crib service at 4pm and the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight at 6.30pm, arrive early if you want to get a seat!

Finally on **Christmas Day** we have an all age Eucharist at 10am.

In contrast to December, January is looking to be a quiet month - so far. One event for your diary is the Mother's Union Christmas Lunch on Wednesday 24th Jan 2018.

Whatever you do this Christmas, wherever you spend it, and whoever you share it with, may you know the blessing of the Father and the peace of Christ this year.

God bless,
Tim



Front Cover – Verbum caro factum est. [Word was made flesh] - Detail from a window in St. Mary's Harvington. Photographer - Lawrence OP – DD 29-05- 2010 - Licence CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Back Cover – Carols round Christmas Tree Poster

Thought for the Month

“He who upholds the universe, in whom and through whom everything came into existence, is brought forth according to the law of human birth; he at whose voice the angels and archangels tremble, is heard in the cries of a baby.” Hilary of Poitiers.

At the heart of the Christian faith is Jesus; not a doctrine or a religion but Jesus. In the weakness and powerlessness of a tiny baby, God comes to us. There is nothing like this in the whole world of religion or mythology. The Bible tells us that God reveals himself to us in a human life and death, in one particular human life and death.

Here we see that God is able to become powerless and weak; the one who spoke creation into existence becomes a speechless infant. And God does all of this for us, to reach us in a way that will not crush or destroy or terrify us.

In the weakness of Jesus we see the power of God; a power that has nothing to prove because God is incomparable. It is only the weak and the insecure who need to cling onto power. God in Jesus has the strength to become weak.

I pray that, in the middle of all of the activity of December, you will find a moment to reflect on the meaning of it all. It is God in Jesus reaching out to the world, to you and to me, with the news that we are loved, that we are not alone. It is God assuring us that life has meaning and purpose beyond this world and beyond time itself.

How do we respond to such love? Firstly by rejoicing - Christmas should be a joy, not a burden. And then by loving in response.

May God bless you and fill your home with peace this Christmas.

Tim.

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God Moves in a Mysterious Way

Our intended speaker for the Mother's Union on 1st November didn't turn up. What followed was an extremely inspiring and moving afternoon. So much so that we were all glad of the hiccup – whilst hoping that there was a simple explanation for her absence. God does move in mysterious ways.

Stephanie, as leader, asked whether anyone would like to say anything three or four times before Josie haltingly agreed to be our speaker that afternoon.

Those words – God moves in a mysterious way – have led Josie to reflect over the years and though admitting she was totally out of her comfort zone she shared something of God's call to her, a calling that felt so like a burden, calling on her to talk, to have a voice.

Her story went right back to being a new Christian in the 80s. Josie was led, along with many of us in the church, to pray for a young teenager who had cancer of the face. Sadly, Julie died and this resulted in Josie's anger and distress as she struggled with the thought of God's part in it all. The mystery of death, the hope of that new life in Christ which will come to us all one day, that final, ultimate healing, was a concept she had yet to encounter. She mourned Julie with sorrow, angry at God and wrestled with what healing means in our relationship with God.

Shortly afterwards she attended a Healing Service given by a man and his wife, known to have a healing ministry. To her surprise, right at the beginning, everyone was invited to look to God for healing for themselves. Josie felt that this was unnecessary. She wasn't blind or deaf or lame. She prayed for a friend recently diagnosed with MS. Then focussing on Jesus she was suddenly reminded of a time when, on entering church, a church warden had asked her if she would read the lesson. Her response had been an immediate 'No!' Her thoughts very much about her own inferiority. Feelings she had harboured since childhood came to the fore. She reminded us that God doesn't want anyone to feel that they are more special, but neither to think that they are less than others. Her thoughts ran along the lines of 'Well I have been like this for 40 years but if you can heal me all well and good.' Soon after that, on entering church one evening, the same church warden asked the same question. And she responded 'Yes'. Then panic set in! She asked Elaine sitting next to her to pray for her and as they prayed the Lord Jesus showed her that he would stand up with her, walk with her to the front, be with her as she read. And he did, and she read – word perfectly – and sat down. That was the first time she had done anything like that in her life.

Continues on Page 7

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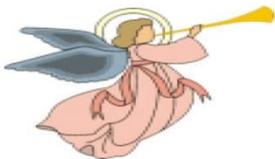
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Welcome to St Mary's Parish Church, Ecclesfield

St James the Least of All On keeping warm in church

The Rectory,
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren.

It was delightful to have a family from your church visiting ours last week, but perhaps if it happens again, you may suggest a certain dress code to them. That the man arrived without wearing a tie was probably forgivable, but I do think you should have warned them about the temperature. Your church building may be warmer than a nursing home, but the only time that hot air is blown over the heads of our congregation, is when the archdeacon preaches.

Thus, by early December, our congregation knows to come to church equipped with overcoats, scarves, gloves and thermal socks. And the Verger's regular disappearance into the side chapel during Services isn't on urgent ecclesiastical business, but to warm himself up with copious swigs from his hip flask.

So, your poor visitors suffered from the cold. In fact, by the time of the sermon, were they to have been laid horizontally, they would have been indistinguishable from the marble effigies of the Earls of Stowe lying in state in the north aisle. As they limped out at the end of the Service, totally numb, my offer of a sherry at the Rectory was more medicinal than social.

December is almost always the month when I gracefully concede defeat regarding the church boiler. True, the congregation has been dropping hints to me since Harvest about the autumnal nip in the air, or of the flowers keeping well in church because it is cool there, or even the slightly more pointed remark that it will soon be time for the heating to be turned on. But all are studiously ignored. I live in an arctic 17th century Rectory, and am hardened to it.

But when members of the congregation start arriving bearing travelling rugs and flasks of hot tea, I begin to realise that the time approaches to fire the boilers up. Then on the Sunday when Colonel Richards lights up his primus stove next to him on the pew, I know it is appropriate to announce that next Sunday the church will be heated – although 'heated' is rather more an aspiration than a reality.

Should any of our congregation be tempted to pay a visit to your own church, I will tell them to dress for a Mediterranean August – although the men will certainly wear a tie. One does have standards to maintain.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

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God Moves in a Mysterious Way - continued

Josie finished by calling us all to be God's voice in the world. Remarking that she had read that the church was diminishing and saying that we need to stand up and act – being God's voice, speaking with his words. We were all extremely blessed by what Josie shared and thank God for Josie's obedience to his call that afternoon.

Those words 'God moves in a mysterious way' then led Stephanie to tell the story of her Uncle's model of our church. Uncle Cyril made a beautiful model of St Mary's many years ago, the interior not complete because of his ill health and death in 1983. His wife Norah wanted the church to come into St Mary's but somehow that never happened. The church then came down to Stephanie who gave it a home for many years until a house move meant that she and Ian no longer had room for it. Sadly letting it go to the charity shop was difficult but along with so much else it had to go. Imagine her delight when at a PCC meeting recently Tim told them that he had had an email from a couple who had bought a model of a church from a charity shop and they were convinced that it was St Mary's, so did he want it? He did. It came. And it is the self-same church which Cyril made. It has found its place at exactly the right time as St Mary's has now been designated a Major Church and as such, having a model of the church for visitors to see, is just the right thing. Cyril Smith couldn't have known that all those years ago as he worked at it, but it does seem that God has very much been, not only in the work, but in the timing too. It is well worth a look when you are in church, and don't forget to carefully lift off the roof to peek inside.

Someone then asked Jennifer Armeson how she came to be a bell ringer and what followed was a lovely trip through Jennifer and Stuart's life as bell ringers. Starting as a teenager aged just 15 in North Mymms, Jennifer has never wavered. She went on a bell-ringing holiday and even though she had been warned about the 'two Rotherham brothers' she met Stuart there and 47 years later they are still happily married and have rung bells throughout the whole country. Their children and other family members have become ringers too over the years. It is a hobby which brings much pleasure and companionship. More ringers are always wanted, so do have a word with Jennifer or Stuart in church one Sunday morning if you would like to know more. We are very lucky to have their expertise and friendliness in our church tower. Again God's mysterious movement in their lives bringing so much pleasure to others and the wonderful ministry of campanology.

Perhaps in future we should look more to our members when in need of a speaker and allow God's mysterious movement to flourish as we listen to each other.

JF

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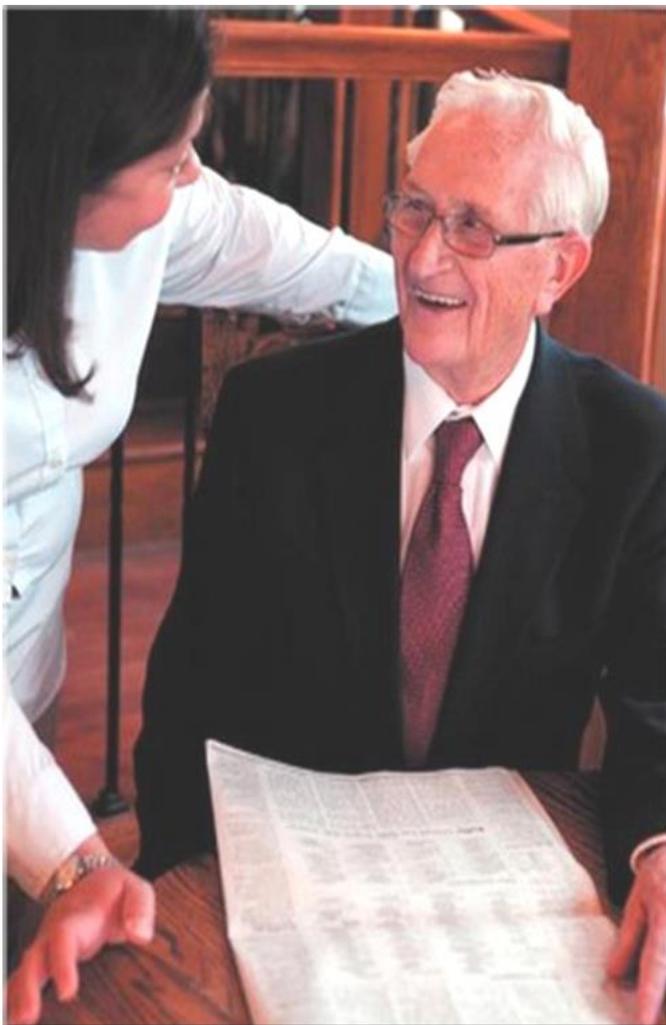
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Will You Remember Them –December 2017/ January 2018

Pakistan

Free at Last! Many Pakistani Christians, who had been legally “bonded” to their brick kiln jobs, are now free, thanks to Barnabas Fund supporters. Through their generosity, the debts which these desperately poor families incurred in times of special hardship have been paid, setting them free, transforming their lives and giving them hope for the future. But many more still need to be set free. Donations from Barnabas Fund supporters have recently freed 40 families from this form of modern slavery, this ongoing project continues alongside food aid parcels which are given to help these and other families.

Latif began working in the brick kiln industry when he was only TEN. In recent years, his daughter Sobia has laboured alongside him in their back-breaking task. Together they make a thousand bricks a day. “So I used to work continuously 18 hours a day.” But then his son fell sick and later his wife broke her leg. Latif had no option but to borrow from the brick-kiln owner to pay for their medical needs. Despite his best efforts he had become bonded to his brick kiln. Now Latif’s debt has been paid off and he is free. “As soon as we paid the loan amount to the brick kiln owner I came back to the church and thanked God and then went to my home,” said Latif. “We are very thankful to Barnabas Fund and all the people for their support. We pray for you all regularly and will continue to do so as we are free because of all your efforts. God bless you all!”

“Jesus took hold of my arm”

Nargis had to borrow money from the brick kiln owner where she works so that her sick husband could go to hospital. Sadly, he died, and she was left with five children and the loan. Every week a sum was deducted from her meagre wages to pay the interest on the loan. Nargis is illiterate and could not even count how many bricks she had made each day, let alone calculate how much money she still owed.

She told Barnabas Fund, “When I heard that my debt will all be paid it was such a joyful and redeeming feeling - My heart leapt with joy at the thought that we are free from this burden at last - All my family, brothers and sisters, relatives had left me in our difficult time but Jesus took hold of my arm. God bless those people who have thought about us and have helped us - We will pray for you all.”

Please Pray

- Thank god for those who are supporting Christians who are persecuted for their faith by helping to meet their physical and spiritual needs **Amen**

‘If you remain in my word you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.’

John c8 v32

JD



CHRISTMAS CARDS

Time to write your Christmas cards again – what designs have you picked to send this year? Are they religious ones?

Look in the shops at all the different designs, traditional and modern. Traditional religious cards have usually included the nativity – Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. But what else would you count as religious? The Three Kings? The Bible doesn't say they were kings, or that there were three; just that they were Wise Men, who travelled far to bring special gifts for the baby Jesus.

Do you know why there are so many robins on Christmas cards? The first postmen in Victorian times wore red and were called robins, so robins were shown as delivering cards.



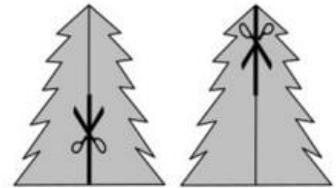
Whatever kind of card you send this year, be sure to include a kind message with love for your friends. Our love is a tiny echo of God's love for all the world.

CARD or DECORATION

Here is a simple 3-D Christmas tree that you can use as a decoration or a card. You will need green card, crayons, glitter or paint, scissors and sticky tape.

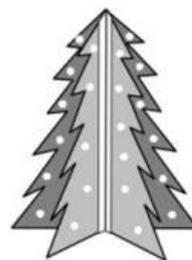
Fold a piece of card in half, then cut it in half. Put the two pieces together and fold them in half again.

Draw half a Christmas tree opposite the fold. Cut along the line and you will have 2 identical trees. Fold the trees in half, very lightly, hardly creasing the centre line to mark the centre of the tree. Cut a slit along the bottom half of the centre of one tree and along the top half of the centre



of the other tree. Slip the two trees together along the slits. To help the tree to stand firmly, use sticky tape to fasten the parts together where they meet.

Decorate the tree. If you are using it as a card then leave an area free of decorations so that you can write on it.



What goes red white red white red white?

Santa rolling down a hill.

Prayer for the Month

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

This Collect for Advent Sunday, was translated by Thomas Cranmer into English from the ancient Latin prayers used in the English Church. It is the first of the collects in the Book of Common Prayer because Advent Sunday marks the beginning of the Church's year.

The Collect emphasises one of the great themes of Advent - the judgement which we must all one day face. However it also reminds us that the One to whom we are all accountable; the one who will judge our hearts and our actions is Jesus. Our judge is our redeemer. He has already died for us.

This prayer reminds me that at the heart of every Christian doctrine and dogma is Jesus. It reminds me that in Jesus mercy and judgement are not opposed to each other, but are united in Him; they meet at His cross.

And so, even though one day we all will face the judgement seat of Christ; even though one day we will all hear His perfect verdict on us and our lives, on our thoughts, words and actions, we do not have to fear His judgement.

In Christ, judgement is hopeful because as one theologian has put it, our Judge pronounces us guilty and then steps down from the judgement seat and stands in the dock in our place.

In Advent we are encouraged to keep in our minds, for a short time at least as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, our mortality and the judgement we will all one day face. Perhaps it is not how we usually prepare for Christmas; but it might remind us what we mean when we speak of the child in the manger as the Saviour of the world. It might remind us of the reason why we continue to celebrate the birth of this baby.

As the angel said to the Shepherds, passing on the very first Christmas greeting:

“I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.”

Tim Gill

St Mary's – Regular 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)

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

Time for God – Wednesday at 7.30pm

Every 2nd & 4th Wednesday during school term time

A time for worship, teaching and prayer

St Mary's - Activities & Groups

Church Office Opening times

Tuesday 9:00 am to 1.00 pm

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

Church Diary Items to Note - December 2017 - January 2018

December 2017

Day and Date	Time	Item
Monday 4 th	7.30 pm	PCC meet in Church
Wednesday 8 th	1.00 pm	Mothers' Union meet in the Gatty Hall
Saturday 9 th	9.00 am	Prayer Breakfast
Sunday 10 th	6.00 pm	Carols Round The Tree
Tuesday 12 th	6.30 pm	Carols at the Northern General Hospital
Wednesday 13 th	7.30 pm	Time for God
Sunday 17 th	4.00 pm	Christingle Service
Thursday 21 st	7.00 pm	Service of the Longest Night
Saturday 25 th	6.30 pm	Prayer and Praise
Sunday 24 th	4.00 pm	Crib Service
	6.30 pm	Service of Lessons & Carols

January 2018

Day and Date	Time	Item
Tuesday 9 th	7.30 pm	Prayer Meeting in Church
Wednesday 10 th	1.00 pm	Mothers' Union meet in the Gatty Hall
Saturday 13 th	9.00 am	Prayer Breakfast
Monday 15 th	7.30 pm	Fabric Team Meeting
	7.30 pm	Baptism Preparation
Monday 22 nd	7.30 pm	Ignatian Prayer in Church
Sunday 28 th	6.30 pm	Prayer and Praise Service

From the Registers

Baptisms

5th November	Eden Rose Carr
5th November	Davide Luigi Rozas Del Prete
5th November	Marnie Grace Petra Harrison

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

Wedding

25th November	Thomas Martin Mainwaring & Emma Louise Collins
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May each be to the other strength in need a comfort in sorrow and a companion in joy.

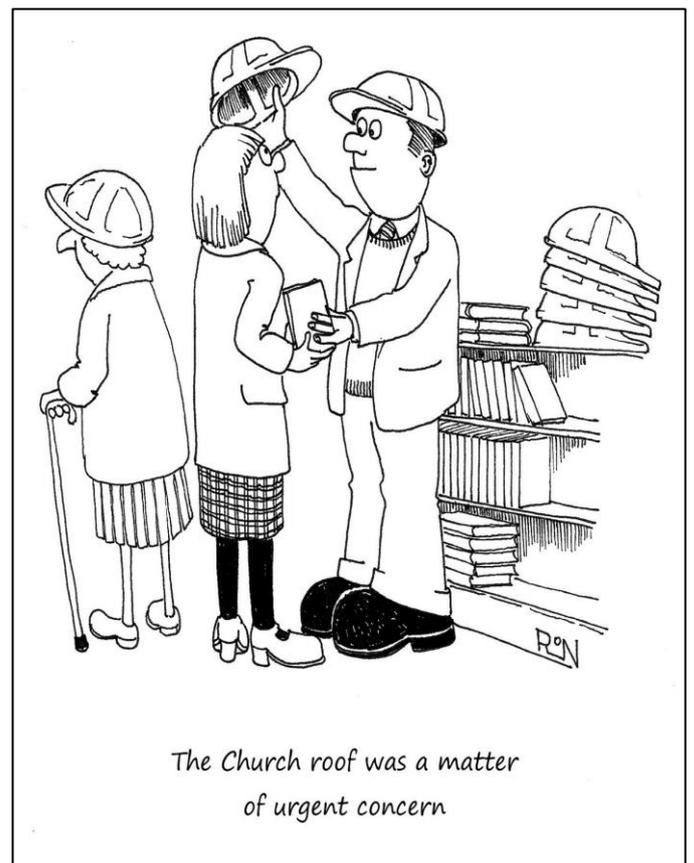
Funerals

2nd November	Joseph Donald Bamforth	99
3rd November	Brian George Goodman	84
6th November	Carol Barbara Lindley	54
7th November	George Austin	80
13th November	Jennifer Margaret Taylor	72
17th November	Peter Kelvyn Worrall	87
22nd November	Earnest Collins	77
27th November	Sheila Biggin	85
27th November	Colin Beevers	94

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

Flower Rota December 2017

3rd December	Advent 1 – No Flowers
10th December	Advent 2 - No Flowers
17th December	Advent 3 - No Flowers
24th December	Advent 4 -Christmas Flowers
31st December	Vacant



The Children's Society

Here at St. Mary's this year's Christingle Service is on Sunday 17th December at 4.p.m. We would love for you, your friends and family to come and join us at this wonderful celebration so we can help to support children and their families who are in need.



The candles to save coins in 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. The children then bring the money candles to the service and receive an Orange Christingle to take home.

On Saturday 16th December at 10.00am a small team of willing helpers will make 140 plus oranges into the Christingles for the service. I wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their time in making this Christingle season so memorable for the children.

In 2016 through your giving £ 1985.23 was sent to the Children's Society, this was a wonderful effort from everyone thank you. The money came from over 50 Collection Boxes, donations, and also includes the Coffee Morning and the children's Christingle money Candles.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas - Love Pat



The Gardening Year December 2017 - January 2018

Garden work is difficult in December, but every effort should be made to tidy up the plots and to complete the preparation of the ground. Care should be taken to eliminate draughts in greenhouses and outhouses. This is a good time to plan your seed requirements for the coming season. Continue, and if possible complete the digging of beds and borders in which next years' hardy and half-hardy annuals will be grown. Try to complete as much digging as possible before the frost and snow arrives. If you are over-wintering sweet peas remove the growing point above the second or third pair of leaves in order to encourage the formation of vigorous side growths.



Trees and Shrubs - deciduous trees and shrubs can still be planted during mild weather. Make the soil firm round roots otherwise winter gales will rock the shrubs loose before they have had a chance to get settled and established new roots. This is a common cause of failure. Fruit – winter wash fruit trees I spray all my fruit trees and bushes with insecticide and fungicide when they are fully dormant. In most seasons the dormant season lasts from December to mid-January, although peach and nectarine which reach bud-burst early normally need spraying in December. Trees and bushes which are not going to be sprayed in the summer need spraying every winter. Apple and Pear – feed established trees in grass every year with 1oz. nitrogen (as sulphate of ammonia or nitro-chalk) per sq. yd. feed all trees every other year with 1oz. sulphate of potash and every third year with 2oz. super phosphate. Little can be done in the garden in January, except to try to minimise the effects of adverse weather. Plants will often survive well under a complete cover of snow, but if they penetrate above the snow they can be badly frosted, and even so-called hardy-plants can be affected. Heavy snow fall can break down branches and it is wise to knock it off them.

Greenhouses and Frames – stocking a greenhouse with flowering plants and vegetables is much easier if a plan is made each January, setting out how many of each kind will be required to fill the available space.

I would to take this opportunity to wish all our readers and all at St. Mary's

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year *Colin Williams*



Ecclesfield Handbell Ringers

present their

Christmas Carol Concert

Come along and sing your favourite carols

Saturday 9th December 2017

7.00pm

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and

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One Year On

It's a full year since my dad Dennis Ogle passed away and there is not a day goes by that we don't think about him. Last December The Editor wrote a lovely article about his contribution to the magazine which really made me smile as well as shed a tear, I remember well his struggles with the laptop!

I realise that a year has gone by but I hope it's not too late to say a big thank you to the congregation for the love and support shown to my dad. When he was no longer able to get to church he really appreciated the company, home-made food and of course the opportunity to chat.

We have just come back from the Memorial service and have truly appreciated Tim's warm and comforting words, so rather belatedly, thanks again for your prayers and love.

Val, Phil, James, Kate, Natalia and Steve (McNerney)



Crossword Puzzle - Solution is here

		T	A	B	E	R	N	A	C	L	E	
S		A		O		A		B		U		
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F	R	I	G	H	T		C	A	V	E	L	L
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S	O	N	A	R		A	M	A	Z	I	N	G
		S		A		T		V		S		S
	S	E	T	T	L	E	M	E	N	T		

Quotes

“No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.” *Heraclitus*

“He is richest who is content with the least, for contentment is the wealth of nature.”
Socrates

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.” *Aristotle*

“One of the most beautiful qualities of true friendship is to understand and to be understood.” *Seneca*

“He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.” *Epictetus*

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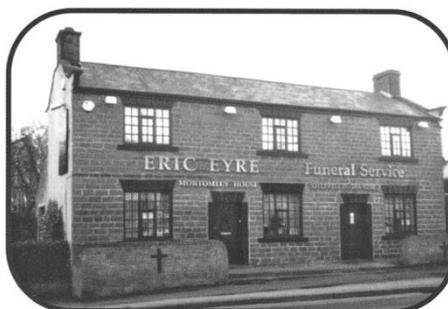
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Saint of the Month – December 6th

St Nicholas – patron saint of children

Father Christmas seems to be as old as Europe. Once he was Woden, lashing his reindeer through the darkness of northern midwinter. Then he encountered the Church, and She transformed him into a saint, the much-loved Nicholas, Bishop of Myra (in south-west Turkey) in the fourth century. St Nicholas became the patron saint of children, and was given 6th December as his day.

Since the 6th century St Nicholas has been venerated in both East and West, though virtually nothing is known of his life. Some believe he may have been one of the fathers at the Council of Nicaea (325), imprisoned during the Emperor Diocletian's persecution.

According to legend, Nicholas was an extremely generous man. He revived three schoolboys murdered by an innkeeper in a tub of pickles. He rescued three young women from prostitution by giving their poverty-stricken father three bags of gold. (Hence the use of three gold balls as the pawnbroker's signs.)

Over the centuries many people 'on the fringe', including children, sailors, unmarried girls, pawnbrokers and moneylenders have claimed him as their patron.

Perhaps it was on account of St. Nicholas' generosity that in recent centuries children began to write little notes sometime before 6th December, to tell him about the toys they specially wanted. These notes were then left on the windowsill at night - or else on a ledge in the chimney.

But St Nicholas Day chanced to lie in the magnetic field of a much more potent festival... and after a while his activities were moved towards Christmas. Then in Bavaria the children still left their notes on the windowsill, but they addressed them to Liebes Christkind - Krishkinkle as they knew him - and the saint's part in the matter was simply to deliver the letters in heaven.

The most popular result of the cult of St Nicholas has been the institution of Santa Claus. He is based on Nicholas' patronage of children and the custom in the Low Countries of giving presents on his feast. Santa Claus has reached his zenith in America, where the Dutch Protestants of New Amsterdam (New York) united to it Nordic folklore legends of a magician who both punished naughty children and rewarded good ones with presents.

Prayer in 2018

Surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:11-13

In January we will be starting a year of prayer for renewal.

We will have events throughout the year praying for personal renewal - that each one of us may come to know God in a deeper way, that we may live more as God's children.

We will be praying for renewal in the Church, that God's Holy Spirit will breathe upon the Church again. That the Church in this land will fulfil it's calling to be the Body of Christ, a colony of heaven here on earth.

We will also be praying for the renewal of our nation. At the moment we see so much despair about the future, we see divisions in Britain becoming wider and deeper. The Bible's promise for us is that with God there is a future with hope.

Our text for the coming year is Jeremiah 29:11-13. It was first given about 600 years before Christ when God's people had been defeated by the Babylonian empire, and many citizens had been taken into exile. In that bleak and hopeless moment, God gave a word of hope to the people through the prophet.

The promise of the prophet Jeremiah is that if we truly seek God, no matter how hopeless our situation or circumstance, then hope breaks in. God has a plan and a purpose for each one of us, and the first step towards discovering that plan is to trust, to put ourselves and our future, the Church and our nation into God's hands.

Till Gill

Ecclesfield Church Playgroup

The Gatty Memorial Hall - Priory Road - Ecclesfield

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Crossword Puzzle

Clues Across

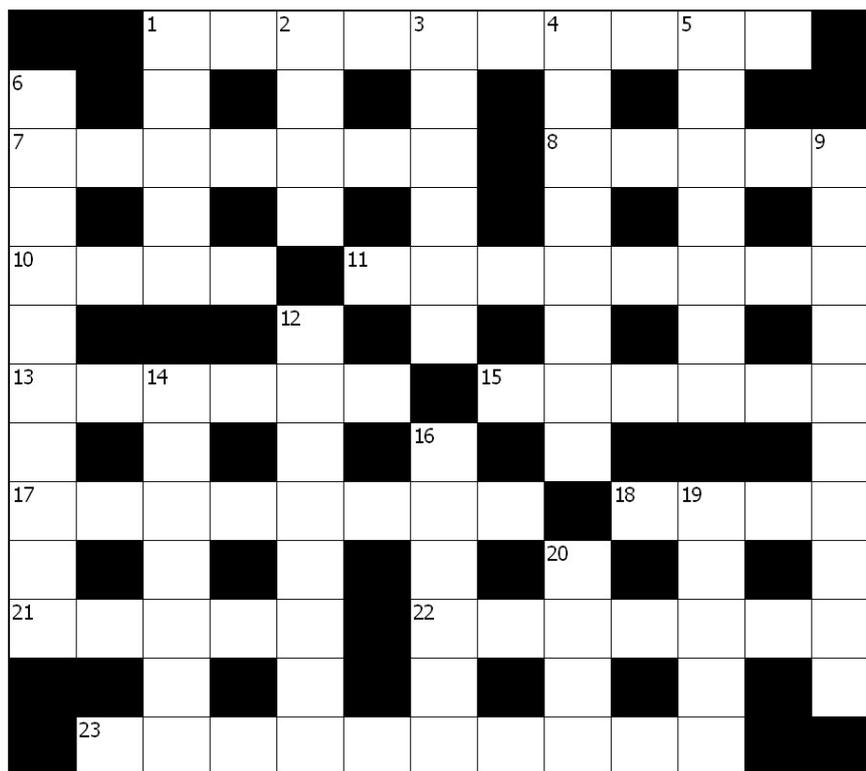
- 1 Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)
- 7 David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14,15) (7)
- 8 They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries (5)
- 10 Small deer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

Clues Down

- 1 and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8) (5)
- 2 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as ... as a lion (Proverbs 28:1) (4)
- 3 One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)
- 4 He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19,20) (8)
- 5 City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)
- 6 Offer your bodies as living , holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1) (10)
- 9 Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)

- 12** One who accepts government by God (8)
14 Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual (Exodus 30:1)
 (7)
16 He asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) (6)
19 Are (Romans 13:1) (5)
20 You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will ... his people
 from their sins (Matthew 1:21) (4)

Solution is on Page 20



Looking back on the year...

War loves to seek its victims in the young. - *Sophocles*

Everyone is interested in the future, in what lies ahead, and particularly this is true in business. - *Wayne A Johnston*

My political ideal is democracy. Everyone should be respected as an individual, but no one idolized. - *Albert Einstein*

Any event, once it has occurred, can be made to appear inevitable by a competent historian. - *Lee Simonson*

History repeats itself, that's one of the things that's wrong with history. - *Clarence Darrow*

It is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil. - *John Maynard Keynes*

Unquestionably, there is progress. The average worker now pays out twice as much in taxes as he formerly got in wages. - *Henry L Mencken*

Prayers and Poems Page

Father of all good gifts,

Thank you for the greatest gift of all – your precious Son, Jesus. Thank you that He chose to live with us so that all who trust Him will one day live with you in peace and wholeness.

Help us Father, this Christmas, to keep you at the centre of our celebrations and, in the midst of all the busy-ness and rush, to know your presence and the peace that only you can give. And Lord, may we reflect your love to those who don't yet know that you are real and alive and able to help, whatever their situation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

To Bethlehem

The moon on high wears
A silver halo round its head,
And stars in the sky are dancing
E'er they go to bed.

There's a happy tune held close
In the midnight air,
And wise men wend their way to Bethlehem
And the King who's cradled there.

Meantime, in the hills
Above the sleeping town,
Angels singing heaven's own song
Wing God's message down.

They speak of the Child who brings
God's judgement and care,
And call us to turn our hearts to Bethlehem,
And join in the shepherds' prayer.

So come with us quick
This Christmastide to greet our Lord
As He, by shepherds and wise men,
Is now adored.

Come near and meet our Saviour
Who hates human strife,
And learn of Him who calls us in love,
How to re-mould our life.

By Sam Doubtfire

Winter Trees

Winter trees, of growth denuded
Bow their heads to wind and snow
Bow towards a lonely stable
Unto which some shepherds go.
Trees that seem so cold and lifeless
Bow toward that heavenly glow.

In that shed, a new-born infant
Bathed in golden lantern's light
Shepherds kneel in awe and wonder
At the gift of God this night.
E'en the trees so bare do whisper
Wondrous praises at that sight.

Winter trees will soon be verdant
When the winter turns to spring.
We, like them, can be as joyful
Death has lost its fatal sting.
For that babe within a manger
Brings good news of which we sing.

Glory be to God in Heaven
Glory be to God, we cry
For His gift, so freely given
His own precious Son to die.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
We can live with Him on high!

By Nigel Beeton

The man who married Mary

The traditional Nativity scene on our Christmas cards has Mary with the Holy Babe. Around her are the shepherds and Magi. We may also see stable animals, angels and a star! While Joseph is often included, his presence seems to be of minor importance. After all, we praise God for Jesus with our familiar Christmas carols, mentioning angels, shepherds, Wise men and Mary but the name of Joseph is absent! Why is Joseph given a low profile? For he is a man to be remembered.

Joseph was a resident of Nazareth. He worked as a carpenter and his skills would have included making furniture, repairing buildings and crafting agricultural tools. Although Joseph had an honourable profession, he would not have been a man of great wealth.

The gospel writers Matthew and Luke give Joseph a few brief mentions. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary go to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate the Baby to God. Afterwards, they flee into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod and much later return to Nazareth. Twelve years later, Mary and Joseph go with Jesus to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Here they lose Jesus, and find Him in the Temple talking with religious leaders!

Apart from these verses, the New Testament is silent about the rest of Joseph's life. However, we do know that Joseph was father to other children by Mary. His four sons are named and they had at least two daughters. (See Matthew 13:55)

And we also know that Joseph was someone who quietly and humbly took on the awesome role in caring for the early life of the Son of God. Joseph would have taught Jesus many things – not just the skills of a labourer, but the lore of the countryside which was evident in our Lord's teaching. Jesus grew up within a loving family and described God as 'Father', knowing also the good fatherly qualities of Joseph.

In the Christmas story, Joseph is placed into a situation that brought him misunderstanding and suspicion. But Joseph remained faithful in the knowledge that as long as God had spoken, the opinion of others mattered little. Before Jesus began His ministry it is believed that Joseph died. It is likely Jesus took on many of his father's responsibilities before He left home.

In the eyes of the world, Joseph was a nobody. He was not a man of valour, fame and fortune. But he was the one who had parental responsibility for the greatest person who has ever lived!

It is sad that we often equate ordinariness with ineffectiveness. Down the ages, God has used many ordinary people to accomplish great things. God continues to use ordinary people. Like Joseph, we need to know that doing God's will is the most important thing in life. May we, this Christmas, respond to God's call to us and please Him in all that we do.

By Lester Amann

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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community.
Volunteer helpers always needed.
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

Practice Monday in St Mark's
Church Hall at 7:30 pm
Secretary: Judith Gill Tel: 07824 112584
www.grenosidesingers.co.uk

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Carol Singing Around The Christmas Tree

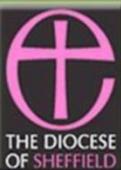
**Sunday 10th December
6 pm to 7 pm**

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If weather inclement, the Carol singing will take place in Church



A community event organised by: -
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