



December  
2020



The United Benefice of  
Christ Church with St Mary's

## Who's Who Within the Benefice

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Alan Burgess

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Rev'd Colin Alsbury: Vicar, St John the Baptist 472853

[www.christchurch-stmarys-frome.co.uk](http://www.christchurch-stmarys-frome.co.uk)



## Contents

Pastoral letter.....	4
Services in December.....	5
Christmas traditions.....	5
Summary of Covid restrictions in December 2020.....	6
Prayer Diary for December.....	7
Prayer.....	8
We are invited to sing.....	9
Trust, Joy and Resilience.....	10
Eco-news: the 30 by 30 pledge.....	13
Plants please.....	14
Saints.....	15
What are you reading? In defence of bookworms.....	16
God in the Sciences.....	17
Jane's Recipes!.....	18
Comfort and Joy.....	19
December Prayers.....	20
Rotas for December.....	22

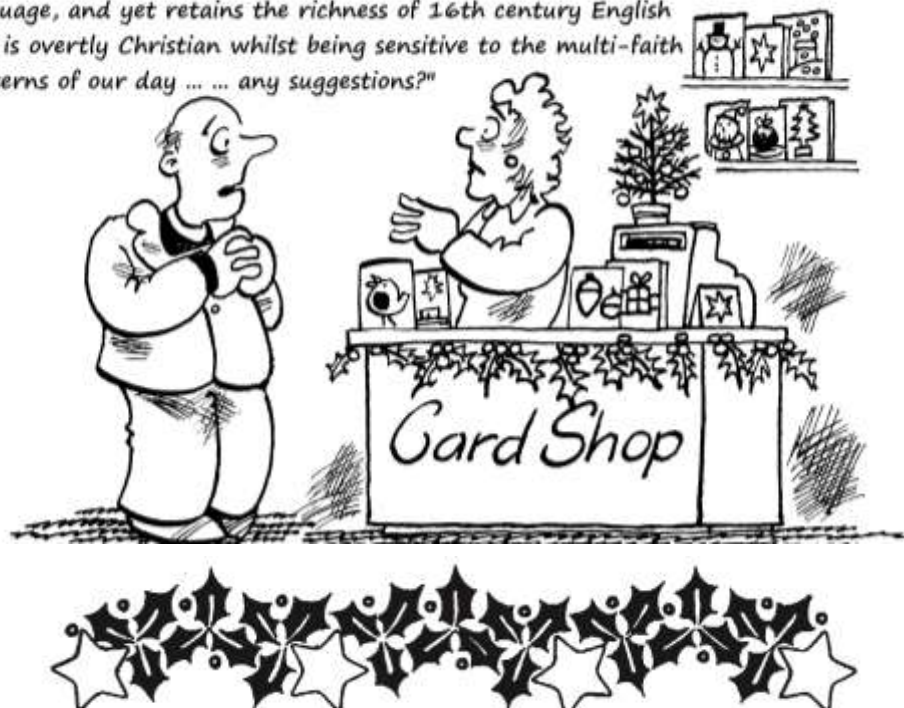
## Church communications

Contributions for the church magazine are welcome. We have several regular features that might reflect your interests—books, plants, nature, a favourite recipe? If you would like to share your thoughts on a particular saint who has inspired you, or a prayer that brings you comfort, please send them to:

[caroline.thornycroft@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.thornycroft@gmail.com)

If you don't use a computer, post your text to the Vicar, or leave it at the back of the church addressed to 'Editorial Team'. We'll type it up for you! The magazine can currently be found under 'documents' on the website. In this digital version we hope to use colour photographs and additional articles. There have been printer problems, as well as Covid-19 restrictions, but we hope to do a limited print run for those who don't access the magazine on-line. Let us know if you would like a copy.

*"I am looking for a Christmas Card that contains inclusive language, and yet retains the richness of 16th century English and is overtly Christian whilst being sensitive to the multi-faith patterns of our day ... any suggestions?"*





## **Pastoral letter**

**Rev'd Liz Dudley**

It's tempting to rush towards Christmas. Already people have their trees up and their lights on and with all the uncertainty and anxiety around, it's only natural to search for the bright bits and find comfort in habits and rituals.

All through the month of November and continuing into Advent, we have, at Morning Prayer, been working through the book of Revelation, of Daniel and now Isaiah. Books of prophecy and oracles, truths hidden in images and allegories...fearful pictures of beasts and terrible happenings. It has been hard going at times the Jesus of the sea shore, the fishing nets, the hillsides and the picnics seem a long way away.

The feast of Christ the King at the end of November brought us face to face with the One who is seated at the right hand of God...who will judge the living and the dead with righteousness and mercy and all around the awe-full majesty of Christ, the images and visions of what is to come, swirl and billow...visions that disturb and even terrify us.

Perhaps especially this year the storms of destruction and the tumult that surrounds us on a cosmic level have been experienced closer to home—the devastation caused by the Covid19 pandemic, the heating earth, the violence meted out by one human being to another—visions of reality that disturb and even terrify us. Yet just as the biblical visions point us to Jesus, the lamb who confronts the hideous beast, the baby lying wrapped in swaddling bands in a manger, so we catch a glimpse of stillness, of peace and of what it is to be without fear.

Yet as I imagine the baby in the manger while the dark night rages without the stable, another story comes to mind... of Jesus asleep... not in the hay, but on cushions in the bow of the fishing boat. As the death rate and numbers facing unemployment rise ever higher, as those already vulnerable become ever more so in this next phase of lock down, I hear the cry of the disciples... “Jesus, do you not care that we are perishing?”

During this season of Advent, we have another opportunity to consider who we think Jesus is and what difference he makes in our lives when some things just do not make sense, or threaten to overwhelm us completely. Having faith in Christ doesn't shield us from the anxieties and the woes of living in the world today, but it does shift our gaze and our perspective beyond what we experience now .to what is to come if we stand firm, and trust in God.

None of us knows what the New Year will bring, but I hope and pray that each of you will find something precious in this Christmas season, even if there is grief and disappointment about what is not there, and that this will be enough to carry us into God's future with hope and confidence and joy.

## **Worship**

It is a real joy that from 2 December we can, once again, meet in church to worship together. It feels as if it has been a very long month.

Thank you to those who have joined me on Zoom for the Daily Offices. I am intending to continue throughout Advent, so if you feel like coming along just use the ID and Passcode.

We have also invested in some more microphones and learnt how to use them, so hopefully, the sound quality of services will improve. The broadband in both churches has also been upgraded.

The rules about gathering for worship are clear that individuals **must not interact with others who are not in their household or bubble**. It is hard to remember this especially when seeing people who we have missed or have been thinking about. Please do your utmost to keep to these rules in the interests of the well being of one another.

## Christmas services

### Sunday 20th December

8.00am BCP Holy Communion CC  
9.00am Mossy Church CC  
10.00am Parish Eucharist St.M  
6.00pm Service of Music and Readings CC

### Sunday 27th December

8.30am Parish Eucharist St.M  
10.00am Parish Eucharist CC

### Each Wednesday

10.am Holy Communion at St. Marys

### Weekdays on Zoom

08:30 am Morning Prayer ID 525 657 0143  
Pass 049003

18:00 pm Evening Prayer ID 984 2413 5993  
Pass 345670

19.30pm Compline ID 972 9723 2736  
Pass 333368 (Wednesday only)



## Christmas traditions

### Deck the halls with holly and ivy

During December, as we look forward to celebrating the birth of Christ, we have fun decorating our homes. The spectacular Christmas tree in the centre of Frome was in place from early November, reminding us all of this special season and this year, in particular, people will probably enjoy creating Christmas decorations and lighting a candle in a window for the neighbours to enjoy as well. One of the good outcomes from our 'pandemic problems' has been getting to know our neighbours better! How fortunate we are that there's a jolly good local tradition for community celebrations. Frome families did wonderfully well with rainbows and Winter Wonderland Lanterns!

It's always interesting to see all sorts of traditions played out with regard to Christmas.

The oldest traditions for decorating our homes are holly, ivy and, of course, mistletoe. While holly and ivy are to be found in gardens and hedgerows, mistletoe usually only appears in greengrocers' shops, at florists, or high in a tree well out of reach. The farms where it is grown commercially are fascinating; perhaps we can go again next year!



## **Mistletoe**

Mistletoe is *hemiparasitic*, meaning that although its leaves enable it to feed itself through photosynthesis, its roots invade the host tree or shrub to extract water and other nutrients. Its favourite host trees are apple, lime, hawthorn, poplar or oak and it normally hangs as a large globe, tantalisingly high and totally visible once winter arrives and it is the only green left on the tree. There are some spectacular examples in Windsor Great Park, clearly visible from the path on the opposite side of the River Thames.

We all know about the almost translucent white berries, fleshy and sticky, which form in the forks of mistletoe's many branches. While they are toxic to humans, they are attractive to birds. When birds have enjoyed the juicy flesh, they wipe the remaining seeds off their beaks onto the nearest branch, like small children wiping sticky hands on any surface close by – mummy's face or clothes! With luck the seed remains stuck to the bark which is a neat way to spread the species.

In Greek mythology, mistletoe gave access to the Underworld. Romans thought it represented Peace, Love and Understanding and perhaps that is how it has sidled into our Christmas celebrations. The earliest documentary evidence for kissing under mistletoe dates from the sixteenth century. Some people think a berry should be removed after each kiss. Given the small size of pieces generally available these days, perhaps that is a practice not to be pursued if you are lucky enough to be in the kissing game.

## **Summary of Covid restrictions**

Across all tiers, everyone:

- must wear a face covering in most indoor public settings, unless they have an exemption
- should follow the rules on meeting others safely
- should attend school or college as normal, unless they are self-isolating; schools, universities, colleges and early years settings remain open in all tiers
- should walk or cycle where possible, plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes when travelling
- must follow the gathering limits at their tier except for in specific settings and circumstances.

Exemptions are detailed at the end of guidance

### **A note on places of worship**

- Places of worship remain open but you must not socialise with people from outside your household or support bubble while you are indoors there, unless a legal exemption applies
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees
- 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies and receptions
- 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events such as wakes, or stone settings.
- if you live in a tier 2 area, you must continue to follow tier 2 rules when you travel to a tier 1 area.
- Avoid travel to or overnight stays in tier 3 areas other than when necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities.
- You can travel through a tier 3 area as part of a longer journey.

## Prayer Diary for December 2020

		<b>Church Family &amp; the Parish</b>	<b><i>Our Community</i></b>	<b>The Wider Community</b>
1	T	Our vicar Liz and her family	<i>Other churches in Frome</i>	The Queen & the Royal Family
2	W	Clergy who assist in our Benefice	<i>All those in care</i>	Our preparation for Celebrating Christ's Birth
3	Th	Sides Persons & Chalice Bearers	<i>Graham, our Rural Dean</i>	Archbishops of Canterbury and York
4	F	The Garden Nursery	<i>The people of Murrhardt</i>	All those ill with, or adversely affected by coronavirus
5	Sat	Churchwardens & P.C.C	<i>Those using Food Banks</i>	Final stages of the Brexit Transition
6	Sun	All those recently baptised	<i>Those struggling with debt and long-term unemployment</i>	Peace in the Middle East
7	M	Pastoral Workers	<i>Farleigh College &amp; North Hill House</i>	Thanksgiving for the Blessed Virgin Mary
8	T	Choir and Organists	<i>The Elizabeth Anne-Charity</i>	The situation in Syria
9	W	Sacristans & Servers	<i>All at Frome Medical Practice</i>	All those affected by terrorist attacks.
10	Th	All who worship at St Mary's & Christ Church	<i>Tall Trees Kindergarten</i>	Médecins Sans Frontières
11	F	Family Service/Junior Church & leaders	<i>Care Home</i>	Aid and Relief Workers
12	Sat	Readers & Intercessors	<i>Bishop Peter</i>	The Salvation Army
13	Sun	New Prayer & Study Group	<i>All who use Frome Community College</i>	All those rebuilding after natural disasters
14	M	All those recently married	<i>The Hospital Service</i>	War and famine in Africa
15	T	The Magazine Team	<i>Local prisons</i>	The many issues surrounding "Black Lives Matter"
16	W	Christ Church School	<i>Carol Concerts and Services throughout the town</i>	"Crisis at Christmas"
17	Th	Those who are ill or infirm	<i>The Mayor &amp; Local Council</i>	Refugees & migrants and international solutions
18	F	New initiatives in the Benefice	<i>Christian healing ministry in Frome</i>	Our Government and Parliament
19	Sat	Our work with young people	<i>"Bethlehem Link"</i>	Afghanistan and Iraq
20	Sun	Our Christmas Services and their witness	<i>Frome Community Hospital staff and patients</i>	The Armed Forces stationed abroad & their families back home
21	M	Those in administrative roles	<i>School</i>	The situation in Yemen
22	T	The elderly & housebound	<i>HOPEFrome</i>	Goodwill Children's Homes (India)
23	W	Mothers' Union.	<i>Youth Work in Frome</i>	The lonely & those separated from loved ones at Christmas
24	Th	All who visit St Mary's & Christ Church this Christmas	<i>All who work over Christmas for our comfort, safety &amp; health</i>	Family gatherings and reunions
25	F	Lay Readers	<i>Downside Abbey</i>	Those unknown to us who need prayers
26	Sat	Needleworkers	<i>Rest time for our clergy following Christmas</i>	Christians facing persecution
27	Sun	Flower Arrangers	<i>Meals on Wheels</i>	Thanksgiving for John's Gospel
28	M	Deanery Synod	<i>All those with addictions</i>	Those ordained this year
29	T	Social committee & Coffee teams	<i>The homeless &amp; those living on the streets</i>	Zambia Link
30	W	All who tend the church buildings and grounds	<i>Our local MP</i>	Thanksgiving and Remembrance for 2020
31	Th	Those recently bereaved	<i>Bath &amp; Wells Diocese.</i>	Preparing for a New Year

## **A Morning Prayer**

*William Barclay*

O God our Father,  
Who makes the light shine out of the darkness,  
We thank Thee for this new day.  
Grant that we waste none of its hours,  
Soil none of its moments,  
Neglect none of its opportunities.  
Bring us to the evening time  
Undeclared by any temptation,  
At peace with ourselves,  
At peace with our fellow-men  
And at peace with Thee.  
This we ask for Thy love's sake,  
Amen

## **An Evening Prayer**

Send your peace in  
to my heart, O Lord,  
That I may be contented  
with the mercies of this day  
and confident of your protection for this  
night;  
And having forgiven others,  
even as you forgive me,  
May I go to rest in tranquility and trust;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **St. Francis of Assisi**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
who kindles the flame of your love  
in the hearts of the saints,  
grant to our minds the same faith  
and power of love:  
that as we rejoice in their triumphs,  
we may profit by their examples  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
Amen  
(from the Gothic Missal)

## **The prayers of the church**

We have been asked to pray for  
all those affected by the Covid 19 virus  
and agencies working to find a solution.

We remember by name:

Brian Green, Sally Jackson, Helen Herniman,  
Jazz & Darren, Christ Church 1st School,  
Selwood Academy & Frome Community College,  
Belmont Villa & Greenhill Grange Care Homes

Those serving in the Armed Forces  
and Emergency Services

We remember by name:

Dean, Hayden, Nick & Ian A.J, Alan C,  
Anthony D, Bertie, Bp Peter, Brian, Charlotte,  
Coral, Crawfie, Fr David, David G and Janna,  
David L, Di and family, Doreen, Elizabeth,  
Gordon, Gwenn, Hannah, Haydn, Jean, Judy,  
June, Kate, Maggie, Marlene, Mary, The Mason  
Family, Nellie, Bp Peter, Peter and Tina, Roberta,  
Sarah, Suzie, Verity, Fr. Eric

## **Recently Departed**

Audrey Maloney

## **Year's Mind**

Anthony Whorlow, Maria Tavener,  
Richard Trevillian, Betty Tingey, Maddy Armour,  
Cecil Ernest Goodall, Gladys Davis, Jack Dinmore,  
Thomas Williamson, David Hannant,  
Heidi Dowden, Mike Owen, Donald Pitcher,  
Ernest Gill, Maurice Dobbs, Molly Wheeler,  
Janet Press, Joan Childs, Anthony Barefield;  
Charles Mitchell; Clara Harrison, Auntie; John Skipper; Robin Clark





## **We're all invited to sing**

**Why:** It's Christmas

**When:** Wednesday 16 and Thursday 24 December at 6pm

**Where:** Our doorsteps, at open windows, or inside

**Who:** FromeFM (96.6FM) Radio and us

**Tune in! Turn up! Sing along!**

Carols can be downloaded from: [www.doorstepcarols.co.uk](http://www.doorstepcarols.co.uk)

We all know that singing together lifts the spirits like few other things! Let's support the idea to sing along with our neighbours in time honoured tradition, whatever else is going on later in December.

The sing-along suggestion from Shropshire is being shared across the nation. If you don't have a printer, or a handy iPad, ask a neighbour to print out the carols for you and your family so that you can all join in and *'Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!'*

The Frome idea of window displays is also being adopted far and wide. The 'Winter Wonderland' theme is followed by 'Windows of Hope' to add to the Christmas spirit during December.

Let's keep them shining while we sing carols together on 16 and 24 December!

## **We're also invited to sing at Christ Church on Christmas Eve**

**Dress warmly and meet us outside at 2pm!**

## **Keeping in Touch**

During this time of lockdown, we are trying to keep in touch with congregation members via telephone. Sometimes it is difficult because we simply do not have contact details.

If you would appreciate a call, help to do shopping, or anything else, please let churchwardens know, tell us at: [admin@christchurch-stmarys-frome.co.uk](mailto:admin@christchurch-stmarys-frome.co.uk)



"Your word is a lamp  
for my feet,  
a light for my path"  
Psalm 119:105

# Trust, Joy and Resilience

by Rupert Kaye

## Habakkuk

Early one school morning, exactly halfway through the four-week national lockdown, as I was spending a little quiet time with God, this scripture came to mind:

### Trust and Joy in the Midst of Trouble

Though the fig tree does not blossom,  
and no fruit is on the vines;  
though the produce of the olive fails  
and the fields yield no food;  
though the flock is cut off from the fold  
and there is no herd in the stalls,  
yet I will rejoice in the Lord;  
I will exult in the God of my salvation.

*Habakkuk 3:17–18 (NRSV)*

It seems uncannily apt for this season of COVID.

Habakkuk's words provided me with much to ponder. This was my initial response:

### Trust and Joy in the Midst of a Pandemic

Though many businesses struggle with reduced income  
and have had to move trade online;  
though many workers have been working at home alone,  
or have been furloughed or made redundant;  
though many households now rely upon food banks  
and the kindness of strangers and vouchers from government;  
though many families have been kept apart by lockdown rules  
and others have been forced together by lockdown rules;  
though adult relationships have been stress-tested to failure  
and children have witnessed or experienced domestic violence;  
though many millions are sick with worry  
and in need of mental, emotional, spiritual and physical healing;  
though the Christian 'flock' may not gather offline,  
for fellowship, teaching and worship;  
yet I will rejoice in the Lord;  
I will exult in the God of my salvation.

(Inspired by *Habakkuk 3:17–18*)

## Building resilience

When I wrote my Habakkuk-inspired meditation, little did I know that later that very morning an email from the Diocese of Bath and Wells would link me with an article about building resilience. (There is no such thing as a coincidence, only a God-incidence!)

The article summarised key sections of a document entitled *Called, Connected, Committed: 24 Leadership Practices for Educational Leaders* by David Ford and Andy Wolfe, published in 2020 by the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership.

On page 25, Ford and Wolfe write: "Resilience is often offered as a catch-all solution to many of the pressures we face – if only the children, teachers, or budget were more resilient."

It's a pervasive concept. From Latin roots, we draw the English verb 'to resile' – meaning 'to return to the same place', to 'spring back', or 'return to normal'."

Resilience, Ford and Wolfe contend, is more than determination, grit, hanging in there, or getting through. And, although (thankfully, here in the UK in 2020) school leaders do not face 'physical persecution, fear, imprisonment or beatings ...' they will daily be confronted with severe challenges to their resilience – discipline, budget cuts, complaints, safeguarding tragedies, exclusions, accountability'.

### **Bouncing back stronger**

For Ford and Wolfe, 'the upside-down ecology of God's kingdom' offers hope in the face of adversity. They say: "The Christian life does not offer exemption from challenge, or removal of suffering. Rather it gives us a lens through which to see our challenges, and recognises that in our most challenging or painful times, God is at work in us, both as individuals and teams – guiding, strengthening, refining and re-focusing us, enabling us to bounce back stronger."

And, there it is! That's my first "Called, Connected, Committed" takeaway. Whether we are experiencing misfortune, facing misery or learning from our own mistakes, we can "bounce back stronger"! Even a leader confronted by calamitous setbacks and afflicted by adversity has an opportunity to learn, grow and flourish as a leader. Similarly, a team/school/church/ business encountering difficulty or disaster may, as both Joe Biden and Boris Johnson have said this year, "Build back better!"

My second takeaway from "Called, Connected, Committed" is that God is alongside us on our journey. We are not alone, even though it may feel like that. God co-suffers, co-endures, and co-perseveres with us. This reminds me of the 'Footprints in the Sand' poem, which ends with the words: "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you. Never, ever, during your trials and testings."

### **Footprints in the Sand**

One night I dreamed a dream.  
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.  
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.  
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,  
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.  
After the last scene of my life flashed before me,  
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,  
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,  
there was only one set of footprints.  
This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.  
"Lord, You said once if I decided to follow You,  
You'd walk with me all the way.  
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,  
there was only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."  
He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you.  
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.  
When you saw only one set of footprints,  
It was then that I carried you."

And there we have it. Whether we know it or acknowledge it, God is with us all the time. And 'God with us' is my way to 'segue' into the season of Advent.

## **Emmanuel**

One of the precious titles for Jesus we celebrate at Christmas time is 'Emmanuel', which means 'God with us'. But, as Chaplain Mike the Internet Monk (Yes, really!) puts it, "When we use that title, we tend to think of it in completely positive ways, in ways that bless and benefit our lives."

Chaplain Mike's examples include:

*God is with us* to save us, to redeem us, to reconcile us to God.

*God is with us* to take our side in life's battles and defeat the powers of sin, death and hell that are arrayed against us.

*God is with us* to teach us and help us understand who God is and, by extension, what God has created this world and human beings to be — to show us the purpose and meaning of the life God created.

*God is with us* to identify with us in our human struggles and sufferings. God is with us to have compassion on us, to touch and heal us.

*God is with us* to comfort us in our sorrows.

*God is with us* to forgive our sins, to cleanse and renew us so that we might experience the fullness of what it means to be human: to love others, to bless the world by living lives of justice and peace.

Chaplain Mike goes on to say, "When God comes to us, it may not only bring blessing, but also cause disruption." For example:

God may come and find us unprepared to handle the changes God will bring.

God may come to tell us hard truths that we will find hard to face.

God may come and we could face decisions that will be difficult to make.

God may come and it might suddenly become clear that we have assumptions about life that we need to outgrow, blind spots that need to be dealt with, and challenges we've been avoiding, but which now must be faced.

## **I will rejoice in the Lord**

In conclusion – with the wisdom of Habakkuk, and the insights of David Ford, Andy Wolfe and Chaplain Mike, the Internet Monk, ringing in my ears – I'd like to say this ...

Come what may, and in spite of every challenge, let us respond to the problems around us today, tomorrow and the days after that with courage and resilience, buoyed up by the knowledge that God is with us every step of the way. Let us say with confidence: "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation."

And all the people said, "Amen!"

### **Christ Church's school vision statement:**

**We want Christ Church to be a shining example of Jesus' love and kindness. We are an inclusive Christian learning community where everyone is welcome and valued, and all are inspired to be the best they can be. We want all children to thrive and flourish in every way, developing a love of learning, discovering their unique strengths and talents, and growing in character and confidence so that their light shines brightly for all to see.**

### **Please pray for Christ Church C of E First School and Nursery**



Please remember the pupils, parents, staff and governors at Christ Church C of E First School and Nursery in your thoughts and prayers. Pray especially for John Price (Chair of Governors) and Rupert Kaye (Headteacher) as they lead the school. "Lord, bless the plans to improve outdoor learning spaces for the benefit of Christ Church's youngest pupils. Pray that people across the parish and benefice will be excited by this vision and will be prompted to offer support with bird tables, plants, cash and prayer!"

## **Eco-news: the 30 by 30 pledge**

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's commitment to protect 30% of the UK's land to support the recovery of nature added to existing commitments to protect 30% of our seas has been termed the '30 by 30' pledge: an undertaking to protect 30% of land and sea as a commitment to put nature on a path to recovery by 2030. Regrettably, the 2010 commitment to halt biodiversity loss by 2020 failed to be enacted, but it is undeniable that this could be good news if the catchy headline is underpinned by sound policies.

A number of potential issues have been highlighted by Colin Beale, an A Rocha UK Trustee. He wrote: 'During his statement, the Prime Minister claimed that 26% of the UK is already protected for nature. His calculations assumed National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are protections that benefit nature. This is wrong: these are recognitions of landscape value and do not confer additional legal protection on wildlife. Adding 4% more land to our National Park network will certainly not put nature on a path to recovery: we must ensure the 30% of our land covered under this pledge holds nature conservation as a primary management objective. Upgrading National Parks and AONBs in this way would be an exciting step, but it is unclear if the government has this plan.'

He added, 'Also ignored during the PM's statement was any commitment to improve the status of our existing natural protected areas. Exactly how much of the UK is protected for nature is surprisingly difficult to compute, but legal protection is probably given to nature on approximately 14% of land, mostly protected as biological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs, or ASSIs in Northern Ireland). Unfortunately, more than 60% of English and Welsh sites are currently in an 'unfavourable conservation status', according to the government's own data. If additional protected areas are to result in benefits for nature we must ensure protection means beneficial management in all areas.'

Notwithstanding the criticisms and scepticism, the Prime Minister's '30 by 30' commitment is seen as a positive step for conservation. If it is to provide the breakthrough for nature that is so desperately needed, we must all ensure the government's promise is followed by meaningful actions: to benefit nature the new areas need to be in the right places, must adequately protect the features they seek to cover, and all our protected areas must be restored to their full potential. In addition, we can all play our part. Churchyards throughout the country are being managed to offer vital habitats. Every little helps, from window sill to garden and allotment!



## Plants please



### Parsley if possible

The herb that remains unbeaten for flavour, health and good looks is parsley. It will grow throughout the cold months and is available year round. Whether flat-leaf, or the crinkly variety, parsley is pretty and it contains iron, calcium, vitamins A and C, as well as flavonoids which help to control allergies. It is used for decoration and served fresh, or cooked, as its aromatic flavour lends a lift to every conceivable dish from soups to stews and sauces.

Myths and legends have kept pace with this vigorous herb since the days when Greek and Roman warriors fed it to their horses. It is said the proper time to plant it is on Good Friday when the church bells are ringing. Putting a sprig on food was once believed to be a sign of goodwill as it is an antidote to poison. The practice has continued and many people these days think decorating food with parsley is to keep the flies away!

Flat-leaf parsley is popular in salad, especially in spring when it is new and tender. Tossed in olive oil and fresh lemon juice with a variety of new green leaves, rocket, lettuce and lamb's ear spinach, it is delicious.

Parsley finely blended with garlic and olive oil makes *persillade*, which is similar to the combination made with basil that we call *green pesto*. *Persillade* is a healthier option than the better known parsley butter and it will turn a humble baked potato into a feast. It can be added to any rice or pasta dish, whipped into creamy mashed potato, put in savoury pastry and cheese scones with chives, or added to bread dough. It can even be dipped in batter and fried. A sprinkle here and there will keep you in excellent health.

### Garlic is good for you too

Now an essential part of so many kitchens and gardens, garlic has valuable health benefits. It lowers blood pressure, fat and cholesterol levels and is a natural antibiotic, combating infections. In our family a clove is swallowed whole at the slightest hint of a sneeze.

Add garlic to your parsley *persillade* or make a salad dressing; use the back of a teaspoon and some salt to squash it into a fine paste, add favourite herbs, thyme is a favourite, and blend it with olive oil and apple cider vinegar, or lemon juice; grand as a baste for roast chicken, or sprinkled on roast potatoes as they come out of the oven.



Garlic planted in autumn will be ready to reap in July. Some varieties, such as *Messidrome* and *Germidour*, can be planted from October to January and so it is not yet too late to plant a few cloves of garlic to eat in 2021. Garlic is an allium, part of the onion **family**. Onions are one of our most invaluable vegetables and one of civilisation's oldest medicines. They also help lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels and are anti-asthmatic, antibacterial and antiseptic.

While we are thinking about alliums, we mustn't forget the humble chive. All allium flowers are really good for many insects and a clump of chives in flower is a great joy for bees in particular!

### Vegetarian Christmas Feast?

A favourite is roast pumpkin because you can make it look quite marvellous. Cut the top off, ideally in a star shape, and scoop out the pips. Sprinkle old fashioned brown sugar and butter inside and stuff it with your usual mix of breadcrumbs, chopped onions, herbs and seasoning. We add an egg beaten into sour cream with salt and pepper, a fair amount of nutmeg, a little olive oil and toasted nuts and seeds. Put the lid back and lightly butter or oil the outside before wrapping it in tinfoil. Bake until it is soft and serve like a 'Horn of Plenty' decorated with carrots and mange tout Brussel sprouts and other pretty vegetables sticking out and around it. It can be cut like a cake and probably the skin will be soft enough to eat.

# Saints

## St Eglantyne

Eglantyne Jebb is a modern-day saint whose compassion and determination saved literally millions of lives. She founded '**Save the Children**' at a time of great necessity and her legacy lives on. This remarkable woman, with a name one doesn't hear much in this century, did not begin as an obvious 'mover and shaker' of people. Born in Shropshire in 1876, she grew up in Ellesmere, studied history at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford, taught at Marlborough, and then resigned as she was not physically robust.

She moved to live with her mother in Cambridge, where it would have been easy to settle for a life of peaceful obscurity, but she was a Christian, and at Oxford she had developed a passion for social concerns. She felt compelled to take action and started researching poverty in Cambridge. In 1906 she published her findings. In 1912 the Balkan Wars broke out, and Eglantyne left Cambridge for Macedonia. Her months among the refugees led her to decide that long-term constructive aid was more effective than short-term handouts.

The First World War left Eglantyne horrified by the prolonged Allied blockade on Germany and Austria-Hungary, which even after Armistice meant starvation for millions of civilians, especially children. And so in 1919 Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy Buxton helped found the 'Fight the Famine' Council, which wanted to end the blockade and establish a League of Nations.

One day during a rally in Trafalgar Square, Eglantyne was arrested for distributing a leaflet showing starving children which read: 'Our blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death.' She ended up in court and was fined, but the judge was so impressed with Eglantyne's commitment to children that he himself paid her fine. His money became the first donation to **Save the Children**, the new charity just set up by Eglantyne and Dorothy.

**Save the Children** was officially launched at the Albert Hall in May 1919, with the aim of helping the starving civilians of central Europe. It was a success, raising £400,000 in that first year alone. When in the autumn of 1921 Russia was facing famine, **Save the Children** chartered a cargo ship, the SS Torcello, to carry 600 tons of lifesaving food and medical supplies to Russia – saving hundreds of thousands of lives. By 1922 **Save the Children** had become one of Britain's biggest charities. Eglantyne's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1923, was adopted by the League of Nations.

Last year, the **Save the Children** global movement reached 40.8 million children across 117 countries including here in the UK, thanks to the help of supporters like you. The postal address for donations is: Save the Children, 1 St John's Lane, London, EC1M 4AR

## Saint Osmond

Osmond is less well known. He was one of the Normans who followed William the Conqueror to England from France shortly after the memorable year of 1066. He became famous in the West Country through his association with **Salisbury Cathedral** and so when we can visit there again, we'll remember him and recall the attributes that make him sound like someone we'd be very pleased to welcome to our shores in 2020.

He was no soldier, but a gifted and godly man, with a great gift of administration. He became royal chaplain and then chancellor in 1072. In 1078 he was made Bishop of Salisbury. As such, he completed and consecrated the cathedral, and formed such an outstanding chapter and constitution that it later became a model for other English cathedrals. He took part in the preparation of the **Domesday Book**, and was present when it was presented to William in April 1086. He died in 1099, well respected for his purity and learning, and his lack of avarice and ambition.



## What are you reading?

Dorothy Day, who created the Catholic Worker movement that opened up houses of hospitality all over the USA, wanted to be remembered as a lover of books and considered her call to love her neighbour came through avid reading. As a young woman she read authors with a heart for the poor, Dickens, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy and came to see working people through their eyes." *The Tablet*

I would like to share comments from Zena Hiltz on being a bookworm:

"Reading at its best is a mode of communion..."

"When we read or study seriously, not to compete for status or to distract ourselves, we encounter the object of our attention in all of its messy, unpredictable reality. Such reading and thinking involves discipline to undertake and a willingness to surrender to whatever one may find. We may not know in advance how entering a fictional world or considering a philosophical theorem might change us. ...

"Perhaps reading and writing books is one of the last defences human dignity has left, because in the end they remind us of what God once reminded us before He too evaporated in this age of relentless humiliations – that we are more than ourselves; that we have souls."

## Cultivating names

Our inherited vocabulary can be taken for granted – but it is laden with meanings and understanding its etymology can unpack the experience of our ancestors. Flower names are rich with medieval ideas on art and nature. Many of us have common daisies in our lawn and marigolds self-seeding in the borders. But did you know that the name 'daisy' comes from 'day's eye'? Like the marigold, it opens in sunshine and closes at dusk. So it seeks the light and rejects the darkness – a Christ-like flower. Look closely: its white petals tinged with pink speak of Christ's bloodstains; as a motif the daisy is laced through the margins of Books of Hours.

The closely related marigold is 'Mary's Gold', its long petals collecting dew and dripping as if with tears at dawn. It flowers through 'Ladytide' – the liturgical calendar with the main feasts of the Virgin, from early spring to the autumn frosts. The marigold was usually depicted in the margins around the lamentation of the Virgin. It's a little-known fact that the King and Queen of heaven's flowers were used to represent our monarchs at the end of the Middle Ages.



**The name 'daisy' comes from 'day's eye'**

## Keeping up appearances

The appearances of plants were crucial to understanding the intention of their maker. It was thought that God's purpose in nature was to remind us of biblical truths, as the *Wisdom of Solomon* explains that God ordered all things in measure and number and weight. The number three was thought Trinitarian – an open iris looks like a paternoster triangle showing God, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The number five – a common array of petals – suggested the five wounds of Christ. Combine that number with the colour red, and you have five bloody wounds. No wonder the red rose of five petals is seen in so many churches, and was chosen as an emblem by the warrior king Edward III, even before the Lancastrian dynasty adopted it.

But not all plants relayed biblical symbolism through their shape and colour. Many were known for their medicinal properties, as shown in illustrated copies of the *Tacuinum Sanitatis*, an 11th-century Arab book on health by Ibn Butlan of Baghdad, which became popular in Christian Europe. Visual associations were informative to medieval medicine. Walnuts, for example, were thought to be good for the brain.

### Seek out the saintly

Plants were also associated with saints. Look for roses in churches and cathedrals dedicated in whole or part to St Mary the Virgin, as in Lincoln, Lichfield, Exeter, and Salisbury, and grapes in those dedicated to St John the Evangelist, for example, at Beverley Minster.

### Discover associations

Illustrated manuscripts are fascinating and the library at Downside a real treat, when doors open and we can book a visit again. If you look closely at margins, you'll see how the behaviour of insects and animals complements the flowers. A good example is that of butterflies, which are often associated with red carnations. They emerge from their tomb-like chrysalis with wings that take them heavenward, so they represent the reincarnation of Christ from which the carnation took its name.

### Dip into a good book

Explore this subject further through:

- *The Oak King, the Holly King and the Unicorn: the myths and symbolism of the Unicorn Tapestries* by John Williamson, published by Harper Collins
- *Flowers of the Renaissance* by Celia Fisher, published by Frances Lincoln
- *Lincoln Cathedral: The Biography of a Great Building* and *Lichfield Cathedral: A Journey of Discovery* by Jonathan Foyle, both published by Scala Arts & Heritage Publishers Ltd

**We hope you will send in 200 to 400 words on the books, or book, you have most enjoyed reading. Let us know if you want your name mentioned and send your contributions by email to: [caroline.thornycroft@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.thornycroft@gmail.com)**



## God in the Sciences

*This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.*

### Follow the Star

Jesus' welcoming committee included Eastern scholars who learned about His birth through their study of astrology. I can't help thinking that the arrival of these people at Bethlehem is a link between a very early form of science, albeit mixed in with their own form of religion, and Christian faith. What better way to discover God than to explore the world and follow the evidence wherever it leads? But what exactly was the star of Bethlehem? Scientists have investigated this question over the centuries, coming up with a variety of answers.

First, there is the idea of a supernova: the massively bright explosion caused by a dying star. On rare occasions a supernova can be seen from Earth with the naked eye, remaining visible for several months. We now know that Herod the Great died around 4BC, so the actual date of Jesus' birth must be a little earlier. The supernovae that might match this timing were one in the Andromeda galaxy between March 8BC and September 7BC, and another in the constellation of Capricorn in the Spring of 5BC.

Next, comes a planetary conjunction. The alignment most commonly associated with the star of Bethlehem was between Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces in 7BC, but not everyone is sure whether this would be extraordinary enough to be the 'star' mentioned in the Bible.

Finally, the bright astronomical object that drew the Magi could have been a comet. This idea came from Sir Colin Humphreys, Professor of Materials Science at Cambridge University, and Oxford astronomer WG Waddington, who found that a comet was recorded by Chinese astronomers between March and May, 5BC. Humphreys then speculated that the 'no room at the inn' scenario came about because Jesus was born during Passover, and the Magi visited Jesus in May or June. There's little argument from historians that Jesus of Nazareth existed. Whatever the true explanation for the 'Star of Bethlehem' may be, there's plenty of evidence that an astronomical event could have happened at the time of His birth.

## Jane's Recipes!

When thinking about this month's recipe I thought that I would let you have my 'posh lamb stew' as the more irreverent members of the family call it. It is in fact quite simple and is great as it will keep warm on the oven if you are not sure when visitors are going to arrive. It is also good made the day

before and cooled down and put in the fridge as then if there is then any spare fat it will come to the top and solidify as lamb shoulder is a very tasty joint but is inclined to be a bit fatty – this gives it the flavour! So, skim it off and heat up the next day when required (make sure you heat it right the way through though.)

Jane M



### Ragout d'Agneau

2 lb lean bones lamp, leg or shoulder – I find that you can often get some very good cubed frozen lamb which is very good and less expensive than fresh.

3 good table spoons red wine vinegar, or if you are feeling extravagant red wine leftovers – if you ever have any!

1 ½ ozs flour

Salt and pepper

2 tablsps oil

1 oz Butter

2 mm carrots

4 oz button Onions, skinned 9lf not then a couple of mm onions in 1/4s

4oz button mushrooms, wiped

¾ pt beef stock

2 tblsp tomato puree paste

1 bayleaf

1 Bouquet garni

Cube lamb, place in poly bag with vinegar. Shake well and put in a deep bowl. Leave to marinade. Leave to marinade overnight if poss in the fridge. Next day, drain meat and dry on kitchen paper. Reserve juices. Toss in seasoned flour. Melt oil and butter in frying pan, fry meal until sealed and brown. Remove. Add carrots and onions to pan and fry for 5 mins. Place with meat and mushrooms in tightly lidded casserole. Pour stock into pan and stir. Add reserved juices, tomato paste, bay leaf and bouquet garni. Bring to boil, pour over meat and cover. Cook 325°F Gas 3 (Fan 130°C, 150°C) for about 2 ½ hours. Remove Bay Leaf and Bouquet Garni. Spoon off excess fat, Serve with rice, baked potatoes or hot French bread.





## Comfort and Joy

Churches all over the country will be marking Advent and Christmas in both new and familiar ways this year. The Church of England's 2020 Christmas campaign, 'Comfort and Joy', has been designed to help

enrich Christmas for all of us. It features daily reflections for the Christmas season from Kate Bottley, Jonathan Bryan, Bob Chilcot, Martha Collison, Stephen Cottrell, Guli Francis-Dehqani, Chine McDonald, Sally Phillips and Justin Welby.

Beginning on Christmas Day and ending on 2 January, every day explores a Bible reading and a familiar carol, encouraging us to consider Christmas in these extraordinary times, and inviting us to hear again the message of the angels – good news of God's unfailing love for a world that is weary and hurting.

### Smile lines for December

*Here are some titles of Christmas carols, as (mis)understood by children...*

Deck the Halls with Buddy Holly

We three kings of porridge and tar

On the first day of Christmas my tulip gave to me

Later on we'll perspire, as we dream by the fire

Noel, Noel, Barney's the king of Israel

With the jelly toast proclaim

Olive, the other reindeer

Sleep in heavenly peas

O come, froggy faithful.



"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think that the Angel of the Lord Zooming with the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."

### This Christmas

If you are fortunate enough to spend this Christmas with your family,

remember that a certain friction between the generations is inevitable. After all, the young and the old have all the answers and those in between are stuck with all the questions.

### Next Christmas

William had just taken a selfie with his grandmother who'd come to stay for Christmas and her 89th birthday. "Granny, I hope I'm around next year to photograph you on your 90th birthday," he said tactfully. "Why shouldn't you be?" his grandmother replied. "You look healthy enough."

### Christmas cake

Every Christmas, composer Giacomo Puccini would have a cake baked for each of his friends. One year, having quarrelled with Arturo Toscanini just before Christmas, he tried to cancel the order for the conductor's cake. But it was too late; the cake had already been dispatched and so he sent a short message: 'Cake sent by mistake.'

The following day, Puccini received a telegram from Toscanini: 'Cake eaten by mistake.'

## December Prayers

		<b>Morning Prayer</b>	<b>Evening Prayer</b>
1st	Tuesday	Psalm 80 Isaiah 40 v1-13 Revelation 20	Psalm 74 Isaiah 26 v 1-13 Matthew 12 v 22-37
2nd	Wednesday	Psalm 7 Isaiah 43 v 14-end Revelation 21 v 1-8	Psalm 77 Isaiah 28 v 1-132 Matthew 12 v 38-end
3rd	Thursday	Psalm 42 Isaiah 44 v 1-8 Revelation 21 v 9-21	Psalm 40 Isaiah 28 v 14-end Matthew 13 v 1-23
4th	Friday	Psalm 25 Isaiah 44 v 9-23 Revelation 21 v 22 - 22 v 5	Psalm 17 Isaiah 29 v 1-14 Matthew 13 v 24-43
5th	Saturday	Psalm 9 Isaiah 44 v 24 - 45 v 13 Revelation 22 v 6 - end	Psalm 27 Isaiah 29 15-end Matthew 13 v 44-end
6th	Sunday	Psalm 80 Baruch 5 v1-9 Luke 1 v 5-20	Psalm 40 1 Kings 22 v 1-28 Romans 15 v 4-13
7th	Monday	Psalm 44 Isaiah 45 v 14-end 1 Thessalonians 1	Psalm 144 Isaiah 30 v 1-18 Matthew 14 v 1-12
8th	Tuesday	Psalm 56 Isaiah 46 1 Thessalonians 2 v 1-12	Psalm 11 Isaiah 30 v 19-end Matthew 14 v 13-end
9th	Wednesday	Psalm 62 Isaiah 47 1 Thessalonians 2 v 13-end	Psalm 10 Isaiah 31 Matthew 15 v 1-20
10th	Thursday	Psalm 54 Isaiah 48 v 1-11 1 Thessalonians 3	Psalm 73 Isaiah 32 Matthew 15 v 21-28
11th	Friday	Psalm 86 Isaiah 48 v 12-end 1 Thessalonians 4 v 1-12	Psalm 90 Isaiah 33 v 1-22 Matthew 16 v 1-121
12th	Saturday	Psalm 145 Isaiah 49 v 1-13 1 Thessalonians 4 v 13-end	Psalm 94 Isaiah 35 Matthew 16 v 1-12
13th	Sunday	Psalm 50 v 1-6 Isaiah 12 Luke 1 v 57-66	Psalm 68 v1-19 Malachi 3 v1 - 4;4 Philippians 4 v 4-7
14th	Monday	Psalm 40 Isaiah 49 v 14-25 1 Thessalonians 5 v 1-11	Psalm 26 Isaiah 38 v 1-8, 21-22 Matthew 16 v 13-end
15th	Tuesday	Psalm 70 Isaiah 50 1 Thessalonians 5 v 12-end	Psalm 50 Isaiah 38 v 9-20 Matthew 17 v 1-13

16th	Wednesday	Psalm 75 Isaiah 50 v 1-8 2 Thessalonians 1	Psalm 82 Isaiah 39 Matthew 17 v 14-21
17th	Thursday	Psalm 76 Isaiah 50 v 9-16 2 Thessalonians 2	Psalm 44 Zephaniah 1 v 1 - 2.3 Matthew 17 v 22-end
18th	Friday	Psalm 98 Isaiah 51 v 17-end 2 Thessalonians 3	Psalm 49 Zephaniah 3 v 1-13 Matthew 18 v 1-20
19th	Saturday	Psalm 146 Isaiah 52 v 1-12 Jude	Psalm 57 Zephaniah 3 v 14-end Matthew 18 v 21-end
20th	Sunday	Psalm 144 Isaiah 7 v 10-16 Romans 1 v 1-7	Psalm 113 Zephaniah 2 v 10-end Luke 1 v 39-55
21st	Monday	Psalm 121 Isaiah 52 v 13 - end 53 2 Peter 1 v 1-15	Psalm 84 Malachi 19 v 1-12 Matthew 19 v 1-12
22nd	Tuesday	Psalm 124 Isaiah 54 2 Peter 1 v 16 - 2.3	Psalm 48 Malachi 2 v 1-16 Matthew 19 v 13-15
23rd	Wednesday	Psalm 130 Isaiah 55 2 Peter 2 v 4-end	Psalm 89 v 1-37 Malachi 2 v 27 - 3.12 Matthew 19 v 16-end
24th	Thursday	Psalm 45 Isaiah 56 v 1-8 2 Peter 3	Psalm 85 Zechariah 2 Revelation 1 v 1-8
25th	Friday	Psalm 110 Isaiah 62 v 1-5 Matthew 1 v 18-end	Psalm 8 Isaiah 65 v 17-25 Philippians 2 v 5-11
26th	Saturday	Psalm 130 Jeremiah 26 v 12-15 Acts 6	Psalm 86 Genesis 4 v 1-10 Matthew 23 v 34-end
27th	Sunday	Psalm 21 Exodus 33 v 12-end 1 John 2 v 1-11	Psalm 97 Isaiah 6 v 1-8 1 John 5 v 1-12
28th	Monday	Psalm 36 Genesis 37 v 13-20 Matthew 18 v 1-10	Psalm 128 Isaiah 48 v 14-25 Mark 10 v 13-16
29th	Tuesday	Psalm 19 Isaiah 57 v 15-end John 1 v 1-18	Psalm 132 Jonah 1 Colossians 1 v 1-14
30th	Wednesday	Psalm 113 Isaiah 59 v 1-15a John 1 v 19-28	Psalm 65 Jonah 2 Colossians 1 v 15-23
31st	Thursday	Psalm 102 Isaiah 59 v 15b-end John 1 v 29-34	Psalm 90 Jonah 2-3 Colossians 1 v 24-27

## Rotas for December 2020

	6th	13th	20th	27th
	2nd Sunday of Advent	3rd Sunday of Advent	4th Sunday of Advent	1st Sunday after Christmas
<b>Readings</b>	Isaiah 40 v 1-11  2 Peter 30 v 8.15a  Mark 1 v 1-8	Isaiah 61 V 1-4, 8-11  1 Thessalonians 5 V 16-24  John 1 V 6-8, 19-28	2 Samuel 7 V 1-11, 16  Romans 16 V25-27  Luke 1 V 1-18	Ezekiel 34 v. 11-16, 20-24  Ephesians 1 v. 15-end  Matthew 35 v. 31-end
<b>St Marys</b>	<b>10:00</b>	<b>8:30</b>	<b>10:00</b>	<b>8:30</b>
<b>Reader</b>	Laura	Judy H	Barbara P	Rob
<b>Prayers</b>	Laura	Jane	Arthur	Alison
<b>Sides</b>	Laura	Rob/Jane	Diane	Marilyn
<b>Music</b>	Jane	Len	Pauline	Diane
<b>Christ</b>	<b>8:30</b>	<b>10:00</b>	<b>8:00</b>	<b>10:00</b>
<b>Sidesman</b>	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc
<b>Interces- sions</b>	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc
<b>Reader</b>	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc

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