

St Helen's Magazine

December 2022 **50p**



St Helen's
**Celebrates
Christmas**

Sunday 18th December
7pm Candlelit Carol Service

Christmas Eve
5pm Children's Crib Service
11.30pm 'Midnight Mass'
Holy Communion

Christmas Day
10.30am Holy Communion

St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch



Loving God, loving others, loving the world

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♦Opening times Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 10.00am - 1.00pm

- ♦ Facebook: St Helen's Ashby de la Zouch
- ♦ Instagram:
- ♦ Twitter: @sthelensashby
- ♦ Website: www.sthelensashby.net

Giving

You can make donations to the work of St Helen's via our website - <https://www.sthelensashby.net/Groups/327469/Giving.aspx>

Editor Writes ...



At the end of October archaeologists found a tomb beneath a church in Turkey which they believe to be Santa's! When I say Santa it is, of course, Saint Nicholas or, as he is properly known, Saint Nicholas of Myra, who was a real life bishop living from AD 270 to 343.

Although St Nicholas Church in Demre in the Turkish province of Antalya is named after him, and was recorded as his original burial place, no one had looked for his remains there because the story was that his bones had been moved to Italy at the time of the crusades in the eleventh century. The recent discovery of his tomb happened during a routine survey.

A routine flip through this magazine might not show up anything unusual, but look a little harder and you'll find there's a hidden advent calendar. Actually, you don't have to look very hard to find it – it's in the very middle pages. Its contents might bring a few surprises though, although no chocolaty ones I'm afraid – sorry.

The historical existence of Saint Nicholas has not been in dispute, and it is the saint's reputation for having distributed gifts to the poor and needy which seems to have led to the myth of today's abundant Christmas-present supplying Santa. There's quite a bit about gift giving in this month's magazine, with the children of Messy Church's kind hand-made creation on page 5, how to give 'greenly' on page 7, a gift for the birds on page 9, and looking back to generous giving over 150 years ago in Wendy Freer's regular item on page 30.

You can read about how the gifts of time, commitment, and expertise are transforming lives in Susan Boardman-Weston's account of her Tearfund trip to Rwanda on page 14, how the gift of money (thanks to PRG's amazing fundraising) will improve lives on page 27, and on page 32 read about how the actions of praying, protesting and lobbying can be a gift.

It may have become an elaborate story involving, reindeers and elves, huge sacks of toys, and a snowy North Pole, but Santa Claus is the idea of giving for the sake of giving, without thought of thanks or acknowledgement. And that sounds a lot like the Christian notion of grace.

Happy Christmas, everybody.

Jill Chapman

A decorative graphic consisting of three solid black circles of varying sizes, arranged in a small cluster.



Rev Tim Writes ...

Tales of the unexpected

You'd think we would be getting used to it by now. Since Leicester won the FA Cup, surprises have been coming, thick and fast. It's a tricky time. How do we know how to live when we face uncertainty and challenges that are unfamiliar to us?

Well, the light in the darkness is the Christian hope. The light in the darkness is Jesus. Not the babe in a stable, although that is the story's beginning. It is the light of the world coming into the darkness.

The Lord Jesus is the light that we need. These are not just comforting words, though they are; this is transformative life-giving power.

The scripture is strong on this point. There is power in the name of Jesus. This one-and-only who came to Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth and ministered for three short years around Israel-Palestine is the one on whom history hinges.



The Christmas message is central, not just to the Christian faith, but to history. The serious contention of the Bible is that everything was made through him and for him.

We are here to be joined to him, but this is not a given. It is a gift, but not a given. It is up to us. God has left it to us to respond to his invitation to life, joy, and peace. These gifts are found in him, and he wants us in this place of (currently) unapproachable light.

As we approach the Christmas season with all the hustle and bustle, all the rush and activity, this light of life may shine in our hearts. May we turn our attention to him and find the life, in all its fullness, that he came to bring.

I wish you a very Merry Christmas,

Tim Phillips

Updates from Loughborough Town of Sanctuary

Many thanks for your prayers for our work with asylum seekers in Loughborough. We continue with our 'meeting and greeting' outside the Immigration Centre and more volunteers have answered our appeal to help with English conversation sessions. We take a different theme each week and prepare relevant resources and games.

Although we have an idea of elements of vocabulary, key phrases and aspects of grammar we want to introduce, the sessions are relaxed and informal and we let the conversation take its course. The young men I have met have travelled from Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia Eritrea and Afghanistan - all countries where protracted conflict and human rights abuses prevail. They do sometimes tell their harrowing stories, but mainly they are eager to learn about our British customs and culture, as well as the English language. We have also had some pretty deep conversations about our different faiths. Honestly, I consider these conversations to be a real privilege.

The games also allow for some fun though - and when we try to learn a word or two of *their* languages, our efforts cause much hilarity!

The children at Messy Church this month have prepared a beautiful 'welcome' banner - which will be displayed at a forthcoming English conversation session. I have to say, they made efforts far superior to my own, to get to grips with writing 'welcome' in many different languages!

THANK YOU CHILDREN! I'm sure the banner will be very much appreciated!

Pat Stafford



Chris Lewis

Counsellor / Psychotherapist

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I'm Dreaming of a Green Christmas

There are carol services in the calendar and festive adverts featuring Farmer Christmas and skateboarding foster parents on the TV, which can mean one thing – Christmas is coming!

At St Helen's, we are currently working to become more eco-friendly and better care for the Earth. This year, we can all make a few changes to have a 'greener' Christmas while still enjoying the traditions and trimmings we look forward to at this time of year. Even small changes can make a real difference, both to our planet and to those around us. Here are a few suggestions of some small swaps we can all try this festive season:

Presents: Giving and receiving presents is a wonderful way to bless and show our love to those dearest to us. Doing your Christmas shopping at local, small, and eco-friendly businesses is a great way to find meaningful gifts with a smaller environmental footprint. You could also try finding second-hand treasures, or even try your hand at homemade gifts! Alternatively, give a gift that keeps on giving; make a donation on behalf of friends and family, or give a charity gift (e.g. providing equipment or animals to help communities abroad). This year in particular, when so many are struggling due to the cost of living crisis, perhaps consider donating to the Trussell Trust or other aid charities.

Gift wrapping: When it comes to wrapping your gifts, see if you can swap the wrapping paper (which often can't be recycled!) for a greener alternative. Gift boxes or bags are good reusable



options, or you could take inspiration from Julie Andrews and use brown paper (string is optional – you could also use ribbons, or hand-decorate the paper which can be recycled). There has even been a trend in recent years

to wrap gifts in decorative scarves, which can be reused or make a lovely bonus gift!

Christmas cards: Send your Christmas greetings electronically this year if you can, through an e-card or instant message, instead of posting cards. And you can do even more good by donating the money you would have spent on Christmas cards to a charity of your choice! If you would prefer to send cards to your loved ones, try looking for ones printed on recycled material which can be recycled – or composted! – or even make your own using recycled cards from previous years.

Food: We all love Christmas food, and it's all too easy to buy more than we need (especially as the supermarkets line every aisle with tempting treats!). If you can, try to buy LOAF (Local, Organic, Animal-friendly and Fairly) to reduce the footprint of your feast.

This Christmas, let's celebrate the amazing story of Jesus' birth in a way that will love and protect our amazing planet and everyone in it.

Cornelia Wright



December Gardening Tips

The shortest day of the year is approaching so you will need to keep warm when outside. Pruning and digging will help you achieve this. I expect there are not too many jobs to complete outside, so take the opportunity to do some fireside garden planning as well.

If you have not done so already, dig over empty borders, raised beds and prepare the soil for the next growing year. Also, put any potted plants together in a sheltered spot in the garden to protect them from any extreme winter weather. You may have to cover the more tender plants with fleece. Preferably, put them in a heated, or unheated, greenhouse if you can.

Keep pruning in mind, especially Wisteria, climbing roses, fruit trees and Japanese Maples (these will bleed sap if pruned later into next year). Leave the faded flower heads on any Hydrangeas until Spring as they provide frost protection to the swelling buds further down the stems. Ensure that climbing plants and shrubs are securely attached to their supports with ties.

In the vegetable garden, lift any leeks, parsnips and carrots before the soil is frozen. They can easily be stored either inside or outside. Don't forget to cover Winter Brassicas with netting to protect them from

pigeons and have fleece handy for hardy salad crops.

In the fruit garden lift and divide established rhubarb clumps, but take the outer sections preferably as these are generally healthier. Replace all strawberries that are over three years old as these can harbour diseases and tend to lose vigour and productivity.

Ensure that you clean out the greenhouse if you fortunate to have one. Clear away any snow at the tops of greenhouses to protect the glass. Ensure the gutters are clear of dead leaves and insulate any water butts / taps. On warmer days, ventilate the greenhouse to reduce humidity and risk of disease. Finally, watch out for aphids over wintering on the stored plants.

Keep clearing away dead leaves on your lawn to allow light in and stop dead patches appearing. If possible, avoid walking on the lawn when blanketed by heavy frost or snow as this will damage the grass. Keep spiking lawns to improve drainage and aeration. Ensure you turn off all taps and pack away hoses that are not required.

On a clear day clean out the garden tool shed in preparation for Spring. Clean all tools and give them a wipe of linseed oil on wooden and metal areas to prevent rotting or rusting. Wash and disinfect bird feeders and tables as well as clearing out the bird baths.

If you have a pond, then cover it with fine netting to catch any debris / leaves and remove filters and pond pumps so that they don't suffer damage from freezing.

Finally, if you only do one thing in December, then hang out a bird feeder in the garden where you can easily see it but cats cannot get to it.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You All

Alan Cross



The
**What's
 On**
 Notice board



St Helen's Church

Join us for our

Christmas Carol Service

Sunday 18th December
 at 7pm

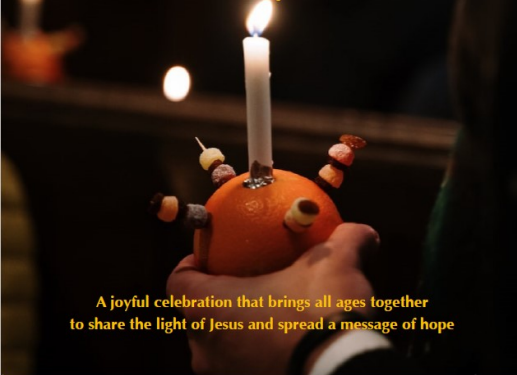
Come and enjoy the candlelight, the beautiful music,
 & the greatest story ever told!



St Helen's

Christingle

Sunday 4th December
 3.30pm



A joyful celebration that brings all ages together
 to share the light of Jesus and spread a message of hope

Abby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AB

www.sthelenchurch.org



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The Flagstaff Family of Churches

JOURNEYING THROUGH ADVENT:

Advent Compline Services

To aid us in our Advent reflections and as we prepare for Christmas, there will be short services of Compline on each of the Wednesdays in Advent:

- 4pm 30th November: Breedon on the Hill
- 7:30pm 7th December: Isley Walton
- 7:30pm 14th December: St Matthew's, Worthington
- 7:30pm 21st December: St Helen's, Ashby

Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AB



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Heritage
Ashby Leics

Saturday 10th Dec

Christmas in Breedon . . .

. . . through the ages

Breedon Priory Church at 7pm

Journey through time and experience Christmas from the
Anglo-Saxons to the Victorians.



An evening of songs by choral quartet Tesseractae, literary
extracts from Donne to Dickens and the occasional historical
interlude! An interval will include refreshments.

Please email to book your seats.

FREE to attend

There will be a voluntary collection plate on the evening.



St Helen's Community Heritage Centre
4 Church Yard, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AA

HERITAGE TALKS 2022 –23

Mike Hawkes

Tuesday 24th January at 7.30pm

GRAFFITI IN MEDIEVAL CHURCHES - IS THE WRITING ON THE WALL?

Mike studied archaeology at the University of Leicester. He is Archaeological Advisor to the Dioceses of Leicester and of Southwell and Nottingham. He also works as a freelance archaeological illustrator and is involved with a project looking at early medieval parish formation in the Kingdom of Mercia.

£3 including light refreshments
Tickets on the door



St Helen's Church & Heritage Centre

Celebra

Burn's Night!

on

Saturday 28th January 2023, 7pm start

at

St Helen's Community Heritage Centre

- Traditional Scottish haggis supper (or veg option)
- Neeps & tatties
- Served with a "wee dram"
- Trifle dessert
- Supper "piped in" in the traditional manner

Tickets £17.50 available from Liz Smith

Tables will be set for 6 people. Larger tables available on request.



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Website: www.sthelensashby.net
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4 Church Yard, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AA

My trip to Rwanda with Tearfund

In October I spent a week in Rwanda with some members of staff and five other Tear Fund supporters (we paid our own costs). I knew only two things about the country before I went: that there was a genocide in the 1990s, and that the previous UK government proposed to send some asylum seekers there for permanent settlement.

I was pleasantly surprised to find an attractive, green country sometimes described as 'the land of a thousand hills'. We spent the first few days in the capital city of Kigali. It is the cleanest city I have ever visited. There is a zero-tolerance policy on litter (and instant fines for those who drop it) and a countrywide ban on non-biodegradable plastic bags.

The best part of the trip was visiting projects run by Tear Fund. They are designed to help the very poorest of people and most are based in local churches. Tear Fund offers training in integral mission, meaning that broken relationships with each other and creation can be restored and that we are all called to be stewards of creation.

Everywhere we went the people we met said that they were grateful to Tear Fund for changing their mindset and enabling them to find a way out of poverty. Often the starting point is a savings group where the members contribute a very small amount – perhaps 2 cents – on a regular basis. As the fund grows someone is able to take a loan to buy resources or equipment which will enable them to earn money. Interest is charged and the loan must be repaid. Then someone else can have a loan. And so it goes on.



It was humbling to hear the stories of individuals. Here are a few examples of what we heard:

One lady said that without the training she had received she wouldn't be able to stand in front of us because she didn't have a dress to wear, only rags. She chose to have some vocational training and learned to make clothes. She now

makes clothes for all of her friends using her own sewing machine (bought with a loan from the savings group). If her customers can't pay for them straightaway she allows them to pay in instalments. Another lady had used a loan to buy a knitting machine and now has a contract from a local school to produce school uniform jumpers.

A teenage girl told us that she has organised a group of her schoolmates to make soap and lotions for sale and they are very popular. They have plans to expand to other products.

A man with some land said he had been given a dozen coffee plants which he grew. Then he invited his neighbours from the local church to plant some coffee too. They now have a big enough crop to sell to a local roastery. They gave each of us a bag of beans to take home. He has joined the church and said that a problem with his leg has been healed and he no longer needs a stick to walk.



In agricultural areas we met growers of green beans and green chillies. There is a local market where the produce can be sold but they are keen to expand to a size where they can export their produce. An economist from Tear Fund accompanied us on this visit. He gathered information about hindrances to their progress so that he can use his experience to find ways to overcome them.

It was humbling to hear how lives were changed as a result. Most of those we saw had no electricity or clean water in their homes. Many said that they can now feed their children, that the children can go to school (schooling is mainly free but parents have to pay for books and uniform) and that they can afford to pay the subscriptions for the national health care system. Domestic abuse of wives is a big problem in the country but is much reduced when husbands see their wives contributing income to the household.

Good news travels well in small communities and others are drawn in when they see progress being made by people like them. Then the local council starts to notice, and might offer land or other resources. We heard from some who have become Christians and joined the church as a result of what they had seen.

I have lots of photos from my visit and will be happy to give a short talk about it if you are interested to hear more.

Susan Boardman-Weston

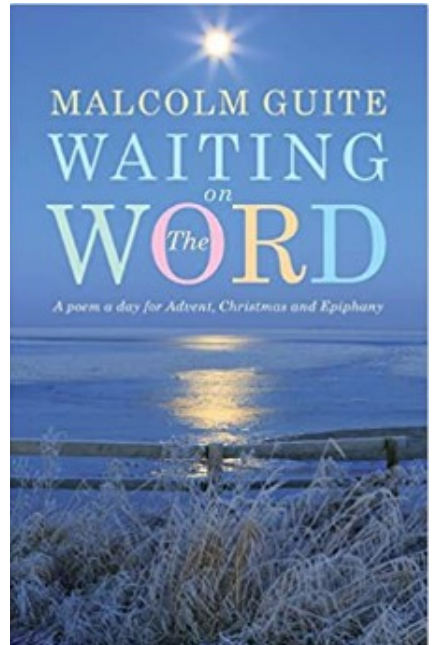
Advent Sunday by Christina Rossetti

BEHOLD, the Bridegroom cometh: go ye out
With lighted lamps and garlands round about
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.
It may be at the midnight, black as pitch,
Earth shall cast up her poor, cast up her rich.
It may be at the crowing of the cock
Earth shall upheave her depth, uproot her rock.
For lo, the Bridegroom fetcheth home the Bride:
His Hands are Hands she knows, she knows His Side.
Like pure Rebekah at the appointed place,
Veiled, she unveils her face to meet His Face.
Like great Queen Esther in her triumphing,
She triumphs in the Presence of her King.
His Eyes are as a Dove's, and she's Dove-eyed;
He knows His lovely mirror, sister, Bride.
He speaks with Dove-voice of exceeding love,
And she with love-voice of an answering Dove.
Behold, the Bridegroom cometh: go we out
With lamps ablaze and garlands round about
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.

Poems through Advent

Malcolm Guite's Advent anthology *Waiting on the Word* offers the reader a poem a day throughout Advent (and also on through Christmas and Epiphany) and a little reflective essay to go with each poem. He says, 'Advent is a season for stillness, for quiet, for discernment. It is a season of active waiting, straining forward, listening, attentive and finely tuned. Its good to keep a quiet space, a sacred time, an untrammelled sanctuary away from the pressures, to be still and hear again one's deepest yearnings for a saviour. I hope that the poems from my Advent anthology *Waiting on the Word*, will help people to do just that.'

The book works entirely stand-alone and could be used privately or in groups, but, in addition, Malcolm Guite has



recorded himself reading each poem and will post a recording on each day of Advent on his blog (<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/author/malcolmguite/>).

Each of the daily recordings is accompanied by an original painting from the artist Linda Richardson, who created a book of images in response to each poem whilst she was using the book devotionally, and has kindly agreed to share those pictures on Malcolm's blog.

If you would like to encourage and support Malcolm Guite's blog you can! Simply, on occasion, pop in to 'buy him a cup of coffee' at <https://>

Christingle Recycling

After the Christingle service, once the candle has burnt down, and you have eaten the sweets ... you can keep the message of hope alive with some of these eco-friendly recycling ideas.

Make natural decorations

Slice the orange into rounds and pat dry with a tea towel. Place them onto a greaseproof lined wire tray and dry them in the oven, 80°C/175°F, for 4-5 hours. Make sure they don't go brown (turn them over half way through). Let them cool – You can put rennin on them and hang them up as decorations.

Grow herbs in your orange skin

Cut your orange in half, scoop out the segments and fill with compost. Sprinkle over some seeds and sprinkle with water. Put it on your windowsill in a small container. Watch the seeds grow.



Create a Birdfeeder

Take half an orange & scoop out the fruit. Use a bradawl or skewer to make 4 holes around the orange, then thread 2 lengths of string through to enable it to hang up. Fill with birdseed and hang outdoors for the birds to enjoy.

Make a Christingle bookmark

Turn the red ribbon from your Christingle into a bookmark for your Bible to remind yourself of God's never-ending love.

For more ideas

<https://www.sunhatsandwellieboots.com/2021/12/6-creative-eco-friendly-ways-to-recycle.html>

Elizabeth Smith

Action Advent inside

Look for an opportunity to encourage someone at work, school, home or in your neighbourhood today.

Read the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) and reflect on what chimes with you this Christmas season.

As you write your Christmas cards or messages include an extra line of encouragement rather than just signing your name.

Angel

'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.'

Luke 1:30-31

Pause and think of someone who is overwhelmed this time of year – or someone whose business is too quiet. Pray for them.

Give someone a Christmas decoration to hang on their tree or decorate their home and let them know you care.

Thank someone for what they do – the bus driver, checkout assistant, teacher, street cleaner, post person, floor manager.

Mary

'But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.'

Luke 2:19

Pause and ponder... what will today (or tomorrow) be like? How can you make a difference to others in the midst of it all?

Have a 'yes' day – quickly say 'yes' when asked to help at home, school, or work.

Sing someone's praises today – try

Pray for an opportunity to

Notice someone

'Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is being

Joseph

Spend 10 minutes in prayer reflecting

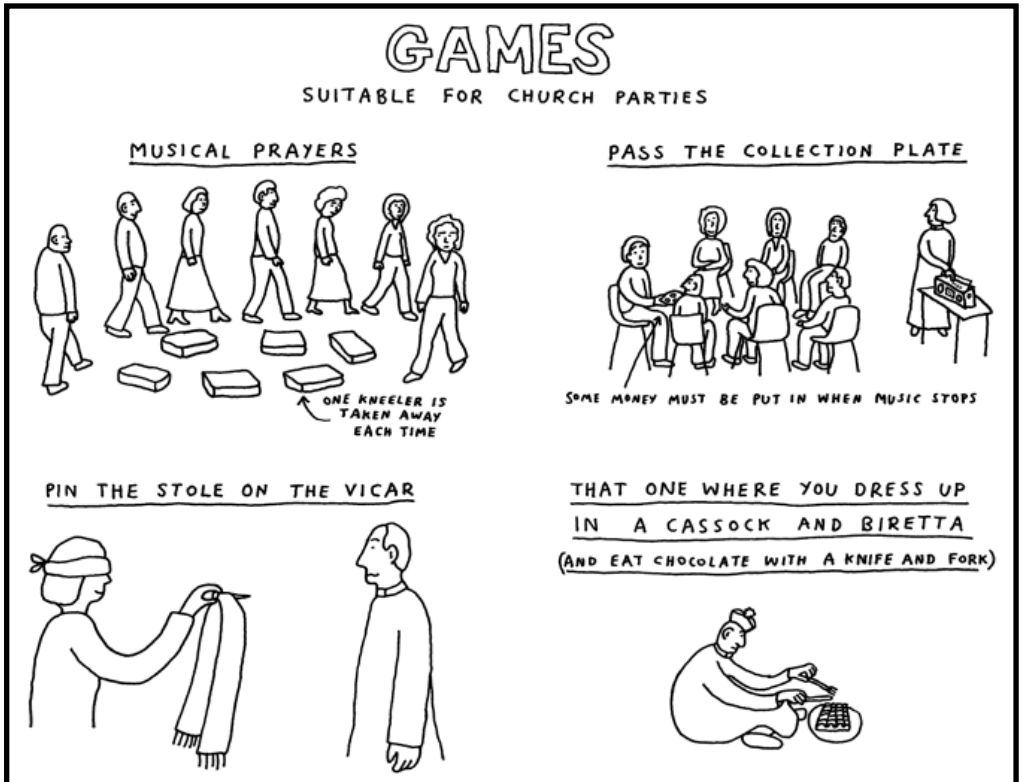
Action Advent Calendar

The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) have created an Advent calendar to share this year, which they have called an 'Action Advent Calendar' because it's about putting your faith into action. They've created it so that churches can share it with everyone in their congregations, so here it is in our parish magazine. If you want to print a larger version it is available to download at <https://licc.org.uk/resources/action-advent-a-calendar-ful-of-ways-to-make-a-difference>. It will also be available in an on-line version.

Suggestions for actions you might take include - thanking that quiet person who rarely gets noticed, praying for everyone to whom you're giving a gift, or welcoming someone who's lonely to join in your Christmas traditions.

As well as actions there are reminders of the actions taken by the characters in the Christmas story, and the way they put their faith into practice.

Over the page there is the front of the advent calendar. Simply cut along the white dotted lines with a craft knife or scissors, then stick the middle pages onto the prompt sheet which is on pages 18 and 23. That's it!









JP SPRINGTHORPE & C^o

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Quotations given

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and spot someone who doesn't always get thanked.

share something of your testimony with someone today.

conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit...you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'

Matthew 1:20-21

Shepherds

'There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby... an angel of the Lord appeared to them and said "I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."

Luke 2:8-10

How can you help those around you get time off and rest over Christmas – whether at work or at home?

Start a chat about what Christmas means to the people around you, and share your own perspective as a Christian.

Support a charity that provides food and shelter to those who need it this Christmas.

Magi

"Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

Matthew 2:2

Offer to pay for the person in front of you in the coffee shop or lunch queue.

Go out into your neighbourhood and enjoy the lights – pray for where you live, that the light of Christ may be seen here.

Jesus

'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given... And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'

Isaiah 9:6

Our Worship on Sundays in December

Week	8.30am	10.30am	pm
1 4 th Dec	St Helen's Holy Communion		3.30pm St Helen's Christingle 6.00pm St Helen's * Evensong
2 11 th Dec		St Helen's * Holy Communion	12.30pm St Helen's Baptisms
3 18 th Dec	Staunton Harold Morning Prayer	Breedon Holy Communion	7pm St Helen's Carols by Candlelight
4 25 th Dec Christmas Day		St Helen's * Holy Communion	

Other services in December

21 st Dec			7pm St Helen's Compline
24 th Dec Christmas Eve			5pm St Helen's Children's carol service 11.30pm St Helen's * Midnight Mass



* - denotes services at St Helen's which are streamed live to Facebook, on the Flagstaff Family of Churches Facebook page, and later on the website - www.sthelensashby.net

Regular activities:

Monday mornings, term time	– Little Fishes 9.30 - 11.30am
Mondays	– Monday Group - 8pm
First Tuesday of the month	– MU meeting 7pm - 9.30pm
Third Tuesday of the month	– MU branch meeting 10am - 12.30pm
Third Tuesday of the month	– PCC meeting 7 - 9.30pm
Fourth Tuesday of the month (October to March only)	– Heritage lectures 7pm - 9.30pm
First Wednesday of the month	– ‘We’re In Stitches’ Knit & natter 2 - 4pm
Thursdays	– Choir practice 6.30-8.30

December Diary

Saturday 2nd	3pm	Tea Time at Prior Park
Sunday 4th	3.30pm	Christingle
	4.30pm	Christingle Tea
Tuesday 6th	7pm	Mothers Union meeting
Wednesday 7th	2 - 4pm	‘We’re in Stitches’ knit & natter group
Saturday 10th	7pm	Christmas Through the Ages at Breedon Priory Church
Sunday 11th	7pm	Concert: Ashby String Orchestra
Tuesday 13th		Willesley School visit
Tuesday 13th	2.30 - 4pm	Friends, Fellowship & Faith
Wednesday 14th	10.30am	Communion at Prior Park
Saturday 17th	6 - 8pm	Priest Room Gang Christmas get-together
Tuesday 20th	12 noon	Mother’s Union Christmas Lunch

Our usual pattern for services will resume in January:

- **Sundays**
 - First Sunday of the month -
8.30am Holy Communion
3.30pm All-Age
6pm Choral Evensong
 - Second & Fourth Sundays of the month -
10.30am Holy Communion
 - Third Sunday of the month -
10.30am Service of the Word
- **Wednesdays - Holy Communion - 10.30am**
 - First Wednesday of the month - Holy Communion - in church
 - Second Wednesday of the month - Holy Communion -
at Prior Park Community Centre
 - Third Wednesday of the month - Service of the Word - in church
- **Saturdays - Parish Prayers - 9.30am in church (Hastings chapel)**

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Toilet Twinning Cake Bake



Everyone at PRG is overwhelmingly delighted that their fundraiser for Toilet Twinning raised an amazing £351.74. This is sufficient to twin not only all four of the Heritage Centre loos, but at least one tap as well.

Ashby Foodbank

We would like to thank everyone who helps us in any way. We continue to be extremely busy and really appreciate your support.

Here is the shopping list for December.

Please note that the warehouse is closed for donations after Friday 9th December as we prepare for our busiest time of the year and we will reopen on Tuesday 3rd January.

(Donations can be left in the box at the back of St Helen's Church, or in Holy Trinity's porch.)



December Shopping List

- Longlife milk- semi or full fat.
- Instant mash
- Tinned carrots, or sweetcorn
- Longlife sponge puddings
- Washing tablets
- Deodorant preferably neutral
- Shampoo
- Shaving foam
- Washing up liquid

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

As I am starting to write this it's not yet December, but the shops are full of their Christmas stock, cards have been on sale since September & all of us are finding our personal finances being stretched for increases in food & heating. This is before we start to think of the Christmas gifts & food for family & friends. The media never cease to update us with the latest doom & gloom, a few minutes ago it was to advise that free range turkeys will be in the short supply as Avian bird food has infected them, and 600,000 have had to be culled, creating a shortage. However, before we all rush to the butchers, we will, apparently be able to purchase all other types of bird. So, maybe this year we can settle for another meat or celebratory bird for Christmas Dinner, or try a vegetarian dish. After all, it is seeing & joining with family at this time which is important and to remember those who are no longer with us. Whatever, those of us lucky enough to choose, will not starve.

Having got that off my chest, let's take time to think of others, many from our world wide family in Mothers' Union. All MU members will have received the information on South Sudan, who are part of the MU Big Give Christmas Challenge between 29th November and 6th December. At this time of year we are prompted to think of many charities, Salvation Army, Crisis, Shelter, Red Cross, to name a few, all endeavouring to help those less fortunate than ourselves, those who will not be thinking what food will they buy at Christmas, but will they eat anything at all! I am able to see this first hand as a volunteer at our local Foodbank. Our clients are from all walks of life, just been made redundant, suffering with real long-term health problems, income not able to cover rent, heat, food. I appreciate, many who do not see what I see, & say "they've got the latest mobile", "smoke", "have finger nails painted", "in Costa with the kids", "in a pub", but, there are many more not able to do those things. Those so embarrassed to be at Foodbank, in tears, children cold, mother's & father's at their wit's end.

Ashby Foodbank is run under the auspices of Trussell Trust, we staff a foodbank in Measham & Woodville as well as Ashby. We at Foodbank are extremely grateful for all donations given to us, be they small or large, also the donors who donate regularly in cash, especially at this present time. Our clients are also very grateful for the food we are able to hand to them & enable the family to eat daily, not just because it's Christmas.

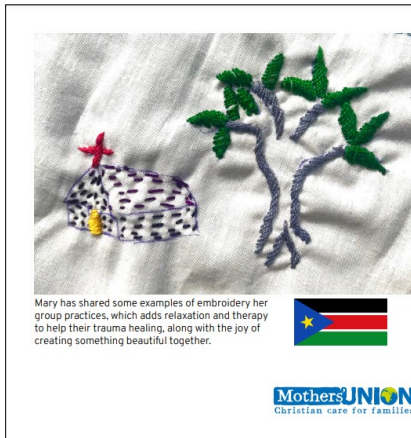
We can include members in our community who are in need of prayer,

when we pray our personal prayers.

At the weekend I joined many at St Helen's on Sunday evening to the beautiful service prepared of word & music. The Carol service for the 1st Sunday of Advent, this enabled those of us present, in the darkened church, lit by candlelight, to really absorb St Helen's. Enabling us to pray and quietly listen to the spoken word and some truly inspirational music. If you close your eyes and imagine you are also there, this is a Post Communion prayer for Advent Sunday, which we can pray throughout the season of Advent:

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we await the coming of your Son our Lord; that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Adrienne Sedgman



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Wishing you the gift of faith, the blessing of hope, and the peace of Christ's love now and forever.

With every blessing,
from Mary and
our Peace
Group
x

Christmas 1867

The Leicester Mail of 2nd January 1869 announced that at the end of 1868, “never before has Ashby enjoyed a merrier Christmas”. The Christmas of 1868 was the subject of one of my articles some years ago, but for this year I have been looking at 1867.

The 1860s were exciting times for Holy Trinity Church. Although it had been consecrated in 1840, it didn't become a Parish Church until 1860. Christmas 1866 might have been celebrated in the new chancel which was completed in that year, but still the church needed a new organ so a “Christmas Tree and Bazaar” was held on 8th January 1867 to raise money for it. It was held in the Ivanhoe Baths, which had been “tastefully arranged and decorated”. Centre stage was a 15 foot tree from Willesley woods, decorated with “small articles” and lit with “many tapers and variegated lamps.” It was said that “Master St John Denton seemed to consider the lighting of the tree his peculiar department”, although I am not sure to whom this refers. John Denton, later Canon Denton was, at this time, the Incumbent at Holy Trinity, but the title “Master” rather than “Mr” was usually given to a child. However, Canon Denton's son John wasn't born until 1873.

Various ladies had laboured in an “indefatigable manner” to get together such a profusion of elegant and useful articles which included a beautiful folding screen from the Misses Smith, which sold for four guineas. Several drawings of the castle and neighbourhood by Mrs Denton were much admired and quickly sold. There were several hundred dolls, one dressed as a bride and two in costume, some beautiful ferns were sold by Miss Davys, a ring said to have belonged to King William IV was sold by Trevor Morris and specimens of beautiful work were on sale from various ladies including Miss Vavasour, daughter of the Vicar of St Helen's. Some electro-plate was sent by Mr Austin. Lady Edith Abney Hastings, under whose patronage the event took place, contributed a pair of hand screens with stuffed love birds.

The refreshment stall was amply supplied with large presents of game and provisions being donated by the Marquis of Hastings, Sir J Crewe, Lady Edith Hastings and other friends. Wine was given my Messrs Davenport and Savidge and porter and ale were supplied by Mr Love. Other liberal contributions ensured that both the refreshment stall and other stalls were well supplied and superintended by Mrs Davys. (The Davys name can still be seen above the



entrance to a side alley between the former HSBC Bank and the Headway charity shop. Thomas Davys was a successful wine merchant in the 1840s and 50s. The business was later taken over by Davenport's who supplied the wine for this event.)

Doors opened at 11am but the event really got underway from 2pm. From 3pm until the close at 10pm it was so well attended that moving through the crowd was somewhat difficult. The event raised £108 which, after expenses were deducted, was put towards the cost of the new organ. This was to be built by Forster and Adams of Hull. A further £100 was still required to pay off all liabilities, but it seems that this was found later as the organ is believed to have been installed during 1867.

Meanwhile, at St Helen's, the annual distribution of gifts to the poor will have taken place in the vestry on St Thomas's day, 21st December. This usually consisted of coals, beef, bread and clothing and, in 1867, an additional gift of £10 was given by Messrs H and C Spencer, tea dealers of Ashby, to be distributed to poor widows on Christmas Day by the church-warden.

For those who could afford it, "the new firm now carrying on business at the West-end House, Ashby," were offering "cheap meat", excellent beef at 6 ½ old pence and good mutton at 5 and 5½ old pence per pound. The Leicester Mail of 21st December hailed it as "a boon to the town of Ashby".

Holy Trinity was not the only recipient of fund-raising that Christmas period. On Wednesday 18th December, a concert was held in the Ivanhoe Baths which was very well attended and which raised £26. This, after deduction of expenses, was to be donated for the benefit of the Hastings Cricket Club and the Saline Bathing Institution. The latter stood where the St Giles Charity Shop now stands in Bath Street and was a cheaper alternative for those wanting to take the waters, but who could not afford the fashionable Ivanhoe Baths.

Christmas 1867 seems to have been a year of generous giving in the true spirit of Christmas!

Wendy Freer



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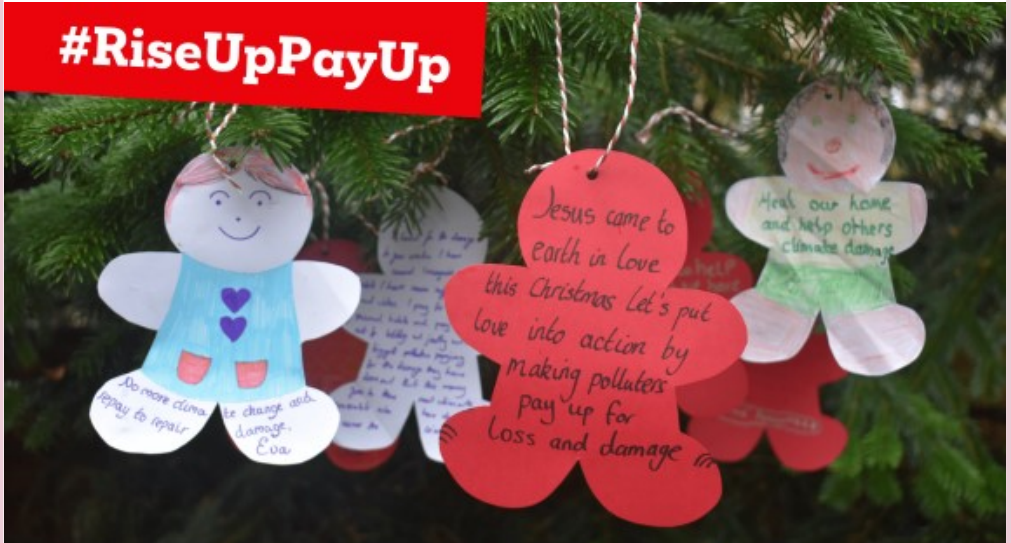
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A Victory for Climate Vulnerable Countries

The good news is that, right at the very end of COP27, a deal was agreed to create a loss and damage fund. The not quite so good news is that there was no agreement about how much, who pays for it and over what time period.



Because the people who have done the least to cause the climate crisis are dealing with damage to harvests and homes right now, and are losing their lives, land and culture, Christian Aid have launched a Loss & Damage Campaign to pressure the polluters to pay. More details of how to help can be found at www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-change/loss-and-damage, where downloadable resources include details of what happened at COP27, prayers, a theological reflection on loss and damage, and information on how to engage your MP.

Sheltering God,
For the hundreds of thousands of people this year
who found themselves trying to sleep under tarpaulins,
instead of under the familiar roof of their home
not knowing what the future holds
lamenting the loss of loved ones, or
all that they owned on this earth,
we pray for your deep comfort
and your generous provision
through the response of the international family of humanity.
In your mercy, hear our prayer.

Christmas Cracker jokes

Not a quiz this year, but maybe the answers to these jokes are even more of a challenge !

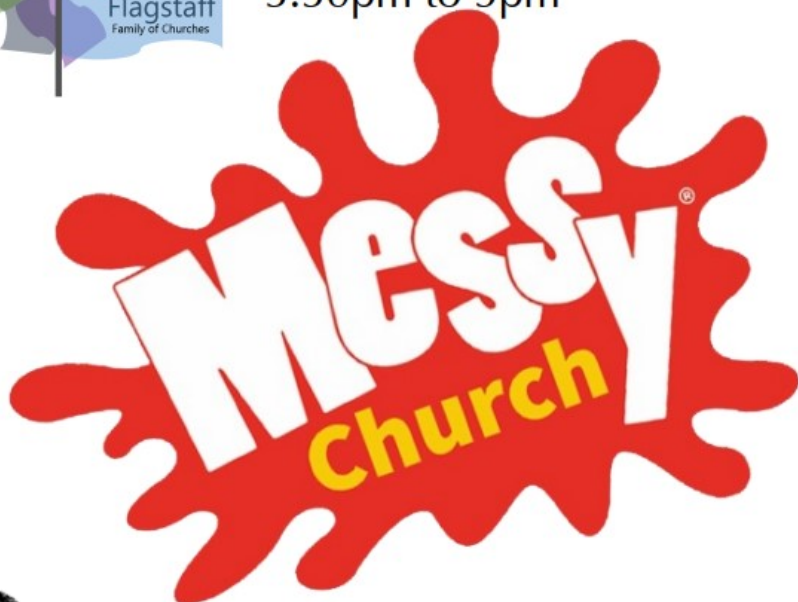
1. Who hides in a bakery at Christmas?
2. What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?
3. Why do birds fly south in winter?
4. What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?
5. Who is Santa's favourite singer?
6. What did Adam say the day before Christmas?
7. How many letters are in the alphabet at Christmas?
8. Why are Christmas trees so bad at knitting?
9. Why did nobody bid for Rudolph and Blitzen on eBay?
10. What did one snowman say to the other snowman?
11. How did Mary and Joseph figure out baby Jesus was exactly 7lb 9oz?
12. Which side of a turkey has the most feathers?
13. What carol do they sing in the desert?
14. What do you sing at a snowman's birthday party?
15. Who's Rudolph's favourite singer?
16. Who delivers presents to baby sharks at Christmas?
17. What athlete is warmest in winter?
18. What's the most popular Christmas wine?
19. Why does your nose get tired in winter?
20. What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?
21. What kind of music do elves listen to?
22. What kind of motorcycle does Santa ride?
23. Why was the turkey in a band?
24. What happened to the man who stole an advent calendar?
25. What does Santa do when his elves misbehave?
26. How did Santa feel when he got stuck in a chimney?
27. How do snowmen get around?
28. How did Scrooge win the football match?
29. Why is it getting so hard to buy advent calendars?
30. How does Darth Vader like his Christmas turkey?
31. What do snowmen wear on their heads?
32. How does Santa keep track of all the fireplaces he's visited?

Answers are on page 39



4th Sunday of each month

3.30pm to 5pm



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Messy Church Welcomes the Posada

Great fun was had at Messy Church on Advent Sunday at the end of November 'getting ready for Christmas'.

Mary and Joseph, in knitted form, began their Posada journey for Advent by travelling around all the activities, and were especially impressed with the banner offering welcome!

And, as it was stir-up Sunday, a beautiful Christmas cake was baked too.



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Quotes for the Month

'There are few experiences more uplifting and humbling than standing in the nave of a cathedral. With the symmetry of columns soaring into arches, and the fine tracery of windows allowing an ethereal light to enter, the effect – as Goethe once described architecture – is like frozen music.'
Martin Barnes, The Observer, October 30th

'Opportunities to attend the Prayer Book service set for 5 November are rare these days — although not totally extinct. I recall one cleric visibly enjoying intoning the collect against "hellish Popish malice" while dressed in enough lace to render him easily confusable for a maiden aunt's tea tray.'

Fergus Butler-Gallie, Church Times, November 4th

'The sky is black with chickens coming home to roost.' - Alan Bennett

Martin Sewell, Surviving Church blog, November 2nd

'Where is discrimination against women still allowed in the UK? The church.'

Revd Martine Osborne, The Guardian, November 11th

'In my life as a pastor I have had MANY opinions about all the things: pews, hymnals, music, lectionary preaching, length of sermons, focus of sermons, who should or should not wear clergy collars, communion bread, if there should be juice offered or not, what should be said when communing someone, if a Psalm is necessary, should there ever for any reason be back-up singers, should lyrics be projected on a screen, etc.... I mean - SO MANY OPINIONS.'

Revd Nadia Bolz-Weber, On Changing My Mind, The Corners, November 16th

'My prayer for the tournament is that there can be unity amidst the challenge. Football can be a unifying force which brings nations and the global community together, and so there is a lot of potential for good if that happens.'

Christian Wienkam, UK's Deputy Director for Sports Chaplaincy, C of E website, November 17th

'I don't think the World Cup should ever have been awarded to Qatar, but it is going ahead. We can choose to be 'a voice in the room' or not. My prayer is that by being in the room & engaging courageously the conversations that we have could even help to bring about positive change.'

Matt Baker, UK's National Director for Sports Chaplaincy, C of E website, November 17th

'I am glad that we've (nearly) moved beyond trying to persuade each other to read the Bible differently and are agreeing to disagree.'

Helen King, The Wisdom of Solomon, shared-conversations.com, November 18th

'Whether you love it or not, there's no escaping the fact that football and the Church have a conjoined heritage.'

C of E Church Support Hub, Making The Most Of The World Cup Final, November 18th

'I will be praying ... that the [World Cup] tournament will be a catalyst for positive change in the country, never allowing sport to be a smokescreen for discrimination, oppression & exploitation.'

Bishop of Derby, Libby Lane, C of E lead bishop for sport, www.churchofengland.org, Nov 18th

'A brilliant week ... as we sought wisdom by 'triple listening' to the Word, the world, one another.'

London Institute of Contemporary Christianity Facebook page, November 25th

'There are quite a few areas where physics blurs into religion'

Physicist Sabine Hossenfelder, The Guardian, November 26th

'The construction the always-happy-to-be-outraged had put upon the advice [that traditional carol services on 18th Dec should be rescheduled] was that one of the two most important English religions – the National Health Service and professional football – had scored a goal against Christianity and Church of England calendrical propriety while ecclesiastical goal keepers were still in the locker room talking, as usual, about sex.'

Canon Jeremy Haselock, The Catholic Herald, November 26th

'God is for life, not just for Christmas'

Very Revd Kelvin Holdsworth, What's in Kelvin's Head blog, November 26th

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Ashby Congregational	01530 563301
Ashby Methodist Church	01530 412298
Holy Trinity	01530 412339
Our Lady of Lourdes	01530 412237

Christmas Cracker Jokes - answers

1. A mince spy
2. A Christmas quacker
3. It's too far to walk
4. Tinsillitis
5. Elfis Presley
6. It's Christmas, Eve.
7. 25 – there's no-el
8. Because they drop their needles
9. They were two deer
10. Can you smell carrots?
11. They had a weigh in a manger
12. The outside
13. O Camel Ye Faithful
14. Freeze a jolly good fellow
15. Beyon-sleigh
16. Santa Jaws
17. A long jumper
18. "I don't like sprouts!"
19. It runs all day
20. Frostbite
21. Wrap
22. A Holly Davidson
23. He was the only one with drumsticks
24. He got 25 days
25. He gives them the sack
26. He felt Claus-trophobic
27. By riding an icicle
28. The ghost of Christmas passed
29. Their days are numbered
30. On the dark side
31. Ice caps
32. He keeps a yule logbook


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St Helen's Church & Community Heritage Centre



Season of Advent church service -

Christingle

4th December at 3.30pm

A joyful celebration bringing all ages together to share the light of Jesus & spread a message of hope



Winter Concerts -

Ashby String Orchestra

Sunday 11th December 7pm

Music of Handel, Vivaldi, Elgar & Tchaikovsky
Admission free - retiring collection



Season of Advent church service -

Christmas Carol Service

18th December at 7pm

Come and enjoy the candlelight, the beautiful music, & the greatest story ever told



Season of Advent church service -

Children's Crib Service

24th December at 5pm

A nativity with dressing up, singing songs ... and a real life donkey!

4 Church Yard, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AA



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