

RG31

St Catherine's Tilehurst Parish Magazine Winter 2023

We welcome Rev Jackie Fountain as our vicar

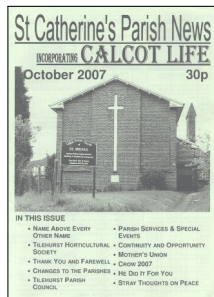


From the editor

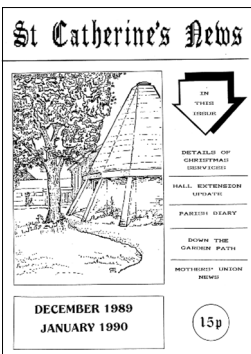


A major change came about when on 1st October 2007, a large part of St Birinus Parish was joined with St Catherine's. By now Stuart was the sole editor.

At the end of 2007 the communications committee met to discern a new way forward for the parish



I was looking through my collection of old parish magazines recently. The oldest one I have dates back to December 1989 and was billed as the first new-style after a re-launch. Joint editors were Jack Smee and Stuart Poore. Whilst only 12 pages



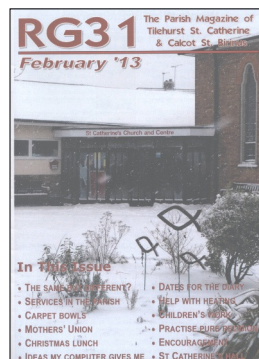
each was twice the size of this magazine; A3 paper folded rather than the current A4 folded. Colour was a long way off in those days, this was the front cover.

Outwardly there was little change over the next few years, the line drawing was changed to a similar sized photo then in 2006 the cover photos (still black & white) were enlarged to full width.



magazine and aimed to come up with a different (and much shorter!) title. Michael Charles suggested 'RG31' and the magazine was re-launched in February 2008 in the now familiar size and with the cover and back pages in colour.

I took over from Stuart at the end of 2012 making some minor changes. Since then the magazine has evolved to become what you are now reading.



I hope that you will wish to continue reading RG31 and therefore will complete the enclosed subscription form.

Tony Bartlett

Mike Heather

The Rocky Road to Bethlehem



Christmas; A time of Holly and Christmas trees, of untangling lights that we put away last year. Houses decorated outside as well as in, cards wishing us a “Merry Xmas”, School Nativity plays and well loved carols.

But it is far more than that. It is a time of hope, expectation and joy, a time when just for a short while people are nice to each other, and all because in a stable in a little place called Bethlehem there was born a baby who was to change the world. A baby who was to bring to each and everyone of us new life.

A baby who reminds us that the pursuit of financial gain is not everything and that we don't have to break the bank in celebrating his birth, and that love and caring for the lonely or a kind word, or an act of forgiveness that is meant is far more important.

Once again this year Christmas will be hard for many people due to financial constraints , so perhaps it is time to look again at what the Christmas message is. To strip away the commercialisation and to once again embrace the Angels message, the joy and wonder of the Shepherds as they stood in awe in the stable that first Christmas in front of the manger and the baby Jesus. A baby who was visited by both the highest and lowest in the land. Shepherds and Kings who came to celebrate his birth in recognition of who He was. Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world.

In the run up to Christmas it's not always easy to take time out and to reflect on its true meaning, but in all the hustle and bustle, try to find a little time to reflect on what is to come, and when we do we quickly realise the enormity of the gift that is Christ Jesus.

So as Jesus came as a Gift to us, let us be a gift to others; loving and forgiving, cherishing and sharing, with each other. So let us welcome the coming of Jesus into our lives and in so doing to follow the road that leads to Bethlehem and to that Baby; not born in some great palace but in a stable, and then on Christmas Day give thanks for the gift of that child, and in so doing remember that he is the reason why we celebrate Christmas, and then when the last parcel has been opened and the tree has gone remember that He came into this world just for you and that Christ is not just for Christmas.

So may the Joy of the Angels, the gladness of the Shepherds, the worship of the Wise Men and the peace of the Christ Child be with you this Christmas.

Christmas Blessings

Mike

What would Jesus do?

While waiting in line to check out at a Christian bookstore, a man in front of me asked the clerk about a display of hats with the letters WWJD on them. The clerk explained that WWJD stands for 'What would Jesus do?', and that the idea is to get people to consider this question when making decisions.

The man pondered a moment, then replied, "I don't think He'd pay £17.99 for that hat."

Don't mention it!

As part of his annual talk to our local Town Council, our minister told some funny stories. Since he planned to use the same anecdotes at the forthcoming Harvest Dinner at church, he asked the young reporter covering the event not to include them in his report.

Reading the newspaper on the following

morning, he noticed that the well-meaning reporter had ended his story on the banquet with the observation "The minister told a number of stories that cannot be published."

Noise

The wheel of my grocery cart was making a horrible scraping sound as I rolled it through the supermarket. Nevertheless, when I finished my shopping and saw a cartless woman, I offered it up, explaining, "It makes an awful complaining noise, but it works."

"That's okay," she said cheerfully, taking it. "I have a husband at home like that."

Apples

Mother: "Martin, last night I put two apples in this cupboard and now there is only one. How do you explain that?"

Martin: "I expect it was so dark I couldn't see the other one."

Congratulations

To Matt Smee on obtaining a distinction for his 'Master of Arts in Arts Management' Degree at Bath Spa University.



"The vicar really is taking all of January off to recuperate, then."

COP 28: A Prayer for the Climate and Ecological Emergency

Father of Creation, God of Compassion,
we thank you for the fragile gift of life,
and the beautiful world that you made.
To you be all praise, honour and glory.

Father of Creation, God of Justice,
you called us to love our neighbours,
and tend and keep your cosmic temple.
Yet we have failed and done evil in your
sight.

Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy.

In our quest for industrial and
technological development, we have
plundered and pillaged this world of
yours, unrestrained capitalism and
unfettered consumerism, building on a
history of oppression of the global south,
Have brought us to the brink.

Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy.

We stand at 1 minute to midnight, and
the clock hand of our existential threat
moves steadily onwards. Yet we stand
distracted and in denial at this late hour.

Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy.

Global temperatures rise, we suffer at 1.2
degrees above pre-industrial
temperatures, sea levels rise, extreme
weather increases, increased migration,
climate breakdown acts as a threat
multiplier. Knowing that unless things
change we will face a 3-degree climate
hell of mass migration, mass starvation
and societal collapse. What have we
done?

Lord have mercy
What have we done?
Christ have mercy

Father of Creation, God of Justice, with
tears in our eyes, and sadness in our
souls, we pray for COP28, for
compassionate change, and the
overturning of the tables of injustice.

Father of Creation, God of Justice, we
pray that world leaders would slam on
the brakes of climate breakdown, that we
would avert the worst of what may be,
and adapt to what will be with
compassion and justice.

Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy.

Father of Creation, God of Compassion,
we thank you for the fragile gift of life,
And the beautiful world that you made.
To you be all praise, honour and glory.

Amen

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Opportunities for Carol Singing

You should find a leaflet enclosed with this magazine listing the Christmas services at St Catherine's:

- 10.00am Sunday 17th December - Nativity service; come dressed for a part!
- 7.00pm Saturday 23rd December - Carols under the Oak Tree, dress warmly and bring a torch and your own mug for refreshments
- 7.00pm Sunday 24th December - Nine lessons and Carols
- 10.00am Monday 25th December - Christmas Day family service



In addition at Tilehurst Triangle on Friday 22nd December we'll be with Santa and his Sleigh courtesy of Pangbourne Rotary Club leading carols at 12.00noon and 4.00pm

**A THOUGHT FOR 2024
THIS YEAR, DO FIRST THINGS FIRST**



'Teach us to use wisely all the time we have' Psalm 90:12 CEV

We all get the same twenty-four hours every day. That's 1,440 minutes, or 86,400 seconds. And we must 'give an account to God' for how we use them (see Ecclesiastes 11:9). A good place to start is by asking yourself, 'How would I spend the next twenty-four hours if I knew that I would stand before God tomorrow?' Your answer can help you prioritise your life.

Think about it; if someone steals your car, you can get another one. If they steal your wallet, a few phone calls to the credit card company usually resolve the matter. But who can you call when you lose your time? How you spend your time is how you spend your life! Ephesians 5:16 says 'Make every minute count' (CEV), so learn to do these

1. *Stop saying yes to everybody.* When your spiritual gut says no, but your people-pleasing gut says yes, go with your spiritual gut, Jesus did. It's what enabled Him to tell his Father, 'I have finished the work . . . You have given me to do' (John 17:4 NKJV). Don't let the good rob you of the best; back off on some activities so you can excel in others.
2. *Be led by the Spirit, not the flesh.* Paul says, 'If you are guided by the Spirit, you won't obey your selfish desires' (Galatians 5:16 CEV). Furthermore, when you walk in the Spirit you burn the oil, not the wick; the Holy Spirit supplies you with strength.
3. *Put first things first.* A mark of real maturity is doing what you don't feel like doing when you don't feel like doing it. So this year, put first things first - and keep them there!

This thought is taken from 'The Word for Today', Daily Bible reading notes produced quarterly by UCB (United Christian Broadcasters Ltd) PO Box 255, Stoke on Trent, ST4 8YY. If you would like to receive these free (although UCB do welcome donations) notes or those aimed at Secondary School age, call UCB on 01782 911 000

Reflections on St Catherine's year of vacancy

It hardly seems possible – St Catherine's year of vacancy ended on November 28th 2023 with the institution of Jackie Fountain as our new vicar. So, we have been in vacancy for 2 days short of a year, as Gill Rowell left us for retirement on 30th November 2022!

Whilst looking forward in excitement to where God is going to take us, I wonder what we each have learnt over the last year.

What encouragement we have had through our local clergy. We have all been blessed by no less than seventeen different clergy visiting us over the year, each bringing with them their own unique style, sharing with us a glimpse of God working through their lives and ministry.

Some like Alan Gates faithfully took all our Wednesday communion services apart from a well-deserved August break and a handful of other services he had to miss. Others attended at short notice in response to our cry of help to Liz Ratcliffe as we struggled to find someone to preside at a service.

There was not one Sunday service without a member of clergy over the entire year, and just a few Wednesday services that were morning prayer rather than communion services due to lack of clergy!

Everyone in our church community stepped up, working together in love to keep the church not only going, but moving forward. Many worked incredibly hard – too many to name.

Just as the disciples were a ragtag collection of people with different backgrounds and education, probably with different political views, we are probably no different!

Yet God moulded us to become a team, working together to His glory, whether maintaining the building or the grounds, working in the café, doing administration, leading or taking part in life groups or prayer groups, running activities and events, praying for God to work through us, or the many other things that the parish requires. What a blessing!

At least one churchwarden was naïve in not fully comprehending the amount of work involved in a vacancy! Its obvious when you think about it. The full time paid vicar is absent, and what they do falls on others.

In addition there is the profile to put together, the legal process to select and obtain a new vicar to follow, clergy to find for our services, and the vicarage to keep an eye on and in addition all the usual jobs!

With the involvement of other clergy in our activities, and the need for us to reach out to Revd Liz Ratcliffe or the diocese for help, checking out a particular approach we are adopting, we have developed stronger links with other churches in the area, which would be lovely to continue to develop.

Liz Ratcliffe has worked with us on many occasions to help resolve questions –

(Continued on page 8)

The Ten Commandments for Christmas



1. You shall not leave “Christ” out of Christmas, making it “Xmas”. To some “X” is unknown.
2. You shall prepare your soul for Christmas. Spend not so much on gifts that your soul is forgotten.
3. You shall not let Santa Clause replace Christ, thus robbing the day of its spiritual reality.
4. You shall not burden the shop assistant with complaints and demands.
5. You shall give yourself with your gift. This will increase its value a hundred fold, and the one who receives it will treasure it forever.
6. You shall not value gifts by their cost. Even the least expensive may signify love, and that is more priceless than silver or gold.
7. You shall not neglect the needy. Share your blessings with many who will go hungry and cold if you are not generous,
8. You shall not neglect your Church. Its services highlight the true meaning of Christmas,
9. You shall be as a little Child. Not until you become in spirit as a little one are you ready to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.
10. You shall give your heart to Christ. Let him be at the top of your Christmas list.

(Continued from page 7)

sometimes having to draw on other resources to resolve!

The questions have been various - can a church be used for a non-Christian funeral, what are the hygiene factors around intinction, who can take a funeral service to name but a few!

In summary what an action-packed year it has been! The range of teaching we have received through all the clergy, the change of café manager and a period without one, not ‘Four Weddings and a Funeral’ but several baptisms, one

wedding and one funeral, a Fire Alarm at the start of Christmas lunch, working through our boiler problems that have been ongoing for many years to what is looking dangerously like a resolution, leaking toilets, an Italian evening, Coronation celebrations with the community, church fetes and much more besides.

God has been faithful over this last year, and we look forward eagerly to what He has in store.

Lynn Stevens and Caroline Heron

Citizens UK is an organisation that seeks to bring people together to win change, to address issues of social justice, building a better, fairer society, whether the issues are big or small. It is currently organised into 18 regional chapters, each made up of local member organisations. Oxford diocese has supported Citizens UK for some time, both financially as well as taking an active role on a number of issues, including the support of refugees.

The founding assembly of Reading Citizens, part of the Thames Valley chapter, took place on 22nd November 2023, in Reading University's Great Hall.



Reading Citizens Founding Assembly –
Spot Liz Ratcliffe, Associate Area Dean
Reading and Liz Jackson, Associate
Archdeacon, Berkshire!

Over 150 people attended representing 24 organisations. These organisations include Reading Deanery, Reading University, Reading Refugee Support Group, Methodist Church, Reading Students Union, and some schools. 6 representatives from St Catherine's were in the assembly crowd, showing our support for social justice. Indeed Micah

writes in 6 v8 : 'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'

The founding assembly included an introduction by Bishop Olivia; some words from each of the Reading alliance member organisations, including Revd Liz Ratcliffe on behalf of the Reading Deanery, on the importance of Reading Citizens for them; and information discovered in Reading University Archives on some historical instances of our community working together to bring about improvements – some more successful than others! We also heard a few people's stories about issues impacting them. Firstly on street safety, after which the police agreed to meet to seek to identify and implement measures for improvements. Secondly, we heard from asylum seekers about the poor conditions they face living in our local asylum hotels. At the meeting some 150 Christmas cards were written to the owner and manager of the hotels, seeking a meeting to discuss how we can ensure local asylum seekers have decent healthy food to eat.

Reading Founding Assembly is just the start and there is a lot to do! Now we need to work together with the alliance to win change on local issues to improve Reading. One of the first actions is on 4pm December 7th when people will join with Reading Refugee Support Group (35-39 London St, Reading RG1 4PS) to deliver the Christmas cards written at the assembly to show our support for all people in Reading, including asylum seekers, to be able to live in dignity, in a safe warm place with good food to eat.

If you would like to know more, do speak to Caroline Heron.

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If you would like to join us please get in touch to have a chat or arrange to meet.

To make contact email us on:
mail@purleyplayers.uk

To have a look at the shows we have done in the past visit our website page:
www.purleyplayers.uk/show-archive/



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- We also hold social events throughout the Year.

We meet at 10.30am on the last Monday
of each month (excl. Bank Holidays) at

The Calcot Centre, Highview, Calcot, Reading, RG31 4XD.

For more information please contact Brenda on 0118 943 1079



Nativity Quiz

1. Where did Mary and Joseph live before Jesus was born?
a) Nazareth b) Bethlehem c) Jerusalem
2. What was the name of the angel who told Mary she would have a child?
3. What did Joseph do for a living?
4. Who was the Roman ruler when Jesus was born?
5. Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?
6. How did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?
7. Why couldn't Mary and Joseph find a place to stay?
8. Where does the Bible say Jesus was born?
a) In a stable b) In hay c) In a manger
9. According to the Bible, which animals were specifically mentioned as being present in the stable when Jesus was born?
a) sheep and a donkey b) cattle and a donkey
c) donkey, sheep and cattle d) None
10. What does the angel say to the shepherds when they tell them to go to Bethlehem?
11. The wise men travelled to Jerusalem.
a) northward b) southward c) eastward d) westward
12. What did the Wise Men follow to find Jesus?
13. How many Wise Men visited baby Jesus?
14. What gifts did the wise men bring for Jesus?
15. Who spread the news about baby Jesus throughout Bethlehem?
16. What is the City of David also known as in the bible?
17. Which of the gospels tell the story of the Nativity?
18. What does Jesus' other name, "Immanuel", mean?
a) God with us b) Son of God c) He who is God d) Chosen One
19. How many days after the birth of Christ did Joseph and Mary give him the name Jesus?
20. Jesus was born on the 25th of December. True or false?

Answers page 36

Westonbirt Arboretum

Most people don't set off to an arboretum for a long walk on a grey day at the end of November when its already raining, most of the leaves have fallen from the trees and the best of the autumnal colour has gone. They have more sense! Not me!

In need of a day off from my usual activities, undaunted, I travelled to the Westonbirt arboretum in Gloucestershire, a 75-minute drive away.

I rediscovered Westonbirt Arboretum earlier this year and wondered why I had not been for so many years! We have Robert Holford, a wealthy Victorian gentleman with a passion for plants, to thank for this stunningly beautiful place.

At that time plant hunters travelled the globe in search of new, rare and exotic species from all over the world, and Holford financed expeditions to travel in search of plant species that he then planted aesthetically. By 1855 he had established Westonbirt's Old Arboretum.

George, his son, carried on his father's work, and on George's death, having no children, it passed to his nephew who sold it within a year. It passed through various owners, and eventually in 1956 was handed over to Forestry England and opened to the public for the first time in 1961.

Westonbirt contains more than 15,000 specimens and 2,500 species of trees from all over the globe – no I did not count them! It is about 600 acres with 17 miles of marked paths – quite enough for me to walk! It comprises the old arboretum with the national tree

collection, and on the other side of the valley, the less formal Silk Wood, arrived at either by a treetop walkway or down and up the steep valley.

Even arboretums are not immune from wanting to have the best and greatest – they have 140 champion trees marked by blue tree labels. Champion trees have either the largest girth when measured 1.5m from the ground or are the tallest!

The rain stopped when I arrived, and I spent a couple of hours walking in the Old Arboretum followed by a few more hours in Silk Wood in autumnal sunshine! So restorative to walk surrounded by many beautiful trees, some still with beautiful autumnal colours, others with no leaves displaying their splendid branch shapes, and others with magnificent berries. My photos don't do justice to the experience!

The Westonbirt signs encouraged reflection! What three things can you be grateful to God for? For some inspiration how about the oxygen trees release that we breathe, the fact they eat greenhouse gases that cause climate change for breakfast, lunch and dinner and the fact that they boost our mental wellbeing as our anxiety drops as we walk amongst them? And if you stand underneath a densely leaved tree, you can see the light of the sky peeking through – however difficult and dark our situation is, we always have that light, that hope in God.

I returned home thoroughly refreshed, glad that I did not have the sense to stay at home!

Caroline Heron

Autumn colours at Westonbirt

Pictures by Caroline Heron



Westonbirt, the National Arboretum, is near Tetbury in Gloucestershire GL8 8QS. It is open every day, Monday - Sunday, except Christmas day, from 9.00am. Last admission is at 4.00pm, 30 minutes before the arboretum closes.

Editor

October MU.

Steph opened a well-attended meeting and introduced Alison Peyton who is the manager of ReadiFood – the charity helping those in greater Reading with food parcels.

F.a.i.t.h. first started delivery of food in 2005 and now provide hot drinks and sandwiches at St. Mary's reaching out to the homeless. Prior to the pandemic a 'Bed for the night' in various churches was available and now the council are going to offer this facility from the 24th January.

Back to the food parcels which are now up to 200 a week, the recipients having been referred by various agencies (70 in number!) as needing help – possibly while their benefits are being sorted.

Another innovation is Norcot Pantry which started 18 months ago for those on benefits and a low income. The customers pay a weekly membership – say £5 and are able to 'shop' for £20 worth of goods. As they have a fridge and freezer they can offer more choice and this is a more dignified experience for the customers.

A new project launched in 2022 is to help women with a 'Back to Work' experience where each woman is supported for 2-3 hours a week up to 4 weeks initially. Their companion will help and explain what to do, so skills of storage, rotation etc. are learned which helps greatly in the warehouse in sorting the donated items.

Alison thanked Paddy for collecting our donations and raising awareness of what is needed, and she also thanked the audience for the items brought that evening – 30 in total.

November MU.

Steph welcomed over 30 ladies to our annual Christmas Decoration evening and introduced Glen Higgins from the Five-a-Day Market Garden in Englefield.

Glen started by telling us about the 2 acre garden which is opposite the Englefield Garden Centre. It was set up by Pam Goddard to provide courses and activities for people of all ages and abilities. Her dedicated service, along with volunteers, merited an award from the High Sheriff for enhancing the life of the community.

A year after receiving the award she moved away and the mantle was taken over by Yvonne Redgrave and Glen Higgins who have added new infrastructure and increased the activities and events despite the Covid pandemic.

In 2023 Five-a-Day became a charity and sessions including Outdoor Learning for Teens and Thyme Together for older folk are on offer and volunteers are always welcome - see Hazel Newman for details.

The produce is available for sale in the Garden Centre Summer house in the car park. More information can be found on line - fiveaday.org.uk.

Glen followed by displaying lengths of willow from the Estate and proceeded to make willow rings and wreaths for Christmas. She took a 5 – 6 foot length and manipulated round her knee to encourage it to form a flexible curve

(Continued on page 15)

which she then twisted into a ring approximately 1 foot diameter. She repeated the technique with 2 more lengths joined to the original making a base to which can be attached items for decoration. For example, leaves, berries, holly, rosemary, teasels and baubles secured by short lengths of wire.



Chris gets instructions from Glen as how to "bend" the willow to make the ring

Glen made it look really easy and we hope to have a go - if not this year, maybe next.



Examples of the willow table decorations

After Hilary expressed our thanks the committee served delicious cakes and tea before the raffle was drawn.

Sheila Bryant

Hilary gets creative for Christmas

Following the MU meeting in November when Glen came and demonstrated willow weaving a table decoration, I decided to go to the Wreath making workshop so here is the result !

Hilary Smee



Christmas stockings

Once again the Mothers Union knitters have been busy making Christmas stockings for the Children Heard and Seen Project supporting children with a parent in prison.



We made 50 stockings which will be filled with chocolates and given to the children at their Christmas party. We have also made additional filled stockings which will be sold in aid of other Mothers Union Projects. Many thanks to all our knitters.

Hilary Smee



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Your family history is waiting to be revealed!

"I was adopted in the 60s - can you help me find my birth family?"

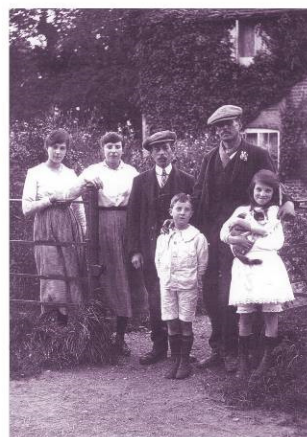
"In the early 1900s, my great Aunt disappeared leaving her two children to be brought up by her parents. What happened? Why did she abscond, or was her disappearance more sinister?"

"Are the Mendums of Bucks. related to those in Massachusetts, USA? How can I find out?"

"In the late 1800s, William Raven left Birmingham with the Army. He married and settled in Reading. Were his reasons financial, or to escape from something he'd rather forget?"

***Do you have unanswered questions about your family
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The Thurleys, Three Mile Cross, c. 1918

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The Power behind the Seal



As I go about my 'Power of Attorney' duties I reflect on the responsibilities that they entail on trust. Historically this document was signed and wax sealed, such was the power it held for the chosen attorney.

The Holy Spirit marked us with an identification seal when we accepted Jesus Christ as our Saviour and it becomes our duty to use that Spiritual Power wisely.

I was inspired to shine a light on the 'Seven Seals' in the book of Revelation which covers certain eras leading to the long anticipated second coming of Christ.

As Christmas approaches, once again we celebrate the birth history of Jesus. The church teaching moves in a cycle, not dwelling in any detail on the events of the future, as revealed in the Book of Revelation. Maybe because the revelations by John of Patmos are difficult to interpret and understand?

We embrace the promise of Eternal Life but aren't really alert to the idea that current world events may be linked to the future.

Too complex to write about here but these are the seven visionary seals that Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God was given the authority to open.

White Horse: Red Horse: Black Horse: Pale Horse: Souls crying out, given white robes: Earthquake, Sun, Moon, Stars: and Silence in Heaven.

Seven is a significant number biblically and means completion. The recent conflict in the Middle East started on the 7th of October 2023.

So whilst Christmas is all cosy and rosy with sweet baby Jesus, He IS the King of Kings. I urge us all to keep an eye on the signs of the times as His return draws ever closer. Amen

Rev 8:1-2 When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God and to them were given seven trumpets.

Lorraine Roberts



New Year Resolutions

What resolutions can we make that will last beyond January? At the start of a new year, let's remember Paul's words:

'I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings' (Philippians 3:10).

Like Paul, our resolution should be to know Christ deeper in this coming year.



All the fun of the



This took place on 17th November, at first it looked to be too far from Christmas so was planned as an Autumn Fair. But then we heard that a visitor from the North Pole bearing seasonal gifts would be arriving; so it had to be a Christmas Fair. The printing elf (Stuart) sprung into action to re-design the posters.

Thanks to the hard work of all those who organised the Fair and the crowds who attended we made some £1,400 to help our finances and our work and witness in our community.



(Christmas) Fair



The Institution, Induction, and Installa



If you missed the service you can watch it on YouTube via the St Catherine's website.



After an opening Hymn and welcome by Bishop Olivia, Rev Liz Jackson, the Associate Archdeacon of Berkshire presented Jackie to the Bishop to be instituted and Inducted.



Members of the Ministry and Leadership teams then undertook to support Jackie

tion of Rev Jackie Fountain as our vicar



Members of St Catherine's presented Jackie with items symbolising baptism, healing, the scriptures, the Eucharist, God's creation, mission & outreach, and hospitality.



Jackie then made declarations and oaths of allegiance after which Bishop Olivia handed Jackie the official Deed of Institution, investing her in the 'Cure of Souls'.



Bishop Olivia anointed Jackie, then blessed her and the members of St Catherine's. Addressing Rev Liz Jackson, the Associate Archdeacon, she asked her to 'Induct' Jackie.

Continued overleaf



The Institution, Induction, and Installation



Next came the Induction where Rev Liz Jackson, the Associate Archdeacon of Berkshire led

Jackie and the Churchwardens to the back of church, laid Jackie's hand on the door of the church and the churchwardens then handed her the keys, a token of her new responsibilities. Jackie was then led to her seat in church and 'installed' as vicar. With the formalities completed, Bishop Olivia could then present Jackie as our vicar to very warm applause calling Paul to join them.



of Rev Jackie Fountain as our vicar (*continued*)

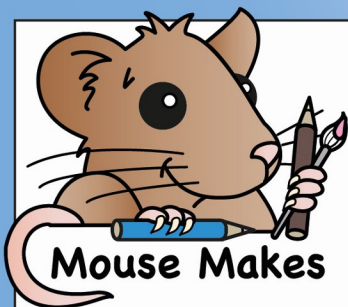


The church was full to capacity with 'overflow seating' in the Hall

The 'tech team': Paul, Lexi & David controlled cameras and sound for the Live stream broadcast and the feed in the Church Hall.

After the service food and drink that had been prepared earlier was laid out in the Church, the Hall and the corridor for the 150 or so people that attended this joyous occasion.





EPIPHANY is the time in the Church year that we remember when the 'wise men' or 'Magi' followed a star that led them to the Christ child Jesus. They bowed down, worshipped him and left *three* special gifts.

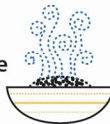


Where was Jesus born?

Luke 2:1



What three gifts did the wise men give Jesus?



_____ and _____

Luke 2:11



Who was the king?

Luke 2:1

Where did the wise men come from?
the _____

Luke 2:1

How were the wise men warned not to return to Herod?
In a _____

Luke 2:12

What had the wise men seen?
a _____

Luke 2:2



Look up the Bible verses, fill in the blanks, find them in the word search then look for the words opposite.

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

JESUS
WISEMEN
WORSHIP
SHEPHERD
KING • JEWS
CHRIST • CHILD
BORN • RULER
ISRAEL • REJOICE
JOY • HOUSE • MARY
GIFTS • EPIPHANY

How many other words can you make from the letters in EPIPHANY?



Tilehurst Triangle WI celebrated their 10th anniversary in November. At the start, there were just 23 members.

Our WI's first meeting was on 13th November 2013 with 18 members present and 2 WI advisers.

We welcomed back Wendy England, the adviser who had opened the first meeting

and we had a nostalgic look back at this occasion.

The first minutes were read which was interesting and some of the original members who still belong were invited to share their memories of the early years including the highlights and the struggles we had to survive.

We enjoyed watching a selection of photos which brought back many happy memories and the fun we have had along the way. What a long we have come with a current membership of 70 and a long waiting list.

Karen Boynton, who has been continuously on our committee since the beginning, cut the wonderful cake that Madeline Notttridge had made. A toast to our WI was made and we enjoyed socialising.

We have also had 2 interesting talks – one about Sandhurst (the Royal Military Academy) and the other about Reading's War Hospital. It is difficult to imagine now how Reading treated so many wounded service personal from World War 1. It could take 10 days to get the injured from the frontline back to Britain.

The workhouse became the main war hospital in Reading, better known to most of us as Battle Hospital. Many buildings including West Reading Library and the long gallery at Englefield House were used too.

The soldiers who were recovering were given a blue uniform to show they were in the armed forces to prevent local people from giving them a white feather of cowardice.

(Continued on page 26)



(Continued from page 25)

Our Christmas celebrations started with an afternoon tea at Riseley Tea Rooms. Karen Patrick and her team gave us a warm welcome.

A delicious selection of sandwiches, cakes and scones were served in the festive tearoom. After our tea, we enjoyed a

Christmas sing-along with a pianist. We can highly recommend a visit to Riseley tearooms.

With best wishes to everyone at St Catherine's for a very Happy Christmas, from Tilehurst Triangle WI.

Ros Somerville Tilehurst Triangle WI
tilehursttrianglewi@berkshirewi.co.uk





**Looking for friendship
or company?**

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Tuesday get Together's last meeting in 2023 will be on the 19th December and reopen on January 2nd 2024.

May we take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

St Catherine's Gardening Club



Our team has been somewhat diminished recently as Hazel has had to spend time getting her new knee in working order. We wish you a speedy recovery, Hazel!

We're hoping that the Insect Hotel which Hazel and Chris created is providing lots of safe overwintering places for many tiny creatures.

We're so grateful to Chris and Richard who have faithfully swept up leaves and kept everywhere looking tidy and cared for. They have also worked hard to store much of the seating outside the north entrance in a safe place for the winter.

Paddy was able to keep the lawns looking good throughout the summer, but the almost continuously wet early autumn weather meant that he had to stop mowing a bit earlier than he'd hoped. Paddy is still looking for an apprentice, any ideas??

I have mainly focussed on tending the roses, dead-heading them when necessary. They have grown wonderfully well this year and given us all a very beautiful display to enjoy.

I have already pruned most of them a little, to reduce wind rocking them about too much and damaging the roots. But I don't like cutting them back when there are beautiful buds and flowers still there to enjoy!

However, we've just had the first big frost of winter so that will probably bring an end to our tender summer flowers.

A few weeks ago, I spread Soil Improver

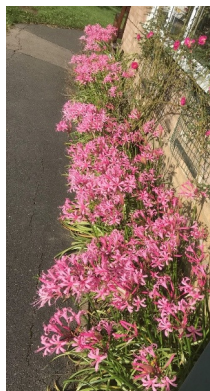
all around the roses to ensure they have the best chance to grow strong and healthy next spring.

I hope you have admired the nerines all along by the path under the church hall window. They've been spectacular this autumn, such a delight at the end of the season. For me personally it's a stunning reward for a lot of hard work!

Our dear friend and neighbour Darren was kind enough to use his professional equipment to cut all our hedges not long ago. They had grown incredibly since the last cut, and in some cases the stems were too thick for Darren's cutter.

We plan to make sure that we have manually removed all of these thick stems ahead of time next year. The volume of clippings produced was daunting but thankfully the "St Catherine's back up team" arrived and many people worked very hard to clear all the clippings. I won't name names in case I leave someone out, but you know who you are, so THANK YOU, all of you.

Our thanks especially go to Chris Sanger and Lynn Stevens for allowing us to fill their green wheelie bins, and to Sue Burston who filled her car and took a huge amount to the tip.



(Continued on page 28)

Reading Crown Court Open Day

This took place in mid October and I went along with two friends. The event was very well attended. Young Police Cadets greeted us and gave us the agenda for the day.

The building is beautiful as you enter – no photos were allowed inside! We signed up for a tour of the cells and it was also possible to take part in a mock trial.



There were many stalls manned by the police force or by volunteers showing different aspects of help given as needed, such as mental health, a refuge for women, those suffering from controlling partners, witness protection and the Probation Service.

All the personnel were very friendly and informative. We spent some time talking to two volunteers who help those with alcohol and drug abuse. They said that they try to help people through various stages of abandoning their addiction but also help those who cannot stop.

We then went to the jury waiting room where we had coffee and delicious home made cake and watched a video explaining the rules for being on a jury.

It was then time for our cell tour so we went down many stairs to see the holding cells. Any furniture is bolted down so that it cannot be used for attack. We were shown the special clothing that officers wear if they have to deal with a violent prisoner – this doesn't happen very often!.

The women officer who showed us round was great – friendly and efficient. We also saw inside one courtroom where legal costumes were displayed. The High Sheriff of Berkshire was there wearing a very elaborate costume.

We completed the tour by going inside the vehicle which transports prisoners to various jails. It reminded me of a camper van in size. Inside were twelve individual cells each with a small window. They were about the size of a loo on a plane. One had a glass door in case any of the prisoners had severe claustrophobia so that they could see out.

It was a very interesting and well organised day.

Rosemary Cunningham

(Continued from page 27)

It's unlikely there will be much activity in the church garden for the next few weeks, but I'm already looking forward to seeing all the bulbs peeping through in January!

I will close by wishing everyone a joyous

and peaceful Christmas, and many blessings in the New Year.

Jo Day

"We might think we are nurturing our garden, but of course it's our garden that is really nurturing us!"

Jenny Uglow

Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child was created in 1990 as a response to the images on TV of abandoned children in orphanages in Romania after the downfall of the Ceausescu regime in Romania. It quickly grew from a husband and wife team to being merged into the existing charity Samaritans Purse.



It delivers shoeboxes packed with gifts of toys, school supplies, and hygiene items to children all over the world, who otherwise may not get anything at Christmas. The goal of Operation Christmas Child is to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need. The project also aims to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with children and their families. Samaritans Purse gives each child a book 'The Greatest Story' written in their local language, and they are invited to hear more about Jesus and God's love for them.

St Catherine's has been collecting shoeboxes for many years now, and it has become a tradition that the last day of drop-off has become 'Shoebox Sunday'. As part of our Sunday morning service, we learn more about what happens to the boxes and where they end up. We bless the boxes as we send on them on their way on their long route to the children. Boxes collected in Western Europe are predominantly delivered to Africa as well as to Eastern Europe - including the Ukraine.



Collected at our Shoebox Service

At our Shoebox Service this year, we saw a video of the delivery of shoeboxes to children in the Ukraine. Boxes have been sent there for many years, but with the current war, the delivery of boxes takes on a special meaning. One of the ladies helping deliver had received a box herself, when a child in a Ukrainian orphanage. Now adopted and living in America she is a worker for Samaritan's Purse helping deliver to her childhood country.



Packed into a car

It's not too late to pack and send a 'virtual' shoebox by going to the website <https://occ.samaritans-purse.org.uk/>

Over 200 million shoeboxes of good news and great joy have now been delivered worldwide over the years that Operation Christmas Child has been running. Why not join them next year.



Delivered to a local collection point

Why churchwardens love January

Hail to the Lord's anointed,
Both clergyman and lay!
But they're seldom disappointed
To get past Christmas Day!
The hectic Christmas season is
Of service constantly –
There can't be better reason
To welcome January!

So, when the season's over,
The crib has been put by,
The drapes to green changed over,
They breathe a heartfelt sigh!
They laugh and smile with pleasure,
And sing a merry rhyme,
But short-lived is their leisure –
For soon comes Easter time!

By Nigel Beeton

The Curate and the Vicar
A busy schedule keep,
As they rush, ever quicker –
They don't get that much sleep.
And overworked Churchwardens
And their sides persons team –
Sure don't get time for boredom,
And only seldom scream!



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Smile lines

Santa

What do you call Santa's helpers? - Subordinate Clauses.

Snowman

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire? - Frostbite.

Sums up Christmas

Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: 'Peace on Earth'; 'Goodwill to Men'; and 'Batteries not included'.

Red

What's red and white, red and white, and red and white? Father Christmas rolling down a hill.

Stronger

Statistics prove we're all getting stronger. Fifty years ago, you needed an estate car to hold £50 worth of Christmas presents. Twenty-five years ago, it took two people to carry £30 worth of Christmas groceries - now a five-year-old can do it.

Christmas in my heart

Christmas is in my heart twelve months a year and, thanks to credit cards, it's also on my Visa card statement twelve months a year.

Turkey

He ate so much over the holidays that he decided to quit cold turkey.

Which side of the turkey has the most feathers? The outside.

Runs over

A father gave his daughter a young puppy for Christmas. An hour later, he found her in the kitchen, looking sadly at a puddle in the centre of the floor. "Look Dad," she said, "My pup runneth over!"

What do you get Dad?

December is the month when the family begins to discuss what to get Dad for Christmas.

Some argue for a shirt; others hold out for a pair of socks.

But the argument usually ends in a tie.

Church rules

Six-year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother Joel sat together for the Christmas concert in church.

Joel kept giggling and whispering until his big sister had had enough. "Be quiet in church!"

"Why?" Joel demanded. "Who is going to make me?" Angie pointed to the back of the church and said: "See those two big men standing at the door? They're hushers."

Christmas gifts

Grandfather was talking to his granddaughter, "When I was a child all we got for Christmas was an apple and an orange."

The little girl clapped her hands in joy. "Brilliant! I'd love a new computer and a mobile!"

Christmas shopping

It was Christmas and the judge was in a benign mood as he asked the prisoner what he was charged with. "Doing my Christmas shopping early," replied the man.

"Why, that's no offence," said the judge. "How early were you doing it?"

"Before the store opened," replied the defendant.

The Godspell about Jesus

This coming year, much of the C of E lectionary will focus on Mark. So here is a short introduction to this much loved gospel...

Mark is the shortest of the Gospels, and most likely the first to be written (about 65 – 70AD). It is certainly the most action-packed!

The gospel of Mark was written by John Mark, whose name occurs often in Acts. His mother lived in a house in Jerusalem, where Jesus' followers met in the early days of the church there (Acts 12:12). John Mark was cousin to Barnabas, Paul's travelling companion.

John Mark had set off with Paul on the first great missionary tour, but then disgraced himself by going home – not making himself popular with Paul! However, Barnabas gave John Mark a second chance, and in later years John Mark won the friendship of Paul. When Paul was in prison, John Mark stood by him (Colossians 4).

Mark's gospel was written not when John Mark was in Jerusalem, but later, when he had spent some time with Peter in Rome. Peter had come to love John Mark as his own son. (1 Peter 5:13), and there is a strong early tradition that John Mark set down Jesus' story as he had heard it directly from the apostle Peter.

For example, Papias, writing about AD140, said: "Mark, who was the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately all that he remembered, whether of sayings or doings of Christ, but not in order. For he was neither a hearer nor companion of the Lord."

Some years later Irenaeus wrote that Mark's gospel was written "when Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church there." After their deaths, "Mark, Peter's disciple, has himself delivered to us in writing the substance of Peter's preaching."

John Mark wrote his gospel with extraordinary vividness. And he obviously knew he would have non-Jewish readers because he often explains Jewish customs.

The Gospel begins with a bang: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God..." No beating about the bush – here is the purpose and the message right from the opening verse.

The word 'gospel' in Greek is evangelion – good news (hence the term evangelist). So where does the actual word 'gospel' come from? The Anglo-Saxons first thought it up, using the term 'Godspell', a word that may mean 'good news' or 'news about God'.

It was an apt way to refer to the new faith when it reached them. (Hence 'Godspell' as the name of the West End musical about the life of Jesus.)

Mark opens the action not with the birth of Jesus, but rather with His baptism by John. Then the action moves swiftly towards the crisis of the cross and resurrection. Within this framework, the material tends to be not in chronological order, but rather grouped by subject.

The book bustles with action and details.

(Continued on page 33)

Tilehurst Afternoon Women's Institute

We recently celebrated our 10th Anniversary with an exhibition covering those years. We were joined by Wendy England and Alison Lewis, our Berkshire Adviser who set up our Institute and Alison who was our first President.



We also held a display of some items made by our Knit and Natter Group and Books read by our Book Club

Before Christmas we are all going out for a lunch and at our December meeting we will be having an American Supper and hope to enjoy our new tablecloth.



This is being appliquéd and embroidered by our members at present. It was designed by Bron Towner and Hazel Ireland is undertaking the co-ordination of the sewing.

In the new year Kevin Little will be talking to us about local canals, followed in February by a Magician.

Visitors are always welcome to come along. We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 2.00pm until 4.00pm.

Diane Wakefield
tilehurstafternoonwi@berkshirewi.co.uk

(Continued from page 32)

It gives far more detail than Matthew's in the accounts of what Jesus did, but deals more briefly with Jesus' teaching.

Mark does not have much that is all his own – in fact - only four paragraphs in all! This is because both Matthew and Luke borrowed heavily from him when they came to write their gospels. And yet we

still have something unique in Mark: moving pictures of Jesus in action, convincing us by what He does that His claim to be the Son of God was true. There are fewer stories in Mark than in the other gospels, but these stories are longer, and the detail in them hints of Peter's remembered eye-witness accounts.

Source 'Parish Pump'

Where did Christmas cards come from?

Christmas cards have a history which may surprise you: their origins are not of the Church, but of the Post Office and railways.

Of course, very early 'Christmas cards' had been around for hundreds of years, in the form of a simple exchange of Christmas greetings in private letters. The earliest such letter on record was written in England in 1534.

In 1611 a HUGE Christmas card made a one-off appearance. It measured a whopping 33" by 24", and was given to King James I of England (who was also King James VI of Scotland). It featured an illustration of a rose, four poems, a song, and a Christmas message for the king and his son.

Then in 1843 came the creation of Christmas cards as we know them today. One enterprising man was responsible for this: Sir Henry Cole, a senior civil servant who had helped launch the 'Public Record Office', now called the Post Office.

Sir Henry Cole helped to introduce the Penny Post, as it was called. Until then, only rich people could afford the Post, but with the building of the railways, which carried far more packages than a horse and cart (and went much faster), suddenly the Penny Post became possible.

Sir Henry wanted to encourage 'ordinary' people to use the new service. So he came up with the bright idea of creating a simple card that people could send each other for Christmas. His friend, John Horsley, was an artist, who designed a three-panel card. Two panels depicted people caring for the poor, and the

middle panel showed a family enjoying a large Christmas dinner.

They printed about 1000 cards that first year, and advertised under the slogan: 'Just published, a Christmas Congratulations Card; or picture emblematical of old English festivity to perpetuate kind recollections between dear friends!'

The cards sold for one shilling each and could be posted to friends and family for a Penny. There was an immediate, warm response from the public.

Printing methods improved, and by 1860 Christmas cards were produced in large quantities. By 1870 the cost of posting one had dropped to half a penny, and the custom was rapidly gaining popularity. By the early 1900s, the custom had spread across Europe.

The first cards usually included a Nativity scene, and in late Victorian times, robins and snow-scenes. Robins were chosen because the postmen in those days were nick-named 'Robin Postmen', because of their red uniforms.

Christmas cards appeared in the USA in the late 1840s. They were mass produced from 1875, and in 1915 John C Hall and two of his brothers created Hallmark Cards, which today offers 2,000 different designs of Christmas card.

Charity Christmas cards began in Denmark in the early 1900s. They spread to Sweden and Norway, and then on throughout Europe and America.

Last year the Royal Mail estimated that it had delivered 150 million cards during the Christmas period.

Source 'Parish Pump'

The Everlasting Turkey

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me
I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.

On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard
As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.

On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door,
The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.

On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old
We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.

On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried,
But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.

On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died.
The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince
When he sat down at table - and was offered turkey mince.

On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter,
For he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of Alka-Seltzer.

On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto,
He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.

On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made brew,
Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.

On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting,
And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.

On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips,
The guests had gone, the turkey too – WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS.

Getting ready for Christmas...

In this season of endless parties, socialising and constant hospitality, please remember:

- No woman ever yet shot her husband while he was washing the dishes.
- Light travels faster than sound. That's why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
- Everyone has a photographic memory. But sadly, some don't have film.
- Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves, for they will never cease to be amused.
- Many people's ambition: to be weighed and found wanting.
- He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
- Seen it all, done it all, can't remember most of it.

Ever heard of World Toilet Day? It was on 19th November, and this is what TLM's CEO had to say ...

“Today is World Toilet Day. It may seem funny to us to spend a day thinking about toilets but can you imagine what life would be like without one?

Sadly, 3.5 billion people across the world still lack even the most basic sanitation.

I saw first hand the impact this lack of sanitation has for people affected by leprosy when I visited Batticaloa, in Sri Lanka, earlier this year. Here, child cases of leprosy are twice as high as anywhere else in the world.

As I met child after child with leprosy, I was shocked to see that none of their homes had toilets or clean water.

Let me tell you about Thibekka and Ajai. Their precious daughters were diagnosed with leprosy at just two years old. Shortly after, they were diagnosed too.

Poverty, dirty water and poor sanitation meant their immune systems were weak. Their bodies could not fight leprosy.

Many families affected by leprosy don't have a toilet. Instead, they must dig a hole outside their house for their daughters to use.

When the monsoon rains arrive, they are forced to use nearby fields. It's unhygienic and fraught with danger.

I'm sure you will agree –no child should fear going to the toilet without safety or dignity.

It costs £300 to provide a family affected by leprosy with a toilet.”

World Leprosy Day is at the end of next month where we will have the opportunity to contribute towards this most basic of needs.

Lorraine Roberts, TLM Rep

Nativity Quiz (page 11) answers

1. Nazareth
2. Gabriel
3. Carpenter
4. Caesar Augustus
5. To register for the census
6. We are not told in the Bible
7. There was no room at the inn
8. c) In a manger
9. d) None
10. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to all people'
11. d) westward
12. A star
13. The Bible doesn't say
14. Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh
15. The shepherds
16. Bethlehem
17. Matthew and Luke
18. a) God with us
19. 8, according to the law
20. False; we don't know the date

Musings from Phil French

What the listener brings?

Some say: "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." (Danger of long essay!) But is meaning "in the ear of the listener"?

A Christian colleague of mine was known for funny answers, remember? Once, he was shown a ceremonial photo of the Pope. He was asked: "What does all this MEAN?" In my friend's answer, he asked about "Hell".

Does "Hell" mean unpleasant things? To Germans that same word means "BRIGHT"! (Google!) Some meanings, my mate felt, come from inside us (and if listeners differ, there's misunderstanding.)

What about Church activity's "meanings"? (Don't ask me! I'm a mere student!) Maybe an important bit can grow inside us, IF we study and pray for true understanding?

Not properly prepared?

That parable of the wedding feast puzzled me, while I focussed on TODAY'S ideas. Particularly when that poor fellow off the street was punished for not wearing a nice wedding garment!

Background knowledge needed? They say that in those days a king might use, e.g., a son's wedding for PRESTIGE - to boss everyone! (Not like some light-hearted wedding ceremonies today!) Staying away might say: "Stuff you!" to the host. (But wasn't the story's king quite benevolent to start with, until ... ?)

Some of the VERY FINAL guests were poor people off the street. Could they all afford splendid finery? No!

But I'm told wedding garments could often be supplied by the wedding hosts. So, er, perhaps that naughty guest REFUSED a robe? Blimey! More to this than I thought.

I'm still working on it, but I must always beware of conclusions based on today's ideas. These stories reflect the customs of their times?

Reaching out

Once I saw an attempt to "speak in tongues". It didn't feel too good. Research (using recordings) SEEMS to show that there are too few speech-like patterns in these utterances to make them very credible? Don't ask me; I do NOT know!!

English has it's funny phrases. (In the Babet storm, someone said: "It rained cats and dogs!") I'm told that some Jews had their own strange "slang" phrases. Some scholars feel that "speaking in tongues" was one of these? (I know SO little. Is this hopelessly wrong?)

But if you read the Old Testament, including the grim bits that we often skip, it was TERRIBLE then to buddy up with foreigners. They were to be fought, and swept aside! Did "speaking in tongues" sometimes mean communicating with those dreadful outsiders?

Let's accept that meaning of the phrase JUST for one wee moment. The disciples shocked a few traditionalists by reaching out to outsiders. It might require a deep study of outsiders' culture, but perhaps there's a good way of "speaking in tongues" today?

On how to make the most of carol singing



The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

Carol singing is not what it used to be. My fond memories of a group of choristers, muffled in scarves and overcoats, carrying lanterns, and walking from door to door in the snow, as they sang 'While shepherds watched ...' had to be suddenly revised when I saw your own music group, in T-shirts inscribed with 'Jesus loves You', singing 'Little donkey', in your shopping centre.

I suspect any money you raised would just about have paid for the electricity used to power your banks of electronic equipment. Singing in the main square of the Centre next to the fountain may have looked good, but it seemed to mean that the choir men were obliged to make constant trips to the lavatory.

Here at St James the Least of All, carol singing is regarded as a staff perk for the choir; the year when the Boys' Brigade tried to break their monopoly was suppressed with a ruthlessness that would have impressed Genghis Kahn.

Our annual carol-singing route involves months of meticulous planning. We find that a transparent collection box is vital, so that donors can see what earlier patrons have given. This means that those who are bound to put in notes must be visited first – 'pour encourager les autres'. It also needs a detachable base, so that if coppers are given, they can be removed from sight before the next call.

Those homes that contain several children are visited just after bedtime, so that parents will give generously simply to get the choir to go somewhere else. Veiled threats to stay and sing more carols (unless they give generously) are usually very effective.

Getting whoever looks the most innocent and photogenic to ring the bell and ask for money is a far more subtle way of ensuring a donation than planting any number of mafia lookalikes (such as our church treasurer) on the doorstep.

The choir always finishes its evening at the local pub – but again, the timing must be carefully managed. Too early and there will only be the landlord, his wife, and their Labrador to listen; too late and people will be so full of Christmas cheer that any carols will be hi-jacked and become the equivalent of back-of-the bus rugby songs.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

St Catherine's Centre

Church and Hall regular bookings
(* is term time only)

Monday

After School Club - 3:30-6.00pm *
Exercise Class - 7.00-8.00pm *
Yoga - 8.15-9.15pm

Tuesday

Breakfast club - 7.30-8.45am *
Childminders Drop-in 10.00-11.30am *
Tuesday Get Together - 10.00am-12.00noon
Seated Exercise 1.00-2.00pm
W.I. - 2.00-4.00pm (3rd Tuesday)
After School Club - 3:30-6.00pm *
AA - 7.00-9.30pm

Wednesday

Breakfast club - 7.30-8.45am *
Communion Service 9.00-10.00am
Yoga - 10.30-11.30am
Vivace Voices 1.45-3.45pm
After School Club - 3:30-6.00pm *
Kettle Bells - 6.30-7.30pm
Mothers' Union - 7.30-9.30pm (2nd Weds)
W.I. - 7.00-10.00pm (3rd Wednesday)
Yoga Sculpt - 7.45-8.45pm

Thursday

Zumba - 9.30-10.45am
Cafe Siena - 10.00am-2.00pm
Over 60's exercise - 1.15-2.15pm
After School Club - 3:30-5.30pm *
Zumba - 6.00-7.00pm
Stretch & Flow Yoga Class 7.30-8.30pm
Trefoil - 7.30-9.30pm (4th Thursday)

Friday

Tots Praise - 9.15am *
Cafe Siena - 10.00am-2.00pm
Friday Friends - 2.00-4.30pm

Saturday

Yoga - 9.30-10.30am and 10.45-11.45am
Crafty Space - 1.30-5.30 pm (once a Month)
Bowls Club - 7.00-9.00 pm

RG31 - The Parish Magazine of Tilehurst St Catherine & Calcot St Birinus

RG31 is published quarterly by the P.C.C. of Tilehurst St Catherine & Calcot St Birinus to subscribers (contact editor to subscribe, the cost is £6 for the year) or in digital form accessed from our website: www.stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

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All details and events are correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of going to print.

The P.C.C. and Editors are not necessarily in agreement with the views expressed by contributors in this magazine.

We welcome contributions of articles or letters for future issues from anyone living in, or connected with the parish.

All contributions for the next (Spring) edition must be received by the editors by 17th March 2024

Contributions may be sent to: magazine@stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

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The Anglican Parish of Tilehurst St Catherine & Calcot St Birinus

ST CATHERINE OF SIENA

Wittenham Avenue, Tilehurst, RG31 5LN

www.stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

www.facebook.com/st.catherines.tilehurst

Please check these websites for up-to-date information on services and other events



We are 'live-streaming' our 10.00 am Sunday services so that they can be viewed via our Facebook page. Simply go to: www.facebook.com/st.catherines.tilehurst (you do not need an account to view - if asked to login or join, you can click 'Not Now'). Once shown on Facebook, all our videos can be found again on our Web Site: www.stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

Every Sunday, The Ten O'clock Service - varies in style and contents each week, but will always be 'family friendly'. It will contain praise, teaching, communion and usually include a time of sharing what God is doing amongst us. Refreshments afterwards in the Hall.

On Wednesdays at 9.00 am - there's Holy Communion in church, everybody welcome.

Who's Who in the Parish



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