

December 2024
and January 2025



GRIDIRON

The Magazine of the Parish Church of
Saint Laurence Upminster
£1



Service Times

The service schedule may change at short notice. Please refer to Porchtalk or contact the Parish Office for up-to-date information.

Sundays

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Holy Communion | 08.00 |
| Sung Parish Mass | 09.30 |
| Sunday Schools | 09.30 |
| Evensong | 18.30 |
| <i>(see Parish Diary for details)</i> | |

Weekdays

| | | |
|-----------|----------------|-------|
| Tuesday | Morning Prayer | 09.10 |
| Wednesday | Morning Prayer | 08.45 |
| | Mass | 11.00 |
| | Evening Prayer | 16.15 |
| Thursday | Morning Prayer | 09.10 |

Footsteps

This Service for pre-school children and grown-ups normally takes place monthly on a Monday at 09.30 in the Lady Chapel. The next service is on **27th January**.



Additional services on Saints' Days are shown in the Diary in the back pages.

Baptisms and Wedding Banns

These are administered during public services. Please contact the Parish Office to make arrangements.

Confessions

By appointment with the clergy.

Please inform the Parish Office or Revd Susannah of anyone who is ill or in need of a pastoral visit.

See back pages for useful telephone contact numbers

www.upminsterparish.co.uk

Parish Office ☎ 01708 220696

parish.office@upminsterparish.co.uk

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From the Rector

'To an open house in the evening
Home shall men come,
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome.
To the end of the way of the wandering star,
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.'

G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936) – excerpt from 'The House of Christmas'

I first came across this poem by Chesterton a few years ago, when searching for suitable material for the Advent Carol Service, and it has stayed with me. The whole poem, but especially this final verse, seems to sum up very well both the mystery and the reality, the immediacy and the transcendence, of what we celebrate at Christmas. I find it very moving how it envisages the Christmas story as the place of our homecoming, and how it sets the wonderful paradoxes of the story out so clearly: the timelessness and infinite meaning of this event rooted in one moment; the way that the incarnation seems both impossible and yet an inescapable reality; the fact that in the place where God is pushed out of the world, the place where there was no room in the inn, God makes himself fully present with creation and calls human beings to find their home in him.

We are beginning the journey through another Advent and Christmas when we are very mindful of terrible suffering across the world – not least of course in the homeland of Jesus himself. When we consider what is happening, it is only right for our marking of Christmas to be tempered with lament, with horror, with sadness and all the other emotions which these realities ought to stir in us. As we recall the song of the angels, 'Peace on earth and goodwill to all people' (Luke 2.14) – we pray earnestly that somehow that may become even just a glimmer of a reality in those places which so desperately need peace.

Yet the Christmas message is one of stubborn hope against all the odds: 'the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it' (John 1.5). Like the Resurrection, the Nativity story is a reminder that the heart of Christianity lies in the belief that evil, death and sin never have the last word. In this strange tale of how the world did not want him, we find the assurance that God is there – and that God is present and working even where we find it

impossible to see him. So as we prepare for Christmas, and celebrate it, and reflect on its meaning, may we find that stubborn hope in ourselves once again, and from it find the impetus to do whatever we can to strive for a more peaceful and compassionate world.

with my prayers and best wishes
Susannah



The Building Project Phase 1 – an update *by Chris Mowat*

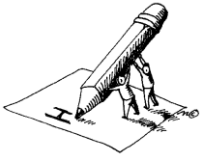
For some while we have been looking to fundraise and move this Project forward. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) approved Phase 1 which, in summary, for those who have not seen the plans on the board at the back of the church or read the pop-up banner, is to install an accessible toilet in the back vestry, provide more storage in the Tower area, including facilities for making refreshments, move the font to the back of the North Aisle and glass in the arch fronting the Tower area.

Following discussions with our architect, the PCC approved the step of obtaining a detailed quantity surveyor's report on the likely cost of the work, thus giving us a figure to aim at for fundraising etc. The report was delivered on the 1st July, and the high level estimate was £350,117 + VAT. Under current regulations it might be possible to reclaim the VAT. We now had an idea of how much was needed and whether we could move forward.

Thanks to recent substantial legacies from the estates of the late Melvyn Gallagher and Pauline Wheeler, I am pleased to report that we are now well on the way to reaching our target and the PCC has approved the next step of instructing the architect to prepare detailed specifications for submission to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) for approval, before an application can be made for a faculty (an ecclesiastical planning consent) and then an invitation to tender from suitable contractors.

The generosity of Melvyn Gallagher and Pauline Wheeler has made the Project come alive and become attainable, although we shall continue to fundraise and seek grants. We thank God that we are moving forward and it is hoped that the DAC will be able to consider the plans in the early part of 2025.

If you would like information on legacies there are leaflets available from the back of church. If you cannot get to church please contact Joanne in the Parish Office by email: parish.office@upminsterparish.co.uk or telephone: 01708 220696.



From the Editors

Dear Readers,

This issue is packed with a whole variety of articles covering a range of topics from various members of the congregation – thank you all for sending in your articles.

Here is just some of what's inside: A visit to Corsica, a walk around some of London's Churches, a Medieval Carol Service and Vocations for Lay people. We hear from the PCC, the Church Building Improvement Fund Raising Committee and the Care of Creation Group.

The list is too long to mention everything here...so just get reading!

Joanne, Editor

From the Parish Registers

BAPTISM

We welcome into the family of the church and pray for:

22nd September Olivia Patricia Couchman

13th October Dulcie Grace Bristow

27th October Wilfred Samuel Masterson

FUNERAL

We offer our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of:

14th November June Mason



February and March Magazine Deadline

Items for inclusion in the February and March edition of *Gridiron* should reach the editorial team by **Friday 3rd January**. We would prefer to receive items by e-mail at gridiron@upminsterparish.co.uk. Paper copy is acceptable but should be submitted to us as early as possible. The **February and March** Magazine will be on sale from **Sunday 26th January**.



We wish all our readers and advertisers a joyous Christmas and prosperity in the new year.



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Summary of PCC Meeting held on 25th September 2024



A proposal to increase the security level of the Parish website to comply with the latest Internet protocols was approved.

Discussions took place on various churchyard trees which need attention. It was agreed to deal with the most urgent work first and that priority should be given to those overhanging trees which pose a hazard to traffic.

Charity of the Month suggestions were considered and selected for several months in 2025. Support for an environmental charity was included as this was an eco church requirement. The Lent Charity would be decided at the next PCC meeting.

Increases in hall hire charges for 2025 for regular users were agreed. One off hire charges are considered to be too low in comparison with others in the area and would be looked into further.

There were further discussions on the problems with the chairs in the Main Hall and it was decided that these should be replaced. Various types of chair were looked at and the preferred options would be trialled before a final decision was made.

Progress has been made towards obtaining a bronze eco award but more needs to be done, such as using eco-friendly products in the halls. It was also necessary to become a fair trade church and it was agreed that we should seek to do this.

Other matters that received attention included confirmations, Heritage Open Day/Ride and Stride, Christingle, increases in the numbers attending 8 o'clock service, meeting with architect on Building Improvements Project, Parish Share, stewardship, removal of concrete bike stands in churchyard. Reports on finance, communications, safeguarding and all routine matters were presented.

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The Birth of a Bell

by Nigel Lockwood

One of the advantages of being on the Aero Engineering Course at Queen Mary College in Mile End in the Seventies was using the Wednesday afternoon free times to pop into Central London. Frequent visits to Foyles Bookshop in Charing Cross Road for course books (and organ music), often included a trip round the corner to Rod Argent's synthesiser shop!!

Another regular haunt (now sadly gone), was the Whitechapel Bell Foundry just down the Whitechapel Road from the college. Here there was always something interesting to see, be it new cores and copes (the moulds) being prepared, new casting or bells in for repair and tuning. The smell of hot casting sand never leaves you.

Wind time forward and its now July 2024 and Day Three of our wander round the Mediterranean, where the cruise ship has just moored at the port of Ajaccio in Corsica. This is a typical South of France small seaport, with working fishing boats and expensive motor yachts tied up in the harbour, and a mixture of medieval through to modern architecture in the town.

The harbour market was a pleasure to wander around, and then we were off to investigate Ajaccio's main claim to fame – that of being the birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte. The house of his birth and the next-door museum were easy to find, then off to the city's cathedral to see where he was baptised.



The cathedral (*Cathédrale Notre-Dame de l'Assomption d'Ajaccio*) is close to the sea and is the ecclesiastical seat of the Bishop of Ajaccio, a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Marseille. It is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and was built in the Baroque/Mannerist architectural style in 1577 to replace an earlier building lost to fire.

Heading for the entrance, we were greeted by the sight of a large crowd of people and camera crews from the Corsican and National French television channels. Everyone was focused on a large articulated lorry parked right across the front of the cathedral steps and fully loaded with some intriguing items!

The trailer flatbed had what looked like a steam engine with no cab or wheels, which was a mobile furnace and still smoking away in the blazing sun. The

other large item was a frame holding nineteen bells (all much larger than handbells), which was now being used to accompany the crowd in communal singing.

Evidently, we had stumbled on the end of a two-day, live casting event for a new bronze bell called 'Louis'. The 48 hours had also included concerts and a treasure hunt for the children, and now was the time to break the mould apart and see if the casting had been successful.



The still-steaming mould had its core slowly pulled out by the crane mounted on the lorry and the remaining assembly was carefully rotated through 180 degrees and left hanging six feet in the air. There then followed some very aggressive use of wooden mallets to separate the outer parts of the case (the cope), which fell to the ground along with most of the casting sand.

A massive cheer went up from the crowd when it was apparent that the casting had

been successful, and the bell founders started cleaning off the remaining casting sand. The event then ended with the mayor being allowed the privilege of striking the first note using a ceremonial mallet!!! I've no idea what pitch it had been designed for, but the note rang true and clear in the space in front of the Cathedral.

Just as we were about to leave the wind picked up and I got the full aroma of the now split cast lying in pieces on the ground. It immediately took me back to those Wednesday afternoons in Whitechapel!



William Holden, our Patron, wrote the following article for the parish magazine of the church where he worships, St Peter's, West Blatchington, and has kindly given his permission for us to reproduce it here. If it raises particular questions for you that you would like to talk through with a member of the clergy or lay leadership, please do get in touch with me or the person you would like to speak to - Susannah

Lay Vocations – What is God Calling You to Do?

This article is based on the Living Faith course notes, a course for which I was a mentor for six years.

In the Church of England, every individual is called to a life of discipleship and apostolic living, which begins with baptism. Discipleship encompasses all the ways we learn from and follow Jesus in our daily lives. This call to service manifests in various forms and is essential for both the gathered and sent church.

The 'Setting God's People Free Report' emphasizes the significant yet often overlooked roles lay people play in society. It highlights that 98% of church members are not ordained and spend 90% of their waking lives outside church-related activities. However, many are neither adequately envisioned, trained, prayed for, nor encouraged for mission and ministry in their everyday lives. Thus, there's a need to transform the church's culture to support laypeople better.

Changing the church's culture is akin to eating an elephant - one bite at a time. At the local level, practical steps can be taken, such as commissioning people, asking different questions, visiting people in their contexts, including prayers for everyday lives, and highlighting community activities on notice boards.

To support faith from Monday to Saturday, the Church of England offers resources like 'Everyday Faith,' which are easily accessible online. The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity provides a range of resources and courses, and the 'Talking Jesus Course' aims to inspire and equip people to share their faith naturally and relevantly.

Understanding vocation is crucial. It's not just about church roles but encompasses various professions and occupations. Common myths about vocation include the belief that it is exclusively religious or requires exceptional holiness. John Adair identifies nine characteristics of vocational people: dedication, fit, not driven by money alone, creativity, enthusiasm, service, and love. Most people have the potential to be vocational if the circumstances are right.

Remember, each one of us is unique, and God has given us special gifts to be used for His purpose. We could, like the person who buried their talent, just do nothing. But vocation calls us to act. Our calling can be a single event or may come at several times in our lives for different tasks. The idea that vocational people are holier than others is persistent but unfounded. A genuine sense of unworthiness is common among those called by God, both in the Bible and today. God calls us as we are, not as others think we should be, using our unique qualities for His kingdom.

Our calling can come in various forms. The person who 'just' unlocks the church daily or 'just' irons the altar linen is answering a call. And they don't 'just' do it: they do it! Each act of service, no matter how small it may seem, is significant in fulfilling God's purpose.

To discern if one is called to a particular ministry, consider these questions: Do you feel a persistent sense of calling? Do others recognize your calling? Is your sense of calling realistic? Is it well-informed? Engaging in prayer, conversation, experience, study, and mentorship, and reading relevant materials can also aid in this discernment process.

As Mary Oliver poetically asks, 'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?' Each person's journey of discernment and answering their vocation is unique, aiming to align their true selves with God's call. Each of us is called, chosen, and beloved by God. Starting with that assurance, our task is to discern, with God and our community, what we are called to do and to be.

What are you called to do?
William Holden

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Walking the Dog

by Rob Brabner

The St Laurence Walking Team made a double effort this year, with two walks in aid of the Friends of Essex Churches Trust and St Laurence Church. They undertook a local walk on the first Saturday in September and a further walk around London churches, as part of the London Open House event, on Saturday 14th September.

Our walkers were Alison Cox, Lorraine Beeton, Diane Merron, Amy Skinner



with her dog Ruby, Maureen Gourley, Cheryl Goddard and Rob Brabner. The local walk was from Romford back to Upminster. Not all the churches were open but we were made very welcome at those which were - especially Ruby, who behaved very well at all times.

On the following Saturday, the official 'Ride & Stride' day, we embarked (another reference to the dog) on a walk around some of London's

Churches. This coincided with the London Open House Festival. Unfortunately, Lorraine was not available but Keith Stewart joined us for the morning, and it was good to have everyone else with us again, including Ruby, who of course had a walking advantage with her four legs.

We were a little disappointed that a few more churches were not open to visitors, however, we did have access to St Botolph's, Bishopsgate, the first church we visited. A few of the closed churches had very attractive churchyards. Worth mentioning is St Vedast, Foster Lane, which is close to St Paul's Cathedral. On the south wall of this church is displayed a section of tessellated pavement with several other interesting items in this attractive green space.

St Andrew's, Holborn, although not open on the day (it's usually open during the week), has an attractive green area with interesting planting.

We visited St Bride's with the famous 'Wedding Cake' spire designed by Sir Christopher Wren. In the 18th century the local pastry



chef, William Rich, modelled the wedding cake on the five octagonal stages of diminishing sizes. However, I doubt if the cake was 226ft high, unlike the steeple.

St Bride's (a corruption of St Bridget) is at one end of Fleet Street and is known as the 'Journalists' Church'. St Bridget is alleged to have turned well-water into beer, which may be appropriate for journalists. There is a strong connection to printing here, too, with William Caxton's press being set up in Fleet Street some 500 years ago.

The original church had Saxon origins and was rebuilt by Wren after the Great Fire of London. Wren's church was badly damaged in WW2 and so the church was restored in the 1950s by Godfrey Allen. The main worship area has an attractive and thought-provoking chapel to the north of the main altar. The Chapel is dedicated to journalists who have died recently, some in conflicts around the world. Many of the names are well known and were regular broadcasters.



Not to be missed is the downstairs area. Post-war excavations revealed the foundations of several earlier churches as well as the remains of a significant Roman Villa. Relics date from Saxon through to the Medieval era. The lower/crypt area hosts a small museum to Fleet Street and the printing trade, with two small but impressive chapels.

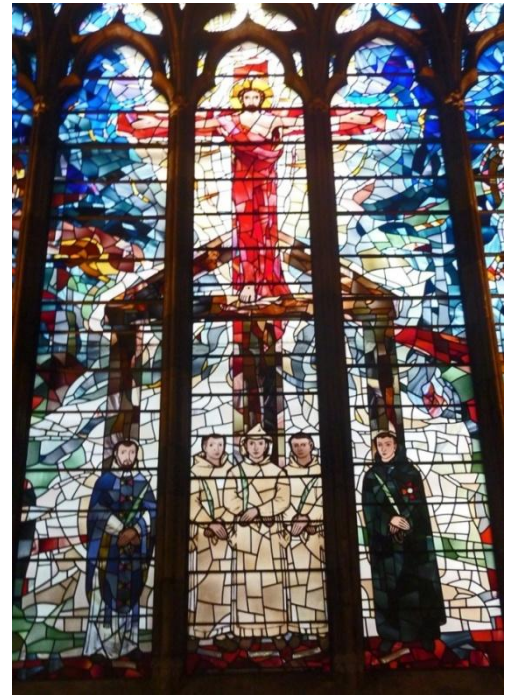
After our visit to St Bride's we had a stop for lunch before moving on. We did manage brief access to St Dunstan-in-the-West, the Romanian Orthodox Church. Though this is an Anglican Church there is a long standing partnership with Romanians going back to the 1950s.

We were hoping to get into Temple Church but had no luck so we went on to St Clement Danes. Although there was scaffolding on the west end of the church, a side door was open but, with a wedding happening, we were not able to access the building. We walked up Chancery Lane towards St Andrew, Holborn, and then crossed the road into Ely Place, where another wedding had just taken place in St Etheldreda's and photos were underway outside. The church was built as a private chapel c1293 for the Bishop of Ely and was acquired by the Roman Catholic Church in 1874. The modern stained glass throughout is considered to be some of the best in the country. The window

tracery is late 13th century and most impressive.

Further on we visited St Bartholomew the Less. This church was built within the grounds of St Bartholomew's Hospital. Close by is the Smithfield Martyrs' Memorial. John Rogers, one of the martyrs commemorated, is an ancestor of our own organist, Nigel Lockwood.

We were not able to access St Bartholomew the Great, which I believe was one of the original churches used in 'Four Weddings and a Funeral'. Coincidentally, this was due to another wedding taking place – the third that day for us!



At this point most of the walkers departed for home as St Bartholomew's is conveniently near to Barbican Station. Cheryl and myself risked the ups and downs of the Barbican walkways to visit the final church, number 20, St Giles' Cripplegate. This is a very busy church with an active congregation and a fine musical tradition, inevitable due to its close association with the Barbican Concert Hall and the Guildhall School of Music, both in the Barbican complex. When we arrived a Memorial Service seemed to have just finished, so I guess we were lucky to get in.

John Milton is buried here, as is Sir Martin Frobisher who helped defeat the Spanish Armada. Shakespeare is believed to have attended his nephew's baptism here in 1607. Daniel Defoe was born in a street close by and John Bunyan preached here. Oliver Cromwell married here and William Holman Hunt, pre-Raphaelite painter and artist of 'The Light of the World', a picture of Christ holding an oil lamp, was baptised here in 1827.

With all that shameless name-dropping I think it's time to finish. However, I would like to thank my fellow walkers, including the furry one, and also to thank all those who gave an hour or so to steward and welcome visitors back at St Laurence for the day. Thank you also to those who have sponsored us. Half the money raised will directly support St Laurence and the other half will support churches of mainstream Christian denominations within the geographic boundaries of the Chelmsford Diocese, which includes the five eastern London boroughs, with repair or improvement works. Please do visit the Friends of Essex Churches Trust's website for more details of their activities: www.friendsof Essex churches.org.uk

Why Do Churches Commit to Fairtrade?

An Update from PCC



Are Fairtrade products more expensive and less readily available than their mass produced counterparts? If so, why would St Laurence Church commit to becoming a Fairtrade Church? And does something as insignificant as a cup of tea matter?

Fairtrade is an anti-poverty tool, helping communities break the unjust trading systems that have them trapped in poverty. Fair pricing enables workers and farmers to provide for their families, supporting access to education and healthcare. The ability to invest in their small businesses enables farmers and growers to provide better working conditions and increased wages

Fairtrade offers producers:

- A unique Fairtrade social premium to benefit the wider community through clean water, education, transport and more
- Environmental protection to care for God's earth, farm sustainably and reduce the impacts of climate change
- Health and safety and business training to give opportunities to people to reach their potential.

These are just a handful of reasons why PCC have agreed that St Laurence Church recommit to become a Fairtrade Place of Worship. We will be buying through a wholesaler which means that the extra cost for the products will be minimal when compared with the human cost of not doing so. It is hoped that our church community will embrace and advocate for this exciting commitment.

We will not be changing our filter coffee; this is already Fairtrade and has been purchased from an ethical supplier for more than a decade.

Fairtrade = Social Justice. Not an insignificant cup of tea after all.

Donations during Advent and Christmas

We will once again be collecting presents to be distributed by charities working with children and families in difficult circumstances. Please bring presents suitable for children and teenagers - new and unwrapped please and place them under the Christmas Tree in the two weeks leading up to Christmas Day and at the two Crib services. These will then be split between three local children's charities.



Autumn Fayre



Our Main Hall was once again buzzing on **Saturday 12th October** when we held this year's **Autumn Fayre**. It was also a hive of activity the previous evening as people mustered to help with setting up tables and chairs, putting up bunting and going to and from their cars lugging in the goodies. Thank you to all of you who helped us set up. Many hands made light work!



Stalls included the ever-popular Cakes & Preserves (which by itself took £624 - we do love a cake or three!); Home-made crafts; 'Bonny Ladies' bric-a-brac; Handmade cards; Jigsaws; Tombola; plus several external stallholders. Sally Thomson and her Guides ran the Treasure Hunt and Sweets in the Jar. Acorns Day Opportunities also joined us, selling items that they had made in their

classes. This year our profits were boosted by a one-off donation from Hall Mead School of lots of lovely toiletry gift sets which enabled us to run a Gift stall.



We raised the magnificent total of **£2476** for our Building Improvement Project, including £572 from the raffle alone (an impressive £216 on the day itself).

These events take a lot of planning so we are very grateful to Sarah Keen and Debbie Stewart for their hard work beforehand and to all of you who ran or organised stalls, served refreshments, and made lunches for the helpers.



So what's next on our fundraising agenda?

We will be holding a **Coffee, Cakes, Cards & Chat Morning** featuring 'A Raffle with a Difference' on Friday 22nd November from 10.30am to 12 noon in the Main Hall. Do come and join us and bring your friends, family and neighbours too. This will be continued for a short while after Parish Mass on Sunday 24th November so that those of you who work during the week don't miss out!

We hope to run another quiz in 2025 and organise a fellowship meal out. As always, if you have any fundraising ideas we would love to hear from you. Just as importantly, we **STILL** need more people to join our very small but dedicated committee. Do please give this serious thought. Help with fundraising is important for the fellowship of our church - but it is also rewarding and often a lot of fun!



Fox

by Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust



Christmas is almost here, folks, and it'll soon be time for that fella in the red coat to come sneaking around. Yep, your neighbourhood fox is on the prowl and shortly after Santa has finished pulling presents out of his sack,



your local fox will be busy trying to pull half a turkey out of your bin bag.

Foxes have lived among us for centuries and, just like Christmas, they're celebrated (in folklore and myths) all around the world. Whether the story belongs to the Greeks, Japanese, Celts, Native Americans, Disney or Roald Dahl it is always the same – the fox is portrayed as cunning, slippery and devious. I prefer intelligent, adaptable and resourceful - and it's these traits that have helped the fox to survive in the modern world. It was the modern world that transformed the fox's wild woods into endless agricultural fields, towns, cities, tower blocks and cul-de-sacs. Traditionally, in the face of development Britain's wildlife has silently been displaced and died. But where others fled destruction the fox, like any shrewd opportunist, saw a brave new world of golden opportunities where each dustbin overfloweth and where the streets are paved with cast away kebabs and finger-lickin' chicken.

And for me this is the chapter in the fox's story that does indeed seem mythical: that in urban Britain there are wild dogs living among us. I can look out of my bedroom window and see a relative of the Wolf, Dingo, Jackal and Coyote casually sauntering across my lawn. It's a touch of the Serengeti in suburban Sussex. Studies undertaken by the University of Brighton have estimated that there are 20 foxes per square kilometre in the city. Of course, tradition dictates that some people do not like foxes. As a child I always viewed the Boxing Day hunt as the antithesis to Christmas: a reminder that amidst this season of goodwill there are still people who are proud to dress up in costumes in a public celebration of their cruelty.

It's in the bleak midwinter that foxes are at their most vocal. The blood-curdling, human-like scream of the vixen sounds like something from a Hammer Horror film. This foxy lady is only fertile for a few days and her scream advertises her availability and sparks bow-wows, barks and bickering from amorous dog foxes. Her cubs will be born about fifty-two days after mating and emerge from their earths in April.

So this Christmas, if you've had it with the plastic snowmen, the fake tree and the fake sentiments, take a short walk away from it all and out into the darkness. Listen for the sound of wild dogs howling at the moon, the sound of survival. Let it stir something wild in your heart.

Merry Christmas everybody and good wishes for 2025.

Refugees

by Brian Bilston

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are
Chancers and scroungers
Layabouts and loungers
With bombs up their sleeves
Cut-throats and thieves
They are not
Welcome here
We should make them
Go back to where they came from
They cannot
Share our food
Share our homes
Share our countries
Instead let us
Build a wall to keep them out
It is not okay to say
These are people just like us
A place should only belong to those who are born there
Do not be so stupid to think that
The world can be looked at another way

Now read from bottom to top

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Church Gates and Railings

by Chris Mowat


It was The Rolling Stones who many years ago had a hit with 'Paint it Black' and so it was on Tuesday 1st October when the iron gates and railings around the churchyard had a new lick of paint. Black it was, and it has considerably smartened up the churchyard boundaries.



Our thanks go to a team put together by Jane Lindsey, of our congregation, from her fellow colleagues working for Metro Bank. Each year the staff at Metro Bank get involved in a community project for a day and we are so grateful to them for choosing St Laurence. Aply assisted on the day by Simon & Becky Perchard, Rob Brabner, John Leaback, Gordon Wesley and myself from the congregation, the railings and gates were wire brushed and then painted. A number of passers-by commented on how good it looked and after a couple of breaks for coffee/tea/biscuits provided by Jean Keen, the project was concluded by 2.15pm before the rain started.

Thanks again to Jane and her colleagues, Olivia, Gary, Ryan, Rahima and Sundhari - without you we would not have beaten the rain! Very well done.

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Baptism and Confirmation Service – 13th October 2024

It was a great joy to see Ian Mitchell from our congregation baptised and confirmed by Bishop Lynne at St John's, Havering-atte-Bower. Here are some photographs from the occasion and some words from Ian:



I would like to thank everyone for the overwhelming support during my baptism and confirmation service on Sunday 13th October 2024. It was so nice to have my family, friends and members of St Laurence congregation in attendance to offer their support during this important time in my life.

Thank you to my wife, Michelle, for arranging my son, daughter-in-law, and beautiful granddaughter, Grace, to travel down from Scotland to attend. What an amazing surprise this was!

I would also like to thank Susannah Brasier and Neil Barrett for their support during my confirmation preparation.

It was an absolute joy to affirm my faith so publicly, and I believe this has deepened my relationship with God and strengthened my connection with the Holy Spirit.

I hope and pray that my spiritual journey leads me to a meaningful Christian life full of God's love.

We celebrated Harvest Festival on Sunday 29th September. The Church building was decorated with produce in the windows and lovely flower arrangements in Autumnal colours and food was laid at the altar in



thanksgiving for all of God's gifts. The food was then donated to the Harold Hill Foodbank. In the afternoon fellowship was enjoyed over a good meal by many of the congregation. Thank you to all those whose hard work enabled all these things to happen and the day to be enjoyed.

'Don't worry about your Latin!' - A Medieval Carol Service at St Bartholomew the Great

by Keith Stewart



'Make a joyful noise to the Lord' said Fr Marcus Walker, Rector of St Bartholomew's, as part of his introduction and welcome to their medieval carol service last December. The Priory and Hospital of St Bartholomew was founded in 1123 by Rahere (among other things the Jester in the court of King Henry I) who, whilst on a pilgrimage to Rome, fell ill and reputedly had a vision of St Bartholomew, who instructed him to establish a religious hospital. On his recovery and return to England, Rahere followed this calling and founded the priory at Smithfield in the City of London, becoming its first prior, a position he held until his death in 1143. The church has remained largely unchanged since then, surviving the Great Fire, the Blitz, and Hugh Grant's (Charles) 'nearly wedding' to Anna Chancellor (Henrietta) in 'Four Weddings and a Funeral'.

This medieval carol service was one of the many events held to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the foundation of the Priory, and took place on a damp and chilly evening a few days before Christmas. I had seen it advertised on the church's website, and it sounded intriguing enough to merit a trip to the City to see what all the fuss was about. 'Arrive early' said the website, and so I did. But even so the church was packed, with just about every seat taken. I found a spot in a side aisle, looking in towards the nave of the church and the front of the altar, framed by large stands of candles.

At the beginning of the service the clergy processed in, accompanied by servers with torches. Fr Walker, whose vestments could have made him the subject of one of Hans Holbein's Tudor court paintings, welcomed us all, explained what would happen, and told us to sing loudly and not worry about our Latin. In addition to the choir and organ, some of the carols were led by the five members of Run (pronounced 'rune', an old-English word meaning a 'mystical spell-song') described in the order of service as a 'recently established medieval ensemble', playing a variety of reproduction medieval instruments, including a recorder, vielle (similar to a modern violin), gothic harp, a small pipe organ and percussion.

The service followed a familiar 'lessons and carols' format, framed by a traditional Bidding Prayer near the start and a final blessing at the end. The readings were taken from the Wycliffe Bible - the earliest known translations

of the Bible into English, dating from the 14th century. All the carols except one were sung in Latin (translations provided in the order of service!) and dated from between the 4th and 15th centuries. The congregation were invited to join in versions of 'Veni, Veni Emmanuel', 'Personent Hodie', 'Gaudete' (made famous by Steeleye Span, reaching number 14 in the charts in 1973) and 'Resonet in Laudibus', a 15th century carol. Even if the Latin words were not familiar, the tunes certainly were and so after the first verse or so, they were quite easy to follow. Clearly some of the congregation were more comfortable than others with the words and music, which lent an air of good-humoured muddling through to the evening. With a little imagination you could picture yourself in the midst of Christmas festivities in the great hall of a medieval castle or manor house.



The ancient priory church must have played host to many services such as this over the centuries; the beautiful music, Latin carols, traditional readings and candles all seemed to emphasise the timeless appeal of the Christmas story.

If you would like to make a joyful noise to the Lord without worrying about your Latin, St Bartholomew's 2024 medieval carol service is on 21st December. Or if Latin is not your thing, then you could try Dickensian Carols, German Carols, or American Carols ('A Star-Spangled Christmas') on 18th, 19th and 23rd December respectively. Details of all 'Great St Bart's' Christmas services are on their website <https://www.greatstbarts.com/christmas-2024>

However you celebrate it, have a Happy Christmas!

Charity of the Month - December

Crisis was founded in 1967 amidst growing realisation of the extent of the homelessness crisis across the UK. Crisis provide practical support enabling people to access benefits, healthcare, employment and more. Their main aim is to help people find safe and affordable homes as quickly as possible. As well as helping to end homelessness for individuals they work to address the root causes that push people into homelessness in the first place. They campaign on the political changes needed to end homelessness for good and conduct research to understand and highlight the scale, causes and consequences of homelessness.

Just one swap... Just my drop!



It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the scale of problems in creation. Sometimes, we all feel, 'But what can I do? I'm just one person, my changes would be so small!' In Uganda, they have a saying, when the scale of a problem seems too large for just one person to contribute to change. They say: Drop by drop, fills the pot!

At St Laurence, rather than feeling there's nothing we can do, we'd like to encourage one another to contribute our 'drops' into the pot of caring for creation. We've come up with ways to make our everyday choices a little greener: some ideas for simple swaps around the home.

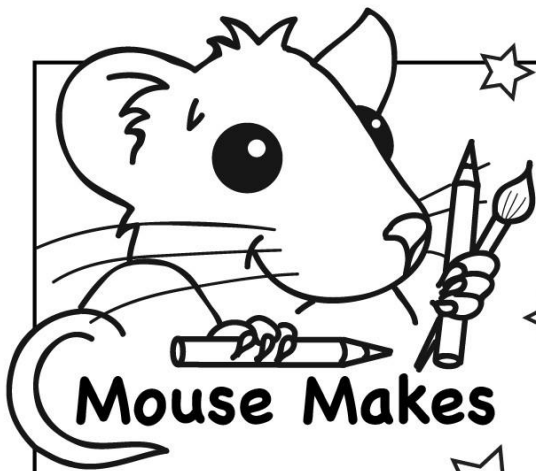
Simple Swap No 10: Traditional Sellotape cannot be recycled because it is made from plastic. Before recycling any paper wrapping, remove all Sellotape. Swap to recyclable paper tape, or think about wrapping presents in scarves or in a fabric bag that can be reused indefinitely.

Simple Swap No 11: Consider swaps for more sustainable food products: Odd box is a company delivering weekly boxes of fruit and veg that would otherwise be foodwaste. It is either 'too odd' or 'too many' for the supermarkets. It is possible to exclude items you do not like. A small fruit and veg box contains 7 types of vegetable and 3 types of fruit @ £14.49. Other sizes available. www.oddbox.co.uk. Refill Cabin is at South Ockendon Garden Centre on Saturdays 10am - 3pm. Refill your dried goods and household products in 'Ermintrude' the Eco Cabin.

Charity of the Month - January



Youth PWR Charity was formed in 2019. They engage, inspire, educate and empower young people helping them to thrive, overcome obstacles, and shape a brighter future. Their experience has shown that young minds hold the key to addressing societal challenges and driving positive change. They provide skills development programmes to raise awareness and tackle issues such as mental health, crime and youth violence, career and employability, confidence, self-esteem and personal responsibility. Their vision is for a society where all young people are empowered to achieve their full potential, and shape the future with confidence.



Mouse Makes

"The child to be born
will be called
H _____, the
_____ of _____"
Luke 1:35

THE GREATEST GIFT

"She will bear a son,
and shall call his name

_____ for he will save his
people from their sins."
Matthew 1:21

"Jesus said,
I am the _____ Y
and the _____ U _____
and the _____ I _____.
No one comes to the Father
except through me."
John 14:6

"For unto you is born
this day a
S _____ who is
_____ R _____
the _____ R _____"
Luke 2:11

"Jesus said,
I am the

_____ and the life."
John 11:25

B L I G H T L O
R A Y W O J J R
E M M A N U E L
A B Y J E S O
D S A V I O U R
S A V R J S D

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

**JESUS
—
THE
GREATEST
GIFT
OF ALL!**

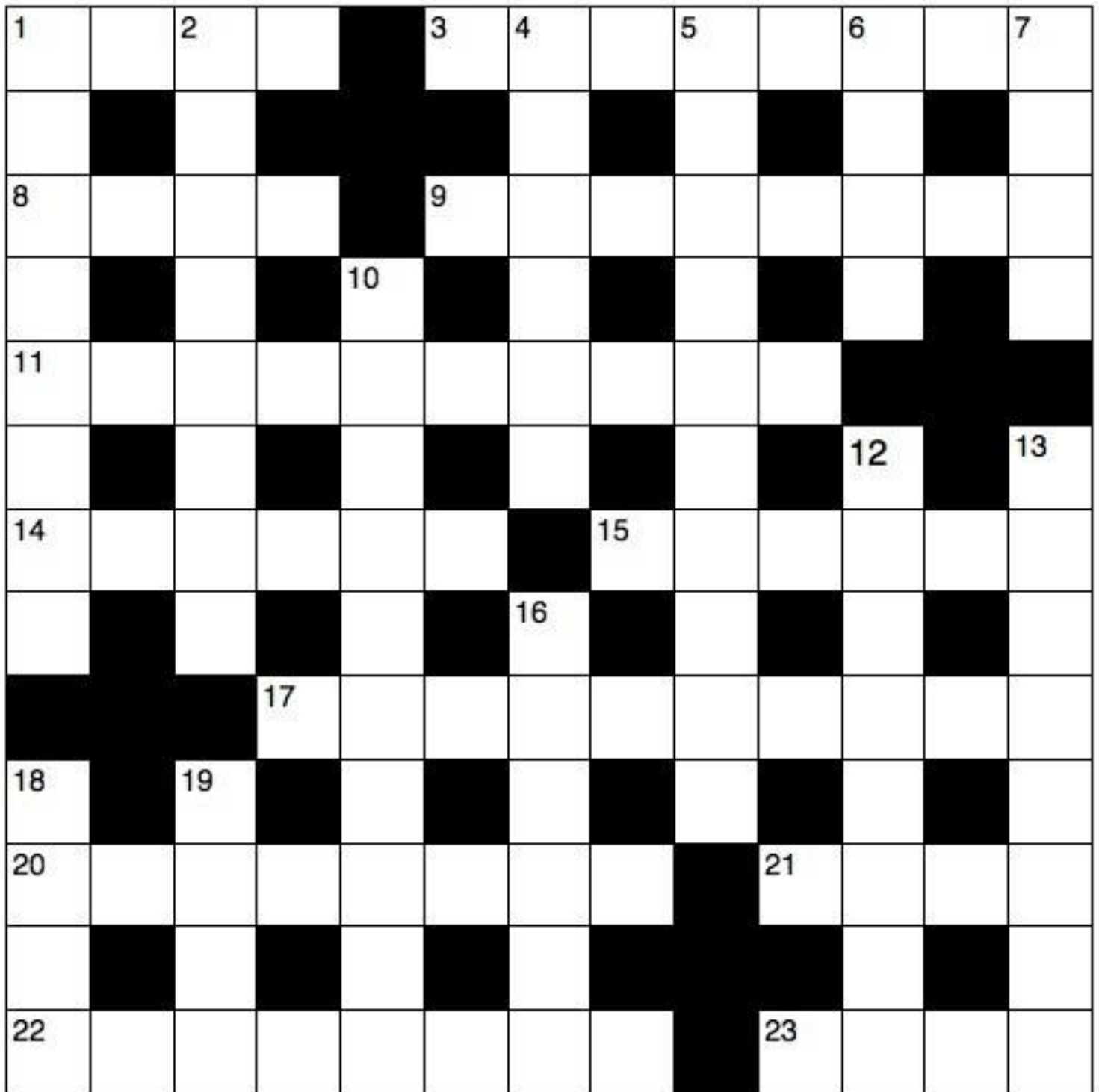
P R O P H E T I
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K I N G O F K I N G S
I N K I G W F D O U
S E S O N O F G O D D
S E W O C O U W O R D
C O U N S E L L O R U

EMMANUEL • MESSIAH REDEEMER • KING OF KINGS • WORD
SON OF MAN • EVERLASTING • SHEPHERD • PRIEST • PROPHET • TEACHER
LIGHT • BREAD • VINE • DOOR • LAMB • COUNSELLOR • CHRISTMAS • GIFT

Find the words from the Bible verses too!

Dec24 © deborah noble @ parishpump.co.uk



Across

- 1 'The blind receive sight, the ___ walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)
- 3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)
- 8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)
- 9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)
- 11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)
- 14 'Now the serpent was more ___ than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)
- 15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot ___ God' (Romans 8:8) (6)

- 17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)
- 20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)
- 21 Rite (anag.) (4)
- 22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)
- 23 'The eye cannot say to the __ , "I don't need you"' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

Down

- 1 'Flee for your lives! Don't __ __ , and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)
- 2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)
- 4 'The tax collector... beat his __ and said, "God have mercy on me, a sinner"' (Luke 18:13) (6)
- 5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will __ this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)
- 6 'The day of the Lord is __ for all nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)
- 7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)
- 10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)
- 12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)
- 13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)
- 16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and __ ' (Acts 7:22) (6)
- 18 'Although he did not remove the high places, __ heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)
- 19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)

Answers to the October/November Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Deacon; 4 Appear; 7 Wits; 8 Heavenly; 9 Argument; 13 Mob; 16 Broken-hearted; 17 Ran; 19 Suddenly; 24 Obstacle; 25 John; 26 Enable; 27 Market. **DOWN:** 1 Dawn; 2 Afternoon; 3 Nehum; 4 Again; 5 Prey; 6 All to; 10 Users; 11 Ephod; 12 Trace; 13 Metalwork; 14 Body; 15 Eber; 18 Alban; 20 Uncle; 21 Dream; 22 Stab; 23 Gnat.



Advent and Christmas Worship at St Laurence

Sunday and Wednesday Masses are as normal unless listed as otherwise below.

Monday 25th November

9.30am 'Footsteps' - *A short service for children below school age and their parents/carers, reflecting on Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. Refreshments and playtime afterwards.*

Sunday 1st December (The First Sunday of Advent)

6.30pm Advent Carol Service - *Music and readings for the start of Advent.*

Sunday 8th December (The Second Sunday of Advent)

4.00pm Christingle Service - *A family-friendly service supporting the work of The Children's Society.*

No further evening service today.

Sunday 15th December (The Third Sunday of Advent)

6.30pm Compline on Zoom.

Sunday 22nd December (The Fourth Sunday of Advent)

9.30am Parish Mass with Nativity Play.

6.30pm Service of Lessons and Carols. - *Telling the story of Christmas in words and music, followed by mulled wine and mince pies.*

Christmas Eve

3.00pm and 5.00pm Crib Service and Candlelight Procession - *These services are particularly suitable for children and families. You might like to bring a gift (new and unwrapped please – no food) as a present for children who are in need.*

11.15pm Midnight Mass - *First Mass of Christmas Day.*

Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion.

9.30am Parish Mass.

Sunday 29th January (The First Sunday of Christmas)

9.30am Holy Communion.

No 8am or Evening services.

Wednesday 1st January

No service.



Parish Diary for December

See inside front cover for regular Sunday service times

| | | |
|-------|------------------|---|
| Sun | 1 st | 1st Sunday of Advent, 4pm Confirmation Service, All Saint's Cranham, 6.30pm Advent Carol Service |
| Tues | 3 rd | <i>Francis Xavier, monk, teacher of the faith, c749, Nicholas Ferrar, deacon, founder of the Little Gidding Community, 1637</i> |
| Wed | 4 th | 11.45am Advent Course, Parish Office |
| Thurs | 5 th | 8pm Choir Practice |
| Fri | 6 th | <i>Nicholas, bishop, c326</i> , 9.00am Christingle Preparation, Parish Office, 10.30am Coffee Morning |
| Sat | 7 th | <i>Ambrose, bishop, teacher of the faith, 397</i> |
| Sun | 8 th | 2nd Sunday of Advent, 4pm Christingle in Church, No further evening service today |
| Mon | 9 th | 11am Christmas Service, Derham House Nursing Home |
| Wed | 11 th | 11.45am Advent Course, Parish Office |
| Thurs | 12 th | 8pm Choir Practice |
| Fri | 13 th | <i>Lucy, martyr, 304, Samuel Johnson, moralist, 1784</i> , 10.30am Playgroup Nativity in Church, 10.30am Coffee Morning |
| Sat | 14 th | <i>John of the Cross, poet, teacher of the faith, 1591</i> |
| Sun | 15 th | 3rd Sunday of Advent, 11am Adventurers' Nativity Rehearsal in Church, 6.30pm Compline on Zoom |
| Tues | 17 th | <i>Eglantyne Jebb, social reformer, founder of 'Save The Children', 1928</i> , 10.30am Christmas Service, The Oaks Residential Home |
| Wed | 18 th | 11.45am Advent Course, Parish Office |
| Thurs | 19 th | 10.30am Christmas Service, Little Gaynes Residential Home, 8pm Choir Practice |
| Fri | 20 th | 10.30am Coffee Morning |
| Sun | 22 nd | 4th Sunday of Advent, Parish Sung Mass with Adventurers' Nativity, 6.30pm Service of Lessons and Carols |
| Tues | 24 th | Christmas Eve, 3 & 5pm Crib Service and Candlelight Procession, 11.15pm Midnight Mass, Parish Office closed |
| Wed | 25 th | Christmas Day, 8am Holy Communion, 9.30am Sung Parish Mass, Parish Office closed |
| Thurs | 26 th | <i>Stephen, deacon, first martyr</i> , Parish Office closed |
| Fri | 27 th | <i>John, Apostle and Evangelist</i> |
| Sat | 28 th | <i>The Holy Innocents</i> |
| Sun | 29 th | 1st Sunday of Christmas, 9.30am Holy Communion, No service at 8am or 6.30pm today |
| Tues | 31 st | <i>John Wycliff, reformer, 1384</i> , Parish Office closed |

Details of dates, times and venues of all meetings and events need to be recorded in the Parish Diary (Parish Office 01708 220696)

Parish Diary for January

See inside front cover for regular Sunday service times

| | | |
|-------|------------------|---|
| Wed | 1 st | <i>Naming and Circumcision of Jesus</i> , No service at 11am today, Parish Office closed |
| Thurs | 2 nd | <i>Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus, bishops, teachers of the faith, 379 and 389, Seraphim, monk, spiritual guide, 1833, Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, bishop, evangelist, 1945</i> 8pm Choir Practice |
| Fri | 3 rd | 10.30am Coffee Morning |
| Sun | 5 th | 2nd Sunday of Christmas, 6.30pm Evensong on Zoom |
| Tue | 7 th | 7.30pm Adventurers' Leaders Meeting at Penny's House |
| Thurs | 9 th | 8pm Choir Practice |
| Fri | 10 th | <i>William Laud, archbishop, 1645</i> , 10.30am Coffee Morning |
| Sat | 11 th | <i>Mary Slessor, missionary, 1915</i> |
| Sun | 12 th | 1st Sunday of Epiphany, Baptism of Christ, 6.30pm Evensong on Zoom |
| Mon | 13 th | <i>Hilary, bishop, teacher of the faith, 367, Kentigern (Mungo), missionary bishop, 603, George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends (Quakers), 1691</i> , 8.00pm CM&FG Meeting, Parish Office |
| Thurs | 16 th | 8pm Choir Practice |
| Fri | 17 th | <i>Antony of Egypt, hermit, abbot, 356, Charles Gore, bishop, founder of the Community of the Resurrection, 1932</i> , 10.30am Coffee Morning |
| Sat | 18 th | <i>Amy Carmichael, spiritual writer, 1951</i> |
| Sun | 19 th | 2nd Sunday of Epiphany, 6.30pm Evensong on Zoom |
| Mon | 20 th | <i>Richard Rolle, spiritual writer, 1349</i> |
| Tues | 21 st | <i>Agnes, child martyr, 304</i> |
| Wed | 22 nd | <i>Vincent of Saragossa, deacon, martyr, 304</i> , 7.30pm Halls Committee Meeting, Parish Office |
| Thurs | 23 rd | 8pm Choir Practice |
| Fri | 24 th | <i>Francis de Sales, bishop, teacher of the faith, 1622</i> 10.30am Coffee Morning |
| Sun | 26 th | 3rd Sunday of Epiphany, 6.30pm Evensong on Zoom |
| Mon | 27 th | 9.30am Footsteps in Church |
| Tues | 28 th | <i>Thomas Aquinas, priest, philosopher, teacher of the faith, 1274</i> |
| Thurs | 30 th | <i>Charles, king and martyr, 1649</i> , 8pm Choir Practice |
| Fri | 31 st | <i>John Bosco, priest, founder of the Salesian Teaching Order, 1888</i> 10.30am Coffee Morning |

Details of dates, times and venues of all meetings and events need to be recorded in the Parish Diary (Parish Office 01708 220696)



Get in touch with

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