

ABBHEY HILL U.R.C. MAGAZINE



The
Prince
of
Peace

December 2023
& January 2024



'NEW GUARD PLEASE UMPIRE!'

Do you have times when your head is full of so many different things it is difficult to concentrate? I do, and one of them is now! Not all bad things, but things that preoccupy me.

I am writing this halfway through November. One of my thoughts is still on the Remembrance Day service I led at Rugby URC, Sunday last. For the first time in over three years, it was a Parade service with the youngsters from the full set of uniformed organisations that meet at the church.

They were amazing. I met with them a couple of times to see what they were planning and on the day they presented drawings relating to the theme of remembrance and peace. I had stressed the service was worship to God – a God of peace. Without boring you, they responded brilliantly.

It is only a short step then, to thinking about the different conflicts in the world. The situation in what we call The Holy Land and The Ukraine obviously. But you may be surprised to know, there are twenty-six other countries in the world where conflict is taking place.

This coming Sunday, at Abbey Hill there is a Baptism taking place. A little more stress and pressure than usual because the recipient is my Granddaughter, Cleo! And I'm still working on that. By the time you read this, you will know whether all went well!

In a few days' time, we are off to Barcelona for six days (see, I told you, it isn't all bad!) and I've been finding time to book various attractions that are a 'must-see' in that wonderful city.

For some weeks now, to the continuing delight of my two 'children,' I have been muttering about the amount of Christmas trees, lights and decorations that are on show; as well as supermarket shelves being filled with things they tell us are essential for Christmas. Not for nothing am I known by my two as 'the Christmas Grinch' at this time of year!

This morning I went to the local Christian Bookshop to collect one or two things, including two sets of Bible reading notes for 2024, which seems months away.

Suddenly, I am jerked to reality with a diary note that tells me this article is due for the December/January Abbey Hill magazine and the deadline is just a couple of days away. How can that be? So much to fit in before December, never mind the New Year...

...yet not for nothing is Advent a time for preparation and waiting, for Christians. Because I am reminded that it was into a world just like this one, over two thousand years ago, a tiny baby was born in dubious circumstances, who would change the world for ever and give hope to millions.

Born into a country with foreign invaders ruling with a rod of iron. Born into a country with plenty of poverty, having to rely on the Pharisees quite often to provide for them. The same Pharisee's who Jesus would be highly critical of some years later.

So, I need to deal with these next few days and then start to prepare and listen. I hope you are able to find your own space to prepare and listen too. Advent books are available of course, either daily readings or complete books. Let me know if I can help with suggestions.

And after that, to use a cricket analogy, I will take a fresh guard, 'middle and off please Umpire,' and hope to continue batting for the next 366 days!

Judith joins me in wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Blessings

George

CHURCH SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 2023

- 3rd Sunday** **11.00 Family Service led by George Jones.**
- 10th Sunday** **11.00 Christingle Service led by Bronwen and Lottie Todd.**
- 17th Sunday** **11.00 Family Service with Communion led by George Jones.**
19.00 Carols by Candlelight service.
- 24th Sunday** **11.00 Family Service led by George Jones.**
- 25th Sunday** **10.30 Christmas Day Service led by George Jones.**
- 31st Sunday** **11.00 Family Service led by George Jones**



CHURCH SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2024

- 7th Sunday** **11.00 Family Service led by George Jones.**
- 14th Sunday** **11.00 Family Service led by David Connolly**
- 21st Sunday** **11.00 Family Service with Communion led by George Jones.**
- 28th Sunday** **11.00 Family Service led by Chris Flood.**

Home Bible Study Group

This group meets at Hilary Scott's house on Wednesday evenings – 7.30pm.
Contact Hilary for further details – 07749 836928/01926 859337

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – December 2023 / January 2024

Event	Venue	Date	Time	Coordinators
Elders	Abbey Hill	1 st Wednesday every month	7.15 start	Jo Warren - church secretary
Managers	Abbey Hill	2 nd Wednesday every month	7pm start	Ivan Pointon - manager's secretary
Coffee Pot	Abbey Hill	Every Thursday	9.30 to 11.30	Betty and David Connelly
Community Listening Exchange hosted by Coffee Pot	Abbey Hill	3rd Thursday every month	10.00	Ivan Pointon and Ed Watson
Repair cafe	Abbey Hill	Every 3rd Saturday	2 to 5pm	Kenilworth Repair Cafe
Memories Service	Abbey Hill	Wednesday 13th December	12 noon	George Jones
Coffee Pot Christmas Lunch	The Tiltyard	Thursday 14th December	12.00 for 12.30 start	Betty Connelly
Carols at the Castle	Kenilworth Castle	Saturday 16th December	Doors open 5.15pm for 6pm start	Kenilworth Lions Website: kenilworthlionsclub.co.uk
Carols by Candlelight	Abbey Hill	Sunday 17th December	7pm	Hilary Scott and Bible study and prayer group
Talisman Theatre Panto	Talisman Theatre	Wednesday 20th December	7.00pm For 7.30 start	John Nichols
Christmas Eve service	Abbey Hill	Sunday 24th December	11am	George Jones
Christmas Day Service	Abbey Hill	Mon 25th December	10.30am	George Jones
Elders 'drop-in'	Abbey Hill Church	Saturday 13th January 2024	10am to 12.00	Any of the elders
Church meeting	Abbey Hill	Sunday 21st January	After morning service	George Jones / Jo Warren
Talisman Theatre The Philadelphia Story	Talisman Theatre	TBA (5 th to 10 th February)	7.00pm For 7.30 start	John Nichols
Festival of Crosses	Abbey Hill Church	Maundy Thursday 28 th March to Easter Monday 1 st April	TBA	Anne Gilmore

KENILWORTH LIONS CLUB



**Saturday
16th
December**

CAROLS AT THE CASTLE

Sing along to a Traditional Programme of Christmas Carols

with The Coventry Salvation Army Band and St Augustines School Choir

There will be mulled wine & hot chocolate available.

Celebrated as one of the best Christmas events in Warwickshire

Tickets £5 for Adults – Children Free
Pay at the Gate

6PM – 7PM
KENILWORTH
CASTLE

**Gates open
at 5.15pm**



HAPPY CHRISTMAS

What better way to begin your Christmas celebrations than singing Carols at Kenilworth Castle? Forget the frantic last-minute shopping and start the festive season in the traditional manner.

Our ancient castle ruins will be filled with the sights and sounds of Kenilworth Lions' annual Carols at the Castle event on Saturday 16th December.

The Coventry Salvation Army band will be joined by the children of St. Augustine's School and Kenilworth School to provide the musical lead. Mulled wine and hot chocolate will be available, as usual, to keep the cold at bay.

Don't forget to bring a lantern. You can also keep warm by wrapping up well, and singing the carols with gusto.

The castle will open at 5.15pm, with the carol singing starting at 6.00. Admission is £5 for adults and free for children.

ELDERS 'DROP-IN', SATURDAY 13 JANUARY 2024, 10AM – 12.00 NOON, IN THE CHURCH

- Ever wonder what Elders do?
- How did they become Elders anyway and for how long?
- Feel called to explore being an Elder?
- Should we be doing more than we are? If so, what would you like to see the church doing?
- Are there things we are doing you either don't like or don't understand?
- Do you feel called to be more involved but are either reluctant to say, or are not quite sure how?

One or two Elders will be available, in the church, on the above date and time to try and answer your questions and concerns. It is intended to be an opportunity to listen to anyone, member or not, with a view to improving the way the church serves God, each other and our community. It is intended to be informal and on a 'one-to-one' basis.

At least you can enjoy a warm drink and fellowship with us. It will be lonely without you! Do come.

George Jones, on behalf of the Eldership.

Stoneleigh Male Voice Choir

The Stoneleigh Male Voice Choir, ably supported by soloist Lucy Morris, entertained an appreciative audience to a mixture of popular songs. Audience participation was also encouraged and added to a successful evening.

The evening raised sufficient funds for the Church to pay £300 to each of the, Kenilworth Reader & Visitor Service and Kenilworth Community Centre.

Many thanks for everybody who supported the evening and worked hard to ensure it all went off well.

Phil Inshaw

Treasurer's Report

The Harvest gifts, donated to the URC Charity, Commitment for Life, reached £1335.50. Thank you all for this.

Coffee Pot donated £160 to church funds and the Eco Craft Coffee Morning raised £142.76. The communion offertory in December will be donated to the Red Cross for their [Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory Appeal](#) helping the thousands of people injured and/or displaced from their homes.

The Carol Service Collection and Christmas Day Offertory will be donated to charities helping the homeless in Leamington and Coventry.

The January Offertory will be donated to Acorns Children's Hospice.

September communion offertory raise £50 for Sightsavers.

In October £59 was sent to the Moroccan Earthquake Appeal.

The November Communion offertory will be donated to Help for Heroes.

Singing Group for Christmas

It is some years since we last did this mainly because of Covid. We have many new people in church some, hopefully, enjoy singing. We hope to form a Singing Group to practice a couple of Christmas songs for the Carol Service. We will practice for a few Sundays before the morning service.

The first meeting will be on Sunday 19th November at 10.00am. We will then obtain some idea if we have enough people to form a group, discuss what we will sing and start practicing. If you wish to sing but cannot come that Sunday, please let Jane Woods-Scawen or David Connelly know.

You do not have to belong to a choir to join. The only criteria we look for is an enjoyment of singing!

FREE WILL ENVELOPES

These envelopes are available for putting your weekly offering in. They are printed with a number so your donations can easily be tracked for Gift Aid, if you have signed the necessary declaration.

They are free of charge and available to anyone. If you are already using the envelopes, no action is required - you will receive next year's set before the end of the year. If you would like a set of envelopes or receive envelopes and no longer want them, please contact Susan Derwent on 07515 890598

Coffee Pot Christmas Lunch

The Coffee Pot Christmas Dinner is on Thursday 14th of December. We meet at The Tiltyard at 12 noon for 12.30pm. Please can I have all money and meal choices by December 3rd.

Coffee Pot will be closed for a two week break over Christmas on December 21st and 28th. Back to normal on January 4th.

Have A Lovely Christmas.

Betty

Bibles

The church now uses the more up to date NIV version of the bible for the Sunday readings. We have purchased a new pulpit bible. Some of you like to follow the readings from a bible so we have also purchased some smaller NIV bibles. They have bright blue covers and are in the porch for your use.

We will keep a few of the brown covered Good News Bibles but have about 20 surplus to requirement. They are mostly in good condition. If you would like one or more for yourself or to give to other people, please have a word first with David or any elder so we can keep track of how many are going and take them.

‘REFORM’, the magazine of the URC - a Reminder

It is time to send in orders and payment for 2024 for our Abbey Hill group subscriptions to ‘Reform’. If you are already a subscriber, please give me £29.50 (cash or cheque made out to ‘United Reformed Church’) as soon as possible for the 10 monthly printed issues (July/August and December/January are each 2 months together). If you would like to become a subscriber for either the printed copy or the digital (digital is £18), please also contact me as soon as you can.

The ‘A Good Question’ in the November issue was ‘Which Book of the Bible should I stop overlooking?’ - what would your answer be, and why? You can borrow (and return) the church copy in the church entrance to read the answers given by the 4 contributors.

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Janet Turner

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

A Happy Birthday to all of the following:-

December 4th Mary Lea
December 11th Robin Loutit
December 19th Sarah Todd
December 28th Phil Inshaw

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Those celebrating a birthday in the New Year are :-

January 11th Glenys Hobbins & Jo Stratton
January 12th Elinor Nunn & Pam Muckersie
January 13th Jennifer Jackson
January 14th Tony Gilmore
January 22nd Winnie Tawil

BIRTH

Congratulations to Joy Thorpe on the birth of her first grandchild, a baby boy called Remy.

Also, Congratulations to John & Jo Williams on the birth of Elijah James, their second great grandchild.

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

Especially in our thoughts this month are Pat Scott, Jo Williams, Kath Shortley and Donald & Haro Horsfield We wish them all a speedy and full recovery

We continue to pray for Edna, Mavis, Janet, Mary, Esme and Winnie.

All of the above mentioned and any who do not wish to be mentioned by name, are in our thoughts and prayers.

ADVICE ON THE ENGLISH WEATHER

*Whether the weather be cold
Or whether the weather be hot,
Weather the weather,
Whatever the weather,
Whether you like it or not.
Anon.*

Please let Pat know either in person or on 01926 313904 of any Pastoral Care matters.

ROTAS – December 2023

	Transport	Flowers provided by	Flowers arranged by
03/12	Colin Ritchie 01926 512507	Jane Woods-Scawen	Christmas Arrangements
10/12	John Nichols 07770 598598	As above	As above
17/12	Di Wilson 01926 857002	As above	As above
24/12	Colin Ritchie 01926 512507	Anne Gilmore/Christmas	Anne Gilmore
31/12	John Nichols 07770 598598	Alison Crichton	Anne Gilmore
	Projector & Sound	Stewards	Readers
03/12	David	Di Wilson & Julia Graham BINS - Recycling, Grey Refuse	John McKenzie
10/12	Alison	Anne and Fred Holloway	John Nichols
17/12	Ivan	Betty Connelly & Kath Shortley BINS - Recycling	Kath Shortley
24/12	John	Rosemary Lawrence & Donna Bloy	Lorna Spenser
31/12	Bronwen	Phil Inshaw & Eileen John BINS - Recycling	John Thomas
	Coffee	Car Park	Vestry
03/12	Kath Shortley and Cheryl Ritchie		Colin Ritchie
10/12	Rosemary Lawrence and Suzanne Hall		Jane Woods-Scawen
17/12	Alison Pointon and Hilary Scott		Anne Holloway
24/12	Pete and Jo Warren		Anne Gilmore
31/12	Jane Woods – Scawen and John Thomas		Jo Warren
	Communion Prep.	Comm. Servers	
	Jo Warren and John Nichols		

ROTAS – January 2024

	Transport	Flowers provided by	Flowers arranged by
07/01	Colin Ritchie 01926 512507	Betty Connelly	Betty Connelly
14/01	John Nichols 07770 598598	Pat Cowan	Ayse McKenzie
21/01	Di Wilson 01926 857002	Vivien Nichols	Vivien Nichols
28/01	Colin Ritchie 01926 512507	Anne Holloway	Anne Holloway
	Projector & Sound	Stewards	Readers
07/01	David	Pat Cowan & Anne Gilmore	John Williams
14/01	Alison	Jo & John Williams BINS - recycling & grey refuse	Betty Connelly
21\01	Ivan	John & Vivien Nichols	Pat Cowan
28\01	John	Di Wilson & Julia Graham BINS - recycling	Phil Inshaw
	Coffee	Car Park	Vestry
07/01	Susan Derwent & Di Wilson		Vivien Nichols
14/01	Betty Connelly & Eileen John		John Nichols
21\01	Pat Cowan & Glynis Hobbins		Colin Ritchie
28\01	Anne & Fred Holloway		Jane Woods-Scawen
	Communion Prep.	Comm. Servers	
	Anne Holloway & Betty Connelly		

Messy Church

The Bible Study Home Group was asked to contribute to October's Messy Church. Initially, we had a few obstacles to overcome; many of our group weren't familiar with Messy Church and those of us who were, knew it wasn't everyone's first choice of service to attend! Coupled with this, the 5th Sunday in October was the first weekend of the Half Term holiday so we couldn't even rely on there being any children! Should we accept the challenge? It didn't take us long to decide that we would, and we're very glad we did! What a happy morning of praise and fellowship was enjoyed by all!

After a warm welcome from Anne Holloway and prayers and singing, we explained the activities on offer and everyone chose a group to join. There was an art-based collage, a word-based computer activity, a group who wrote a poem, prayer or Psalm, a practical activity centred around what we use our hands to do and a group who set out to learn to do some British Sign Language. There seemed to be a group that suited everyone!

The crowning glory was the sharing of our ideas at the end with the BSL group leading us all in singing and signing All Things Bright and Beautiful. With Steve very considerately playing the organ slowly enough for us, everyone joined in and it was indeed Beautiful! We would like to thank Hilary's friend, Julie, who very patiently taught us how to sign.

Here are three of the contributions from the Writing group:

The world does not belong to us
Its beauty is for all creation
Our duty is to care and protect
To not pollute our rivers and seas
To preserve the rare and exotic
To listen to the ticking of the clock
For time waits for no man

My Faith

My faith is like a butterfly, beautiful, oft
fleeting.

An ugly grub,
A dormant chrysalis

A hard shell
A hidden essence

Waiting....waiting

Wings opening,

Spirit soaring.

The magic of transformation.

Dear Lord, Your creation makes my soul sing!

"The lion will lie down with the lamb", we cherish the thought.

"You have made us a little lower than the angels" and at times WE feel so much lower.
But Your promise stands firm.

You are not confined by time or space – You created it!

WE are special

You will kiss it better.

Collage made from natural materials on the theme of God's Creation



Computer Word Art designed from words we associated with God's Creation



Reciting a poem or prayer written on the theme of God's Creation



What we have used our hands to do

BSL group leading the congregation in signing to All Things Bright and Beautiful.



The Heart of Christmas

We're at that time of year again! But is Christmas just about the shopping, tree or presents? At its heart, Christmas is all about a God who has showed up on earth. The Creator of the universe, whose hands flung stars into space, cared enough to come to earth as a tiny baby. 'The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.' (John 1:14)

Every year we sing carols and retell the same story of the donkey, innkeeper, stable, angels, shepherds, star, wise men, gifts and Mary and Joseph with baby! Why do we do all this? It's to remind us that God deals with the mess of our world by sending His Son to die in our place. This makes it possible for us to have a relationship with Himself:

When the time came, He "did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)

Reflecting on Jesus in the manger is a great place to start understanding the heart of the Christmas message. However, it's so much more than simply a cute baby lying in the bed of straw:

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator;

If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist;

If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist;

If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer;

But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Saviour.

Follow the Star

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

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

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

Finally, the bright astronomical object that drew the Magi could have been a comet. This idea came from Sir Colin Humphreys, Professor of Materials Science at Cambridge University, and Oxford astronomer WG Waddington, who found that a comet was recorded by Chinese astronomers between March and May, 5BC. Humphreys then speculated that the 'no room at the inn' scenario came about because Jesus was born during Passover, and the Magi visited Jesus in May or June.

People interpret the biblical account of Jesus' birth in all sorts of ways, but there's very little argument from serious historians that Jesus of Nazareth actually existed. Whatever the true explanation for the 'star of Bethlehem' may be, there's plenty of evidence that an astronomical event could have happened at the time of His birth.

I think it makes perfect sense that if God was going to enter His own creation and take on the form of one of His own creatures, it should be marked by a very significant physical event!

'The Virgin of the Lilies' by Carlos Schwabe

During this year we have been exploring how art can celebrate the wonder of this world. This month with our Lady and Jesus we stand above the world: high on the clouds with a glorious path of tall, elegant lilies that lead like a stairway to the earth beneath. This is 'The Virgin of the Lilies' by Carlos Schwabe. He was born in Germany and then lived in Switzerland and France, painting this canvas in 1899 when he was 33 years old.



It is like a scene caught when we look out of the window in an aeroplane. We can see the earth beneath and spot hills and valleys, roads and settlements, and a river weaving its way through the countryside. Mary and Jesus are haloed in a lunar-like radiance. The lilies are symbols of purity and obedience, the qualities that will take them to that scene at Bethlehem which we give thanks for at Christmas. The heavenly light shining out in the painting brings hope and joy to the world below, transforming lives with the wonder of the Saviour's birth.

Jesus holds three nails in his hand as a sign that His life will be tempered by rejection, suffering and death. But the lilies growing tall and straight in the skies are signs of new life and resurrection. The light come down to earth at Christmas can never be extinguished. That light and love are expressed in this vivid, moving painting of Carlos Schwabe as they are caught up in the carol of Christina Rossetti we sing at this time:

*Love shall be our token, Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men, Love for plea and gift and sign.*



Mouse Makes



GOD'S PROMISE

Isaiah 9:6-7

CHILD • BORN • SON
GIVEN • WONDERFUL
COUNCELLOR
MIGHTY • GOD
EVERLASTING
FATHER • PRINCE
PEACE • LORD



AN ANGEL MESSENGER

Luke 1:26-38

ANGEL • GABRIEL
JOSEPH • MARY
FAVOUR • SON
JESUS • GREAT
THRONE • REIGN
FOREVER • HOLY
SERVANT • WORD

ADVENT
comes from
the Latin
'AD VENTO'
which means
ARRIVAL

In Advent we
celebrate Jesus' birth
and look forward to
the time when Jesus
will come again.



A LONG JOURNEY

Luke 2:1-20

BETHLEHEM
REGISTER • BIRTH
MANGER • INN
SHEPHERDS • FLOCK
ANGELS • JOY
GOOD NEWS • PRAISE
SAVIOUR • CHRIST



THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

John 3:16

GOD • SO • LOVED
WORLD • HE • GAVE
ONLY • SON
WHOEVER • BELIEVES
ETERNAL • LIFE

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

Big Ben

Do you stay up until midnight on New Year's Eve? If so, this year will be special – it is 100 years ago, on 31st December 1923, that the BBC first broadcast the chimes of Big Ben to welcome in the New Year.

For it was not until 31st December 1923 that the chimes of Big Ben were ever heard outside of Parliament and Westminster. But then the BBC got permission to broadcast them to the nation, and history was made.

That first year, the BBC engineers were not allowed into Parliament, and so had to access Big Ben from the roof of the Palace of Westminster. This meant that their microphone picked up not just the chimes, but a lot of traffic noise as well. But a tradition had started, and by 1924 the Big Ben bongs were being broadcast every day.

By then the BBC had installed low sensitivity microphones very close to the bells, so that they missed the sound of the clock mechanism.

The nation quickly came to love the sound of Big Ben, and during the Second World War the chimes were broadcast across occupied Europe – encouraging millions in their struggle against the Nazis.

The Big Ben daily time signal on the BBC is still cherished today, and Big Ben rings live for important events such as Remembrance Day and New Year, when the BBC sends the sound right around the world.

<https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/anniversaries/december/big-ben-new-year/>

Quotes

With Christmas in mind...

*For history the really strong argument in favour of the virgin birth is the difficulty of accounting for the story otherwise than on the assumption of its truth. - **H R Mackintosh***

*The Son came out from the Father to help us to come out from the world; He descended to us to enable us to ascend to Him. - **Anthony of Padua***

*Christ became what we are that He might make us what He is. - **Athanasius***

*The God who took a motherless woman out of the side of a man took a fatherless man out of the body of a woman. - **Matthew Henry***

*In Jesus Christ heaven meets earth and earth ascends to heaven. - **Anon***

With parties and family visiting over Christmas in mind:

*The times we find ourselves having to wait on others may be the perfect opportunities to train ourselves to wait on the Lord. - **Joni Eareckson Tada***

*He that gives his heart will not deny his money. - **Anon***

*From acquaintances we conceal our real selves. To our friends we reveal our weaknesses. - **Basil Hume OSB***

*Old age, believe me, is a good and pleasant time. It is true that you are gently shouldered off the stage, but then you are given such a comfortable front stall as spectator, and, if you really have played your part, you are more content to sit down and watch. - **Jane Harrison***

*Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility to evaporate. - **Albert Schweitzer***

Looking back on the year...

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

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

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

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

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



Singers wanted

Do you love to sing? How about joining a singing group in 2024?

Zenith Harmony is an a cappella group based in Kenilworth and we are looking for new singers. We sing a wide range of music in four-part harmony. Rehearsals are in Abbey Fields Church, Kenilworth on Thursday evenings.

If you are interested, we would love to hear from you at info@zenithharmony.co.uk



See our website zenithharmony.co.uk and our Facebook page facebook.com/zenithharmonycoventry to find out more about us.

**COULD ANY ARTICLES/NOTICES FOR THE
FEBRUARY 2024 MAGAZINE PLEASE BE SENT TO ME
BY
SUNDAY 21st JANUARY 2024
PLEASE 😊? (e-mail to m.todd1@hotmail.com)**



REPAIR CAFE
KENILWORTH



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REPAIR CAFE



Repair Café Kenilworth

Repair Café Kenilworth (ReCK) is a free meeting space that's all about repairing things together, be that clothes, toys, furniture, electrical appliances, bicycles ... there's very little that can't be repaired by our team of expert volunteers.

We meet at the United Reformed Church every third Saturday in the month, between 2PM and 5PM. There is free parking outside the Church, but it can get quite busy. If your item is particularly heavy or large, we'll always try to assist you as best as possible.



Sustainable. Social. Economic. Fun.

A local Repair Café is a not-for-profit community event, created by neighbours, for their neighbours. The aim of the Repair Café Kenilworth (and those worldwide) is to reduce waste, increase sustainability, save money, and have fun in an informal social gathering.

Oh ... with lots of tea and cake on tap also. It is a Repair CAFÉ after all.

Bin it? No Way!

Some things have to be thrown away ... the old toothbrush with curly bristles, that blown light bulb that's been sitting inside the cupboard since 1983, the fish 'n' chip wrappers from last night's tea ... but what about that broken bedside lamp, or the rickety wooden stool that belonged to your grandparents?



The Repair Café movement has one simple question, and an even simpler answer; Bin it? No Way!

Along with actually repairing your broken items, we'll help you to develop the skills to start repairing them yourself, to promote the culture of repair over replace, and to give you the satisfaction of bringing your treasured memories back to life.

Further details

[Repair Cafe](#) | [Repair Cafe Kenilworth](#) | [Kenilworth \(repaircafe-kenilworth.org\)](#)

The third Saturday afternoon of the month at Abbey Hill Church 2pm-5pm.

All in the month of December

250 years ago, on 16th December 1773 that the Boston Tea Party took place in Massachusetts. American patriots boarded ships and threw chests of tea belonging to the British East India Company into Boston Harbour, as a protest against the British tax on tea.

200 years ago, on 23rd December 1823 that the poem *The Night Before Christmas* was first published (anonymously) in the Sentinel newspapers in Troy, New York. It was written by Clement Clarke Moore.

175 years ago – on 19th December 1848 that Emily Bronte, British novelist and poet, died of tuberculosis, aged 30. Best known for her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*.

100 years ago, on 6th December 1923 that Ramsay MacDonald became the first Labour Prime Minister. The General Election had resulted in a hung parliament, and the Labour Party had formed a coalition with the Liberal Party.

80 years ago, on 22nd December 1943 that Beatrix Potter, children's writer and illustrator, died. She created animal characters including Peter Rabbit, Squirrel Nutkin, Mrs Tigger-Winkle, Jemima Puddle-Duck, and many more.

75 years ago, on 10th December 1948 that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

65 years ago, on 5th December 1958 that Britain's first motorway, the Preston Bypass, was officially opened. (It is now part of the M6 and M55.)

60 years ago, on 21st December 1963 that the Daleks made their first appearance on the British science fiction TV series *Doctor Who*.

40 years ago, on 10th December 1983 that Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. (It was accepted by his wife, as he feared he might not be allowed back into Poland if he travelled to Norway to accept it.)

10 years ago, on 5th December 2013 that Nelson Mandela died. This anti-apartheid revolutionary and politician had become President of South African 1994-99. He served as President of the African National Congress (ANC) 1991-97. Winner of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize.

The first-ever nativity scene

This Christmas, thousands of Nativity plays will be held around the UK. Ever wonder who staged the very first one?

It was St Francis of Assisi, and it was 800 years ago, in Greccio, Italy, on 25th December 1223.

Francis had been born into a wealthy family, but abandoned his noble inheritance when he became a Christian. Instead, he had turned to a life of great simplicity, in service to Christ's church.

Francis spent many hours meditating on the stories of the life of Christ, and even travelled to the Holy Land in 1219 and 1220, to see the various holy sites of Jesus's life. The sites deeply moved him, as they brought the Bible stories to vibrant life.

Back in Italy, in November of 1223, Francis was in Rome, and he had an idea. Why not share something of the inspiration of the Holy Land with his people here in Italy?

Barely 50 miles to the north, in Greccio, he knew many people to whom he had been ministering for years. He could at least show them something of the simplicity of the birth of Jesus. And so it was that, two weeks before Christmas, Francis asked his friend, the Lord of Greccio, Giovanni Velita, to prepare a nearby cave with live animals and a hay-filled manger.

That cave, beside some rocky crags, became the venue of the very first ever Nativity scene. On Christmas 1223, when the people of Greccio attended Christmas Mass as usual, they were invited to 'come and see' the simple scene.

According to his biographer, Brother Thomas of Celano, Francis wanted people to see what Jesus had "suffered for lack of the necessities of a new-born babe, and how He lay in the manger between the ox and ass."

According to eyewitness accounts of the moment, fires lit the dark scene while crowds arrived at the spot carrying candles and torches. There were also accounts of miracles happening that night. Some people had a vision of a real infant in the empty manger, and others reported miraculous healings.

All in all, the Nativity scene was an instant success, and soon other communities were staging their own.

Today, you can still visit the cave and rocks where the first Nativity was staged. It is now a Franciscan hermitage and sanctuary. Every year at Christmas, the people of Greccio stage a live, historical re-enactment of St Francis and the first Nativity scene.

Pope Francis has visited the spot two times: in 2016 and then in 2019, when he signed an apostolic letter on the importance of Nativity scenes.

Crossword clues

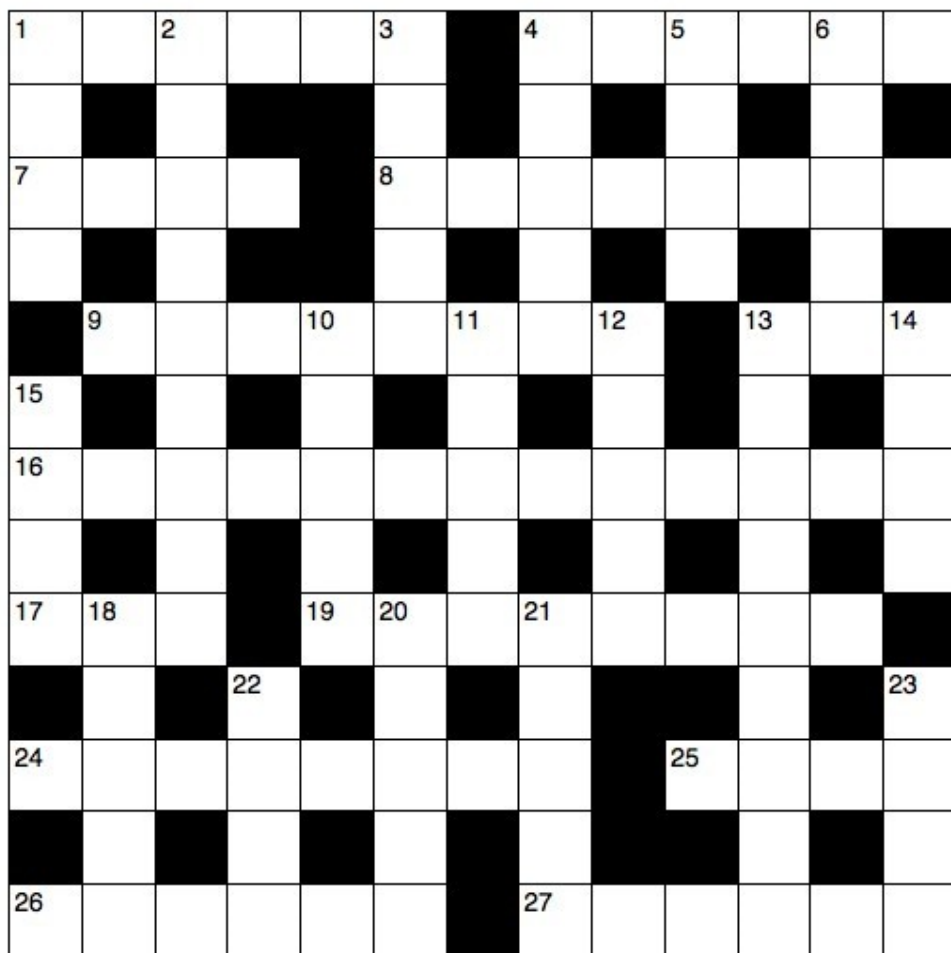
Across

- 1 Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
- 4 'He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
- 7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)
- 8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)
- 9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)
- 13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)
- 16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)
- 17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
- 19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)
- 24 Able dock (anag.) (8)
- 25 The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)
- 26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)
- 27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

Down

- 1 Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
- 2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)
- 3 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
- 4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
- 5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
- 6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
- 10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)
- 11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
- 12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
- 13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
- 14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)
- 15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)
- 18 Narnia's Lion (5)
- 20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5)
- 21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
- 22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
- 23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)

Answers on later page





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.*

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.

Children's version of the Christmas story

- When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manger.*
- When Mary heard that she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta*
- Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.*

Santa

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

Snowman

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

Wise

A little boy rushed home from school and said excitedly: "I got a part in the Christmas play!"

"What part?" asked his mother.

"I'm one of the three wise guys!"

The Christmas stars

Any astronomer can predict with absolute accuracy just where every star in the universe will be as the clocks chime midnight on Christmas Eve. He can make no such prediction about his teenage daughter.

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 would you like for Christmas?

A little girl went to visit Father Christmas in the local garden centre grotto. He welcomed her with a smile and the question of what she would like for Christmas.

The little girl gasped and stared up at him in horror. "Didn't you get my email?!"

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."

Mother in a storm

One cold winter night, during a violent storm, a mother was tucking her small, frightened little boy into bed. She was about to turn off the light when he said with a tremor in his voice: "Mummy, will you stay with me tonight?"

Mummy smiled and gave him a reassuring hug. "I can't, dear," she said, "I have to sleep with Daddy." A long silence – and then came his shaky reply: "The big coward!"

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!"

PRAYER DIARY DECEMBER 2023

1 st	Haro and Donald Horsefield
2 nd	Jane and Phil Inshaw
3 rd	Jennifer Jackson and Robert Banks
4 th	Eileen John and Leon
5 th	Emilie Jones
6 th	George Jones
7 th	Robert Kerr
8 th	Rosemary and Gerald Lawrence
9 th	Mary Lee
10 th	Gill and David Littleford
11 th	Ruth and Robin Loutit
12 th	Alice McAdam
13 th	John & Ayse McKenzie, Iain, Layla and Scott
14 th	Mhari McLintock and Hugh Maccallum
15 th	Roz Morris
16 th	Pam Muckersie
17 th	Vivien and John Nichols
18 th	Alison and Ivan Pointon
19 th	Cheryl and Colin Ritchie
20 th	Hilary Scott
21 st	Pat Scott
22 nd	Kath Shortley
23 rd	Mary Skidmore
24 th	Lorna and John Spenser
25 th	Jo Stratton, Sophie and Elspeth
26 th	Ruth and Steve Sutton
27 th	Winnie Tawil
28 th	Helen and Dave Thomas
29 th	Esmé Thorpe
30 th	Joy Thorpe
31 st	Bronwen and Martyn Todd, Sarah and Lottie

PRAYER DIARY JANUARY 2024

1 st	Janet Turner
2 nd	Jo and Pete Warren
3 rd	Gaynor Watkins
4 th	Emma and Gary Watt
5 th	Jo and John Williams
6 th	Lesley Williams
7 th	Di Wilson
8 th	Jane Woods-Scawen and John Thomas
9 th	Jon Atkinson
10 th	Ann Banning
11 th	Heather and John Barton
12 th	Louise Barton and Emileigh Warren
13 th	Peter and Barbara Champion
14 th	Judy Clarkson and Sam
15 th	Betty and David Connelly
16 th	Vera and Andy Cooper
17 th	Gloria Cordery
18 th	Pat and Ian Cowan
19 th	Alison and Robert Crichton
20 th	Donna and Michael Curran, Henry and Martha
21 st	Elinor Davies and Alexander Nunn
22 nd	Susan Derwent and Henry Bentley
23 rd	Edna Dixon
24 th	Mavis Duckworth
25 th	Paul Duffy
26 th	Judith and Terry Eaton
27 th	Sue England
28 th	Glo Ford
29 th	Barbara and Richard Gillard
30 th	Anne and Tony Gilmore
31 st	Julia Graham

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Church Website: www.kenilworthabbeyhill.urc.org.uk



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