

SHIRLEY PARISH



## A PRAYER FOR THE PARISH

**Give to us your people, living God,  
A renewed faith and a bold vision  
that we may proclaim  
the Good News of your Son  
with faith that your kingdom will come,  
with hope for our community  
and with love for Him  
who died and rose again  
to save us, Jesus Christ our Risen Lord  
Amen**

## THE RECENT PRAYER ENVOYS

As part of Shirley Churches Together (SCT) all three of our churches are involved in the Prayer Envoys. For each round of envoys churches within SCT are paired and send their envoy to the other who tells that congregation about their church. It is a great opportunity to find out what other Christians locally are doing.

For this round:

Christ the King was paired with St Patrick's

St James' was paired with Trinity Church, Monkspath

St John's was paired with the Grace Church.

Sarah Penfold went from St James to Trinity Church: 'The service included an impromptu acting out of the story of blind Bartimaeus, and some amazing singing from quite a small congregation. The first person I saw as I went through the door I recognised from Women's World Day of Prayer and from the Good Friday Walk of Witness. I was greeted like a long lost friend. Because the service was taken by someone based in Northfield they were very concerned that she would forget to ask me to speak. She didn't, and the congregation were interested to hear what we are up to at St James, especially the cleaning of the War Memorial.

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## PRAYER ENVOYS continued

I later discovered that not only had I worked with the Minister's husband, but that she had been part of a group who led some Taizé services at St James about ten years ago. I had never been in the building before but felt very much part of the family.'

Gill Gough visited St Patrick's Church and was warmly welcomed by old and valued friends. The congregation were genuinely interested in our current activities and what changes has been made in our new Shirley Parish. The Sunday we visited Reverend Julie was leading an informal Eucharist service, no sermon but a talk from Val Sperrey on the shoe box appeal from Samaritans Purse. The young children were very much involved with bringing up the sacraments and helping lay the altar for the Eucharist and continued to help with distributing grapes when bread and wine were offered. Prayers were said specifically for the growth and outreach at Christ the King and for the return of children. We came away feeling of being surrounded by love and well wishes for our future.

Linda Alford visited the Grace Church which meets at Light Hall School at 10.30am every Sunday. 'The church is similar in numbers and ages to St John's and this gave a very familiar feel to my usual Sunday worship. The similarity ended with the surroundings as Grace Church meets in the Gill Allport room – the computer suite at the school. Great use was made of technology, no hymn books or service booklets needed as all was displayed via projectors onto a huge screen at the front. We sang many songs, some I recognised, some new to me, accompanied by a group of musicians on keyboard and guitar. I was warmly greeted by all of the congregation before and after the service and made to feel most welcome. I gave my short talk about St John's as part of their feature slot and answered a few questions before enjoying the rest of the worship. One last similarity, there had been a family celebration since their last meeting, so we all enjoyed delicious cake at the end ... so much like St John's.'

Gill, Linda and Sarah – Prayer Envoys



### THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES 100 CLUB

Congratulations to the November winners

**£50 - Ian Whyte £25 - Barbara Neale**

# Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

**18th October 2018**

## **Games Evening and Fish and Chip Supper**

Members and friends gathered in Church House for an evening of games and a fish and chip supper. The participants were divided into two teams and took part in a quiz, a game of Beetle and a guess the character game. The successful team won by a small margin. The fish and chips were delicious and enjoyed by all. Thank you to all those who organised the games and fetched the fish and chips.

**7th November 2018**

## **Di Thomson - "My Chosen Career"**

Di has had a long career in nursing, mostly spent in hospitals in the Birmingham area. This career started in 1966 with Di as a trainee nurse. Her qualifications included general nursing, children's nursing, intensive care and midwifery. However Di's chosen route was children's nursing and she pursued this speciality until she retired in 1998. Di saw many changes in nursing and nursing training and summed it up as developing from task focused to patient focused. This was a really interesting talk enjoyed by all.

Sue Guy



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## A GREAT DAY AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY

**Friday 9th November 2018**

It started at one book club meeting. Ray Speakman told us that he was trying to arrange a remembrance event that would include telling the story of the tomb of the unknown soldier. Would we be willing to take part? There was a unanimous 'Yes'. A few extra voices were conscripted, scripts were circulated, music was discussed, and the evening took shape.



Those of us involved in the telling sat in a semicircle with Tommy, our gone but not forgotten squaddie, in the middle. Ray had split the script into four sections with Kevin Gill playing appropriate music in between.

In rehearsal we had spontaneously joined in singing 'It's a long way to Tipperary'. We did it again on the night.

Although I had had the script for some time it was only as I heard the actual performance that some aspects of the story had real impact. The idea had at first appeared morbid to some including the King. But others persisted and in the event King George walked behind the coffin and provided the sword which was attached to it. The whole thing touched the spot for so many people who were mourning family members.

As a group we were to a certain extent self-selecting but as I listened to the range of accents involved, local, east and west of the Pennines, south of the Thames, they reflected the diversity of the army itself both then and now.

Our thanks go to Ray for the script, the idea and the organisation, and to Kevin for the music. A Great Day at Westminster Abbey - a great evening at St James.

A book club member

*"A thoughtful and very moving experience. Hearing about those local people, who lived yards away from the church, literally brought home the story and sacrifice made by so many. Thank you all, and for the exhibition too."*

Linda Alford

*"It was a very moving evening. It made a huge difference ... when hearing the names on the newly rededicated war memorial read out. We now knew about some of them, where they lived, went to school and who their families were. Huge thanks to Ray Speakman for writing and directing it."*

Kate Law-Jones



## 'THE BIBLE'



A few weeks ago, I preached a sermon at St James on 'The Bible' (part of our Autumn sermon series). It received a number of positive comments – so it clearly struck a chord with some people. I tried to explain what the Bible is and what it isn't – from its structure to its content and its purpose for us today. What follows below is a summary of that sermon.

The Bible is actually a collection of "books" (Biblia = the books); 66 in fact. It is divided into two sections which we call the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Testament means agreement or covenant – referring to agreements between God and his world – we could equally well use the word pact or contract or promise. The Old or First agreement between God and people is effectively the story of the people of Israel, from the beginning of time to the period just before Jesus was born.

The new or second agreement is about God relating not just to Israel but to the whole world; it's about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and about the beginnings of what we know as the Christian Church – people who follow Jesus and believe he is God.

The separate books that make up these testaments are all different. Not just in content but in genre and style and purpose and authorship.

It's important to realise what type of literature we are dealing with when we read or hear something from the bible. And it's also important to know the context. We often hear just short snippets, but they all are extracts from a larger text and are within a context, the knowledge of which will help us understand what's being said.

In The Old Testament we have some books which tell history (examples are Exodus, Judges, the books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles); some books which are collections of prophecies – words that God has spoken to particular people to speak to his people to encourage them to live as he wants (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos to name a few), and some what we call wisdom literature – collections of sayings which give wisdom and knowledge on how to live, plus songs used in worship (e.g. Proverbs and Psalms).

## **‘THE BIBLE’ continued**

The Old Testament tells many stories, but they all fit within one overarching story of the nation of Israel. The earliest pages of the bible tell about the origins of the world, but then with the story of Abraham begins the tale of God and his relationship to a tribe – a family – which became a nation – Israel.

The story of Israel continues, through the period in Egypt, the escape from Egypt and the giving of the law – the distinctive rules for life, the settlement in Canaan, the judges – good and bad – and the kings – good and bad that ruled them. It tells of the split of the nation into two – Israel and Judah, the conquering of the nation by its neighbours, the exile and finally the coming back to the land.

And alongside the history books, the prophecy books tell us more about the relationship of the people with God. They tell how the people disobeyed his laws and instructions for life; how they worshipped other gods and how they failed in their mission to proclaim the one true god to the world. And they contain words – prophecies or challenges – from God to turn back to him, as well as visions of the future. They are best read in parallel with the history so that we can see what message each prophet was proclaiming and why, and to which time in the nation’s history.

The other category is the wisdom books – the Psalms which is a collection of songs used in worship; Proverbs and Ecclesiastes which are wise sayings; and other books which give further insights into the relationship between God and his people.

The whole story is a tale of people promising much but often falling short; of a people promising to obey God but being tempted astray; and also, of occasional revivals. But overall, it’s a tale of the nation wandering away from God but critically a tale of God’s loyalty to them and his love for them.

In the New Testament we have four gospels (the word gospel means good news). These are Matthew, Mark, Luke & John, each giving accounts of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, broadly in agreement, but each different in emphasis and perspective. There is the book we call Acts, which is the history of the first few years of the church. There are a number of letters written to churches and individuals by Paul, Peter, John and James, the early church leaders. It can be an interesting exercise to see the connections between the churches in Acts and the letters written to them.

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## **‘THE BIBLE’ continued**

Finally, there is the Revelation of John – a vision of the end times, of what heaven might be like.

The New Testament tells of Jesus life and in doing so refers back to the Old Testament – especially the prophecies – which seem to tell of a coming “Messiah” or Saviour figure – a person Jesus claims to be. It tells of Jesus life, his teaching, his actions and his claims to be God in human form. It refers to him saying he has come to fulfil the law and the prophets, emphasising the connection between Old and New Testaments. It talks of the opposition that this generated from Jews – who couldn’t grasp that Jesus was this Messiah. It talks of his eventual death and his death being a sacrifice to save people from their sins and wrongdoings and reunite them to God. And it talks of his amazing resurrection and begins to explore its meaning

It talks of those first Christians and how they adapted to life without the physical presence of Jesus, but with his Spirit guiding and inspiring them. It talks of the struggles with the Jews and the eventual founding of a new faith to which Jews and non-Jews could belong. It talks of the spread of this faith, and of the issues the new “church” as it came to be called faced. It ends with a vision of the end times – of a time when God would bring all things to a wonderful conclusion.

That’s a very broad overview of what the Bible is all about, but another important question is why do we believe it is such an important collection of books or writings?

The letter from Paul to Timothy talks of scripture being inspired by God, and being useful for teaching, reproof and correction. This probably refers to the Old Testament, but elsewhere in the letters Peter seems to put Paul’s writings on a par, and Paul quotes from Jesus’s words – giving to them a similar authority to the Old Testament.

Jesus treats the Old Testament with a reverence and acceptance that it is special – the word of God in some sense. The Jewish faith holds the same view of the Old Testament

And by inspired or being the word of God, I think we mean that in some way these writings are the result of prayer and meditation. They have been written with God in mind, and in the presence of God and add something to the story of God and his people.



## **‘THE BIBLE’ continued**

They were, of course, written by human beings. They were written for particular reasons and situations and with the degree of understanding that had been given to those who were writing.

By this I mean that there may be biases or specific answers to specific situations. There are some things that are timed bound and others which are true for all time and in all situations and there may be things that we find hard to understand.

This means, for example, that we cannot expect the writer of the creation stories in Genesis to have a knowledge of particle or nuclear physics. We cannot expect them to know the things we know about the age and geological history of the planet. And we have to accept that the creation stories are written not to tell us how the world was created but to explain that behind it all is God. Consequently, whether or not there were six actual days in which God created the world becomes an unimportant if not irrelevant question. The point is that the world – the universe – exists because of God not the other way around. And that in some way we are made in God’s image.

Another question we might ask is whether the God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament as it sometimes seems from the Bible. I think that the answer comes down to people’s perception of God being different, and the culture at the time of writing being different.

The perception that the Old Testament writers had of God was of a nation-God. Each nation had their own God, who was like a General leading the troops into battle. The stories of the people of Israel were written with that perspective in mind. Our own understanding is that God is the God of all people, all nations – and we are treading on dangerous ground if we assume God is on our side in times of conflict. The more important question is whether we are on God’s side.

Some Christians believe everything within the Bible is literally true. To me it doesn’t matter if the ancient figures in Genesis lived 900 years or not, whether Adam and Eve were actual people who lived or not. It doesn’t matter if Job actually existed or whether the Book of Job is simply a story with a meaning. After all, we don’t get hung up on whether there actually was a Good Samaritan. However, there are some things that we do believe are true – the life and death and resurrection of Jesus for instance. Things that are critical to faith.

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## 'THE BIBLE' continued

The Bible then is the story of God's relationship with his people. It tells of his love for us; it tells of his plans for us and it shows us how easy it is to get things wrong. It's a guide, it's an inspiration and it's a warning. It gives hope where there is none, and it brings life where there is death. And it's to be used by us – regular reading and meditation and study – because God speaks through it. It's not the only way God speaks, but it is an important way.



It can be hard, can be confusing and can be downright frustrating and perplexing – but I commend it to you – it will bring you life and joy and hope and purpose.

Reverend Paul Day



# Christmas

at Earlswood Garden & Landscape Centre

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INDOOR LIGHTS

OUTDOOR LIGHTS

BAUBLES

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WREATHS & GARLANDS

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 Late night close (7pm) on  
 29<sup>th</sup> November, 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> December  
 Saturday 8:00am - 5:00pm  
 Sunday 10:00am - 4:00pm

## FESTIVE WISHES FROM THE VICARAGE

This Christmas sees some new ventures for the Parish.

You will read elsewhere about the reflective Christmas service at St John's on the 23rd, while that morning there will be a Carol Eucharist at St James's. This will be a celebration of the Eucharist with an emphasis on singing our favourite carols.

There is also the Christmas Tree Festival beginning on the 13th December and ending with a Christmas themed family service at 4pm on the 16th. Local organisations have agreed to support this new community venture, including Woods Farm who, as well as their customary generosity in providing St James's with a Christmas tree every year and helping to clear rubbish from the churchyard, are keen to support the festival. There will also be a Craft Fair on the Saturday of the festival, so there will be plenty for everyone to enjoy.

For many of us, Christmas is a time of mixed feelings, so we will be trying to keep the normal rhythms of the Parish going during the festive season. We have already set up the Tuesday Cafe, and don't forget the fortnightly ploughman's lunch, both of which are open for everyone and anyone who enjoys a good chat and good food.

Who knows what the New Year will bring? My hope is that it will bring every blessing to the Parish and to everyone who lives in Shirley. My prayer is that Christ the King, St John's and St James's will continue to grow in knowing Christ and making Him known.

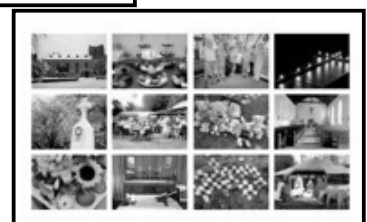
Wishing you every blessing for Christmas and 2019.

Reverend Peter Law-Jones



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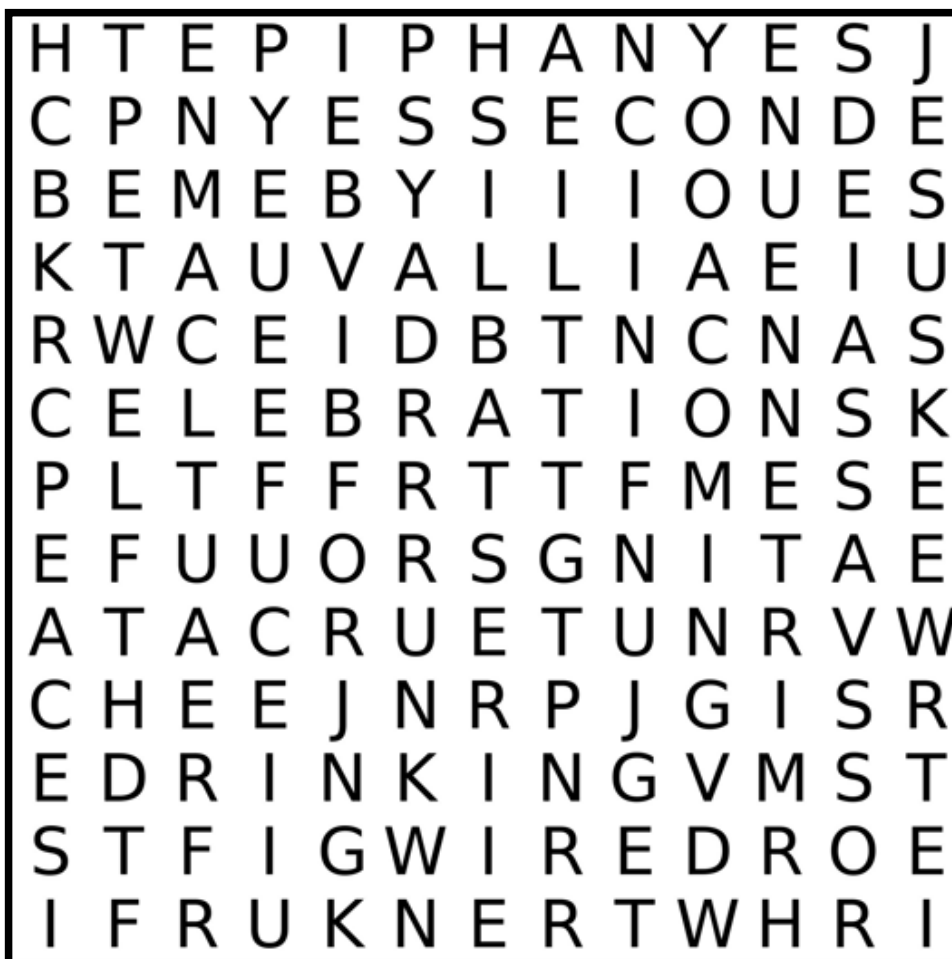
**From the  
Parish Office, St John's Church  
or Gill Hanton**

## WORDSEARCH - ADVENT

The nearly four weeks leading up to Christmas is Advent. It means 'coming'. It refers to Jesus' first coming as a baby, but it also looks forward to a day when Jesus is expected to return in triumph at his 'second coming' to establish perfect justice and a new order of peace.

Originally Christians marked Advent as a time when they refrained from excessive eating and drinking. Then Christmas Day reintroduced them to the joys of feasting. Christmas celebrations lasted for twelve days, with gifts exchanged as a climax at Epiphany (6th January).

Today, however, Advent is more likely to be associated with accelerating festivity, with the days following Christmas something of an anti-climax until 'twelfth night', on which decorations are removed. Many Christians worldwide are trying to revive the spirit of Advent by setting aside time to pray and address global poverty.



DRINKING  
EATING  
EPIPHANY  
ESTABLISH  
FIRST  
FOUR  
GIFTS  
JESUS  
JUSTICE  
NEW  
ORDER  
PEACE  
PERFECT  
RETURN  
REVIVE  
SECOND  
TRIUMPH  
TWELFTH  
WEEKS

ADVENT  
BABY

CELEBRATIONS  
COMING

DAYS  
DECORATIONS

*Answers are  
on page 29*

## REFLECTING ON THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Have you ever had a time in your life when, just for a few minutes, time seems to stand still?

My times were when I held my new born child for the first time, as I took in the tiny details of their face, counted their tiny fingers and toes and just breathed in the scent of my child, a truly precious gift from God.

Then on a sadder note when my parents died the sudden silence and empty space not only in the room but in my heart too.

So, with Christmas just a short while away now it has got me thinking about Mary and Joseph and the journey they went on to Bethlehem.

Mary must have been worried about the journey ahead of her and how would they cope if she was suddenly to start her labour as, in those days, they didn't have the scans and information of when you might just give birth.

Then Joseph not a very rich man but, knowing the journey ahead, got them a donkey to help to carry Mary when the long walk was tiring her out.

Then at last they arrive in Bethlehem to find they are too late to find a room for the night.

Then Mary realises her baby is on the way and when the inn keeper offers them a stable, well it's not the same as a room but at least it's warm and dry.

Now the shepherds on the hillside are busy watching the sheep, probably chatting amongst themselves when all of a sudden, an angel appears to them. They have never seen the like before and are petrified and I should imagine this was when they experienced their moment in time when it stood still.

After a few moments they probably all looked at each other and said did you see the angel? did you hear what this angel said?



A king born in Bethlehem? lying in a manger? In an animals feeding trough? That's no place for a baby and certainly not for a king.

So, they say to one another "let's go take a look for ourselves", "we will take a lamb or two for this new born king just in case as a stable we can't believe".

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## REFLECTING ON THE CHRISTMAS STORY *continued*

Far away we have the wise men who have noticed this star and it doesn't appear on any of the maps they have got so far. So off they go following it as it is of some importance, maybe the birth of a king.

So, Mary has now settled down with her new born baby son and Joseph is marveling at this child and says, "we will call him Jesus".

Then all of a sudden shepherds appear falling down on their knees offering lambs and praising Jesus.

Later the three wise men call bringing gifts and also falling on their knees when they recognise that this is the King, the one born to be Saviour of the world.

This is their moment when time stood still, they came and saw, which filled them with wonder.

So now Mary and Joseph are in their moment of when time has stood still for them. They have seen shepherds and wise men on bended knees in this stable right here in front of them, it's most amazing to them.

So, as we are approaching Christmas make time stand still for you, take a few moments to think about the shepherds and the wise men, how they came to the stable, how they knew at once this was "THE ONE".

Then Mary, how tired she must have been after such a long journey and nowhere to stay, she must of been feeling stressed, unprepared for such an event and Joseph probably feeling he was letting Mary down.

But they had all trusted in the messages from the Lord, they acted upon his word and in their moments of "time that stood still" changed their lives forever.

So, have a moment in time, make the hustle and bustle all around you stop, take the time to soak up just what Christmas is all about, listen to the stillness and calm your fears, let that tiny baby reach out to you just as he did to Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men.

Please read your pew slips for details of all the things happening in our Parish during this month and don't forget to let time stand still for just a few moments and give thanks.

Season's greetings to you all

Denise Smith

## THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING DINOSAURS

A very kind friend gave me six large dinosaurs and fifty small dinosaurs to make up into bags for small boys at Christmas. (Why are all small boys fascinated by dinosaurs?) The next day I went to get them – and they were nowhere to be found. I eventually found the large ones but where were the small ones? I had obviously put them somewhere “safe”. So, I looked in all the “safe” places. Then I looked in all the other places. They had not hidden in the airing cupboard, or the fridge, or under the beds. By this time, I was beginning to wonder if I had imagined them, but my friend confirmed that she had indeed given me six large dinosaurs and fifty small dinosaurs. I became obsessed with finding them - you would have thought they were the Crown Jewels. I even started calling them, rather sad really. Eventually, eventually, after many days of searching they came back. They were at the bottom of a bag of children’s books but I’m sure that I had looked there at least twice ... They are now very firmly in their plastic bags, in a carton with thick brown tape sealing it. I defy them to get out of there!



In the meantime, “our” Food Bank continues to serve the people of south east Birmingham. A family in this parish were in trouble recently and it felt good to



know that they could be helped. We are now in the build up to Christmas when we hope to get some small extras to include in folks’ bags but at the same time, we are always needing **small bags of sugar, small boxes of tea bags, toiletries and cleaning materials**. We may not be thrilled or relieved to be offered a box of washing powder at Christmas but to a family in dire straits it is very welcome.

As I write, the Gift Tree is up, and the presents are starting to come in. Thank you all for your generosity. As we often remark - you may never meet the folks you help but they think very kindly of you.

Elizabeth Paice

## OUR PARISH DIARY FOR DECEMBER 2018

1st 3pm: Shirley Band - 'Children's Christmas Concert' at St James Church  
7.30pm: Shirley Band - 'Brass at Christmas' at St James Church

### 2nd **Advent Sunday**

7pm: Reflective Evening Worship at St John's Church  
Speaker - Paula Gooder

3rd 9am-11am: 'Journey to the Stable' at St James Church  
10.30am: Portershill Drive Holy Communion

4th 11am: Pegasus Court Holy Communion  
12noon: Ploughman's Lunch at Church House  
1pm: Lunchtime concert at St James Church

5th 2pm: MU – 'Christmas Nostalgia'  
7pm: Eucharist and Guild of St Raphael at St James Church

6th 7.30pm: PCC Meeting at St John's Church

### 9th **The Second Sunday of Advent**

11.30am: The Friends of St James Walking Group

10th 11am: Elizabeth House Holy Communion

12th 10.30am: 'Coffee & Carols' at St John's Church  
10.45am: Swallows Meadow Holy Communion

13th 9am-5pm: Christmas Tree Festival at St James Church  
2pm: MU – Carol Service at St James Church  
3.30pm: Messy Church at Widney Junior School  
Theme: 'God so loved the World'

14th 9am-5pm: Christmas Tree Festival at St James Church

15th 9am-5pm: Christmas Tree Festival at St James Church  
10am-3pm: Craft Fair in Church House

### 16th **The Third Sunday of Advent**

2pm-4pm: Christmas Tree Festival at St James Church  
4pm: Family Christmas Service at St James Church

18th 10.30am: Mason House Holy Communion  
12noon: Ploughman's Lunch at Church House  
7pm: Carol Service at Widney Junior School

19th 10.30am: St John's Bible Study



## OUR PARISH DIARY FOR DECEMBER 2018 *continued*

### **23rd The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

10am: Carol Eucharist at St James Church

7pm: Celtic Carol Service at St John's Church

### **24th Christmas Eve**

4pm: Crib Service at St James Church

4pm: Crib Service at St John's Church

11.30pm: Vigil Eucharist at St James Church

11.30pm: Christmas Midnight Communion at 18 Widney Lane

### **25th Christmas Day**

8am: Christmas Eucharist at St James Church

9am: Christmas Eucharist at St John's Church

10am: Christmas Eucharist at St James Church

10.30am: Swallows Meadow Holy Communion

26th ST STEPHEN

27th ST JOHN

10.30am: Eucharist at St James Church

28th 12.30pm: Wedding at St James Church

### **30th The First Sunday of Christmas**

9am: Patronal Festival Service at St John's Church

*(Please check the weekly pew slips or the website for any changes and additions to the above)*



## **JANUARY 2019 PARISH MAGAZINE**

**DEADLINE FOR INFORMATION & ARTICLES** - Wednesday 12th December

**PUBLICATION DATE** - Saturday 29th December

# LUNCHTIME CONCERT

starring Kevin Gill on organ and piano and the  
Eversfield School Choir

**Tuesday 4th December at 1pm  
at St James Church**

followed by refreshments

*Do join us!*



## WHERE DID CHRISTMAS TREES COME FROM?

There are two early stories that mention fir trees. The first involves St Boniface, who went to Germany in the 8th century as a missionary and found people sacrificing a child to their god under an oak tree. Boniface was appalled, and

rescued the child. He then chopped down the oak tree and found a tiny fir tree growing nearby. He gave this to the people and said: "This is a symbol of life. Whenever you look at this tree, remember the Christ-child who is the One who will give you life, because He gave His life for you."

The second early fir tree story involves Martin Luther in the 16th century. It is said that one year he decided to drag a fir tree into his home and to decorate it with candles. He used it as a visual aid, telling people that the candles symbolised Jesus as the light of the world, and the evergreen tree symbolised the eternal life that Jesus gives to us. Many of the people who followed Luther were struck by the idea and took up the custom.

St John's Church  
Tilehouse Lane  
Tidbury Green B90 1PW

## COFFEE & CAROLS

10.30am until 12noon

Wednesday  
12th December



*All welcome*

# CHARITY CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

come and see the decorated trees  
in St James Church

Thursday 13th, Friday 14th, Saturday 15th  
December from 9am to 5pm

Sunday 16th December from 2pm to 4pm

**TROOP  
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All proceeds will support Troop Aid and the British Legion



## CRAFT FAIR

Saturday 15th December  
10am - 3pm in Church House



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## **#FollowTheStar is the Church of England's 2018 Christmas campaign**

Thousands of Christmas services and events will be taking place in churches all over the country in the run up to Christmas.

"For many of us, Christmas brings up so many emotions, memories and expectations. We

have one nativity story, but it can seem like we all have very different Christmases. For you it might be a time of joy and togetherness. Or perhaps it's all about planning and to-do lists. Many others can find it a sad and lonely time – nagged by the feeling that your Christmas is not like those 'perfect' ones we see in the media. But just like the unexpected assortment of people who were invited to meet the baby Jesus, #FollowTheStar doesn't ask you to be perfect. It says: come just as you are to take the life-changing Christmas journey."

*Archbishops Justin Welby & John Sentamu*

**Find out more at <https://www.churchofengland.org/christmas>**



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## #CHRISTINGLE50 CAMPAIGN

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Children's Society bringing Christingle to this country with a service held in Lincoln Cathedral in 1968.

To celebrate this landmark anniversary, the Children's Society is running its #Christingle50 campaign, which aims to support vulnerable young people through raising funds at Christingle events and a collaboration with The Royal Academy of Music.



Some 200,000 10 to 17-year-olds in the UK are experiencing emotional neglect on a regular basis, and many are also struggling with other difficulties at home.

The charity found that:

11% of 10 to 17-year-olds experiencing emotional neglect also do not have their own bed; 21% 10 to 17-year-olds experiencing emotional neglect had also been homeless in the last five years; and 20% of 10 to 17-year-olds experiencing emotional neglect also lived in a household that had used a food bank in the last five years.

Matthew Reed, Chief Executive of The Children's Society explains: *'Too many young people will wake up on Christmas morning like any other - feeling alone and unable to cope.'*

The Children's Society has created an original song for schoolchildren, congregations or community choirs to include in their Christingle services. The song, 'Light a Candle', is available to download and listen to or learn for free from The Children's Society website.

You can support young people by donating to the #Christingle50 campaign, or by attending a local Christingle Service. For more information, visit [www.christingle.org](http://www.christingle.org).



## THE MEANING OF 'THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS'

On the 1st day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

### **A Partridge in a Pear Tree**

The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, whose birthday we celebrate on December 25th, the first day of Christmas. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge that feigns injury to decoy predators from her helpless nestlings, recalling the expression of Christ's sadness over the fate of Jerusalem: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have sheltered you under my wings, as a hen does her chicks, but you would not have it so . . . ." (Luke 13:34)

On the 2nd day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

### **Two Turtle Doves**

The Old and New Testaments, which together bear witness to God's self-revelation in history and the creation of a people to tell the Story of God to the world.

On the 3rd day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

### **Three French Hens**

The Three Theological Virtues: 1) Faith, 2) Hope and 3) Love (1 Corinthians 13:13)

On the 4th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

### **Four Calling Birds**

The Four Gospels: 1) Matthew, 2) Mark, 3) Luke and 4) John, which proclaim the Good News of God's reconciliation of the world to Himself in Jesus Christ.

On the 5th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

### **Five Gold Rings**

The first Five Books of the Old Testament, known as the Torah or the Pentateuch: 1) Genesis 2) Exodus 3) Leviticus 4) Numbers and 5) Deuteronomy, which gives the history of humanity's sinful failure and God's response of grace in the creation of a people to be a light to the world.

On the 6th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

### **Six Geese A-laying**

The six days of creation that confesses God as Creator and Sustainer of the world (Genesis 1).



## 'THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS' continued

On the 7th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

### Seven Swans A-swimming

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: 1) prophecy 2) ministry 3) teaching 4) exhortation 5) giving 6) leading and 7) compassion (Romans 12:6-8; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:8-11)

**TO BE CONTINUED IN THE JANUARY ISSUE ...**

Taken from [http://www.articleseen.com/Article\\_The-Meaning-of-the-Twelve-Days-of-Christmas\\_119672.aspx](http://www.articleseen.com/Article_The-Meaning-of-the-Twelve-Days-of-Christmas_119672.aspx)

Many thanks to my friend Maurice Griggs from Jaywick for sharing this with us - Editor



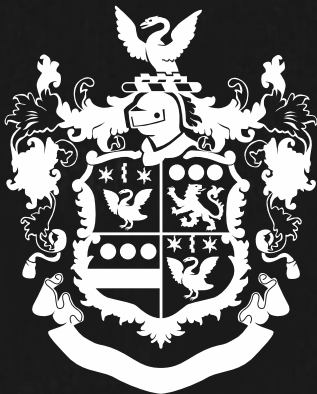
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## SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE ...

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Members are reminded that subscriptions for the next six months (December to May) are now due.

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If you would like to join the 100 Club please contact the Parish Office or a member of The Friends.

### SHIRLEY PARISH MAGAZINE

The Communications Committee are pleased to confirm that this price of this magazine will be staying the same in 2019 - 60p each or £6 for the year (one issue free) if paid in advance.



The more subscribers that we have the better we can manage our costs.



*SP*

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## CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

### Across

- 1** 'How long will you — your face from me?' (Psalm 13:1) (4)
- 3** 'Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the — he bore' (Hebrews 13:13) (8)
- 9** Posh sin (anag.) (Romans 8:15) (7)
- 10** Solemn pledges (Matthew 5:33) (5)
- 11** Italian term for full orchestra (5)
- 12** For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not — the cry of the afflicted' (Psalm 9:12) (6)
- 14** Prescience (1 Peter 1:2) (13)
- 17** Where a Hindu holy man lives (6)
- 19** 'If he found any... who belonged to the Way, whether — — women, he might take them as prisoners' (Acts 9:3) (3,2)
- 22** Fragrance (2 Corinthians 2:15) (5)
- 23** Vine hen (anag.) (Jonah 1:2) (7)
- 24** Precious stone decorating the twelfth foundation of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:20) (8)
- 25** 'Will you keep to the old path that evil men have — ?' (Job 22:15) (4)

### Down

- 1** Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with — — ' (Numbers 20:11) (3,5)
- 2** 'You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, " — — murder"' (Matthew 5:21) (2,3)
- 4** One of Paul's many hardships endured as a servant of God (2 Corinthians 6:5) (13)
- 5** 'We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, — inwardly' (Romans 8:23) (5)
- 6** Changed (Daniel 6:8) (7)
- 7** 'My yoke is — and my burden is light' (Matthew 11:30) (4)
- 8** Recoil (Revelation 12:11) (6)
- 13** 'O Lord, you have — me and you know me' (Psalm 139:1) (8)
- 15** ' — to me the joy of your salvation' (Psalm 51:12) (7)
- 16** Express sorrow (Isaiah 16:7) (6)
- 18** 'Then he said to Thomas, " — out your hand and put it into my side"' (John 20:27) (5)
- 20** 'God has said, " — will I leave you; — will I forsake you"' (Hebrews 13:5) (5)
- 21** Son of Onam and brother of Shammai (1 Chronicles 2:28) (4)

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*Answers are on page 29*

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### PUZZLE ANSWERS



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## COACH PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

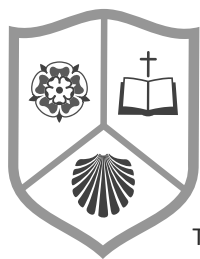
### September 2019

As we write we've just heard from Pax Travel that they are putting the final touches to the brochure i.e. the visit to the vineyard for wine tasting and possibilities for a short walk for those who are able on the Espiritual Variant part of the route. They are also sorting out one last hotel accommodation.

Sorry this has taken longer than expected but it is due to the extra variety we are offering on the pilgrimage tour.

Hopefully, all should be sorted with itinerary and prices for the January magazine.

Reverend Theresa & Dave Jones



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	14th	Cooper Alexander Rogers Ronnie Lee Bishop
	21st	Daisy Susan Bratos
	28th	Michelle Davey

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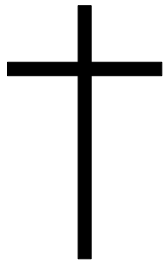
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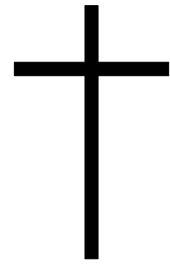
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