

Issue 10 / 23 Trinity's email: trinity@basingstokecircuit.net **Dec 23 & Jan 24**



Our Minister is:
Revd Claire Simpson

☎: 01256 323103

email:
revclaire72@btinternet.com



Trinity's Church & Building has closed & Trinity has merged with St Andrew's. They now worship together at St Andrew's Church, Western Way, Basingstoke.

Trinity E-News:
Deadline Feb 24 is:
Sat 20 Jan 2024

Trinity E-News is available on the Basingstoke & Reading Website – link below.

I love receiving all your pieces, please keep them coming. **A Big Thankyou** to everyone who sends in items, these can be posted, emailed or given to me.

Thank you so much,
Hazel, Ed

(☎: 01256-461375) & email:
hazel@basingstokecircuit.net
16B Portacre Rise, B/Stoke,
RG21 1YQ

Link to Circuit Website:
www.basingstokereadingmethodists.uk

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Online Circuit Services at:
<https://www.basingstokereadingmethodists.uk/worship-prayer>

We wish all our readers a very Happy, Joyful & Peaceful Christmas & New Year.

CHRISTMAS

December 2023 / January 2024

Dear Friends

I am not a movie buff. The menfolk in my household are much keener to go to the cinema or watch films on the television. However, I can remember the last two films I watched. They were back-to-back last Christmas, when on a day off between Christmas and new year in a quiet house I stumbled across an Antony Hopkins' afternoon on the BBC and got drawn in to watching 'Shadowlands' followed by 'Remains of the Day' – both of which I really enjoyed. I made a resolution at that time to try and watch a few more films in 2023. Sadly, that resolution fell by the wayside as I don't think I have watched one since!

Having said all of that, I was fascinated by the title of a film that was one of the hits of 2022: 'Everything Everywhere All At Once' won many Oscars and other film awards and was very well reviewed by film critics the world over. I haven't seen the film but maybe you have? It was the title that fascinated me as it seemed to describe so much of the way that the world and life works in 2023.

Do you ever feel like there is so much going on in the world today and in the busyness of our own lives that there is too much happening all at once for us to keep up with. I've certainly felt it this year as so much has happened in my life and the life of my family. Maybe you've felt the same or had a similar feeling? The pace of life and our ability to know everything as it is happening means that we can be overloaded with information and calls on our time in a way that wasn't the case in the past. We can know so much about everything, everywhere, all at once. Everything, everywhere, is potentially at our fingertips and only an instant away.

As we begin Advent this year, I'm reminded amidst this reality that there is another way to live. The poet R S Thomas

in his poem 'Kneeling' explores the experience of kneeling in a church in the presence of God. It is a short poem but it ends with the line 'The meaning is in the waiting'. This line became the title and focus for an Advent book I read a few years ago by the theologian Paula Gooder. I'd recommend it. Her reflections unpack that we live in a world and a society that doesn't have to wait for anything. We can have everything, everywhere, all at once and so waiting for anything becomes unnecessary and a counter-cultural activity. Isn't this why Christmas produce begins to appear in many supermarkets and shops in early autumn? Why you can 'buy now, pay later'? It's also why, even in the church dare I say, we begin to celebrate Christmas from the start of December rather than attend to Advent, a time of waiting to prepare ourselves for Jesus' birth and what this means for us and the world today.

I'm aware that everyone feels a little differently about this. I'm married to the unofficial Mr Christmas! I would put a Christmas tree and decorations up in our house some time after the 20th December but Mr Christmas adorns our house (beautifully, it has to be said) around 1st December. I try not to be bah humbug about it. But I think it's important that we take time in Advent to pause, to stop at some point each day and ponder our own lives, our relationship with God and what might come from waiting on God each day. I need help and discipline to do this so I have signed up to the Methodist Church's set of Advent reflections called 'Out of the Ordinary' which will drop a daily e-mail into my inbox at 6am(!) each morning of the Advent season. You can sign up via the Methodist church website too. I've also bought 'Stick with Love' by Arun Arora to guide my thoughts and help me focus.

cont'd.....

Eventually we shall get to Christmas and then the New Year but not before we have prepared ourselves for this. So, my prayer for each one of us is for a thoughtful Advent, a joyous Christmas and a hope-filled new year and that we will come to these not all at once, but in time, as we journey and wait on God for 'the meaning is in the waiting'.

With love,
Claire

(JAM) – 'Jesus And Me'

Meets: 2.30 pm – 4.30 pm,
usually the 1st Sunday of
the month.



The Next 'JAM' Date is:
Sunday 10 December,
at St Andrew's:

- 2.30 pm – 3.30 pm for JAM
Christmas Crafts and Games
- 3.30 pm – refreshments
- 4.00 pm – Christingle
- 7 January first JAM of 2024



* * * * *

JAM – Children & Families now meet at
St Andrew's, usually the 1st Sunday of the
month to hear stories of Jesus, Craft,
Singing & Tea.

All are very welcome.

Every Christian needs a half hour of prayer
each day, except when he is busy, then he
needs an hour – *Francis de Sales*

Trinity Circle

Our next meeting is
Tuesday 12 December
at 7.30 pm at St Andrew's,
Western Way.

Ann Walker will be leading our
evening showing us how to make
Christingles. We will also have
some Carols and Mince Pies.

Please come along and join us –
all are welcome.

There will be NO Trinity Circle in
January or February, Sonia



Northern Housegroup

Our next Housegroup is on:
Tuesday 5 December at 7.30 pm
at Sonia's home.

This will be a Christmas Evening
where we all bring along poems /
readings / music with a
Christmas theme.

The January meeting is on
Tuesday 9th January at Janet and
David's new home for a meal.

This will be at the earlier time of
6.30pm.

Sonia, Edna and Hilary



800 years ago, on 25th December 1223, St Francis of Assisi created the first nativity scene, in Greccio, Italy, after visiting Jesus' birthplace in the Holy Land. It proved enormously popular and inspired other communities to stage their own nativity scenes.



Our Minister is: Revd Claire Simpson

**Sunday Worship at St Andrew's & Trinity
and our Basingstoke Churches**

Plan for Worship for Dec 2023 to Feb 2024

Enquiries – Joint Senior Stewards:

Diane Bath ☎: 01256 320429 or email dianeath51@gmail.com

Linda Hoe ☎: 01256 417219 or email lindahoe@hotmail.co.uk



Basingstoke & Reading Circuit – Basingstoke Churches – December 2023

Dates	3 Dec Advent	10 Dec	17 Dec	24 Dec Christmas Eve	25 Dec Christmas Day	31 Dec
Trinity / St Andrew's 10.30 am	Rev C Simpson, B	Rev D Jenkins, S, 10.30 am 4 pm Christingle led by JAM	2 pm Carol Service, (following Christmas lunch at 12 noon)	John Smith	Rev C Simpson, 10 am 	LA
Church of Living Stream 10.30 am	N Klingaman	S Whithorn	Rev Dr J Mather	LA	-	M Beukes
Oakley 10.30 am	P Frank	S Appiah	T Rowell	Rev C Simpson	John Smith, 10 am	LA
Oakridge 10.30 am	LA, Joint with Old Basing	LA Nativity	J Smith, am & LA, 4 pm	T Rowell	Rev Dr R Midcalf, 10 am	S Appiah
Old Basing 10.30 am	LA at Oakridge	J Skeet	Rev C Simpson	S Appiah	-	C Marsh

Basingstoke & Reading Circuit – Basingstoke Churches – January 2024

Dates	7 Jan	14 Jan	21 Jan	28 Jan
Trinity / St Andrew's 10.30 am	A Rowe	T Pitt, P	Rev C Simpson, S	T Rowell
Church of Living Stream 10.30 am	S Turner	S Appiah	N Graham	P Frank
Oakley 10.30 am	T Bell	Rev C Simpson, Cov	S Appiah	S Turner
Oakridge 10.30 am	Rev C Simpson, Cov	P Jose	S Whithorn	LA at Old Basing
Old Basing 10.30 am	P Frank	T Rowell	S Appiah	LA, Joint with Oakridge

Basingstoke & Reading Circuit – Basingstoke Churches – February 2024

Dates	4 Feb	11 Feb	18 Feb	25 Feb
Trinity / St Andrew's 10.30 am	Rev C Simpson, S	LA	S Whithorn	A Rowe
Church of Living Stream 10.30 am	LA	D Munns	Rev J Dowding	J Skeet
Oakley 10.30 am	C Marsh	LA	Rev C Simpson	D Munns
Oakridge 10.30 am	N Graham	Rev C Simpson	N Klingaman	C Marsh
Old Basing 10.30 am	John Smith	P Frank	T Bell	S Whithorn

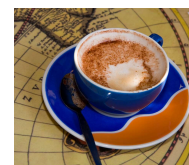
‘Take a look’ –

A Video – *Colin How and Charmian Harrison* interviewing our **Minister, Revd Claire Simpson**, can be found on **YouTube** at:

<https://youtu.be/p7r4t60Kh8k?si=QyM9YRutT-afJ9CI>.

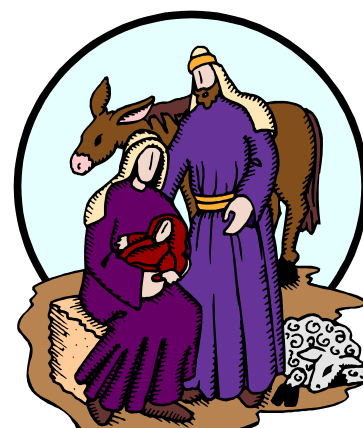
Come & Enjoy***'Fellowship with Friends'***

after Morning Worship on Sundays along with an ***'enjoyable Coffee, Tea, Biscuit and sometimes even cake' !***

**Can You Help ?**

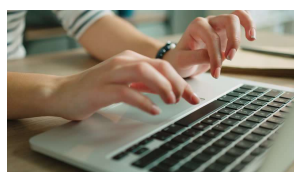
Many of you know that Rebecca Pitt is a police officer in the MET. A lot of her work time and a lot of her free time, is spent

working with the Police Cadets (13 - 18 yr olds) in Croydon. Many weekends she spends with the young people enabling them to do the expedition for their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Many of these children do not have suitable clothing or walking shoes for these activities, so if you have walking shoes or waterproof jackets or trousers that you no longer use, would you consider donating them to this worthy cause. Any items can be given to **Jennifer or Tony**



Newsletter – 'Events / Contributions / Dates'

Please let me know if you have **Events**, '**Dates for Diaries**' or other **Contributions** that you would like included or promoted in **OUR Newsletter**. I look forward to receiving them. *Items can be emailed, posted,*



*phoned through or given to me. **Thank you all in advance, Hazel, Ed** (Items can be: bible passages, prayers, poems, stories, outings, holidays, events or anything else you would like to share with us or have included).*

TUESDAY COFFEE CLUB

Come and enjoy a cuppa and chat, everyone is very welcome. We run alongside the Mug and Biscuit at the back of the church from **10 am till 11.30 am**, so finish in plenty of time to grab lunch from the Mug and Biscuit!

We aim to stay open **all year apart from Christmas**.

Di Spencer



Christmas Medley

**Thursday 21 December
2.30 pm at St Andrew's**



A warm invitation to you to join us for a '**Christmas Medley**' on **Thursday 21 Dec at 2.30 pm at St Andrew's**. There will be music, carols to sing, poems, prose etc and of course mince pies and a cuppa! We hope to see you there, so please put the '**Date in your Diaries**' and come if you can. **Everyone very welcome.**

Diane



Oakley Methodist Christmas Fayre

On behalf of us all at **Oakley Methodist Church**, I would like to thank everyone who came to support our Christmas Fayre which was held on 4th Nov.

It was wonderful that the rain stopped in time for the event and even more wonderful that so many people came. With your help, we raised around £390 for church funds. The Hospice team were well pleased with their result too. I've yet to hear from the Red Cross and Bluebells.

The winner of the '**Number of sweets in the jar**' **AND** '**Guess the weight of the cake**' was Mavis! Clever (lovely) lady.! ❤️ And the '**Puppy, named Bella**', was won by a little girl called Sophia.

Thank you again for all your support. We hope that you enjoyed the event as much as we did.

Eldwyth Stacey

Safeguarding Foundation Module Training:

In person training is being provided at the following venue:

- **Tuesday 13 February 2024, 7.15 pm to 9.30 pm** (arrival by 7 pm), at Tilehurst Methodist Church, School Road, Tilehurst RG31 5AN

Please book with **Peter Frank** by email (resources@brmc.uk) or telephone (07407 281986).



St Andrew's Methodist Church

Christmas lunch and Carol Service

Sunday 17th December 2023
Lunch at 12.00 midday
Carol Service at 2.00 p.m.

Lunch is free of charge,
but donations will be welcome. Cash or card.

Please register your name for the lunch
by email to diane bath51@gmail.com
along with any special dietary requirements.

A Picture Club

We have been wondering about having a picture club for our new community. This is not a camera club though it is likely that many people will use their phone or cameras to take pictures.

The idea is to have a get together where people could share photos that have been taken, or pictures found in a book or magazine etc, with each other, and perhaps to say why it is interesting or special.

At the moment we want to see who might be interested and then we can work out when and where to meet.

Let us know if you are interested.

David Webb and Theresa Loveridge

250 years ago, on 16th December 1773, 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.

Recycling of Plastic Milk Bottle Tops –

If you have plastic milk bottle tops (**only milk bottle tops**) & would like to recycle them, Pamela has a contact with a collector for Hants & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance. Tops can be given to Pamela or ring the Bishop family on ☎: 01256 467702. Thank you.
June Bishop



The Prayer Link



About twenty years ago we decided here was a need for collective prayer for members of the congregation at Trinity who were experiencing medical or other difficulties, either themselves or family or friends.

People were asked to give names to either Pauline or myself and were then transferred to the group via telephone. It is not necessary for details, a Christian name is often all that is given. It helps us if we know a little but is not essential – God knows all about it!

This service is highly confidential within the group. We respect the fact that people are sharing their deepest fears or emotions.

If you have any need for prayer, please contact:

Pauline Ansell – ☎ 01256 782352 **or**
Heather Shepherd – ☎ 01256 327105

If you feel called to join us in this service, you would be very welcome.

Heather Shepherd

The Hour is Late

The hour is late

I should be sleeping, renewing myself for another day.

Yet I lie here wide awake, my mind is churning round and round.

So many thoughts, I just can't seem to shut them off tonight.

I should have done this better, I should have done that.

What if this happens, how will I deal with it, so many what ifs?

Calm my thoughts Lord, as you calmed the waters of Galilee.

Bring me peace, like you gave to your disciples that night.

Help me let go and give to you the problems and difficulties that fill my mind.

Let me trust in you to take care of my worries and in you to lead me in the way you want me to go.

Grant me now a restful sleep, that I may wake refreshed in the morning to serve you anew.

Amen

Written by Jennifer Pitt



Winter Pruning (*a little snippet from Barbara*)

If you have mature ivy growing in your garden, please don't prune it yet, as the flowers are a good source of nectar for insects, and the berries are enjoyed by garden birds.

The Fountain Prayer Group

will meet

in the **Worship Arena or Quiet Room at St Andrew's**

on Thursday 14 December &

Thursday 11 January &

Thursday 25 January &

Thursday 8 February



We will gather at 2.30 pm and begin at 2.45 pm with a short reflection. The rest of our time together will include a period of silence and some prayerful sharing. We will finish the formal part of the meeting at around 4 pm.

Please come even if you cannot attend every meeting.

Angela Webb (angela@webbfamily.org.uk)

Christian Musical April 2024

We have invited the team from **Christian Music Ministries** to lead us in presenting **"Wildfire"**, a musical about Stephen, the first Christian martyr, at Christ Church Chineham on Saturday 13 April 2024.

You are all invited to come to this.

You may remember that the circuit was supported by CMM in the production of **"3 Camels"** at Wesley last November and **"Apostle"** at Trinity in 2019. I know that many found the presentation of a familiar story in a different way to be both enjoyable and valuable.

We will be looking for narrators, singers and musicians to present the musical. You would spend the day rehearsing under the tutelage of the CMM conductor. For planning purposes please could you let me know if you would like to take part.

Ruth Midcalf has also agreed to do some rehearsal and familiarisation sessions in March and early April to help us ensure that the presentation is truly worshipful and so we will be encouraging you to come to some of these.

If you would like to take part but cannot come for the whole day, then this should be fine, but please would you let me know.

We will also be looking for people to help out with back-office type activities – catering, moving tables and chairs etc; again let me know if you think you could help.

Also 100 years ago, on 31st December 1923 that the BBC broadcast the chimes of Big Ben for the first time, to welcome in the New Year. The tradition continues to this day.

If you want to know more, please contact me at david@webbfamily.org.uk or

☎: 07848 843360

200 years ago, on 23rd December 1823, 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.

MINUTES OF THE ST ANDREWS/TRINITY CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**HELD ON 30TH OCTOBER 2023 at 2.00pm. Venue: St Andrews/Trinity Church****Present:** There were 25 people present.

1. **WELCOME:** A warm welcome to all from Revd Claire as we prepared ourselves for the first Church Council meeting of the amalgamated Churches. Looking at the scope of the Agenda, it was agreed that some items would have to be deferred to the next meeting, and Revd Claire prioritised those items for discussion today.
2. **OPENING DEVOTIONS:** A Bible reading followed by a prayer.
3. **APOLOGIES** received from: Peggy Wood, Katrina Cox and Jenny Leighton.
4. **ELECTION OF EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**
Church Council Secretary – Barbara Johnson proposed by Revd Claire and seconded by Theresa Strachan. Agreed by unanimous vote.
Treasurer – Sarah Whithorn was proposed by Llyn Frost and seconded by Diane Bath. Agreed by a unanimous vote of 21 for, none against, no abstentions.
Pastoral Secretary – Revd Claire explained that this role was still vacant. Linda Hoe and Diane Bath were overseeing pastoral care for the time being until the post is filled.
5. **ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL**
These people would reflect all areas of the wider Church in going forward and help to shape our new community and mission. The following Church members were proposed and elected en-bloc:- Peter Ansell, Ann Walker, Revd Angela Webb, David Webb, Hillary Reed, and Helen Blake. Agreed by a unanimous vote.
6. **CIRCUIT MEETINGS REPRESENTATIVES**
Our current membership is 79 from Trinity, and 37 from St Andrews which includes three new members, making a total membership of 116. Therefore, we have 3 vacancies. Revd Claire proposed two Church members, Vivian Edwards and Bob Lock. Viv and Bob were elected unanimously. It was noted that the two Senior Stewards and the Church Treasurer, also attend the Circuit meetings.
7. **PROPERTY**
Revd Claire thanked Bob and Michael for forwarding their respective reports.
Key Register: Llyn Frost said she had the current records to September 2023 and would pass them to Bob. Bob thanked her for the work she has done keeping records and issuing keys over many years. He will carry out a review in due course.

Photocopier/printer at Trinity Office

Peter Harris gave a comprehensive breakdown of the costs involved if Trinity were to cancel their existing lease contract, and return the machine to the supplier. He also outlined the alternative suggestion from the suppliers who have offered St Andrews a three year lease contract.

The meeting discussed the various options available. Barbara put forward a proposal that based on the information given does Church Council wish to commit to a new lease and transfer the existing machine from Trinity to St Andrews. Bob seconded this proposal. It was agreed by a majority.

Outstanding Items from Trinity

Michael Parker said the Font was available to St Andrews/Trinity Church as an interim font, until such times as the Church decides what type of font they wish to purchase for our new Church.

cont'd.....

Everyone agreed that this would be a good idea with a Baptism coming up soon.

The Memorial Table is now located in the entrance to the Church.

Trinity Church Inventory – Surplus items

During the Inventory several people identified objects they wished to have. Those people are asked to liaise with either Tony or Michael to arrange collection. It was agreed with Martin Beukes that no charge will be made, but a donation to St Andrews/Trinity Church would be more appropriate for the items taken.

Within Trinity Church there is a lot of wood that could be re-purposed, and Angela wondered if it could be made into small crosses or hand-held size crosses, that Church members could have as a keepsake.

Girls Brigade/Boys Brigade Flags at Trinity Church

Theresa had confirmation from Headquarters that the flags at Trinity cannot be displayed at St Andrews/Trinity as both the Boys and Girls Brigade had been decommissioned.

Grey Upholstered folding Chairs from Trinity (32)

There was a discussion on the merit of various chairs for the different groups that use the Church. Theresa proposed that they accept the 32 grey chairs from Trinity as they fold up and take less space than the existing ones. Seconded by Tony. Agreed by a majority vote of 11 for and 7 against. Revd Claire gave a vote of thanks to all those working behind the scenes.

8. FINANCE

Margaret Hayes reported that the Standard Form of Accounts for Trinity had been signed off by Alan Harland. These need to be signed and approved by Church Council as they form part of our annual return to the Charities Commission. Proposed by Margaret Hayes and seconded by Michael Parker. Agreed unanimously.

Margaret then discussed St Andrews finances which had benefited from the injection of funds from Trinity Church.

Church Signatories

Margaret confirmed that while Trinity Church signatories will stay the same until closure of the Church next Spring, it was necessary to review the signatories for St Andrews. Margaret Hayes proposed that the following six Church members become signatories for St Andrews and be voted en-bloc. Seconded by Theresa Strachan.

Sarah Whithorn, Margaret Hayes, Linda Hoe, Robert Lock, Llyn Frost, Diane Bath.

21 votes in favour, non against, no abstentions.

Margaret concluded her report, and there were no questions.

9. SAFEGUARDING

Revd Claire proposed Margaret Hayes as the Safeguarding Officer for our new Church. Seconded by Pauline Ansell and agreed unanimously. Margaret had prepared the Safeguarding Policy Statement for Church Council's approval, which has to be signed by our Minister and posted on the Church notice board. Revd Claire proposed acceptance of the Safeguarding Policy Statement. Seconded by Peter Harris, and agreed unanimously.

Safeguarding Training or Refresher Training

Several members were now due for the Safeguarding refresher course. Dates yet to be agreed.

cont'd.....

10. **GDPR**

As yet, we have no volunteer for this role Revd Claire said that people need to be mindful about GDPR and what it is they are agreeing to. As a first step Revd Claire suggested a Data Mapping exercise.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS****Looking Forward**

Revd Claire was mindful that people were concerned about what we are going to call ourselves and our new Church community. This is an important issue that will have to be revisited, but she was hopeful that as we begin to work together, there might emerge from us something that might be obvious as a name; a sense of the right name and the right time. We must hold together all the different feelings about this until we all meet together again.

12. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 27th November 2023 at 3.00pm - St Andrews/Trinity Church

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Special Taster Retreat at Silchester Retreat Centre

Our retreats are to enable you to explore and experience meeting with God;
to be explorers and journeyers.

To enable this we offer a variety of multi-sensory experiences.

If you have not previously attended then why not try our

Special Taster Retreat
Saturday 27th January 10 am to 12.30 pm
Cost £5.

If you have been to a retreat day before,
you would be very welcome to bring a friend.

Please contact Angela Hiscock to reserve your place
(angela.hiscock@btinternet.com or tel. [01256 850432](tel:01256850432)).

SEE also page 15 for informaton on next year's Retreats !

Sickly Houseplants (*another lovely snippet from Barbara*)

If you have a sickly-looking houseplant that won't flower, give it a pick-me-up, by dissolving 2 aspirins in a pint of luke-warm water, and water your plant as usual, but please don't over water the plant. In the winter months houseplants need to be moved nearer to the light and require less frequent watering.

3rd Boys Brigade

Boys Brigade – especially the 5 – 8 year-old boys – If there are any boys out there with nothing to do on a Friday night between 6.30 pm – 7.45 pm, it's £2 per session and boys can come any Friday to see what we do and if they want to join us on a regular basis that would be great. **Theresa Strachan**

Memories



It has been a strange year, 2023. For me a year of nostalgia, and some uncertainty. I suppose most of us like positives, even if they are difficult. Not quite knowing what happens next, makes us uneasy. This could be health, family, finance, or multitude of other reasons.

I decided to revisit places from the past. Places that have had special meaning in my life, sometimes with a friend, but often alone. So, in April, I went to Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. Richard and I lived in WGC for seven years during the 1960's.

It was an opportunity to visit my parents grave, and to thank God for them. To walk past the house where my youngest son Paul was born, then past the rose bushes where Christopher my eldest son, fell, every time, when learning to ride a bike. He did eventually learn, and the scratches healed. It was good to be in the 'Garden City' again.

In July I went to Lincoln for the Hymn Society Conference. It was lovely to be with Christian Friends, sharing singing and fellowship. Many I have known for over 20 years.

My next journey was to Welshpool. This is a delightful little town on the Welsh/English border, near Shrewsbury. For me, Welshpool is full of memories. Over 60 years ago, I was the Salvation Army Officer in the town. Welshpool has not changed, apart from new buildings up the hillsides. It is still special. And I remembered the warmth of the people which is still so real today. Some folk stay in our hearts. and that is true for me recalling those wonderful days.

The last place nostalgia took me was 'home' London SE 12. A friend came with me, to Eltham, In the London borough of Greenwich. This is where I grew up. Much of the area is Crown land.

We were able to walk to Eltham Palace, now administered by English Heritage, using the Green Chain footpath.

We passed the donkeys in the field, and being up high had a good view across to Greenwich, and the river Thames.

I saw again the fields where I had played with friends, and the unpretentious council flat where I lived with my parents.

We finished the day at 'The Tarn,' a man-made lake, away from the hustle and noise of the traffic. An oasis of calm.

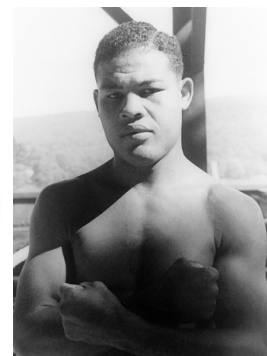
A year looked back on. So, what of 2024? **God says in Isaiah 43 'Behold I make all things new. Do you not perceive it?'** He wants us to take hold of that newness every day. To understand it and know it for ourselves. The newness of life that we pray for.

God bless you, **Margaret Garland**

100 years ago, on 31st December 1923, the BBC broadcast the chimes of Big Ben for the first time, to welcome in the New Year. The tradition continues to this day.

This Happened in Naples

This happened in Naples. One evening I was watching a rugby match (*something to do*) and I was the only spectator. The match had just started when an American Officer came up and said “is this your rugby”? Just then the referee blew his whistle and he said “what was that for” – I did know the rules so I explained it and this went on for the whole evening. He told me about their soccer and I told him the sport I played etc and a most enjoyable time we both had.



During the evening he asked if I was going to see Joe Louis – Joe Louis or the ‘*brown bomber*’ he was called was the world heavy-weight boxing champion and was giving demonstrations to the American forces. I said to him we could not get tickets. We parted after a great evening and I thought that was that.

About a week later I had just got back to the billet when someone came dashing in to tell me that “there was a Yank asking for me outside”! I went down to find this officer who had a jeep and driver. I asked him in but was very pleased he did not come in. I do not know where we would have sat for one thing. However, he said he should not really be there but thought I would like two tickets for Joe Louis. He had to go but said that he had a ticket next to our ones so he would see me there. I took a mate with me and we had a most excellent time – there was some boxing first and then Joe Louis came on and he was huge but when he moved about the ring he seemed to float – he was so light on his feet it was amazing.

When it was over the officer said “did we want to go to their PX” (The American NAAFI), the only difference was that we knew that they had lots of things which we never saw (including chocolate etc).

I said to my mate “Have you any money” he replied that he was SKINT so I said that makes two of us and it was obvious if we went our friend would have to pay for everything. We did not think this was right so we made up an excuse and we did not go. The chocolate was very tempting !!



Nobby

South Ham Churches Lunch Club

The three churches on South Ham run a Lunch Club **every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month** welcoming people at St Joseph’s Church, St Michaels Road, South Ham at 12.30 pm.

For the over 55’s at £5 per head, you get a main meal which can be vegetarian followed by a hot drink, cake and biscuits and if you are a diabetic, a diabetic pudding.



Bob Lock



Some useful NHS information

Debbie Howard

Lead Chaplain

Telephone (Basingstoke): 01256 314901 Ext: 44901

Telephone (Winchester): 01962 824906 Ext: 24906

Mobile: 07909817721

Email: Debbie.Howard@hhft.nhs.uk

Web: www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk

RETREAT CENTRE SILCHESTER RG7 2NY PROGRAMME 2024



Come and join us for a day of refreshment and reflection at Silchester Methodist Church.

Our retreats are to enable you to explore and experience meeting with God; to be explorers and journeyers. On each day, themed multi-sensory experiences are available to choose from.

Wednesday 6th March Hands

How do we use our hands?
How do we speak of the "hands of God"?

*See, I have engraved you on the palms of my **hands**;*

Isaiah 49:16 (NIV)



Saturday 27th April Pictures of Jesus

How have we pictured Jesus across the world, through the centuries?
How do we see the face of Christ today?

*The Son is the **image of the invisible God**, the firstborn over all creation.*
Colossians 1:15 (NIV)



For enquiries or to book for any of the **Retreat Days** please contact Angela Hiscock at:
angela.hiscock@btinternet.com or phone Angela on ☎ 01256 850432.

Numbers are limited.

All days run from
10 am – 3 pm.

Refreshments from:
9.45 am. Please bring a '**Packed Lunch**'. Hot and cold drinks, including cup-a-soup provided.

Suggested donation:
£10 per person.

Location:  Paddle.worthy.windmill

Entrance: from Pamber Road, RG7 2NY.

Car parking and entrance to hall at rear of the church.

Future 2024 Retreats:

- Wednesday 12 June
- Saturday 10 August
- Wednesday 2 October
- Saturday 23 November

If you have not previously attended why not try our '**Special Taster Retreat**' on:

Saturday 27 January
10 am to 12.30 pm

Suggested donation
£5 (page 12 for more info)

MINUTES OF THE ST ANDREWS/TRINITY CHUCH COUNCIL MEETING**HELD ON MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 3.00pm**

Present: 20 members attended.

Welcome: Revd Claire expressed her appreciation to CC members for accommodating the later start of 3.00pm.

1. **Opening Devotions** : Our Church prayer read by Revd Claire.
2. **Apologies:** 10 members sent their apologies.
3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 30th October 2023** were accepted as a true record.
4. **Matters Arising:** None

5. **Property:** RL gave an update on the roof leak. RL reported that the shutters / partitions in the Church had been serviced; gutters had been cleaned and a few roof tiles replaced. Items outstanding are the boiler service, emergency lighting, and batteries need replacing in the Fire & Security system. RL told the meeting of an incident that happened outside the Church building which he had subsequently reported to the police.

Lettings: The Bowls Club had recently cancelled its lettings contract but had sent a very complimentary letter to RL thanking St A's for its hospitality and enclosing a donation of £200 to be given to a charity of our choice. Church Council agreed that the cheque should be paid into our bank account and will decide after Christmas to which charity it should go to. Item for next CC meeting agenda. BJ was asked to write a letter of thanks to the Bowls Club.

The ex Trinity Font was now in place for the Baptism on Sunday.

Flags: A recent Stewards meeting discussed the Trinity GB/BB flags that could no longer be displayed in Church, and suggested having something like a plaque to commemorate the long history of the Boys and Girls Brigades in the Methodist Church. Church Council agreed that this idea should be taken forward. TS spoke about the future of Boys Brigade. She explained how her group use the TV screen in the Mug and Biscuit, and suggested that this technology could be better utilised. A suggestion would be to have the TV screen showing throughout the day, images of Boys Brigade activities, advertise other Church events, or anything we wished as a Church to promote. The screen can also be seen from outside by passers by. After some discussion it was agreed that this idea should be explored further.

Storage In the Roof: Historically this area could not be used because bats had taken up residence. The bats have now gone and the space could now be used for much needed storage. Property Stewards were asked to take this forward.


Keys: LF confirmed that she had now handed everything over to RL.

Revd Claire gave a vote of thanks to LF for all her hard work over several years.

6. **Finance:** LF confirmed that she had deposited £30,000 (as instructed by our Treasurer) into St A's HSBC Bank account.
7. **Trusteeship:** Revd Claire talked about the responsibilities of being a Managing Trustee and she encouraged all elected Church Council members to look at the Methodist Website. TP stated that all CC members were responsible for ensuring

7. That our accounts were administered correctly. MP will send BJ the website link to be sent to all CC members so they can access the Methodist website and go to the relevant section which explains Trusteeship. TP asked that the Financial Report from our Treasurer be circulated to CC members prior to the meeting date, so they can study it before the meeting. Revd Claire confirmed that this would be done.
8. **Reports from other Groups:** DB reported that the combined Housegroups were meeting up on 21 December at 2.30pm in St A's. for a Christmas Medley of Carols, music, prose and poetry, plus tea and mince pies. Everyone is welcome so do come along and join in the fellowship.
9. **Setting priorities for the new Church community:**
Revd Claire issued each group a set of written questions for discussion; What in our Church has gone well ? What could be better or done differently ? How might we set priorities for the next 12 months ? Revd Claire suggested that as a guide and starting point for discussion it would be useful to look at our Commitment Card, our new Church Prayer, and 'Our Calling' on our Methodist membership card. There was a lively discussion and subsequently each group gave their feedback on questions which were written on a flip chart. The points on the flip charts are attached to these minutes as Appendix 1. In summarising Revd Claire said that we are now moving into Advent and Christmas, but what we want to aim to do in the new year is to try and gather people round the priorities we have highlighted this afternoon; the formation of a Worship Group, a Tech Team exploring how we use available technology in Worship, and an essential Communication Link to be established.
10. **Any Other Business:** Revd Claire said it was too late this year to have a Christmas Eve Communion Service, but perhaps the Worship Group could look at this or 2024. LH replied that she encouraged people to bring their drinks into the Church and use the chairs on the back wall. There is no room for tables, but there are plenty of chairs. Naming the new Church: DB asked when the name and new logo would be discussed. Revd Claire replied that it would be on the CC agenda for next year.
11. **Date and Time of next meeting** **MONDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2024 at 2.00pm**
The meeting closed with The Grace.

* * * * *

<p>At 01.12.23 the Foodbank <u>Most Needed / Very Short:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi skimmed UHT milk • Instant Coffee • Sweet Spreads (jam, honey, marmalade) • Tinned fruit • Hot & Cold Desserts • Long Life Fruit Juice • Savoury Spreads (Marmite, Peanut Butter, Meat Paste etc) • Deodorant (Male & Female) 	<p><u>We Have PLENTY:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasta & Rice • Tinned Soup • Tinned Baked Beans • Pulses • Tea • Hot & Cold Cereal • Non-Dairy Milk • Sanitary Pads • Baby Food & Formula & nappies • Hand Soap • Dog & Cat Food 	<div data-bbox="1062 1603 1418 1789">  </div> <div data-bbox="1018 1854 1484 2016"> <p>Website: www.https//basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1034 2080 1461 2163"> <p>Fuller information on their website</p> </div>
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The Mug & Biscuit at St Andrew's Church is Open on:



Hours of opening are:

Tuesday: 10 am to 1.30 pm
Wednesday: 10 am to 1.30 pm
Thursday: 10 am to 1.30 pm



- We serve: *home-made cakes, jacket potatoes, toasted sandwiches & tea cakes.*
- Menu is subject to change. **Last Orders** for hot food at 1 pm.
- Takeaway Available. Credit Cards Accepted.



The Mug & Biscuit is NOT OPEN during School Holidays.

The Mug & Biscuit is registered as a 'Warm Hub Opening' during 'Mug & Biscuit' Hours



We look forward to welcoming old & new friends.

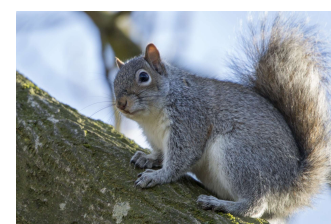
The Mug & Biscuit Team



Any queries, **Offers of Help** – contact: **Linda Hoe** ☎: 07963 583506

Love them or loath them.....Grey Squirrels (*another one from Barbara*)

Squirrels are very busy in our communal gardens at the moment, burying anything they can find for their winter larder in our lawn, but more annoyingly in my pots on the patio. A recently planted winter Hellebore is looking a bit sad due to the constant digging up and burying of large walnuts which have fallen from our tree. A useful tip to deter squirrels from pots and bird feeders is to dab peppermint oil on the bird feeders (*renewing it after rainfall*) and for pots, grate some very strong smelling soap over the soil.



Bibles

Shoemakers
 CHRISTIAN BOOKS & COFFEE SHOP

Gifts & Cards

Great News – We thank God that Shoemakers is Remaining OPEN in the Arcade, Newbury, 22.09.23

Church Supplies

Shop Open: Tuesdays – Saturdays – 9.30 am – 4 pm

Shoemakers Christian Bookshop, The Arcade, Market Place, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5AD

- **Website:** www.christophershoemaker.org.uk (*for online orders*)
- Email Orders – office@christophershoemaker.org.uk or *Pop in*
- Phone your orders – *during opening hours* ☎: 01635 37836
- Facebook messenger at: www.facebook.com/shoemakersbooks
- Click and Collect available *and* Orders can be *posted or delivered to you.*
- Coffee Shop IS CLOSED

Books, Children's Books

Useful ☎ & Email Contacts:**Our Minister is: Revd Claire Simpson**☎: 01256 323103 / email: revclaire72@btinternet.com

* * * * *

Church Contacts: Joint Senior Stewards:**Diane Bath** – ☎ 01256 320429 /email: dianebath51@gmail.com**Linda Hoe** – ☎: 01256 417219 /email: lindahoe@hotmail.co.uk

* * * * *

St Andrew's Bookings: Contact – Bob Lockemail: robertlock1@virginmedia.com

* * * * *

Trinity E-News Editor: Hazel Harris – email is:hazel@basingstokecircuit.net ☎ 01256-461375

address: 16B Portacre Rise, B/Stoke, RG21 8YQ

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Basingstoke & Reading Circuit Website:www.basingstokereadingmethodists.uk

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Basingstoke & Reading Circuit is a Registered Charity, Charity No. is: 1134891

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Circuit Administrator: Mrs Marion Young can be contacted on: ☎ **07503 652961** (working hours only) & email: marion@basingstokereadingmethodists.uk**Oakley Methodist Church****Coffee Mornings:
December and January****10.30 am – 12 noon**

- **Tuesday 12 December**
- **Tuesdays 9 & 23 January**
£1 for a bottomless tea or coffee & biscuits

Paperbacks available 30p each**Ukraine War: Help
Support the Church in
Ukraine with Bibles**[https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/
getinvolved/donate/](https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/getinvolved/donate/)**75 years ago, on 24th December 1948, the first Midnight Mass to be televised was broadcast from St Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.****Old Basing Methodist Church****CAMEO**

- **Tuesday 19 December, 11.30 am – 1 pm – Light lunch provided.**
- **Tuesday 23 January, 11.30 am – 1 pm. Light lunch provided.**
You are welcome to bring along crafts of your choice. All welcome.
- **Congregational Lunch – 16 January**

Advent Bible Study Group – This course lasts for 4 weeks from Thursday 30 November at 2.30 pm. The first two weeks will be at Old Basing M/C, and the last two weeks at St Mary's Church. The sessions will be led by Rev Claire Simpson, and Rev Jo Mulliner.

- Christ became what we are that He might make us what He is – *Athanasius*
- In Jesus Christ heaven meets earth and earth ascends to heaven – *Anon*
- From acquaintances we conceal our real selves. To our friends we reveal our weaknesses – *Basil Hume OSB*

Basingstoke & Reading Circuit Prayers
December 2023 to February 2024

**Pausing to listen to God's voice,
our feelings,
the desire God is giving us.**



God in hiding, waiting in the dark, blowing over the formless void,
speak a word of light and life, we pray, and make something out of
this nothing once again.

God hidden in plain sight, divine treasure to be found in seeds and
soils, yeast and dough, birds and trees, hunger and thirst, enemy and
neighbour, bread and wine, open our eyes, give sight to our blindness
and make us see you once again.

God hiding in me like water, underground rising, seeping out, bursting
out, pouring out, come Holy Spirit come and make me full to
overflowing once again.

(Extract from a prayer by Mark Slaney in Methodist Prayer Handbook 2023/2024)

Stop Mist on your Windscreen (PP)

If you will be out in your car a lot this Christmas, here's an easy way to
stop your windscreen from misting up: Simply clean it with shaving
foam. It provides a protective barrier which stops mist forming. Ice
hockey players use it to stop their face masks from steaming up while
they're on the ice.

It's easy to do. Put a good dollop of shaving foam onto a clean towel,
and then wipe it all over the windscreen. Then take a second clean
towel, and gently wipe off the shaving foam. This leaves a protective
barrier, but it will need to be regularly reapplied, to continue to work.
This tip can be found on the RAC website: www.rac.co.uk

Can you get benefits? (PP)

Christians Against
Poverty (CAP) has
launched a
campaign to help
people gain access
to the various
benefits that are
going unclaimed by
eligible households.

CAP estimates that
in the past year,
almost £90 million in
benefits has gone
unclaimed, because
of the complexity of
the application
systems.

Pension credit is the
most under-claimed
benefit, and yet it
acts as a passport
benefit to other
support, including
housing benefit and
local assistance.
Carers' allowance is
also underclaimed.

About 800 churches
have now signed up
to work with CAP, to
encourage people to
check if they could
be liable to claim
benefits. CAP, in
partnership with the
debt charity
Turn2Us, has
created an online
calculator to help
people discover
what they may be
eligible for.

Go to:

<https://capuk.org/money-and-debt-advice/benefits-calculator>

Master, speak! thy servant heareth,
Waiting for thy gracious word,
Longing for thy voice that cheereth,
Master, let it now be heard.
I am list'ning, Lord, for thee;
What hast thou to say to me?

Master, speak! and make me ready,
When thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady,
Still to follow ev'ry word.
I am listening, Lord, for thee;
Master, speak, oh speak to me!

Oh, fill me with your fullness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'erflows
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Your love to tell, your praise to show.

Oh, use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as you will, and when, and where
Until your blessed face I see,
Your rest, your joy, your glory share.

Verses from two hymns by Frances Ridley Havergal

Lectio Divina (Listening to God in the Bible)

from www.methodist.org.uk

Take a reading from scripture; the psalms or parts of the prophets or epistles are most useful for this style of prayer.

Read through the text very slowly.

When you are struck by a word or a phrase **STOP**.

Stay with the words that moved you, maybe repeating them slowly, allowing them to sink into your heart.

Only move on when you are quite ready.

Try to have an inner stillness so that you can perceive the gentle action of God.

Help people out of modern slavery (PP)

The Salvation Army offered more than 10,000 people modern-slavery victim support last year, under its government contract. It was the highest since the arrangement began, and included more than 3,000 new referrals.

It is now 12 years since the Government contracted the Salvation Army to provide specialist support for adult victims of modern slavery in England and Wales.

The victims had experienced a range of abuse, including forced labour, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and domestic servitude.

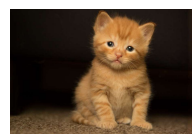
The Bishop of Bristol, the Rt Revd Vivienne Faull, said that the figures were "a stark reminder of the persistent challenges we face in our own community, and a testament to the vital role played by dedicated organisations."

Cold Weather Tips for Pet Owners (PP)

Check your dog's paws for road grit salt after every walk – the stuff may clear snow and ice, but it is toxic to dogs.

Protect your rabbit and guinea pig hutches from snow, winter rain and cold draughts, and check that their water bottles are not frozen.

Don't leave your dog outside a shop in extremely cold weather – it is very stressful for them. Don't leave your cat outside all night in freezing weather.



"Holy desires are different than surface wants, like "I want a new car" or "I want a new computer. " Instead I'm talking about our deepest desires, the ones that shape our lives: desires that help us know who we are to become and what we are to do. Our deep desires help us know God's desires for us, and how much God desires to be with us. And God, I believe, encourages us to "notice" and "name" these desires, in the same way that Jesus encouraged Bartimaeus, the blind beggar to articulate his desire. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked."

James Martin SJ

Mark 10:46-52

⁴⁶ Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

⁵² "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Imagine Jesus asking you "What do you want me to do for you?"

Imagine Jesus asking your church "what do you want me to do for you?"

How would you prayerfully reply?

Everyday Christmas (Mal 4:2, Mt 1:23)

Light a candle,
Look into the
light, Pray.

Light and life to
all he brings,
Risen with
healing in his
wings

As the flame
rises, Smooth,
bright, Know the
comfort of Christ
In the carol
speaking Afresh.

Bringing Jesus
Into heart and
prayer.

Emmanuel, God
with us. Light of
the world, Out of
the stable
Into our
situations.

Because of
Jesus Christmas
is everyday.

The Lord is here.
Hallelujah.

**by Daphne
Kitching, PP**

Tips to Protect things from Freezing (PP)

This may look silly, but it works: cover your windscreen wipers with old socks, to stop them sticking to the windscreen on a freezing morning. The RAC warns that if windscreen wipers cannot move, there is a risk the circuit will overheat and blow a fuse.



If you are cycling to work, try wearing a swimming cap under your cycling helmet – Cycling UK recommends it as a good extra layer, to keep warm.

If you need to be outside for long, wear several thin layers instead of one big chunky one. The UK Health Security Agency says that the air which gets trapped between the layers also helps keep you warm.



Merciful God

We cry out to you, in anguish and horror, at the situations we see across the world of warfare, unjust oppression and disasters, of precious lives lost, of grief and trauma beyond that which most of us can imagine.

Compassionate God, you came and dwelt among us; you know and understand the suffering of this world.

There is no place beyond your reach; you are everywhere, even in places where we fear there is no hope left.

Where we are tempted to despair, your spirit brings mercy, and justice, and healing.

You call us, again and again, in times of conflict and destruction, to be attentive to those who are most vulnerable.

Give us the compassion to weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn;

the discernment to recognize the limits of our own wisdom, and to avoid those actions and words which may cause further harm.

Inspire in us a renewed commitment to walk humbly with you, seeking the peace and flourishing which you desire for all of your beloved children,

Amen

(Based on a prayer from www.methodist.org.uk)



No more 'Postcode Lottery' Recycling (PP)

Life is going to become simpler when it comes to recycling.

From 2026, the national recycling laws are to be standardised, with Councils across the UK all having to collect the same glass, metal, plastic, paper and card, food waste and garden waste. It is expected that the plans will lead to packaging that is clearly labelled 'recyclable' or not, without the need for households to check local provisions.

"Simpler recycling will help us all recycle more easily, doing our bit to help save the planet and make the best use of precious resources that we use every day," said

Therese Coffey, the Environment Secretary. "Alongside weekly food waste collections, we are ending the postcode lottery of what you can put in your bin, so that wherever you live in the country, you will be able to recycle the same products with confidence."

Drink Tea or Coffee Each Day – and Keep Old Age Weakness Away!

Recent research has found that drinking coffee or tea in midlife may help keep you stronger in later life. A study at the National University of Singapore concluded that higher caffeine intake is associated with lower odds of physical frailty in old age, regardless of the source of the caffeine. Physical frailty in old age was defined as having at least two of the following: weight loss, exhaustion, slowness and weakness. The scientists also measured handgrip strength and the time taken to complete a timed up-and-go (TUG) test. In addition to caffeine, coffee and tea contain rich bioactive polyphenols, which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. These have been associated with reduced risk for diseases that increase frailty, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, obesity and neurodegenerative disease. (PP)

The Heart of Christmas, Canon Paul Hardingham, PP

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.*

The Most Beautiful Story, Canon David Winter reflects on the coming of Jesus...

A well-known atheist was once interviewed on Radio 4. When asked how he spent Christmas, and he said that he went to Midnight Mass at church. 'But you're an atheist', his interviewer protested. 'Yes', he replied, 'but what they celebrate at Christmas is the most beautiful story ever told'.

That 'beautiful story' tells of a Creator who sent His Son to share the life of His creation, to be born as a helpless baby, to grow up as a man of extraordinary wisdom, gentleness and love, who was executed by the authorities for contradicting the traditions of the time. His followers – who today number about two billion people all over the world – believe that He rose from the dead, and that by His death and resurrection He has made possible forgiveness and eternal life for men and women everywhere.

That is certainly quite a story, perhaps the greatest story ever told, and yes, beautiful. And that is the story that will be rehearsed again this Christmas, in children's Nativities, in hymns and carols, in Bible readings and sermons all over the country. People who stay away from church all year turn up to hear it, and who can blame them? This is a story of hope, of love and of heaven touching earth.

Most of us are familiar with probably the best-known statue in the world, Christ the Redeemer, towering over Rio de Janeiro, His arms outstretched in blessing. Christmas celebrates the birth of that great Redeemer – a tiny baby laid in a feeding trough. His birth changed history, His life transformed our understanding of what it means to be human, His death was at one and the same time a tragedy and a triumph. Yes, 'the most beautiful story ever told'. Enjoy it again this Christmas. **(PP)**

Nativity Quiz in 20 Questions (by Canon Paul Hardingham) (PP)

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

Answers can be found on page 27

Food Banks across the UK may be facing their 'Worst Winter' yet, (PP)

The Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) has warned that the numbers of people needing foodbanks this year are still rising, as the cost-of-living crisis continues.

The Trussell Trust, which runs the UK's largest network of food banks, expects to support more than 600,000 people between December and February. This means handing out around one million food parcels, or an average of one parcel every eight seconds, which is 11,500 parcels a day, making it the "worst winter yet" for the charity. These figures support what workers at Citizens Advice have found, that there is a "terrifying new normal of people living on empty."

To compound the problem, many independent food banks are now running low on donations. As the manager of one such foodbank recently told the IFAN, "Surplus food is down. Our collections are under 50% of what they were. It just doesn't work."

Paul O'Brien of social justice charity Micah Liverpool put it this way:

"Food banks cannot sustain this level of poverty for much longer." Su Parrish, based at The Easter Team in Crawley, explains a further problem for the foodbanks: "Everyone is feeling the strain of struggling to support clients with increasingly complex needs. Most of our volunteers signed up to give out food parcels and be a friendly face spreading some love. They didn't anticipate the level of stress that our clients now exhibit because of the situations they find themselves in."

For the Young & Young at heart

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

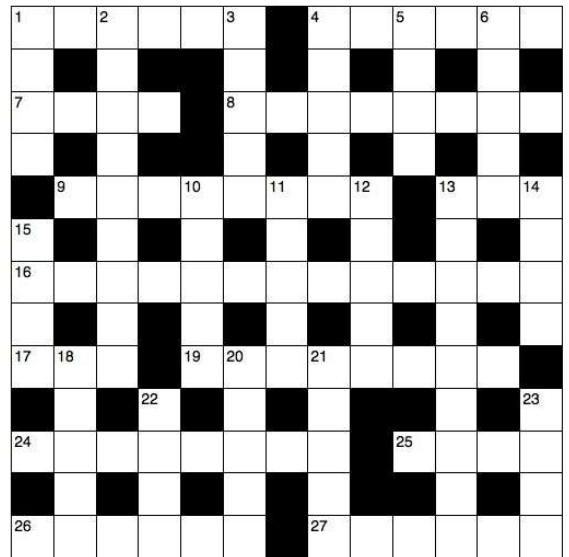
It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 1:26-56 & Matthew 1:18-25

In Israel, about 2000 years ago, a young woman, Mary, was going to marry Joseph. The weddings were in two stages.

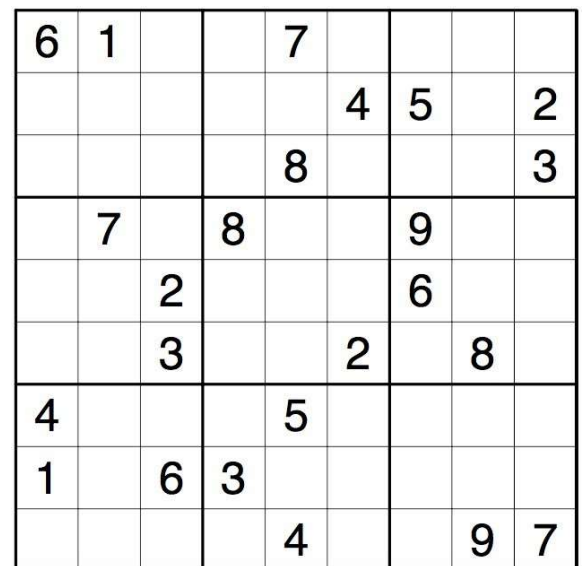


PUZZLES

Crossword



Sudoku



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MOHRLAAMASST
RTNELISTILLE
YEMGLIANRDNE
JLBINGMMTTOM
IOALDUTLSGIE
TVSITNSEUESL
OEIETSINAGRO
YDNHPRRGAED
OAGIPHHCVY
UILORACTFTHE
NDEDOTADRIHT
GCAGAFRAEHAU

Wordsearch – 'Silent Night', much-loved carol comes from Austria, first sung as *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht* on Christmas Eve, 1818. Written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a melody for his carol.

Silent	First	Bing	Priest
Night	Sung	Eve	Third
Loved	Stille	Father	Mass
Carol	Nacht	Joseph	Single
Austria	Hellige	Mohr	Young
Organist	Midnight	Version	
Christmas	Melody		

Mouse Makes

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.

GOD'S PROMISE
Isaiah 9:6-7
CHILD • BORN • SON
GIVEN • WONDERFUL
COUNSELLOR
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

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

VRPRINCELR
WORDCFATHER
JAGMANGERGE
OWHOEVERWII
SJOYBORNOSGE
ESLSERVANTNS
PPYJCHILDEPU
HROSHEPERDS
FAVOUREFRWSO
BIRTHSWOFODL
ISAVIOURURLO
FECOUNCELLOR
ANGELBJVKDVD
BETHLEHEMGES
LANGELSRGODV
IGABRIELTDSM
FPGIVENAHUOA
EEHGAVESRWNR
SAEGREATONLY
OCHRISTINNJO
NEOGOODNEWSN
FLOCKMIGHTYB

Colour in one star each day until Christmas

Dec23 © deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk

Crossword Clues – 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)

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)

Nativity Quiz Answers, from p 25:

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

Puzzle Pages Solutions

Across: 1, Depend. 4, Canopy. 7, Beak. 8, Irritate. 9, Zedekiah. 13, Ate. 16, Job's comforter. 17, NAE. 19, Lang Syne. 24, Blockade. 25, Five. 26, Enigma. 27, Drench.

Down: 1, Debt. 2, Peaceable. 3, Drink. 4, Curia. 5, Nuts. 6, Put it. 10, Excel. 11, Is man. 12, Hoofs. 13, Attention. 14, Ezra. 15, Ijon. 18, Aslan. 20, Abana. 21, Greed. 22, GCMG. 23, Leah.

Sudoku Solution

6	1	5	2	7	3	8	4	9
3	8	9	1	6	4	5	7	2
7	2	4	5	8	9	1	6	3
5	7	1	8	3	6	9	2	4
8	4	2	7	9	5	6	3	1
9	6	3	4	1	2	7	8	5
4	3	7	9	5	8	2	1	6
1	9	6	3	2	7	4	5	8
2	5	8	6	4	1	3	9	7

The Big Bash!



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



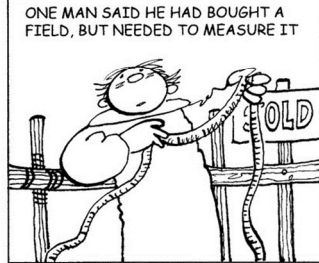
ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A RICH MAN WHO DECIDED TO HAVE A PARTY



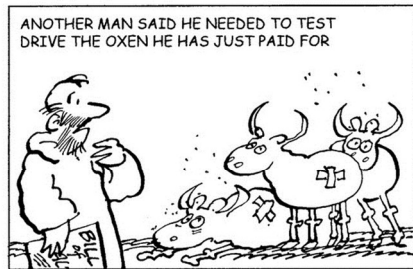
HE SENT OUT LOTS OF INVITATIONS



BUT PEOPLE STARTED MAKING EXCUSES



ONE MAN SAID HE HAD BOUGHT A FIELD, BUT NEEDED TO MEASURE IT



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE NEEDED TO TEST DRIVE THE OXEN HE HAS JUST PAID FOR



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE HAD JUST GOT MARRIED - AND HIS WIFE WOULDN'T LET HIM OUT!

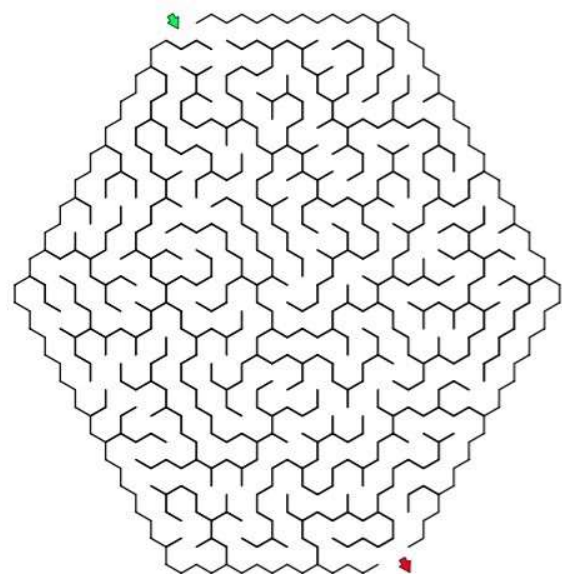


SO THE RICH MAN INVITED ALL THE POOR AND NEEDY INSTEAD.



THE PARABLE MEANS WE SHOULDN'T MAKE EXCUSES FOR NOT FOLLOWING JESUS.

e	f	a	m	i	l	y	o	u	n	g	i	p
l	f	r	z	s	z	d	e	v	b	q	g	n
i	y	j	y	r	i	s	z	y	l	u	f	w
z	e	b	m	a	r	r	i	a	g	e	x	i
a	a	p	r	e	g	n	a	n	t	c	u	m
b	r	f	b	l	s	a	v	e	s	h	k	p
e	a	t	y	j	o	s	e	p	h	i	e	o
t	n	c	o	m	p	l	e	t	e	l	m	s
h	g	s	w	e	d	d	i	n	g	d	a	s
c	e	q	n	o	t	h	i	n	g	r	r	i
e	l	m	g	h	p	e	o	p	l	e	y	b
m	f	h	l	j	d	r	e	a	m	n	r	l
c	m	z	k	b	w	i	e	s	h	a	m	e



Impossible
Messenger
Wedding
Complete

Young
People
Children
Nothing

Joseph
Pregnant
Marriage
Family

Elizabeth
Dream
Angel
Wrong

Israel
Baby
Mary
Year

God
Saves
Shame
Afraid

