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The Parochial Church Council April 2022-2023

Christine Osbaldiston, Jackie Pengelly, Richard Raymond, Alison Grimshaw, Elaine Houghton, Jenny Riley, Simon Thomas, Chris Ward, Angela Williams, Anne Coomes (ex officio)

Deanery Synod: Anthea Wilkinson, Chris Ward, Anne Coomes

Diocesan Synod: Richard Raymond

Letter from Nancy

Dear All,

I love Christmas. I love re-telling the Christmas story in carol services, crib services and nativity plays. I've already been teaching the toddlers "Away in a manger" at Praise and Play in November – is that too soon?

The story begins with Jesus' mother, Mary and Gabriel's visit to her: 'Do not be afraid,



Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.' (Luke 1:30,31). This conversation, which we hear again every Christmas, takes us straight to the heart of what Christmas is all about.

God was doing something unique, that had never happened before! 'God was beginning, at this divine and human point, the New Creation of all things. The whole soiled and weary universe quivered at this direct injection of essential life.' (CS Lewis). This child unites heaven and earth: the eternal God entered time and space and became a baby, both a real human being and fully divine.

The Christmas message affirms that God has entered into humanity to put things right from the inside. We can know God personally and make sense of God's world. God chose an unknown, frightened teenage girl to bring about this new beginning for the world. Her response is the pattern for us, as we welcome God's special gift into our lives this Christmas: "I am the Lord's servant" Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." (Luke 1:38). Mary gave an unqualified Yes to all that God wanted to do in her life. It was a costly decision, which risked both shame and scandal. Yet she was ready to obey and trust God's plans for her life, despite her many questions. Is the same true for us this Christmas? Listen afresh to God's story and make that joy part of your celebrations this Christmas.

A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone. Rev Nancy

The bells of Christmas

Canon Roy Arnold comments on the front cover

Bells and Christmas seem to go together. They feature on many Christmas cards, or around the necks of reindeer. They are also to be found on our front cover this month, as another year comes to an end. Here in Bollington, we used to have bells, up at St John's Church. They now ring out at the parish church of Stockton Heath.





Many years ago, I was a bell ringer, and I always remember delivering Christmas cards as a temporary postman to a farm high up in the hills by Pott Shrigley, when I heard the Bollington bells ring out on Christmas morning!

Church bells were used as a call to prayer for the monks who were working in the fields, to hurry back for their other duties and prayers. Maybe nowadays the sound and the message in the bells gets around by TV and radio, or the beeping of

mobile phones and social media.

Yet I believe that it is not just at Christmas, but all through the year that we need to be reminded of our need for prayer. At this time of year we can enjoy singing carols round the Town Hall steps, but we should also keep hearing that call to prayer, and to remember Jesus.

Some observations on Christmas ...

I heard the bells on Christmas Day their old familiar carols play, and wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth, goodwill to men! - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The hinge of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable. - R Sockman



Remembrance Day 2022

Report by Mark Lomas & Emma Pengelly

On the morning of 11th November 2022, a group 38 ex-Cheshire Regiment soldiers, together with their families and friends walked up to the highest point in Cheshire - Shining Tor - to pay respects to the fallen.

It was fantastic to have Rev Nancy Goodrich (of St Oswald's church in



Bollington) join us & lead a very moving & poignant service. We also had readings from our special guest, Charlie Lawson, and we made a toast to absent friends.

On our way back down, we visited the nearby air crash site where Cheshire Regiment veteran Mark Lomas, owner of local Bollington company Treks to the Wrecks, led a lovely tribute to the pilots who lost their lives. We all paid our respects and laid another wreath.

We were pleased to have local charity Project Recce join us on this event. Their charity offers free courses to prepare Veterans and Service leavers for a sustainable career in the UK Construction Industry, regardless of their previous experience.

It was a very special day and one that will be always remembered.



St Oswald's launches new church website



After several months of hard work, we have a new church website! When you get a free moment, why not visit it, and see what you think? We would welcome your comments via the 'Contact Us' button on the new site. Of course, we are still a work-in-progress, and will be adding more pages soon. Find us at **stoswaldbollington.org.uk**

Harvest Thanksgiving Appeal

A big THANK YOU to all those of you who made a separate donation as a Harvest Thanksgiving gift – the generous sum raised was more than £1000!!

Sing Messiah for All

Bollington Festival Choir invites you to join them on Tuesday 13th December at 7.30pm in the Bollington Arts Centre. Tickets £10.

Booking essential – 01625 511881. All proceeds to East Cheshire Eye Society.

2023 Christmas Tree Collection

The annual East Cheshire Hospice Christmas Tree Collection will take place on $14^{th}~\&~15^{th}$ January. It is very easy to register your tree,

2023 East Cheshire Hospice Christmas Tree Collection!

just go to: www.eastcheshirehospice.org.uk/support/echtrees/



CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

How did we start to celebrate Christmas?

The Bible does not give a date for the birth of Jesus, but in the third century it was suggested that Jesus was conceived at the Spring equinox, 25th March, popularising the belief that He was born nine months later, on 25th December. In about 400 AD, John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, encouraged Christians worldwide to make Christmas a holy day.

By the early Middle Ages, Christians celebrated a series of midwinter holy days. Epiphany (which recalls the visit to the infant Jesus of the wise men bearing

gifts) was the climax of 12 days of Christmas, beginning on 25th December. In 800 AD the emperor Charlemagne chose 25th December for his coronation, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose. In 1066, William the Conqueror also chose 25th December for his coronation, and the date became a fixture both for religious observance and feasting.



Cooking a boar was a common feature of mediaeval Christmas feasts, and singing carols accompanied it. Writers of the time lament the fact that the true significance of Christmas was being lost because of partying. They also condemned the rise of 'misrule' – drunken dancing and promiscuity. The day was a public holiday, and traditions of bringing evergreen foliage into the house and the exchange of gifts (usually on Epiphany) date from this time.



By the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity. Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England's Puritan rulers even made the celebration of Christmas illegal - for 14 years. The restoration of Charles II in 1660 ended the ban. In Western Europe the day for exchanging gifts

changed from Epiphany (6th January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, the significance of Christmas was declining. Charles Dickens was one of several writers who sought to restore it. His novel *A Christmas Carol* was significant in reviving merriment during the festival. He emphasised charity and family reunions, alongside religious observance. Christmas trees, paper chains, cards and many well-known carols date from this time. So did the tradition of Boxing Day, on 26th December, when tradesmen who had



given reliable service during the year would collect 'boxes' of money or gifts from their customers.

Santa Claus is a shortening of the name of Saint Nicholas, who was a Christian bishop in the fourth century in present-day Turkey. He was particularly noted for his care for children and for his generosity to the poor. By the Middle Ages his appearance, in red bishop's robes and a mitre, was adored in the Netherlands and familiar across Europe.

Father Christmas dates from 17th century England, where he was a secular figure of good cheer (more associated with drunkenness than gifts). The transformation of Santa Claus into today's Father Christmas started in New York in the 1880s, where his red robes and white beard became potent advertising symbols. In some countries (such as Latin America and Eastern Europe) the tradition attempts to combine the secular and religious elements by holding that Santa Claus makes children's presents and then gives them to the baby Jesus to distribute.

From: https://christianity.org.uk/the-history-of-christmas

Why was Jesus born in a barn?

Our pretty Christmas cards do not do it justice – the stable that Jesus was born in would have been smelly, dirty, and full of mess. So why did God not provide something better for His beloved Son? Why let Joseph and Mary scrounge around until they ended up in a smelly stable?

Perhaps because the King of Kings being born in a foul stable is a perfect



picture of redemption. Jesus came from glory into a world filled with the dirt, filth and darkness of sin. And Jesus was not put off by darkness in the least – instead, He came to be the Light of the World. Thank God for His unspeakable gift. No wonder the angels sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14)

We three kings of Orient are... what?

"A cold coming they had of it at this time of the year, just the worst time of the year to take a journey, and specially a long journey, in. The way's deep, the weather sharp, the days short, the sun farthest off, in *solstitio brumali*, the very dead of winter." (TS Eliot)

It was 1622, and the Bishop of Winchester, Launcelot Andrews, was preaching a magnificent sermon to King James I. Reckoned one of the best preachers ever, Launcelot Andrews' words were later taken up by T S Eliot and transformed into his wonderful poem 'The Journey of the Magi'.

What a vivid picture – we can see it all! The camels' breath steaming in the night air as the kings, in their gorgeous robes of silk and cloth-of-gold, and clutching their precious gifts, kneel to adore the baby in the manger. Yet the Bible does not give us as much detail as some people think. Tradition down the centuries has added a great deal more. For instance, we know from

St Matthew that the magi were 'wise', or learned men of some sort, but we do not know if they were kings or not. The Bible tells us there were several; tradition has decided upon three, and even named them: Balthassar, Melchior, and Caspar (or Gaspar). But the Bible does tell us that the magi gave baby Jesus three highly symbolic gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Gold stands for kingship, frankincense for worship, and myrrh for anointing — anticipating His death.

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 he 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.

World's oldest fake tree

Did you know that it is a family in Wiltshire, the Parkers, who claim to own the world's oldest artificial Christmas tree? It was bought in 1886, and it is still put up every year.

The story of mince pies

Mince pies have been traditional English Christmas fare since the Middle Ages, when meat was a key ingredient? The addition of spices, suet and alcohol to meat came about because it was an



alternative to salting and smoking in order to preserve the food. Mince pies used to be a different shape - cradle-shaped with a pastry baby Jesus on top.

Why the world was ready for Christmas

Ever wonder why Jesus was born WHEN He was? The Bible tells us that "when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son..." The Jewish people had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. So why did God send Him precisely when He did?

Many biblical scholars believe that the 'time had fully come' for Jesus because of the politics of the time. The Roman Empire's sheer size and dominance had achieved something unique in world history: the opportunity for travel from Bethlehem to Berwick on Tweed without ever crossing into 'enemy territory' or needing a 'passport'.

For the first time ever, it was possible for 'common' people to travel wide and far, and quickly spread news and ideas. And all you needed were two languages - Greek to the east of Rome, and Latin to the west and north. You could set sail from Joppa (Tel Aviv) and head for any port on the Med. And the Roman roads ran straight and true throughout the empire.

So, the Roman Empire achieved something it never intended: it helped spread news of Christianity far and wide for 400 years. After that, the Empire crumbled, and the borders shut down. Not until the 19th century would people again roam so freely. The time for Jesus to be born, and for news of Him to be able to travel, had indeed 'fully come'.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023?

Facing both ways

January gets its name from the Roman god Janus, the god of beginnings and transitions, of gates and doorways. Traditionally Janus had two faces, one looking to the past and one to the future. It



reminds us that as we start a new year we can look back to the past with gratitude and to the future with expectation.

In his hymn, 'How good is the God we adore', Joseph Hart (1712-1768) speaks about God as our faithful, unchangeable friend and finishes with this beautiful thought: 'We'll praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that's to come.' This seems to be a good pasture to take as we enter 2023.

First, we can look back on the year that is gone and give thanks for all the blessings that we have experienced. Thankfulness is really a choice. None of us will have had a perfect year, and many of us will have had some dark days indeed, but if we look carefully enough, we will see that there were also many wonderful days and golden moments. Let's choose to focus on those and to acknowledge the work of God in our lives. For what are you grateful as you look back to 2022?

Second, we can put our faith in God for all that is to come. None of us know the future. We will have our hopes and our dreams, and have made our plans for the year ahead, but no-one can guarantee they will come to pass. There will be surprises for sure, both good (we never expected that!) and bad (I didn't see that coming!). How wonderful then to have a God who knows the future and in whose hands we are safe, no matter what comes to pass. Let's choose to place our trust in Him as 2023 unfolds. What are you most looking forward to as you peer ahead of you this year?

The story behind St Oswald's stained-glass windows

By Chris Ward

When the church was completed in 1908 it had just one stained glass window – the one in the vestry which had been moved from the church in St Oswald's School next door. The window shows four young people dressed in robes, standing by a lectern, with the caption 'We Praise thee O Lord'. The designer of this window is not known but it may date back to when the old school was built in 1845.

The stained glass in the baptistry windows was not installed until 1912 - in memory of Grace Wanklyn, depicting 'Christ blessing little children'. Grace lived at Turner Heath with husband John Alfred Wanklyn, manager of Adelphi Mill,



with five servants including two nurses to look after their four young daughters. Grace died aged 38 in November 1911, two weeks after the birth of her fifth child (another girl) and was buried in Prestbury churchyard, to be joined years later by her husband who died in 1944.

Grace seems to have been a prominent person in the life of the church, being President of the Bollington branch of the Mother's Union, which presented the large leather-bound Book of Common Prayer to the church on the day of its consecration. Mr Wanklyn gave some land for the building and was later a Parish Churchwarden.

This window was made by Heaton, Butler and Bayne, one of the leading firms of the Gothic Revival in stained-glass manufacture. Their work was commissioned by the principal Victorian architects and continued into the 1920s. The firm produced stained glass for nearly 2,000 churches and secular buildings throughout the United Kingdom (including Westminster Abbey) and overseas including the USA.

Their styles ranged from Pre-Raphaelite to Art Nouveau, as illustrated in a book by Mrs SBM Bayne entitled 'A Hundred Years of the Art of Stained Glass' on display at the back of the church. A documentary film, *Stained Glass Masters; Heaton, Butler and Bayne* was also produced in 2000 by the film maker Karl Krogstad, which is available on DVD.

The story behind the stained glass in the large window near the main door at the back of the church will appear in the next magazine.

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Some smiles for Christmas

Christmas entertaining

Inviting a number of people to come and stay with you over the Christmas holidays is a lot like living in California: if you find a fault, don't dwell on it!

Visiting Father Christmas

A mother took her young daughter to visit Father Christmas in his grotto at the garden centre. He greeted the youngster merrily and asked: "And what would you like for Christmas?"

The little girl stared at him, open-mouthed with horror. "Didn't you get my email?!"

When children describe the Christmas story...

When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manager.

When Mary heard that she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta

Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.

All in the month of ... December

It was:

200 years ago, on 27th December 1822 that Louis Pasteur, French biologist, microbiologist, and chemist was born. One of the fathers of germ theory, he was best known for the pasteurisation process, which is named in his honour.

100 years ago, on 14th December 1922 that John Reith (later Lord Reith) was appointed as General Manager of the BBC.

90 years ago, on 25th December 1932 that the first Royal Christmas Message was broadcast live on radio by King George V, from Sandringham.

80 years ago, on 1st December 1942 that the British Government published the Beveridge Report, which formed the basis of the welfare state.

65 years ago, on 25th December 1957 that Queen Elizabeth II's Christmas message was televised for the first time.

40 years ago, on 12th December 1982 that 30,000 women joined hands around the Greenham Common RAF base in Berkshire to protest against the siting of US Cruise missiles there.

25 years ago, on 11th December 1997 that the Kyoto Protocol, aimed at reducing greenhouse gases and combating global warming, was adopted at a conference in Japan. More than 190 countries have signed the agreement, which came into effect in February 2005.

20 years ago, on 7th December 2002 that Iraq submitted a weapons declaration to the United Nations in which it said it had no weapons of mass destruction. This was part of the prelude to the March 2003 Invasion of Iraq.

10 years ago, on 9th December 2012 that Patrick Moore, British astronomer, television presenter and musician died. Best known for hosting the astronomy series The Sky at Night (1957-2013) the longest-running TV series with the same presenter.

Book of Remembrance for December

4 th	Alice Lea
4 th	Jack Fidler
5 th	Noel Mayers
6 th	Marion Holmes
6 th	Derek Joseph Moss
6 th	Diana Kathleen Reader
7 th	Ida Bowden
O th	to a series of the state

8th Jane Hannah Oldfield9th Wilfred Whitehurst

10th Ann Taylor
 12th Ewen Cameron
 12th David Albert Allen
 13th Edith Pye

14th Harry Needham 15th Alfred Goodwin 17th Maud Sutton 18th Evelyn Mear

20th John William Greensmith

21st Emily Horrox
 22nd James M Glass
 23rd Gordon Coley

25th William Osbaldiston

26th Harold B Dixon
 27th Stella W Glass

**



Would you like to include the name of a departed loved one? An entry costs £10. Please contact Ann Stringer on 01625

574325

Good to think about...

Kindness is a hard thing to give away. It keeps coming back to the giver. - Ralph Scott

True friendships are lasting because true love is eternal. A friendship in which heart speaks to heart is a gift from God, and no gift that comes from God is temporary or occasional. - *Henri Nouwen*

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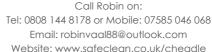
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Get the magazine: please ring Ann Stringer on 01625 574325.

Deadline: Material for the February issue to reach Anne by 18th January.

Worship at St Oswald's in December

Sunday 4th 9.15am Holy Communion

10.30am All Age Service / making Christingles

4.00pm Christingle Service

Sunday 11th 10.30am Parish Communion

3.00pm Carol Service with Bollington Festival Choir

Sunday 18^h 10.30am All Age Communion

Thursday 22nd 10.30am Sing Along Carols followed by

mulled wine and mince pies

Saturday 24th Christmas Eve

4.00pm Crib Service11.15pm Midnight Mass

Sunday 25th Christmas Day

10.30am Christmas Communion

Sunday 1st New Year's Day

11.00am Parish Communion followed by

a Bring and Share lunch

Sunday 8th 10.30am Parish Communion Sunday 15th 10.30am All Age Communion Sunday 22nd 10.30am Parish Communion Sunday 29th 10.30am Parish Communion

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Thursday 1st December 11.15am Advent talk

We will be welcoming people from St Gregory's to an ecumenical gathering with a talk introducing Advent by Fr Michael Winstanley SDB.