

Bollington Church News

The magazine of Bollington Parish Church, St Oswald's



December 2024 / January 2025

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Winter



Who's Who at St Oswald's

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The Parochial Church Council April 2024-2025

Christine Osbaldiston, Jackie Pengelly, Richard Raymond, Elaine Houghton, Lynda Iverson, Chris Ward, Angela Williams

Ex officio: Anne Coomes, Anthea Wilkinson

Deanery Synod: Anthea Wilkinson, Anne Coomes

Diocesan Synod: Richard Raymond

Letter from Nancy

Dear All,

Joy to the world!

At Christmas we sing for joy, and it really doesn't matter if we don't know all the words or if we don't sing in tune. The good news flows from heaven regardless.



Good news for all in celebrating the birth of Jesus. He is the reason for the season. When we sing the good news out of tune, or we can only manage a whisper, the angels in heaven smile and sing along with us. We might be a poor show on earth, but joined with heaven, its magnificent. Let every heart prepare Him room and repeat the sounding joy, as heaven and nature sing of the wonders of His love.

Whenever you celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas, heaven celebrates with you. Every time you put up a decoration, write a Christmas card, eat Christmas food, or sing a Christmas carol, you are joining in with the celebration of the whole company of heaven. Joy flows out of heaven for you.



The angels sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." The heavenly message rings out each Christmas. We sing with the angels and are invited to glimpse the glory of God in heaven through the birth of a helpless babe. Joy to the world!

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a New Year filled with joy.
Every blessing.

Nancy x



ADVENT and CHRISTMAS

Brian Reader comments on the front cover

Ann's picture this month shows that we are in the period of Advent at the start of the Church's new liturgical year. Regrettably, it seems that these days we lose the true meaning of Advent as we are swamped by the preparations for a material Christmas.

Advent signifies preparation for a threefold coming of Christ: firstly in his birth in Bethlehem, then in a perpetual sacramental presence in the Eucharist, and thirdly at his Second Coming and the final judgement.

In ancient times Advent was associated with a time of penitence and of fasting, known St Martin's Lent. This all changed in the 1960's, when it was decided to differentiate, the spirit of Lent from that of Advent, emphasising Advent to be a season of hope for Christ's coming now and at the end of time.



Advent is indicated in our Church with a Christmas wreath with four Advent Candles – they vary in colour and each has a special meanings which I hope will be explained by the minister at each of the Advent services.

**Wishing all our
readers
a Happy Christmas.**

A closer look at the true meaning of Advent



All welcome! Thursday 5th December, 11:15am, St Oswald's

On Thursday 5th December we will be joined by our friends from St Gregory's and St Christopher's to welcome Mary Hardiman, a former high school teacher, counsellor and writer who also volunteers for a charity which supports Death Row prisoners in the USA.

Mary has given talks locally and nationally and is an engaging down to earth presenter. She will help us consider the true meaning of Advent, and how we can get the most out of it as we prepare ourselves for Christmas.

**

Ecumenical Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Tuesday 21st January, at 7.30pm, St Oswald's

Once again Christians from the churches of Bollington will be meeting to pray and worship in this special annual service. All are welcome to join us!

Letter from the Bishop of Chester

The Bishop of Chester has written a letter to the Diocese following the publication of the Makin Review into the abuse perpetrated by John Smyth, and the recent resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Bishop Mark has expressed his “grief” at the church’s failings, and stresses that “there is no place for cover-up or complicity for abuse in any part of society, least of all the church.”



He has said that if the report raises concerns for anyone, then they should contact the diocese for support. If you have any concerns, please contact our Vicar, the Revd Nancy Goodrich, who would be happy to put you in touch with someone who can help you.

The Bishop also asks us all for our continued prayers for the victims of abuse, and thanks parishes across the diocese for all that they have been doing to ensure that our parishes, schools, and chaplaincies are “safer spaces”

**

Bereavement Community Support Group

Bollington Bereavement is a local community group that has been set up by the Middlewood Partnership Social Prescribing group. It aims to help support anyone having to cope with loss and bereavement.

The Bereavement Group meets on the second Thursday of each month at St Oswald’s Church at 2.00pm.

To find out more, and book your place, please call 01625 462593 or email cmicb-cheshire.middlewood.events@nhs.net



The Annual Hospice Christmas Tree Collection Is celebrating 25 years!

Richard Raymond considers a major local effort.

As most households turn their thoughts to Christmas and start preparing for all the traditions of the festive season, a small group of people have already been working on a post-Christmas event that has become a major community fundraising effort in this area, and in many other towns and cities too.

It is of course the East Cheshire Hospice Christmas Tree Collection, which this year celebrates its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary!

So, what does it take to run this, and why does the planning start so many months before Christmas? The answers probably lie in the fact that the East Cheshire Hospice Collection was the first of its kind in the country and remains the largest collection of all the hospices who have also taken up this novel way of raising funds.

The statistics speak for themselves. On the collection weekend, there will be a fleet of over 40 vans all manned by three volunteers who will use a sophisticated piece of route planning to visit nearly

“40 vans will
plan to visit
nearly 7000
addresses”



7000 addresses across a 300 square mile area. Each van will collect over one ton of Christmas trees in a day and during the weekend all the trees will be turned into a mulch by an industrial-sized machine ready for recycling into a soil improver. Welfare for the van crews in the form of hot food, drinks and cakes will be provided by a further team of volunteers and other helpers will process data, man a customer care line, and manage the logistics.

Before the weekend can even take place, bookings will have been taken by phone but more often now on the website. The website must have been built. Donations are received and logged. Gift Aid, where appropriate, must be claimed. House addresses need to be located and identified.

And even before the bookings come in, the Collection must be advertised. Posters and leaflets are designed, printed and then distributed around the area. Over 70 banners are put up and nearly 20,000 leaflets are produced. Magazine articles are written, and radio interviews booked, and social media ‘champions’ tap away at their keyboards to spread the word.

“The East Cheshire Hospice Collection was the first of its kind in the country.”

Volunteers will need to have been recruited and the Volunteer Registration Form will be returned by around 250 people, and they will be then rostered into the daily rota for the weekend. They will be provided with appropriate health and safety workwear as identified in a risk assessment document of some closely typed 12 pages. Local

companies will also be identified so that they can join in as suppliers and sponsors.

So that is a flavour of the background work that goes into the running of the Hospice Christmas Tree Collection.

And the result? The Christmas Tree Collection has raised nearly £2 million in its first 24 years. This has not gone unnoticed by the hospice movement and some 175 hospices will be running Christmas tree collections this January.

Many of the resources that the East Cheshire Hospice Collection have instigated are now available for other independent hospice collections to use.



The 25th Anniversary running of the Christmas Tree Collection will be on **11/12 January 2025**

and if you would like YOUR real Christmas tree to be part of it, please visit www.echtrees.org.uk

“The Christmas Tree Collection has raised nearly £2 million in its first 24 years.”



CURATE'S CORNER

with Jenny Eades

This week I told a story in one of Bollington's schools about a peaceful, prayerful woman called St Clare. In pictures, she is often shown standing, one hand raised while with the other she is holding a box that shines.

The story behind this picture is that her town, of Assisi, was besieged by an army threatening death to the women, children and men sheltering behind its walls. It is a sad reality in our world today that war, though waged almost entirely by men, STILL mostly involves the deaths of women and children.

But on that day, in Assisi, over 800 years ago, so the story tells us, there was no death. This little godly woman turned back the men of violence by holding in her hand a box containing a tiny symbol of Eternity – a bit of bread, a drop of wine – and by standing and remembering the Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, God with us.

Some versions of this story say that the soldiers were afraid – because the box shone like the sun. I'm less sure about that. I think, perhaps, on that day, men of violence, confronted by a woman of peace, chose to walk, at least for a day, the path of peace for themselves.

Christmas invites us to walk a path of peace. It is a choice we are each called to make every day of our lives. If our world seems full of angry, violent voices let's choose the path of peace and listen for the still, small voice – on Christmas Day and every day that follows it. God Bless. Happy Christmas.



St Boniface and the Christmas tree

By Richard Raymond

What does a Devon Saint who was born in the 7th century have in common with the tradition of the Christmas tree?

The tradition of having a Christmas tree and then decorating it came to England through Queen Victoria's consort Prince Albert in the late 19th century. However, legend based on actual historical facts, holds that St Boniface is the founder of the use of a Christmas tree to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child.

St Boniface was born in Devon in 680 and at an early age joined a Benedictine monastery. His yearning to travel and spread the word of Christianity led him to missionary work in Germany. By the time he died in 754 he had been consecrated Archbishop by Pope Gregory and was later to become a Patron Saint of Germany. He is now regarded as one of the greatest missionaries since St Paul.

On one trip, around the time of Winter Solstice, he came across a group of pagan villagers worshipping an old oak tree. Horrified by what he saw as blasphemy, the all-action Boniface grabbed the nearest axe and hacked down the tree known as the Thunder Oak of mighty Thor. As he did so he called on the pagans to see the power of his God over theirs.

Boniface then went on to preach the Gospel and, seeing a small fir tree growing out of the base of the now felled oak tree, he declared it to be holy saying: 'It is a sign of endless life for its leaves remain green. See how it points upwards to heaven'. He also pointed out that its triangular shape reflected the Holy Trinity of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The villagers were amazed, and many were baptized.

And so the tradition of a Christmas tree as a symbol of Christianity at the time of the Winter Solstice began and has since been celebrated throughout the ages in Europe. As our homes are decorated each year with a real Christmas tree, we can thank St Boniface and Prince Albert for giving us this lovely symbol of our faith at this time.

An Introduction to John's Gospel

We continue our series looking at books in the Bible

'John's Gospel is like a pool in which a child may wade and an elephant can swim. It is for the beginner in the faith and for the mature Christian.' (Leon Morris).

The Apostle John is usually credited with the authorship of this Gospel, writing in Ephesus at the end of the First Century. His purpose is *'that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'* (20:31). Throughout he stresses the deity of Christ and presents Jesus as the Son of God.

In the prologue (1:1-14) Jesus is presented as the pre-existent and incarnate Word of God revealed by the Father. It also highlights how He has come as light into the world, so that those who believe in Him will not remain in darkness (cf [12:46](#)).

The heart of John's narrative contains 7 *signs* or miracles, which demonstrate who Jesus is and demonstrating His transforming power over creation and people: turning water into wine (2:1-11); healing the royal official's son (4:46-54); healing the paralytic (5:1-18); feeding the 5000 (6:1-14); walking on the water (6:16-21); healing of the man born blind (9:1-41) and raising Lazarus (11:1-44).

After these signs, the story moves into the upper room discourses followed by the story of His death and resurrection. The whole Gospel is a revelation of the glory of God's only Son, who comes to reveal the Father and then returns in glory to the Father.

It can be well summed up in the famous verse: *'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.'* (John 3:16).

No Room? On the contrary!

All over the world, doors are being slammed shut this Christmas. As the wars in the Middle East, in Ukraine and in Sudan rage on, millions are losing their homes and places of safety. Elsewhere, hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers and would-be immigrants are on the road, seeking refuge anywhere they can find it.

Meanwhile, in recent years vast numbers of Christians have been forced to flee from their ancient homelands in Syria and Iraq. They mirror the Holy Family's escape into Egypt. Every time yet another infant dies violently, it is a reminder of the first century massacre of babies in the Bethlehem region.

So perhaps this year, one carol will be sung with particular poignancy. It retells the message of angels, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests" and continues:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife, the world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel strain have rolled, two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not the love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, you men of strife, and hear the angels sing.*



The angels' goodwill message will persist despite our clamour, for it proclaims God's all-embracing and eternal welcome. Whatever is happening on earth, Heaven's doors are ever open: it is home for everyone. The final biblical vision is of an all-encompassing city: "On no day will its gates ever be shut... the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it."

Jesus, for whom there had been no room at the inn, taught that God's kingdom is home for every race: "I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." He reassured those anxious about the future: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms..." No room in heaven? Don't you believe it!

The most beautiful story ever told

A well-known atheist was being interviewed on Radio 4. When asked how he spent Christmas, 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.

Probably the best-known statue in the world is ‘Christ the Redeemer’, towering over the South American city of 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, it is ‘the most beautiful story ever told’. Enjoy it again this Christmas.

All in the month of December

It was:

1750 years ago, on 25 Dec 274 that the Roman Emperor Aurelian founded the cult of Sol Invictus as an official religion. He erected a temple and declared 25th December a national holiday, to be known as the Feast of the Unconquered Sun. In 336, after the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, 25th December began to be celebrated by the church in Rome as the birthday of God's Son.

500 years ago, on 24th Dec 1524 that Vasco da Gama, Portuguese explorer, died of malaria. He was the first European to reach India by sea.

200 years ago, on 21st Dec 1824 that James Parkinson, British surgeon and politician, died. He was the first person to describe Parkinson's disease, in 1817.

125 years ago, on 16th Dec 1899 that Noel Coward, British playwright, composer, director, actor and singer, was born. His plays include *Hay Fever*, *Private Lives*, and *Blithe Spirit*.

80 years ago, from 16th Dec 1944 to 16th Jan 1945 that the Battle of the Bulge (Belgium) took place. German forces launched a surprise assault on the Allies in the Ardennes Forest – their last major counter-offensive operation of the war.

75 years ago, on 13th Dec 1949 that Jerusalem became the capital of Israel, replacing Tel Aviv.

60 years ago, on 31st Dec 1964 that Donald Campbell broke the world water speed record, and became the only person to break both the land speed record and the water speed record in the same year.

50 years ago, on 5th Dec 1974 that the last episode of the TV comedy series *Monty Python's Flying Circus* was broadcast in the UK. It had begun in October 1969.

50 years ago, on 24th Dec 1974 that British politician John Stonehouse was arrested in Australia (on suspicion of being Lord Lucan.) He had faked his death on 20th November by leaving a pile of clothing on a beach in Miami Florida.

40 years ago, on 3rd Dec that the Bhopal disaster took place in India. A poisonous gas leak at a Union Carbide pesticide plant killed thousands of people and left at least 120,000 with long-term health problems.

Also 40 years ago, on 19th Dec 1984 that the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed by Britain and China. Britain agreed to return Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty on 1st July 1997.

Also 40 years ago, on 31st Dec 1984 that the Bank of England stopped producing one pound notes. They remained legal tender until 1988.

30 years ago, on 9th Dec 1994 that Sinn Fein held its first formal talks with the British government. This eventually led to the IRA ceasefire, the Good Friday Agreement, and the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly in 1998.

25 years ago, on 1st Dec 1999 that an international team of scientists working for the Human Genome Project announced that they had mapped an entire human chromosome (number 22). In April 2003 they announced that they had mapped all human chromosomes.

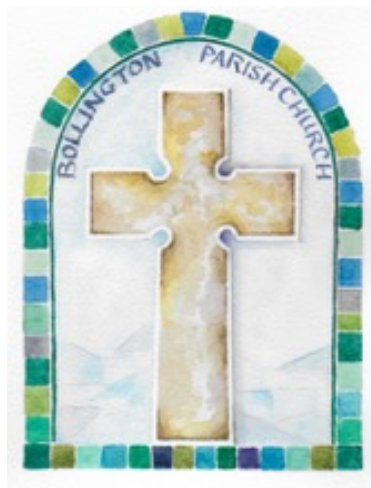
Also 25 years ago, on 2nd Dec 1999 that the UK devolved political power in Northern Ireland to the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive Committee.

Also 25 years ago, on 31st Dec 1999 that the London Eye – the world's tallest Ferris wheel at the time, was officially opened on the banks of the River Thames. It opened to passengers in March 2000.

20 years ago, on 26th Dec 2004 that the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami (also called the Boxing Day Tsunami) took place. A massive undersea earthquake near Sumatra caused a devastating tsunami that swamped coastal areas in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and East Africa. It was one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history, killing more than 230,000 people in 14 countries.

Book of Remembrance for December

4 th Dec	Alice Lea
4 th Dec	Jack Fidler
5 th Dec	Noel Mayers
6 th Dec	Diana Kathleen Reader
6 th Dec	Derek Joseph Moss
6 th Dec	Marion Holmes
7 th Dec	Ida Bowden
8 th Dec	Jane Hannah Oldfield
9 th Dec	Wilfred Whitehurst
10 th Dec	Ann Taylor
12 th Dec	David Albert Allen
12 th Dec	Ewen Cameron
13 th Dec	Edith Pye
14 th Dec	Harry Needham
15 th Dec	Alfred Goodwin
17 th Dec	Maud Sutton
18 th Dec	Evelyn Mear
20 th Dec	John William Greensmith
21 st Dec	Emily Horrox
22 nd Dec	James M Glass
23 rd Dec	Gordon Coley
25 th Dec	William Osbaldiston
26 th Dec	Harold B Dixon
27 th Dec	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

From the Registers

Funeral 22nd November Frank Needham

Book of Remembrance for January

2 nd Jan	William King
2 nd Jan	Jean Hatton
3 rd Jan	Ronald Hugh Wilson Smith
3 rd Jan	Elsie Clayton
3 rd Jan	Vera Marie Parry
4 th Jan	Joan Ottley
6 th Jan	Isabella Alderson
7 th Jan	William (Bill) Bowden
8 th Jan	Claire Whyte
8 th Jan	Raymond Fisher
9 th Jan	Jean Lawson
10 th Jan	Carole Elizabeth Bell
11 th Jan	David Worthington
11 th Jan	Ruth Spooner
12 th Jan	John Peter Williams
13 th Jan	Harry Whitworth
14 th Jan	Arthur James Molineux
15 th Jan	Arthur James Henson
19 th Jan	Ethel Heathcote
20 th Jan	Margaret Cumberbirch
22 nd Jan	Geoffrey Hunt
24 th Jan	Eleanor Cooper
24 th Jan	Norah Wallworth
24 th Jan	Walter James Hargreaves
25 th Jan	John Heathcote
26 th Jan	Alan Roy Clarke
27 th Jan	Allen Oldfield
27 th Jan	John Neville King
28 th Jan	Stephen Wellington
28 th Jan	Stuart Michael Hatton
31 st Jan	Emily White



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

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Giving to St Oswald's:

Our bank account name is 'The Anglican Parish of Bollington PCC'.

Our account number is **39536416** and the sort code is **01-05-41**.

Or talk to Richard Raymond, our treasurer, on 01625 612025.

Worship in December – all welcome!

Sunday 1st Dec – Advent

9.15am - Holy Communion

10.30am - All Age Advent Carol Service

Thursday 5th Dec - 11:15am - Advent Talk at St Oswald's

Sunday 8th Dec - 2nd of Advent

10.30am - Parish Communion

Sunday 15th Dec - 3rd of Advent

10.30am - Parish Communion

3.00pm - Carol Service with Bollington Festival Choir

Thursday 19th Dec

10.30am - Singalong Carols with mulled wine & mince pies

Sunday 22nd Dec - 4th of Advent

10.30am - Parish Communion

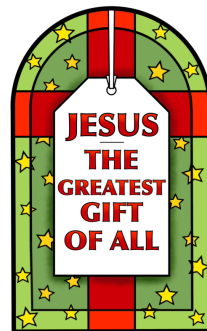
Tuesday 24th Dec - Christmas Eve

10.30am - Crib Service with Carols

11.15pm - Christmas Communion

Wednesday 25th Dec - Christmas Day

10.30am - Christmas Communion



Sunday 29th Dec - 10.30am - Parish Communion

Worship in January

Sunday 5th Jan - 9.15am - Holy Communion / 10.30 All Age

Sunday 12th Jan - 10.30am - Parish Communion/ Bring and Share Lunch

Sunday 19th Jan - 10.30am - Parish Communion

Tuesday 21st Jan - 7.30pm - Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Sunday 26th Jan - 10.30am - Parish Communion