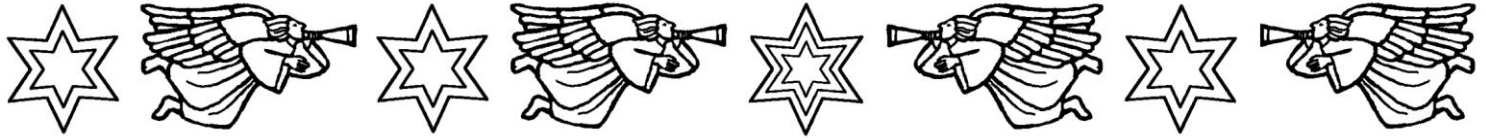




**St Mark's Parish Magazine**  
**December 2022**

# THE PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT MARK, REIGATE



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### Your Views & Contributions

Next issue will be available from 22 December 2022  
All contributions to the editor by Friday 16 December 2022

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## LETTER FROM THE VICAR

Dear Friends,

People today tend to find waiting inconvenient. We have devices that permit every minute to be used for work or entertainment. Telephones fit in our pockets so we're always available. Supermarkets have replaced cashiers with machines and bring goods within hours of order. Delivery apps ensure last minute items arrive at our door. But in eliminating waiting, I wonder whether we haven't eliminated longing, as well as an ability to remain in the present. Instead of enjoying the time I have to spend with others, I can be too focused upon rushing off to the next appointment.

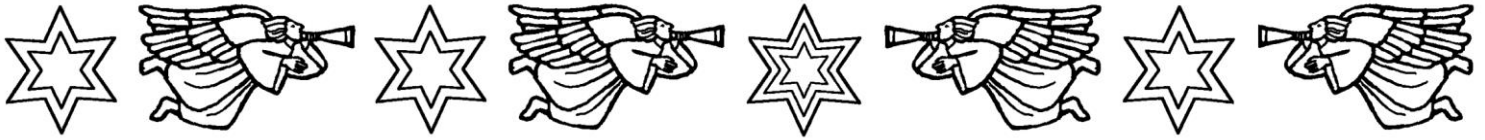
It's no wonder, then, that Advent has become a lost season, squeezed between "I wish it could be Christmas every day" blaring in the shops, and our modern desire to have it all yesterday. But Advent is designed to slow us down. It is intended, not to be another thing to do, but as a time to learn another way to be. It helps us to prepare, not only for Christmas, but for Christ's return at the end of time. Advent is the moment we read Christianity backwards; it gives over the first days of the Christian year to contemplation of the last days of the Christian life.

Advent is not so much an introduction to Christmas, but as a cry of impatience to God for God's return. "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down" (Isaiah 64.1). God's response then is to be found in Christmas; "I have once, and I will again". This cry of impatience is a helpful one, expressing the longing of the Christian people for the Prince of Peace. Teaching about Jesus' coming at the end of time (the day of the Lord) is always accompanied by warnings to "stay awake", and so we must.

Advent isn't an easy season; it's dark and cold, but it's also a time of great beauty and hope. None of us wants to consider the judgement of God at the end of time, but as we cry for God to "come down", we can start to glimpse the God who already has. It might feel easier to skip ahead, to embrace "jingle bells" and "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas", but perhaps there are some times for which it is worth waiting, and longing. In preparing to welcome Christ for a second time, we might discover that we are ready to meet him at Christmas again.

I wish you all a peaceful Advent, and a Happy Christmas.





## **Wasting Time**

Time is so valuable and our time on earth has been given us by God. So many would say that we should use it very carefully carrying out all the tasks we are called to perform.

But I was lucky to view on zoom a lecture given by Dr Malanie Marshall at the Southwark Diocesan Conference in September introduced as "Making Friends and Wasting Time – Can the Church learn anything from University".

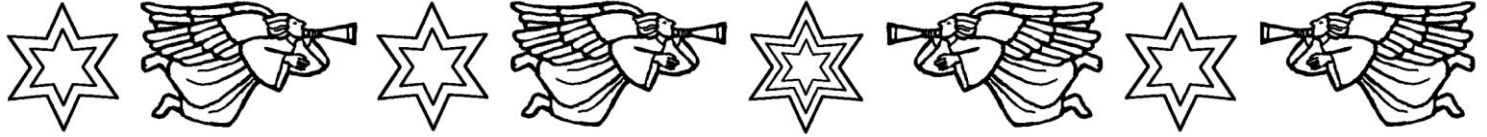
Dr Malanie is a Chaplain at Oxford University saying that students between 18 and 22 are often "wasting time" during their time there, but how valuable that wasting of time can be. She suggested that many others of us should do the same as thereby we may make important friends. She gave a vivid example of a young lady who visited Melanie every day for six months every day talking about everyday things. Melanie was tempted to say, "I am too busy and have other things to do." But happily she resisted that temptation because only at the end of the 6 months did her visitor say what her serious troubles and worries really were.

Through ill health and old age many of us feel we are wasting time if we are not doing something we think is important, but perhaps this is giving us a chance to "waste" time and make efforts in that "wasted time" to meet and listen to others, praying for them as well. This may be God's will for many of us.

John Milton on his blindness said: " They also serve who only stand and wait.."

**Ian Archer**





## Value

Readers may be surprised to hear that “Value” is where the study of economics begins. First lesson is The Law of Diminishing Returns or Diminishing Marginal Utility as it is more formally entitled, which involves the necessity of considering the “satisfaction” from the tenth ice cream compared with the first. That all ends up with Adam Smith’s description of man’s behaviour and later his motivation both as an individual, a “firm” (Micro) and a country (Macro).

Non-economists may prefer to consider “value” alongside the concept of “growing up!” Children “grow up”, to adulthood with all its qualities, capability values and short comings; or at least they used to before the invention of Hollywood and Twitter. Growing up was the change from childhood to adulthood and was the responsibility of parents, partly delegated to schools, and, at the zenith, the boarding school. The aim was to grow “up” and perhaps be like the parent, though most parents wanted a better life for their children. That is not so easy today with the way economic things are arranged.

But did growing up end there? Maybe the next stage as part of “growing up” might be called the years of advancement and acquisition. From teenage the child/adult develops interest in acquisition. It may be the better clothes, shoes, the bike, cricket bat, hockey stick or whatever, but it leads on to the expectation of a personal home, then a house, car and all the rest. It’s aligned to self-improvement. It’s a long journey because acquisitions are endless. Look at the rich, I mean not you and me, but the very rich or if you like the “stinking rich”. They have their yachts, Rolls, pearl neckless, second house, perhaps a mansion for only four summer weeks in Bar Harbour, amongst their fellow stinking rich. But they still want more. Acquisition also becomes associated with recognised worth or status, class, standing! The stinking rich are more at home with others like themselves.

At one time retirement was a time for escape from the heavy work, perhaps of the factory. It still is for some. But for others it’s a time for the ultimate acquisitions: the second house, island kitchen, a conversion to a “Family Room”, just when the children have left home! For some, home becomes the place one comes back to between holidays abroad. Yes, there is no doubt “Growing Up” is a lifetime experience of progress. But the two certainties of life are said to be death and taxes. Well, the stinking rich have almost solved the second problem but even they have yet to overcome death.

For most of us, the next “Growing Down” experience is gradual but significant. In the last few years I have grown an inch and a half but downwards, shorter. No longer

can one run the half mile in one minute fifty seconds. It is now impossible to even run to catch the bus! Cutting toenails reveals a lack of flexibility and shortening arms or is it failing eyesight, ouch? Glasses are a necessity for many, and deafness may introduce another unwelcome world of its own. Those once treasured antique items and other possessions are now of little moment; DIY tools grow rusty through lack of use.

No one warned me about "growing down". Perhaps the secret is to grow down gracefully or disgracefully, if that is your preference. Others, as they reach their middle working years, may anticipate the delights of retirement and yearn for relaxation and the end of work, but when it comes it's not so much sitting in the sun, as remembering to pop the pills on time. Yes, health gets us all in the end. So where has all that stuff about value gone to?

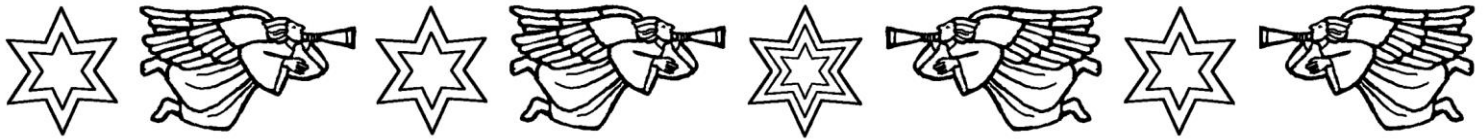
Well, of course, it was never quite all about acquisition. Other values lurked below the surface. There was sport. Nothing beat scoring that try or feeling the exhaustion and exhilaration of coming third in a long race or scoring a few runs. Later it's not the sweaty stuff of past years, but following your team. That gives identity. Something to look forward to. It replaces Friday as the arrival of the weekend. There were also hobbies which may have even been productive rather than acquisitive and entertainment. But in all these values the market strove to turn them into expenditure with price tags. So much so that today it's the cricket, football and rugby seasons all the year round. The success of the ladies' sport will double the whole circus. No longer are there territorial limitations. The chips, or players, can be passed from hand to hand. The ideal is often seen as everything requiring payment so as to expand the opportunities for profit. Let's privatise the health service.

The church has always preached about the non-material values. Remember that chap with his extra barns for the good harvest, when his life might be required of him during the night? Or again, one of Bishop John Robinson's definitions of God was "what we hold most dear." Today, even some economists like Mark Carney draw attention to non-material values not catered for by the "market" and warn about trying to value everything in money terms. Values are quite important.

That's a shaker. What on earth could we replace growing up and acquisitions with? Just fancy: no house, no car, not bothered about clothes. What on earth could I have spent all that money on, which went on shoes? And more important how could that man or woman have sustained themselves without needs and that job? It's all incredible! Without acquisition how would we spend our time? With no office or factory what is there to do. And it's really dangerous to allow time for people to think. It might well bring about anarchy! Worst of all the economist would not have been able to develop that Law of Diminishing Returns, and all that follows. Without economics we would all still be running about in skins; possibly our own skins! It's all as unimaginable as doing without carbon forms of power. No, I'll spare us that one, yet the steeply changing climate now forces us to consider wider values, little things, such as the continuance of man on Earth.

So, perhaps it's not a waste of time to consider value, and perhaps Christmas with its renewal and accent on the family is a good time to do so. Maybe we could envisage a better life for most of us all with less emphasis on the market and its very restricted concept of value. After all our personal values are what we distinguish each other by. Our life is what we value, and perhaps the value of our life is what we cherish most.

**Harry Ingram**



## **Church News**

### **Anti-racism charter**

St Mark's is proud to adopt the Diocese of Southwark Anti-Racism Charter. The Charter is active and intentional. It says: "being anti-racist is not the same as simply not being racist. It is not enough as a Diocese not to be racist; instead we must actively counter, disrupt and oppose racial injustice. This isn't an easy task, it takes introspection, as well as continued intentional action and is not a static description of ourselves."

The key principles of Southwark's Anti-Racism Charter are:

1. An explicit theological understanding that God's kingdom is multi-ethnic, and that it is through our baptismal covenant that we recognise and respect the dignity of every human being and our unity in Christ.
2. An intentional focus in our theological studies, liturgy, teaching, prayer, word and work to take strategic and practical actions to combat racism and inequality.
3. A clear strategy for increasing and sustaining diversity in our governance structures at Diocesan and parish level so as to ensure representation and participation of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds at all levels of our organisation.

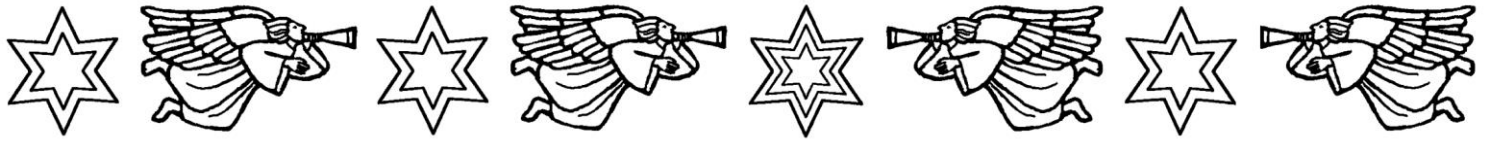
### **Christmas collections**

This year's services will be collecting for the following charities:  
Renewed Hope (supporting the homeless) and Reigate Samaritans.  
At the Christingle service we will continue to support the Children's Society.

### **Warm hub**

St Mark's will make its committee room a warm space between 10:00am – 12 noon on Fridays, starting on the 9 December up to the end of March (excluding 30 December).





## News from the Church of England

### **Millions of people in touch with church community action amid cost-of-living crisis**

More than seven million people have had contact with their local church for community support services such as food banks, parent toddler groups and lunch clubs, new figures suggest.

Polling by Savanta ComRes for the Church of England shows that 13.7% of all UK adults have made contact with their local church through community services such as parent toddler groups, lunch clubs and food banks.

The figures also show that twice as many agree (47%) as disagree (23%) that the local church is an important part of their community and just over a half (52%) agree that the Church is an important part of British society.

The findings come after Church of England statistics from 2019 show its churches running or supporting 35,000 social action projects.

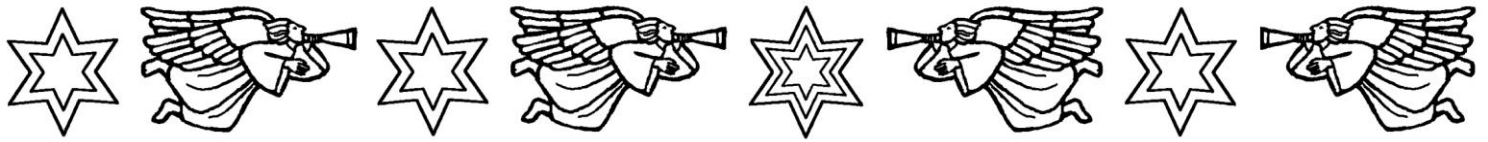
This includes 8,000 food banks and more than 4,000 parent/carer toddler groups. More than 5,000 churches run or support lunch clubs, coffee mornings or similar hospitality for older people.

The Bishop of Durham, Rt Revd Paul Butler, who speaks for the bishops in the House of Lords on welfare issues, said: "These figures show the extent to which the Church of England is providing not just spiritual and pastoral support but practical help to communities throughout the country.

"The biggest source of practical support provided by Church of England currently is through running or supporting around 8,000 food banks throughout the country and many of our churches are now opening up as 'warm spaces' through the 'Warm Welcome' campaign, as people struggle to pay their energy bills.

"Sadly we anticipate that these services will come under increasing pressure this winter."

Full article available on the Church of England website.



## The history of Christmas

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

In 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 25 December. The emperor Charlemagne chose 25 December for his coronation in 800, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose. In England, William the Conqueror also chose 25 December for his coronation in 1066, 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 condemn 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.

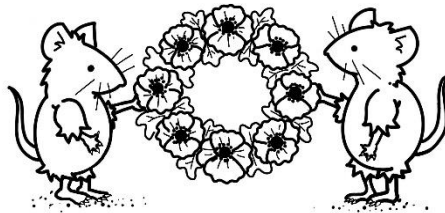
In the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity. Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England's Puritan rulers made the celebration of Christmas illegal for 14 years. The restoration of Charles II ended the ban, but religious leaders continued to discourage excess, especially in Scotland. In Western Europe (but not worldwide) the day for exchanging gifts changed from Epiphany (6 January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, there was a sense that 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 26 December, when tradesmen who had given reliable service during the year would collect 'boxes' of money or gifts from their customers.

In Europe Santa Claus is the figure associated with the bringing of gifts. 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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/#.W9LmchNKhsM>*



### **Final posting dates for the UK this Christmas are as follows:**

- Friday 16 December: Royal Mail Bulk Mail Economy
- Monday 19 December: 2<sup>nd</sup> Class
- Wednesday 21 December: 1<sup>st</sup> Class
- Thursday 22 December: Special Delivery Guaranteed & Royal Mail Tracked 24
- Friday 23 December: Special Delivery Guaranteed with Saturday Guarantee



## Music

What a wonderful gift of God it is if one can compose music for others to enjoy. Ways of creating music, on instruments or for the voice, are gifts, to be thankful for, as are the gifts of performing it for oneself and others. Regrettably I have none of those talents. However, what I do have is being able to appreciate music in many of its forms for which I thank God.

Shakespeare in Twelfth Night said:  
"If music be the food of love, play on;  
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,  
The appetite may sicken and so die."

Of course, one can get too much music from time to time, perhaps in supermarkets, or even at home if we leave the radio on. Music can be too loud or too soft if one is hard of hearing.

Music can be used to excite or inspire us for certain occasions, as with military bands, and music can blend with our times of joy or sadness when bad things occur.

Music can come alongside us with so many of our moods, each and every day. It can cheer us when we are sad, bring back happy or unhappy memories of the past, make us want to sing even if we don't have a melodious voice and even make us want to dance for joy. Whether singing with others round the piano, singing in the bath or in praising God in church it does us good to sing and is especially good for those with dementia. Jenny loved to sing and if she could not remember the words she would make some up. We need to hear and join in singing and this was denied to us during COVID. So much wonderful music has helped us in our worship.

But I don't just listen to lovely music but I give thanks to the musicians of the past and present who have provided us with such a source of joy for now and the future. Musicians spend endless hours practicing to raise their work to what they feel they can be proud of. How wonderful it is that some of them wrote masterpieces at very young ages, and some when they themselves had become deaf or blind, but have left these gems for present and future generations to play and to hear. Some have provided lyrics to go with their own or other people's music. Because of this we can enjoy operas and musicals that can bring smiles and laughter to so many of us.

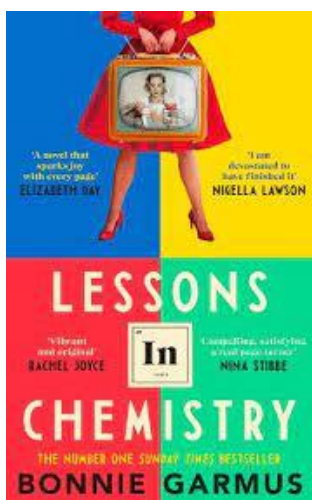
Not all of us appreciate the same sort of music, because, as with art, we are all blessed with our own taste for what we find is right for us. We just need to understand what can be most helpful to us all in our separate ways.





## Book Review

This month we review: Lessons in Chemistry



Set in the 1960's, this book is about the life of Elizabeth Zott, a woman who tries to stand up to the social norms of the time which held back so many women. Through her life she has struggled and suffered at the hands of others, first her mother and later her university supervisor.

Still this woman shows determination to achieve her goal of being a chemist and studying Abiogenesis. All she wants is to be treated as an equal and do her job but society and the attitudes of others are holding her back.

This book covers many issues of the day and shows how a group of unlikely friends can support each other to become an unconventional family.

I found the lead character to be strong and inspirational in the way she challenged social norms of the day in the pursuit of equality. From wearing trousers to women's place in the world of work, she had me rooting for her throughout the book.

The book does talk about religion as the lead character is an atheist and divulging this information in the story has some difficult consequences for her, at a time when it appears tolerance for other opinions and beliefs seems low.

A Sunday Times best-seller, I read this book very quickly as I was hooked to find out what challenge the protagonist would face next. It is well written and very emotive.

## CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2022

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December      12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December      2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent (*Green Sunday*)**  
 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in the Hall  
 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in the Hall and Online  
 4.00pm Family Service – in the Hall

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December      3.25pm T-Time Tales  
 Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December      12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church  
 Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December      10.00am Warm Space in the Hall

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December      3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church  
 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online  
 4.00pm Messy Church

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December      Holmesdale School Nativities  
 Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December      12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church  
 Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December      10.00am Warm Space in the Hall  
 Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December      8.00pm Social Ballroom and Latin Dance in the Hall

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December      4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church  
 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online  
 6.00pm Carol Service

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December      12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church  
 Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December      10.00am Warm Space in the Hall

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Eve**  
 4.00pm Christingle and Crib Service in Church  
**9.00pm** First Communion of Christmas

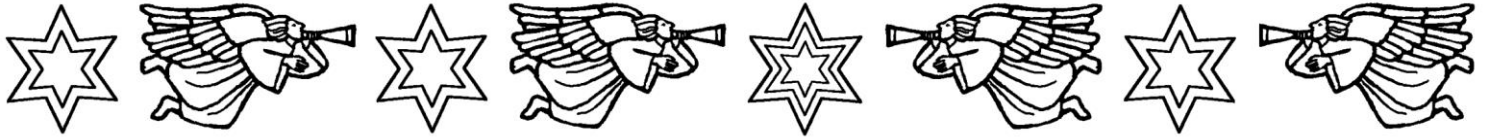
**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> December      Christmas Day**  
 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church  
 10.00am Holy Communion with Hymns – in Church  
 and Online

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December      St Stephen, First Martyr**  
**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December      The Holy Innocents**  
**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> Dec      St John the Evangelist**

## CALENDAR FOR JANUARY 2023

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January</b>  | <b>Naming of Jesus (<i>Green Sunday</i>)</b><br>8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in the Hall<br>10.00am Sung Eucharist – in the Hall and Online                |
| Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> January      | 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church   |
| <b>Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January</b>  | <b>The Epiphany</b><br>10.00am Warm Space in the Hall   |
| <b>Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January</b>  | <b>The Baptism of Christ</b><br>8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church<br>10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online                                    |
| Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> January    | 3.25pm T-Time Tales   |
| Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> January     | 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church   |
| Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> January       | 10.00am Warm Space in the Hall  |
| <b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January</b> | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany</b><br>8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church<br>10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online<br>4.00pm Messy Church |
| Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> January    | 3.25pm T-Time Tales   |
| Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> January     | 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church   |
| Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> January       | 10.00am Warm Space in the Hall  |
| <b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> January</b> | <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany</b><br>8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church<br>10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online<br>6.00pm Taizé Prayer |
| <b>Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> Jan</b>  | <b>Conversion of St Paul</b><br>3.25pm T-Time Tales   |
| Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> January     | 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church   |
| Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> January       | 10.00am Warm Space in the Hall  |
| <b>Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January</b> | <b>Candlemas</b><br>8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church<br>10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online  |

**Please remember that planned services are subject to change at short notice so please check the details on our website or with the Parish Office.**



## **COP 27: 2022**

Whitewash is a white paint made from slaked lime or chalk used to cover poorer surfaces such as walls, ceilings, fences, animal housing and other poor surfaces. It covers. But soon the rot, cracks or other imperfections show through. Metaphorically it is used to describe the “suppression” or “glossing over” of potentially damaging or unwelcome information. On Green issues this is now called “Greenwashing”. Examples of greenwashing would be the assertion by fossil fuel manufacturers that they are taking green issues into account, or pointing to potential tree planting as a counter to the carbon dioxide they increasingly release into the atmosphere.

At Cop 26 the attention on fossil fuels was concentrated on coal to try to get its use banned. This seemed likely until the actual final meeting where the wording on the insistence of China and India was changed from “phase out” to “phase down”. This, in the absence of time scales, meant that the use of coal could go on as before. Coal was used as a debating diversion of attention from oil and gas. You might call this a form of greenwashing.

To understand the way COP fails to operate it is necessary to understand that the countries involved arranged that decisions would be made by consensus. This means that everyone needs to agree. It’s a bit like the veto for the Security Council. Consequently adversely affected countries withhold their agreement so progress is very difficult and slow. With that background countries don’t feel any obligation to carry through agreements. The COP organisation was almost designed to fail. At COP26 it was agreed that all countries should put in revised targets with policies and plans to ensure they were addressed. Until recently Australia was the only country to do so.

COP27 was well attended by world countries, though the heads of government from China, Russia, India and Canada and some others have not attended. However, a record number of 636 fossil fuel lobbyists outnumber the largest country delegation. Are they here to understand how to behave or are they simply keeping their hand on the pulse to ensure they stay one step ahead in their game of preserving their activities? Many delegates think they should be banned. There can be little doubt that, following years of denial which is not now possible, such companies are using their clout to force governments to support the continuation of their activities.

COP 27 in Egypt began with the usual statements by heads of government which clearly recognised the urgency of countering climate change. Emanuel Macron of France said, “the world must not lose focus on climate change or sacrifice emission reduction commitments because of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine.” However,



some countries voicing such sentiments were at the same time issuing licences for further oil and gas exploitation!

When the progress was reviewed, the UN said, "progress on cutting emissions that cause global warming has been 'woefully inadequate' since COP26 in Glasgow last year." Our Prime Minister said government spending to combat climate change is the right thing to do from environmental, moral and economic perspectives. The UN Chief Antonio Guterres warned world leaders gathered in Egypt that humanity must "co-operate or perish ... We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator."

There were sombre reports suggesting that it may be too late to prevent catastrophic global warming. Even if countries implemented existing pledges in full, the world would still warm by 1.8 degrees (against the target of 1.5 degrees). The president of the World Bank said he was not a climate change denier. However, the bank has failed to adopt a strong action plan on the crisis. Greta Thunberg commented on Cop 26 that it was just "Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." Is it any different at Cop 27? She would not lend Cop 27 the recognition of her attendance. Have we reached the stage when words are empty of meaning and only action speaks the truth?

Although all 193 countries need to cut emissions the present release of carbon is concentrated in a small number of countries. China emits by far the highest level, 2,912 million tons of carbon a year, well over twice the level of the USA at 1,286 million tons, the second highest emitter. Of course the USA has been polluting for a far longer period. India comes third with 666 million tons and the next 15 countries together only 1,585 million tons. It would be interesting if we had similar details for countries which enjoy the fruits of emissions. It is hoped that China and the USA will resume bilateral talks. Is it astonishing that two countries can hold the rest to ransom?

Finance to combat climate change was said to be of three types: cutting emissions, adapting to inevitable climate impacts and for loss or damage sustained. The last is because developing countries release little CO<sub>2</sub> but are the ones suffering the most. Since the conference is in Africa the emphasis was to be on loss and damage. In 2009 richer countries then promised \$100bn but they have not yet achieved this. Currently only 24 of 193 countries have promised to commit to providing finance to the Developing World. Recent offers from smaller countries such as Australia and Canada have only totalled \$62 million so far. Compare this with the expenditure of \$15 trillion by western countries to combat the pandemic. Some countries have offered to write off debts from suffering countries but that will provide nothing to deal with current climate issues arising. If exports from Developing Countries were not diverted through tax havens to protect profits from taxation the yield would well exceed debts incurred thus far and provide real tax revenue for the future.

This question of compensation has been the main focus of discussion at the COP and held up the final agreed statement. There is an attempt to bring in countries such as China, Russia, Brazil, India and Saudi Arabia. As I write there seems little chance that

these will agree a practical policy. Compensation is certainly justified but like the coal at COP 26 this subject has acted as greenwashing since it diverts attention to the central issue which is ending the use of fossil fuels. Without that the rest is just who suffers first and ensures we all do in the end.

Most people are now aware of the catastrophic dangers ahead but this is not provoking commensurate action. So let's consider the small here and now. Already damage through climate change is huge. It has been estimated that in the East it has cost \$35.6 billion. If a similar sum were spent before the damage then far greater losses could be avoided. Not responding to climate change is far more costly than funding schemes to replace carbon-based power. The snag is that losses affect the many whilst restricting carbon use affects the profits of the few and currently the priority is the few.

So, I included the year in the title because in years to come no one will credit that with so much knowledge of the future, mankind did so little. After the excitement of COP 26, COP 27 has passed with scarcely a whisper.

On the positive side much has been done by some states in the US to reduce carbon emissions and so also has China. Britain has a good record for planting windmills in the surrounding sea though most of these are in the ownership of foreign companies owned by other governments. But clearly a much greater push from all governments is required.

The fossil-fuel producers first stimulated the view that climate change was not real. That continued for some years. They also attacked the probity of the leading climate scientist in an attempt to discredit him. That failed, but he had a nervous breakdown. But in recent years even they have had to admit the scientific truth. Has this converted them? Not one bit. And governments hesitate before imposing tax on excess profits and then only take a fraction of the excess. So carbon emitters have now turned to greenwashing pretending, for example, to offset green actions such as planting trees, though the planting has often yet to occur and they know the effects will be far too late. At last their commitment to fossil fuels is recognised by the other COP attenders who would like them banned. BUT to my intense surprise, and I should know better, the fossil-fuel producers have gone on the offensive recruiting the elite of some African countries and seeking to develop large reserves of gas in Africa. The African governments know that this will adversely affect their people first and the fruits, after payment of the normal bribes will no doubt be sheltered in tax havens. So with long foresight, fossil fuel producers are developing this further carbon source well in front of the cessation of the use of oil and coal. Their influence with their governments is such that both China and the US support them in again postponing any embargo on the use of oil and gas.

Undoubtedly the clear priority is getting on top of those who produce all kinds of fossil fuels and bringing that to an end as soon as possible.

## Conclusion

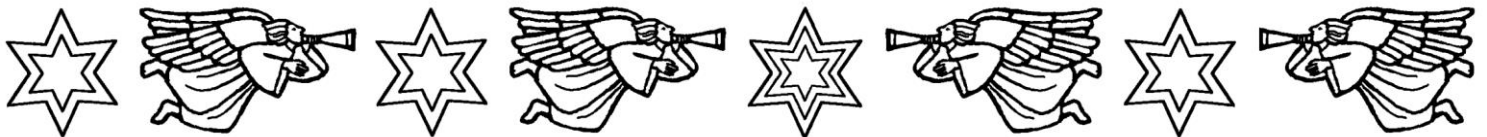
As I write the COP 27 has just closed. It has taken over twenty years for the polluting nations to materially recognise that they are the cause of the desperate climatic conditions of many poor countries including much of Africa. It is only just and right that they should provide aid to those countries and finally an agreement has been reached. After such a length of time one is entitled to be sceptical about the actual outcome.

The COP has concentrated on this issue and in one sense this has been another kind of greenwashing because no progress whatsoever has been made on the phasing out or even the phasing down of the use of fossil fuels. Instead they are still expanding.

An angry Alok Sharma for the UK condemned the lack of urgency and ambition in not phasing out the fossil fuels. There was no movement on coal, oil or gas. "All of us need to look in the mirror and consider whether we have fully risen to the challenge... Each of us will have to explain to our citizens and to the world's most vulnerable countries and communities and ultimately to our children and grandchildren to whom many of us now go home."

Amongst the many adverse statements made by the UN General Secretary were the following. "Using bogus net zero pledges to cover up massive fossil fuel expansion is reprehensible... Our planet is still in the emergency room... We need to drastically reduce emissions now and this is an issue we did not address."

**Harry Ingram**



## **Your Countdown to Christmas – 25 ideas**

1. Find the perfect cards.... But hurry! If you don't already have a favourite charity, try the Combined Charities Christmas Shop at <http://www.christmas-cards.org.uk/> for ideas.
2. Your Count-down dates to Christmas might include:
  - a. 30 Nov – 4 Dec: Write your Christmas cards. Start with the 'must-sends' first, so the pressure eases off. Draw up your Christmas present list.
  - b. 5 & 6 Dec: A good time for the children to make home decorations. Also, start shopping for presents...
  - c. 10 & 11 Dec: Unless your family tradition dictates otherwise, this would be a good weekend to bring the tree home
  - d. Week of 12 – 18 Dec: A good time for a cleaning day to get the house ready for decorating... and finish shopping for presents.

- e. 19 & 20 Dec: Time to pull things together – decorate the tree and the house and finish wrapping the presents you will give out personally.
3. Choose a colour theme for this Christmas. Red? Gold? Purple? Silver? Then use it on everything – from your candles, tree baubles and wrapping paper, to table napkins and Christmas cards and lights.
  4. Plan your Christmas lunch. Try and think of everything that you will need on the day – and make sure you have it ordered or bought in good time.
  5. Set aside enough time for those shopping trips – and prepare a list so that you don't waste time.
  6. Plan your budget – don't let Christmas 'fever' make you reckless. Be careful you don't go over any overdraft with your bank – the penalties are expensive! Also, really and truly, beware using credit cards if you can't pay them off quickly.
  7. Pick the perfect tree. Bear in mind that an artificial tree is not just for Christmas, but for life.... all that non-renewable plastic will spend eternity in some landfill site. So why not branch out and look for the real thing. For more options, visit The British Christmas Tree Growers Association [www.christmastree.org.uk](http://www.christmastree.org.uk)
  8. Learn some party games. For games that are easy, slightly harder and fiendishly hard, visit: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/words/puzzles-and-games>
  9. Hang a wreath. You can buy one or get creative with a mixture of foliage from your garden.
  10. Practical details: Make sure you have in a good stock of coal and logs, Christmas tree lights that work, a clean oven, a stock of candles and matches, and spare batteries.
  11. Fill those Christmas stockings – a must for Christmas mornings. Cleverly planned, they might even delay the time when exhausted parents are awoken from slumbers....
  12. Wrap those presents – what you get and how you wrap it will say a lot about your attitude towards the person you are giving to! So select your presents and wrapping materials with care, use only sharp scissors, and put your Sellotape on neatly. Adding some ribbon is well worth the effort.
  13. Enjoy those Christmas markets and fayres – is there a house-bound neighbour or friend you could take along?
  14. Display your cards with style. The simple ideas are often the most stylish. So have fun with wooden clothes pegs, sprayed gold, and peg your cards along ribbon that can be looped from one end of a curtain pole to the other.



15. Deck the halls – especially yours. Would your front entrance hall take a small tree, wreath, or maybe just a bowl of pretty sweets? Run a garland up the banister. Add some ivy and some fairy lights.
16. Donate to charities who help the homeless and the migrants.
17. Sing carols – and play carols at home. Remind your family what it is really all about.
18. The trip to Bethlehem. Dig out your nativity set, and start Mary and Joseph and the donkey at the top of your stairs – moving them a bit closer to the manger downstairs each day. And don't forget to start the wise men on their way, from another part of the house. (Beware your dog eating anyone on the way!)
19. Think about decorating your table – you could use holly and ivy and narcissi and snowdrops... and lots of red ribbon. But if you use poisonous plants, be very careful around the children and pets.
20. Give your pets some extra care. If you have a curious dog or cat, avoid tinsel on the tree – your pets could choke on it. Keep a watchful eye on the turkey bones on Christmas Day – and dispose of them safely. If they splinter in your pet's throat on Christmas Day, you could easily double the cost of your Christmas with just one visit to the vet.... Don't leave scraps of wrapping paper around if they might be eaten. Finally, ensure your pets can find a quiet place to rest if all the family is there.
21. Go crackers. In 1847 the confectioner Tom Smith invented the Christmas cracker. Legend says that he spotted a beautifully wrapped French bon-bon and had a 'eureka moment'. In effect, he said to himself: 'What that bon-bon really needs is a tiny plastic key-ring, a groan-inducing pun on a piece of paper, a tissue paper parody of royal headgear, all wrapped up inside an exploding toilet roll.' The rest is history.
22. Plan the Boxing Day walk. By then tempers will be frayed and thankyou letters will be looming. A good long walk that includes some lovely scenery will do you all good.
23. Read your children the Christmas story. There are any number of excellent children's books which tell it with wonderful illustrations.
24. Make sure your neighbours are all right – is there anyone who could use a helping hand? Anyone needing a lift to church?
25. On Christmas Eve/Christmas Day, make time to have a family reading of the Nativity stories in Matthew and Luke. As a family, make time to praise God for the gift of Jesus!



## Reader recipes

With the cost of living impacting the cost of electricity, using the slow cooker could be one way to save money. Here is a simple bread recipe to get you started.

### Slow cooker bread

Ingredients:-

- 500g of strong wholemeal flour or strong white flour.
- 7g sachet of fast acting dried yeast
- 1tsp of fine sea salt
- 350ml of warm water



Method:-

1. Mix the flour, yeast and salt in a large bowl and make a well in the middle. Pour most of the warm water into the well. Mix the flour and water together with your fingers or a wooden spoon until combined into a slightly wet, pillowy, workable dough – add a splash more water if necessary.
2. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for at least 10 mins until smooth and elastic. This can also be done in a tabletop mixer with a dough hook.
3. Shape the dough into a large, tight ball and sit the ball on a square of baking parchment. Use the parchment to lift the dough into your slow cooker, cover and set the slow cooker to high. Leave for 2 hrs.
4. Lift the bread out using the parchment. The bottom should be crusty and the top should be springy, not soft. (If you have a digital cooking thermometer, the middle of the loaf should be 90C.) If it isn't ready, return to the slow cooker for 15 mins and test again – it could take up to 2 hrs 30 mins.
5. The bread won't get a significant crust or golden colour in the slow cooker. Once cooked, you can leave it to cool, or put in the oven at 240C/220C fan/gas 9 for 5-10 mins to get some colour.

Recipe taken from Good Food magazine. If you have a recipe you'd like to share email us at [magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk](mailto:magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk).



## Christmas Prayer

Father,

Thank you for creating us and for loving us so much that you sent Jesus to become one of us and to be our way to you. This Christmas may we know the love, peace, comfort and joy that only You can give, no matter what our circumstances. And may we reflect Your light and love in this dark world to bring glory to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.



## Puzzles

### December Sudoku Puzzle

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

### November Solution

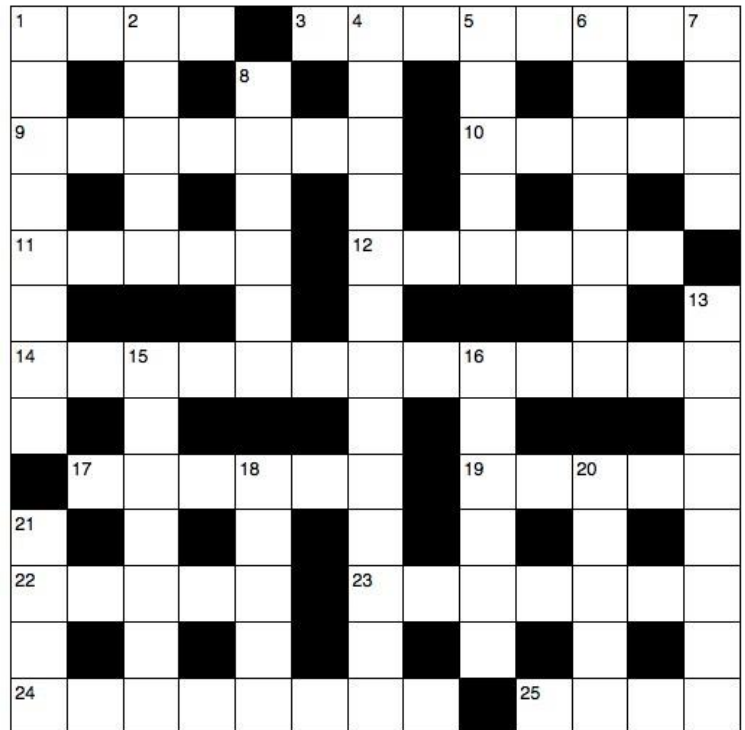
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| 3 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 2 |
| 1 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 6 |
| 8 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 9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

## December Crossword

Biblical references are from the New International Version

### Across

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



### Down

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

### November Answers

**ACROSS:** 1 Hopefulness 9 Hitting 10 du Pre 11 Ere 13 Ozni 16 Wait 17 Climbs 18 Obey 20 Joni  
21 Cuckoo 22 In it 23 Yaws 25 Elm 28 Alarm 29 Epistle 30 Whitsuntide

**DOWN:** 2 Often 3 Exit 4 Urge 5 Node 6 Soprano 7 Theological 8 Westminster 12 Rebuke 14 Icy  
15 Ritual 19 Epitaph 20 Joy 24 Acted 25 Emit 26 Menu 27 Gift





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