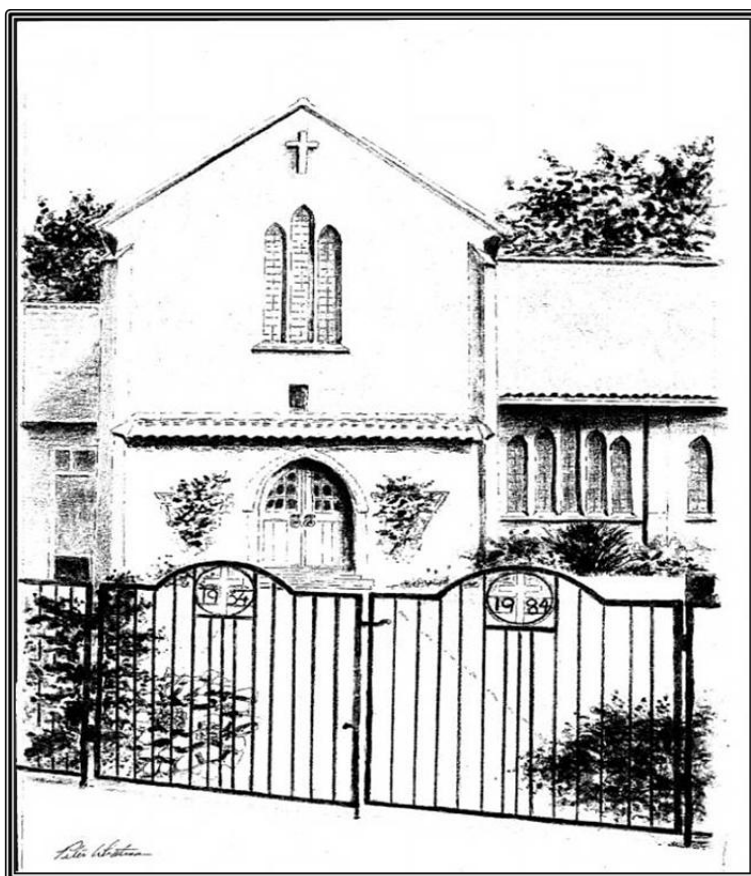


CHURCH MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2025/JANUARY 2026

ST MARY OF NAZARETH

WEST WICKHAM



*A WELCOMING FAMILY WITH THE
CHRISTIAN FAITH AT THE HEART
OF ALL WE DO.*

50p

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Vicar:	Rev Matt Drummond	Vicarage, The Avenue	4629 7301
	revd.matt.drummond@gmail.com		(Day off on Friday)
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	richard.ford73@gmail.com		
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	KennethABryan@aol.com		
	Mrs Debbie Adams	87 Goodhart Way	8777 7834
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	robwest46163@gmail.com		
Organist/Choirmaster:	Mr Geoff Mussard	35 Oakfield Gardens Beckenham	8650 8389
	geoff@mussard.org.uk		
Electoral Roll Officer:	Mr Chris Fitzgerald		8777 0083
Parish Safeguarding Officer:	Mrs Charlotte Wilson		07981 040067
	charlottewilson21@hotmail.com		

Normal Services

Sunday:	8:00 a.m.	Holy Communion (1 st , 3 rd and 5 th Sundays only)
	9:15 a.m.	Sung Communion & Crèche (joint service at 10am on the 1 st Sunday of the month, alternating with St Francis')
Morning Praise:	9:15 a.m.	Normally on the 2 nd Sunday of the month
Messy Church:	3:45 p.m.	Normally on the 2 nd Friday of the month
Holy Baptism: By appointment		
Other Services:		Refer to the Calendar in this magazine. Weddings/Banns, etc.: By appointment

Letter from Matt

Dear Friends,

December and January are months of new beginnings. In December we enter fully into Advent, and the church's year begins once again. It is a chance for us to engage with our spiritual history as we journey with Patriarchs (and Matriarchs), Prophets, John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary in the story of our salvation. I have a particular love for Advent because of the hymns and carols we sing during this period; they tend to be meaty and deep in their content.

As for new beginnings we start to read from Matthew's Gospel during this year. Matthew's is the most Jewish of the four gospels: he uses Old Testament scriptures to highlight the life and work of Jesus, and he presents Jesus as the new Moses. This is why he places Jesus's main speech, the Sermon on the Mount, as it was on a mountaintop that Moses received the Law of God. Matthew's Gospel reminds us of our Jewish roots. The people of the Jewish faith are our family, and whilst we might not always agree with them, we are called to love and support them.

At Christmas we remember God's new beginning as Jesus is born. Here the salvation promised and foreshadowed as far back as the Tree of Good and Evil in Genesis (it is from a sapling of this tree that tradition tells us comes the wood of the Cross) comes to fruition. At Christmas God becomes human in Jesus, and walks in our midst, and calls God's people back to him. It is a new beginning because at Jesus's death the old creation of sin and death will come to an end, and the new creation of true relationship with God begin to take form on Easter Sunday.

January is traditionally a month for new beginnings in the wider world, and we spend time making New Year's Resolutions. Unfortunately, these often get abandoned as we task ourselves with changes that are beyond our will or capacity to amend our lives. In the Methodist Church the first Sunday of the New Year usually includes a Eucharist at which the Prayer of Covenant is

made by the people. This prayer is a prayer of new beginnings as the people rededicate themselves to God's service. It is a powerful (even dangerous) prayer as it commits ourselves not just to doing God's will, but to suffering on his behalf, doing not just that which is easy, but also that which is difficult. It is a prayer that I try and say at the beginning of each new year, and when I am facing uncertainty or needing to make a big decision.

As December are months of new beginnings, so we should remember that Jesus is with us, and the Holy Spirit guiding us as we begin new things, great and small alike. And if you do choose to make a resolution this new year why not commit yourself to saying the Covenant Prayer and thus committing yourself to God's service in a new way. I cannot say where it will lead you, only that God will honour your commitment to him.

Covenant Prayer: Preface

Beloved in Christ, let us again claim for ourselves this covenant which God has made with his people, and take upon us the yoke of Christ. This means that we are content that he appoint us our place and work, and that he himself be our reward. Christ has many services to be done: some are easy, others are difficult; some bring honour, others bring reproach; some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests, others are contrary to both; in some we may please Christ and please ourselves; in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ, who strengthens us. Therefore let us make this covenant of God our own. Let us give ourselves to him, trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.

Lord God, holy Father, since you have called us through Christ to share in this gracious covenant, we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience and, for love of you, engage ourselves to seek and do your perfect will. We are no longer our own but yours:

Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own but yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;

put me to doing, put me to suffering;

let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,

exalted for you or brought low for you;

let me be full, let me be empty,

let me have all things, let me have nothing;

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen



Calendar for December

- Saturday 6th** Big Christmas Sing 4.00 p.m. at St. Francis
- Sunday 7th** **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT Patronal Festival**
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis
 Matt Drummond
10.00 a.m. Joint Service at St. Mary's with livestream
 Very Rev. Mark Oakley, Dean of Southwark Cathedral
- Friday 12th** Messy Church at St. Mary's
3.45 p.m. Messy Church Team
- Saturday 13th** Scouts Carol Service at St. Mary's
6.30 p.m. *Matt Drummond*
- Sunday 14th** **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT John the Baptist**
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis
 Richard Ford/Debbie Adams
9.15 a.m. Morning Praise with livestream
 Matt Drummond/Debbie Adams
10.45 a.m. Morning Worship at St. Francis
 Carol Coslett/Debbie Adams
- Sunday 21st** **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT The Virgin Mary**
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's
 Matt Drummond
10.45 a.m. Carol Service at St. Francis
 Matt Drummond
4.00 p.m. Carol Service at St. Mary's with livestream
 Matt Drummond

Wednesday 24th CHRISTMAS EVE

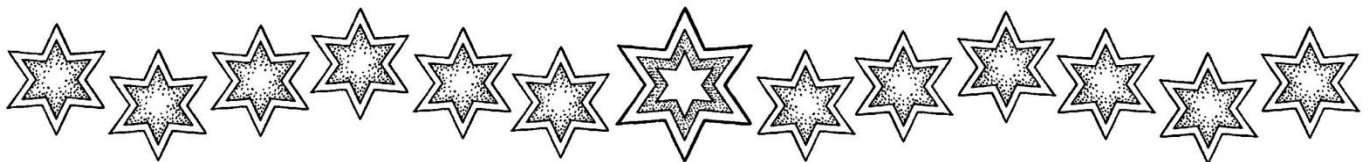
- 4.00 p.m. Christingle Service at St. Mary's with livestream
Ken Bryan/Katrina Walsh
- 6.00 p.m. Lighting the Lamps at St. Francis
Matt Drummond
- 11.15 p.m. Midnight Communion at St. Mary's with livestream
Matt Drummond/ Richard Ford
- 11.15 p.m. Midnight Communion at St. Francis
Carol Coslett

Thursday 25th CHRISTMAS DAY

- 10.00 a.m. Joint Service at St. Francis
Matt Drummond

Sunday 28th FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS The Holy Innocents

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis
Carol Coslett
- 10.00 a.m. Joint Service at St. Mary's with livestream
Carol Coslett



Calendar for January 2026

Sunday 4th FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's
Matt Drummond
- 10.00 a.m. Joint Service at St. Francis
Matt Drummond

Sunday 11th**BAPTISM OF CHRIST**

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

Richard Ford

9.15 a.m.

Morning Praise at St. Mary's with livestream

Richard Ford/Ken Bryan

10.45 a.m.

Morning Worship at St. Francis

*Richard Ford***Friday 16th**

Messy Church at St. Mary's

3.45 p.m.

Messy Church Team

Sunday 18th**2ND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY**

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's

Matt Drummiond/Debbie Adams

9.15 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream

Matt Drummond/Debbie Adams

10.45 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

*Matt Drummond/Debbie Adams***Sunday 25th****CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL**

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

Richard Ford

9.15 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream

Richard Ford

10.45 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

Matt Drummond/Richard Ford

Bible Readings

Date	Reading	Reader
December		
7 th	Isaiah 11: 1-10	
	Romans 15: 4-13	Natalie Outten
	Matthew 3: 1-12	Very Rev. Mark Oakley
14 th	Special readings for Morning Praise	Jean Mathers
21 st	Special readings for carol service	Gifty, Natalie, Margaret and Rev. Matt
24 th	<i>Isaiah</i> 52: 7-10	
	Hebrews 1: 1-12	Gifty Nortey
	John 1: 1-14	Richard Ford
28 th	Jeremiah 31: 15-17	
	Corinthians 1:26-29	
	Matthew 2: 15-18	Bob West
	John 1: 1-14	Carol Coslett
January 2026		
4 th	Isaiah 60: 1-16	
	Ephesians 3: 1-12	Joint Service at St. Francis
	Matthew 2: 1-12	Matt Drummond
11 th	Isaiah 42: 1-9	
	Acts 10: 34-43	Tabitha Woodroffe
	Matthew 3: 13-17	Richard Ford
18 th	Isaiah 49: 1-7	
	Corinthians 1: 1-9	Bill Howell
	John 1: 29-42	Debbie Adams
25 th	Jeremiah 1: 4-10	
	Acts 9: 1-22	Jackie Greatorex
	Matthew 19: 27-30	Richard Ford

Dates for your Diary

December

Big Christmas Sing

Big Christmas Sing is on Saturday 6th December at 4.00 p.m. in St. Francis Church. All proceeds to Christian Aid so do come along and support this event.

Parish Lunch

The Parish Lunch is on Wednesday 10th December in the hall at 12.30 for sherry followed for by lunch at 1.00 p.m. The cost is £10. Please let Beryl know on 0208 289 8097 if you are unable to attend. There will be a sing-a-long of Christmas carols following the lunch.

Scouts' Carol Service

The Scouts' Carol Service is on Saturday 13th December 6.30 p.m. at St. Mary's. Do try to come along and support our young people.

Making sweets for the Christingles

We will be making up the sweets for the Christingles on Monday 22nd December at 2.15 p.m. in the hall. All help will be much appreciated as the more people the quicker the job gets done. Thank you.

Making up the Christingles

We will be making up the Christingles in the hall at 2.15 p.m. on Tuesday 23rd December. Again, any help would be very much appreciated. Thank you.

If anyone would like to make a donation towards the cost of the Christingles, please give to either of the Churchwardens. This enables us to send a larger donation to the Children's Society. Thank you.

January 2026

Parish Lunch

The Parish Lunch is on **Wednesday 7th January 2026** at 1.00 p.m. in the hall. Please advise Beryl on 020 8289 8097 if you are unable to attend.

Advance Notice

Valentine's Ploughmen's Lunch will be on Saturday February 14th 12.30 in the hall. Further updates in the weekly pew sheet but make a note of the date.

Answers to Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS: 1, Tabernacle. 7, Absalom. 8, Incas. 10, Roes. 11, Captured. 13, Fright. 15, Cavell. 17, Cyclonic. 18, Herb. 21, Sonar. 22, Amazing. 23, Settlement.

DOWN: 1, Taste. 2, Bold. 3, Ramiah. 4, Abiathar. 5, Lucerne. 6, Sacrifices. 9, Saddlebags. 12, Theocrat. 14, Incense. 16, Pilate. 19, Exist. 20, Save.

Strange to see how a good dinner and feasting reconcile everybody.

Samuel Pepys

Think not on what you lack as much as on what you have.

Greek proverb



**And Happy New Year
from St Francis of Assisi and St Mary of Nazareth Churches,
West Wickham**

Saturday 6th Dec	4.00pm	<u>The Big Christmas Sing</u> at St Francis' Church, Ravenswood Ave
Friday 12th Dec	3.45pm	<u>Messy Christmas</u> - crafts, games, story, songs and food for all up to age 11 at St Mary's Church, The Avenue
Sunday 21st Dec	10.45am 4.00pm	<u>Family Carol Service</u> - St Francis' <u>Carol Service</u> - St Mary's
Christmas Eve	4.00pm 6.00pm 11.15pm	<u>Christingle Service</u> at St Mary's <u>Lighting the Lamps</u> at St Francis' <u>Midnight Communion</u> at both churches
Christmas Day	10.00am	<u>Family Communion</u> - St Francis' Children are welcome to bring a present from their Christmas stockings

Parish Matters

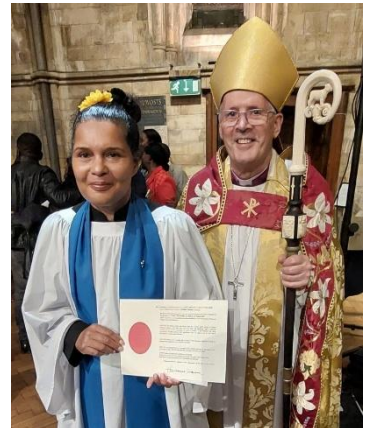
Harvest Supper

On Saturday 11th October some thirty members of St. Mary's and Anita and John Curtis from St. Francis sat down to enjoy a meal of sausages, chips and baked beans with French bread. Home cooked apart from the chips which arrived courtesy of the local fish and chip shop and Stephen!!. This was followed by tasty desserts and then a sing-a-long of songs from the shows with music as usual provided by Geoff. All in all a very enjoyable evening in good company and our thanks must go to Gifty, Julie, Claire Bull and Jackie and of course to Geoff for the music. A profit of £321 was made for Church funds.

Beryl

Debbie Adams with the Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun.

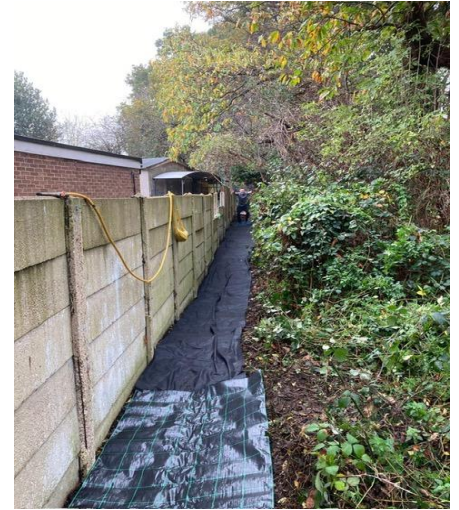
Debbie received her full Readers Certificate at Southwark Cathedral on 12th October 2025 on completion of her four years training. Congratulations to Debbie for all her hard work during this time. Debbie would like to thank everyone for their continued prayers and support.



An Unseen Path to Nowhere !!!!

We all have next door neighbours, who never maintain their gardens, to trim back over hanging branches, and let weeds grow through our fences. With our church site bordering the golf course, we have always had this trouble, but from time to time we apply for permission to trespass, and cut back all growing vegetation from the golf course side of our joint fence line.

And so it was that, the organisers of the play group, that use the land between church and the dividing fence, reported that stinging nettles from the golf course chain link fence, needed cutting back, also along the length of the old concrete fence, the vegetation was almost pushing the fence over, work needed to be planned. Our scout group were looking for a project, where youthful endeavour, could perhaps help their church out in some fashion.



So the ideal match was made, our scouts plus congregation members, with a sweetener !!! of bacon butties for all who work !!!!, provided by our church-warden's, set too, to do battle with high brambles, stinging nettles, weeds and ivy. That with a total of 35 volunteers, the project was completed in 5 hours of honest toil, the pathway now looks a real professional job. !!!

The big heap of wood chippings, lying adjacent to the scout garage, had been unused long enough. With a hedge trimmer leading the way, into the vegetation jungle alongside the fence, this gave access to the team weeding and levelling the path, with a team behind them, to lay down rolls of weed matting, on which the tons of wet wood chippings where laid. Job done.



As "clerk of the works" for the day, I thank all members of our scout group and their parents plus all the valuable help from our congregation. The trade off, hard work in exchange for payment of "bacon butties" was a complete success !!!, I need volunteers, in 6 years' time, to start the job again !!!.

Uncle Steve

Christmas Market

Thanks to all who supported our Christmas Market by donating gifts, helping on the day and during the week before. A full write up on the market with details of all draw winners and raffle winners will be reported in the February edition of the magazine. In the meantime, a big thank you to the Christmas Market Team, particularly Natalie and Tony for co-ordinating the event.

Community Christmas Tree Festival at St Francis

In December we will be holding our third Community Christmas Tree Festival at St Francis of Assisi, Ravenswood Avenue, West Wickham between 13th and 20th December. We will be raising money for Welcare in Bromley, a charity that provides practical and emotional support and advice to families in need. Christmas Tree Festivals have become increasingly popular as a way of bringing communities together, raising money for charity, helping the local economy, sharing the joy of Christmas and having a lot of fun!

The Christmas Tree Festival will be held during the following times:

- Saturday 13th December – 10am – 1pm
- Sunday 14th December – 12 noon – 3pm
- Wednesday 17th December – 10.30am – 1pm
- Friday 19th December – 10am – 1pm
- Saturday 20th December – with a Children's activity - 10am–1pm

We look forward to seeing you there!

Nicky, Gill and Caroline

Warm Space at St Francis

We are open on a Wednesday morning between 10.00am and 3.00pm for coffee and soup and for somewhere to chat and also some board game and puzzles. We will not be open on 24th and 31st December but back on 7th January. We are always looking for volunteers to support this and if you would like to offer a couple of hours on a Wednesday please contact Nicky Nightingale - nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk

Sanctuary Pedestal List

There is a list on the noticeboard at the foot of the choir vestry stairs. Please fill in any dates where you would like to donate a pedestal in memory of a loved one, for a birthday or anniversary. The available dates are every other week as the flowers usually last for two weeks and, this eases the workload as we do not have many arrangers now. The contact for any queries is Merri Womack 0208 777 8772. We can always arrange to do an extra pedestal if anyone requires a special date. If anyone is interested in arranging flowers and would be interested in helping, please contact Merri.

Electoral Roll

If you are new to St. Marys, or already a member but not on the electoral roll. Please see Chris Fitzgerald on a Sunday morning or give him a ring on 020 8777 0083. Chris will be pleased to explain what is involved and give you the necessary form to be filled in. Being on the Electoral Roll gives you the right to vote on any matter concerning the Church.

The Food Bank

Thank you all for your generous and regular donations to the Food Bank. The need is always there but even more so during the winter months and at Christmas time. Please continue to leave donations in the box outside the Hall. Any “bags for life” you may have spare would be very useful for making up Christmas parcels. Thank you.

Magazine Subscriptions

This is a reminder that subscriptions for the magazine are due with the next Edition of the magazine in February. The cost remains at £3 for the year. If you prefer to pay with each two-monthly edition, the cost is 50p per copy. Electronic copies are sent to everyone on the church’s email group.

If you wish to receive an electronic copy, please contact Gifty office@stmaryswestwickham.co.uk

We are always pleased to receive any articles for the magazine.

St Francis & St Mary's Joint, All-Age, Other Special Services and Events Calendar

December

- 4th –6th Matchbox performances
- 6th The Big Christmas Sing at St Francis' – 4pm
- 7th Joint service St Mary's Patronal Sunday – 10am
- 10th St Mary's Christmas Community Lunch – 12:30pm
- 12th Messy Church – 3:45pm
- 13th Scouts' Carol service at St Mary's – 6:30pm
- 13th–20th Christmas Tree Festival at St Francis'
- 14th St Francis' Christmas Community Lunch – 12:30pm
- 21st Carol services: 10:45am at St Francis' and 4pm at St Mary's
- 24th Christingle at St Mary's – 4:30pm and Lighting the Lamps at St Francis' – 6pm
- 24th Midnight Communion Services at both churches – 11:15pm

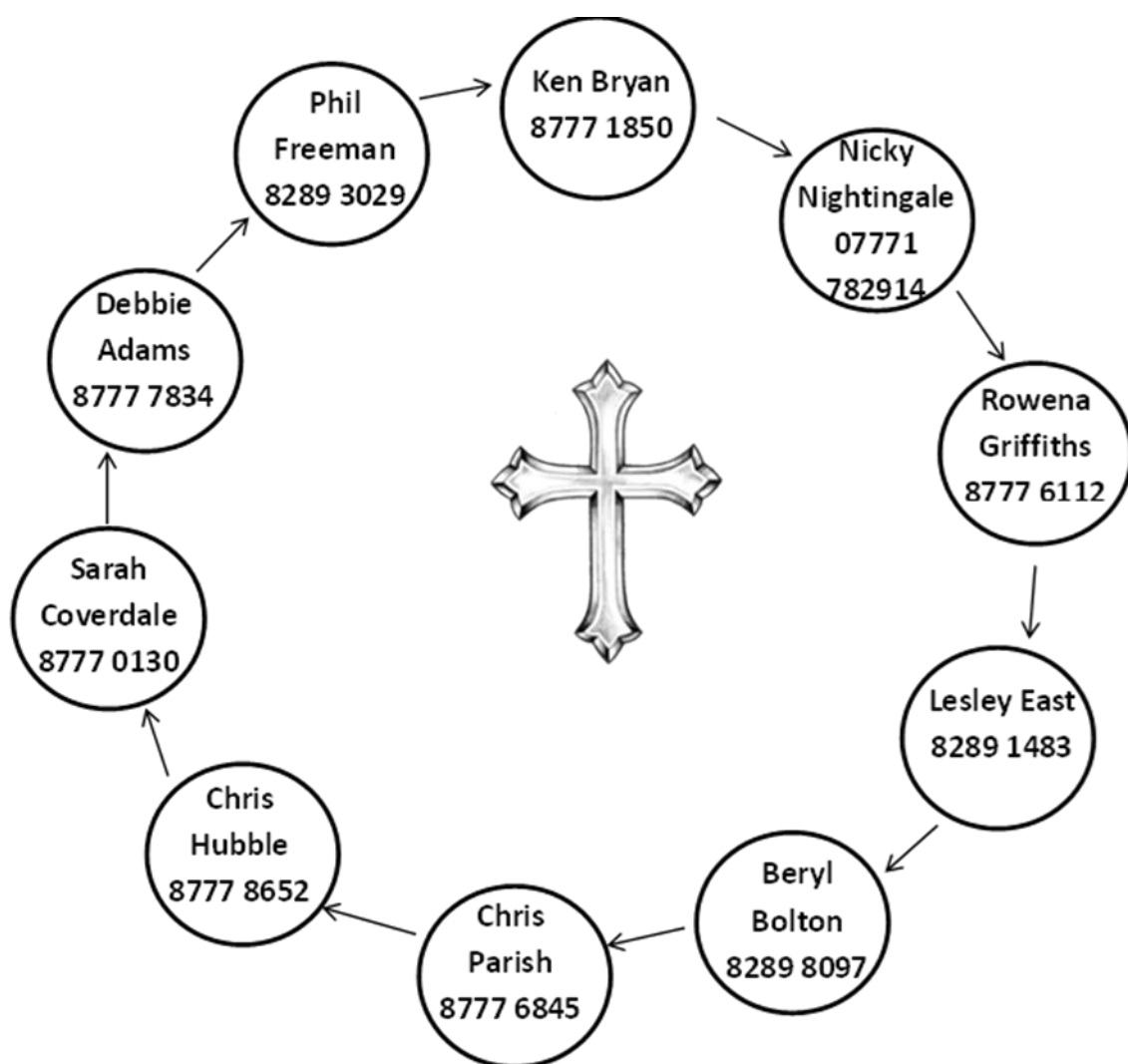
January 2026

- 4th Joint service at St Francis' (Epiphany) – 10am
- 7th St Mary's Community Lunch – 1pm
- 9th Messy church – 3.45pm
- 20th St Francis & St Mary's women's Group – 8pm at TBC

St Francis and St Mary's Prayer Chain

Many people find they are given strength and peace of mind when they know that they, or their loved ones, are being prayed for. And the more people who are praying for someone, the better!

If you would like prayer for yourself, please call anyone on the chain below and they will pass a message on around the circle. If you like a name added to the intercessions list in our services, (which will be on-line as well as in-person) please state this when you make contact.



Prayer Focus

December

December is the darkest months in the Northern hemisphere, yet for the Church it is a month that shines brightly as we journey with the Prophets, John the Baptist, and the Virgin Mary as they prepare for Christ the babe of Bethlehem to be born, each illumined by the Holy Spirit and we by the guiding star. These are days of light and darkness, joy in the present, and future joy seen through the darkness of suffering. The words of the hymn 'Long ago prophets knew' are apt, as we look expectantly for the coming of Jesus, the light of the world:

'Journey ends! Where afar

'Bethlem shines, like a star,

'Stable door stands ajar.

'Unborn Son of Mary,

'Saviour, do not tarry!'

Then following Christmas Day, we remember the victims of State sponsored violence (Ss Stephen, John, Thomas Beckett, and the Holy Innocents), a reminder that the powerful have always feared for their power. As Mary's Magnificat tells Christ's coming turns the world upside down: 'he has cast the mighty from their thrones and has raised up the poor and lowly. He feeds the starving and sends the rich empty away'. The powerful fear the light that Christ brings, because it uncovers their power, the poor rejoice because their suffering is revealed.

In each of these things in Advent and Christmas we are reminded that God is doing a new thing. As we read the Old Testament, we see that God is continuously doing a new thing in the midst of his people, whether it is leading his people out of slavery and into freedom, or from exile into a nation restored.

January

In January we listen to the first stories of Jesus's ministry, in particular his Baptism and the Wedding at Cana. Christ turns the world upside down, and the love of God is made known. We also celebrate the Conversion of St Paul, where light shines into the darkness, and the darkness is unable to overcome that light but is instead changed and transformed into belief. Again, God is doing a new thing in the midst of his creation, and his focus moves from one beloved people to the whole of creation, and what he is doing will in the words of 1 Samuel 'make the ears of all who hear it tingle'.

As during Advent, we await the coming of Jesus at Christmas, and as we celebrate the beginnings of his earthly ministry, let us reflect with our Orthodox friends on the coming of the Light of God into this dark world in the words of the Phos Hilarion:

‘O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the Immortal Father,

‘heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ.

‘Now we have come to the setting of the sun

‘and behold the light of evening.

‘We praise God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

‘For it is right at all times to worship Thee with voices of praise,

‘O Son of God and Giver of Life,

‘therefore all the world glorifies Thee.’

Please join us to celebrate

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

at St Francis of Assisi Church, Ravenswood Ave, BR4 0PW



Come along to St Francis Church to view the trees, enjoy some refreshments, listen to festive music and get ready for Christmas.

We will be raising money for Welcare in Bromley, a charity that provides practical and emotional support and advice to families in need.

**The Christmas Tree Festival will be held between
13-20 December 2025 during the following times:**

Saturday 13 December – 10.00am – 1.00pm

Sunday 14 December – 12.00noon – 3.00pm

Wednesday 17 December – 10.30am – 1.00pm

Friday 19 December – 10.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 20 (with Children's Activities) – 10.00am – 1.00pm

FREE ENTRY



Matt's Book Review

Nick Lowles 'How to Defeat the Far Right: Lessons From Hope Not Hate'

I can vividly remember my first history class at Secondary School. Our teacher Mr Burton asked the class this question 'Why do we study history?' The answer was 'so that we can learn from the mistakes of the past'. As the old saying goes 'those who fail to learn from the past are doomed to repeat its mistakes' (and those who study history are doomed to watch as the same mistakes are made over and again!)

To quote an old Chinese malediction (a form of anti-blessing) 'we live in interesting times'. History seems to be repeating itself once again: the economy is turning downwards, and fascism, totalitarianism and nationalism is on the rise not just in nations far away, but in our own neighbourhood (Europe and America). In our own communities we are seeing a surge in nationalist spirit centred on the Union and St George's flags. Historically flags were used to communicate unity and cohesion, indeed the Regimental Colours paraded at ceremonial events are a sign of unity and valour for the regiment, a rallying sign in times of battle. Now flags are being used to divide rather than to unite, to tell some that they are on the inside, and others that they will never be welcome.

I know from conversations that I have had that many people in our wider community are quietly concerned about this. Indeed, Bishops Christopher and Rosemarie recently held a gathering for clergy to hear about what is happening in the parishes. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend that meeting, though I sent in my thoughts and observations, and suggested that they should hold meetings like this in each Episcopal Area, and not just one for the whole Diocese.

So how do we respond? If you spend time online as I do and on social media, you will see that attack has become the best form of defence for many. People bellow at each other, calling each other names, or retreating into echo

chambers where they listen to and hear only that which supports their beliefs. This is all helped by algorithms that feed us more of what we like, and less of that which we don't. In essence we have stopped listening to each other, or when we do it is only to draw breath before we go back on the attack. (And yes, I am as guilty of that as anyone else.)

Which leads me on to a book I read recently by Nick Lowels the Head of the anti-fascist and research body 'HOPE not hate', 'How to Defeat the Far Right: Lessons From Hope Not Hate'. The focus of this book, despite its author's pedigree in anti-fascist action is not protest but in conversation and communication. His argument is that whilst protest has its place, conversation is far more likely to change hearts and minds. His argument reminds me of the truism that no one is converted to Christianity by a man or woman with a loudspeaker telling them they are a sinner, conversion comes through the building of relationships with people.

This approach has been tried before and has been and has been shown to work. In the mid-1990s the BNP managed to win a seat on Tower Hamlets Council for the Isle of Dogs Ward. The man elected was Derek Beackon, an activist for that organisation. What followed was a response by local community organisers and Churches to listen to people's concerns, to find out what had led them to voting for the BNP and countering the lies and half-truths they had been fed by that party. A year later their hard work had paid dividends and Beackon lost his seat. Those churches and communities on the Isle of Dogs demonstrate how the responses put forward by Lowles worked on the ground. That love, not hate, listening and conversation not grandstanding help change hearts and minds. And all of this was done under the threat of Far Right violence against those who were seeking to care for their community.

We are right to be concerned about the direction our own nation and the world around us, we are in danger of travelling down the same path that led to war in 1939, a path paved with hatred of strangers, vilification of migrants and minorities all encouraged by political demagogues. But there is hope, and we and our communities are that hope, and that hope is centred on our being the best we can be to one another, friend and stranger alike. That hope is based in conversation and listening to the concerns of others, in educating and

correcting where necessary, done not through a megaphone, but through love and over a good cup of tea.

As for the Union and St George's flags, our churches will continue to fly them as and when it is appropriate, as signs of unity and solidarity. They are after all a sign of our united Kingdom, and thus belong to every member.



Luke 2:14



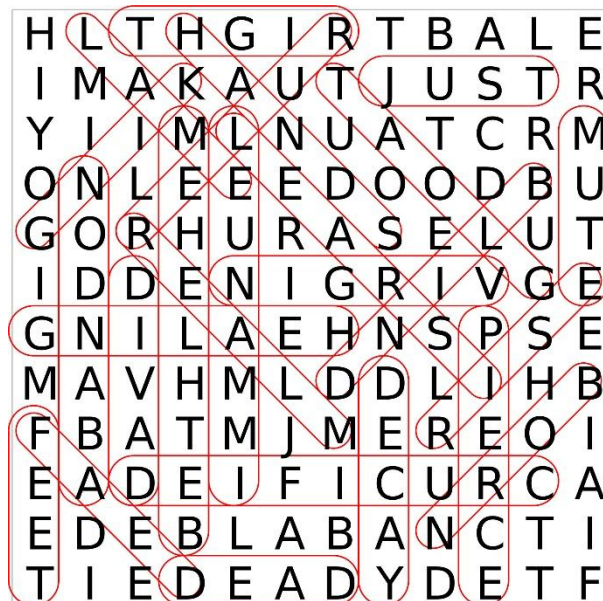
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Wordsearch Answers

Born/Virgin/Immanuel/Bethlehem/Ruler/Israel/David/King/Just/Right
Healing/Blind/Deaf/Lame/Mute/Crucified/Pierce/Hands/Feet/Gloat
Rise/Dead/Abandon/Decay/Realm





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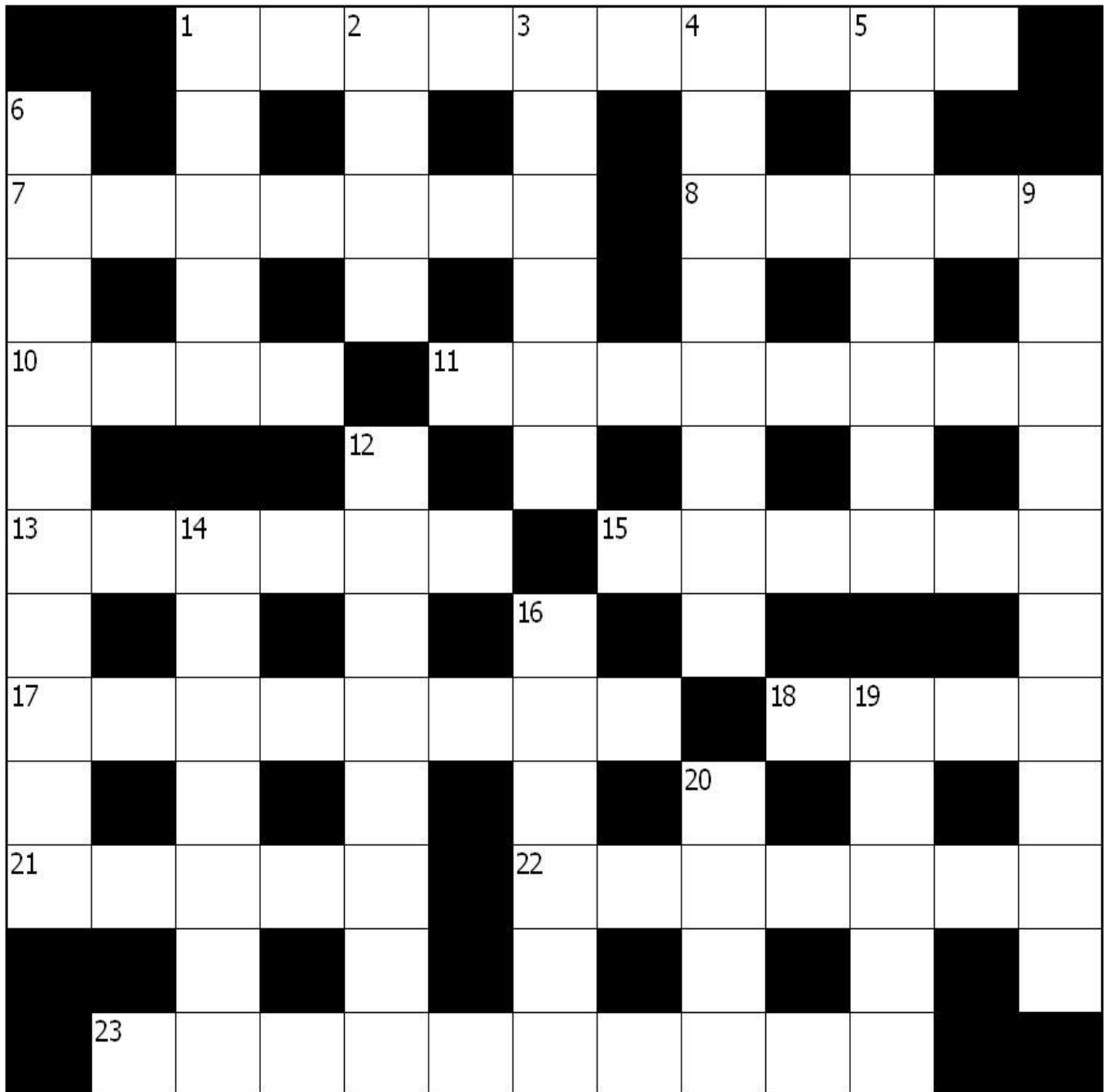


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Crossword Puzzle



Across

- 1 Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)
- 7 David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14,15) (7)
- 8 They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries (5)
- 10 Small deer of European and Asian extraction (4)

- 11 Seized control of (Numbers 21:25) (8)
- 13 Terror (Luke 24:5) (6)
- 15 First World War heroine shot by the Germans in Brussels, Nurse Edith (6)
- 17 Stormy (8)
- 18 A bitter variety of this, together with lamb and unleavened bread, was the Passover menu for anyone unclean (Numbers 9:11) (4)
- 21 Arson (anag.) (5)
- 22 How John Newton described God's grace in his well-known hymn (7)
- 23 Habitation (Isaiah 27:10) (10)

Down

- 1 and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8) (5)
- 2 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as ... as a lion (Proverbs 28:1) (4)
- 3 One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)
- 4 He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19,20) (8)
- 5 City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)
- 6 Offer your bodies as living , holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1) (10)
- 9 Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)
- 12 One who accepts government by God (8)
- 14 Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual (Exodus 30:1) (7)
- 16 He asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) (6)
- 19 Are (Romans 13:1) (5)
- 20 You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will ... his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21) (4)

Answers on page 11

WORDSEARCH



Wordsearch clues

Did the Old Testament expect Jesus to come? Yes indeed! Here are just some examples of OT prophecies:

He would be born of a virgin. ‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son and will call Him Immanuel.’ (Isaiah 7:14)

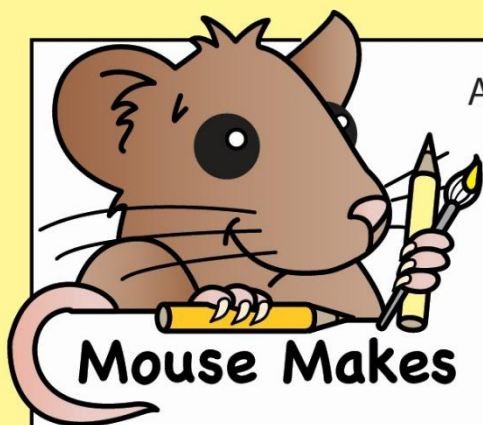
He would be born in Bethlehem. ‘But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel...’ (Micah 5:2)

His lineage would be of the line of David. ‘I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.’ (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

He would bring healing. ‘Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.’ (Isaiah 35:5–6)

He would be crucified. They pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. (Psalm 22)

He would rise from the dead. ‘You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay...’ (Psalm 16: 8-11)



At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus,
God's Son and our Saviour
coming into the world as a baby,
and we look forward to the time
when Jesus will come again,
not as a baby but as the
King of kings and Lord of lords!

read
John 14:3

A baby needs clothes
to keep warm like
a snugly sleep suit
or a vest and nappy.

What were you dressed in?

Jesus was wrapped in

.....

read Luke 2:7

A baby needs somewhere
to be born like at home
or in a hospital.

Where were you born?

Jesus was born
in a stable in

.....

read Luke 2:1-6

A baby needs
somewhere
to sleep like
a crib or a cot.
*What did you
sleep in?*

Jesus slept in a

.....

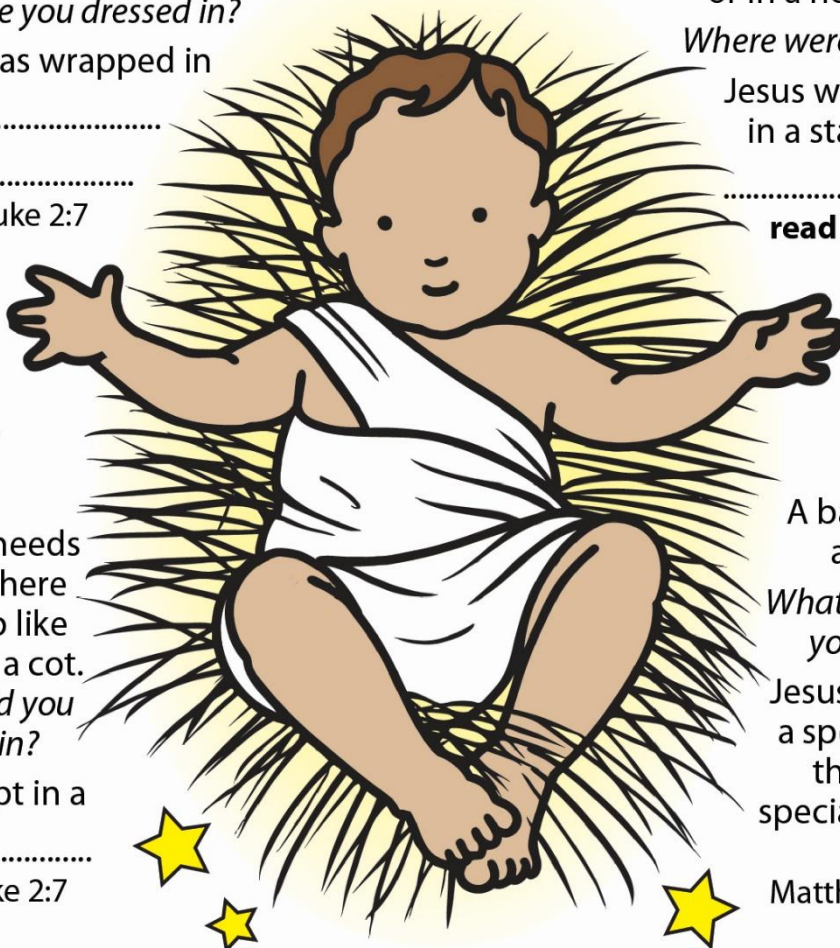
read Luke 2:7

A baby needs
a name.

*What name were
you called?*

Jesus was given
a special name
that had a
special meaning.

read
Matthew 1:21-23



HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ★ NOLLAIG CHRÌDHEIL ★ NOLLAG SHONA
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN

WE ARE ALL GUILTY

Well, I am. At times! Of complacency of leaving it to others to sort out!

BUT we do have a duty when it comes to the safeguarding of children **OR** vulnerable adults in the church.

There is a manual in our church vestibule entitled, '*A Safe Church*', which is for reference by anyone and acts as a guide to safeguarding matters.

If you do have a genuine concern about such a matter, then you may wish to speak to Charlotte Wilson or Kim Teare, our Safeguarding Officers or to one of the churchwardens.

HAVE YOU OR WILL YOU BE MAKING A WILL?

If so, please consider leaving a legacy to St. Mary's.

Legacies we have had in the past have been a great blessing and encouragement and enabled us to carry out important work. It is helpful if the bequest is given without conditions so the PCC can use the money as they feel appropriate.

Please give this prayerful consideration.

To make a Will is one of the kindest things you can do so your wishes are known.

Rotas

December

Welcoming in Church

8.00 a.m. Services

7 th	St. Francis	Stephen Howe
14 th	St. Francis	Stephen Howe
21 st	St. Mary's`	Stephen Howe
28 th	St. Francis	Stephen Howe

9.15/10.00 a.m. Services

7 th	10.00 a.m.	Julie Conway/Jackie Greathouse
14 th	9.15 a.m.	Natalie Outten/Phil Nortey
21 st	4.00 p. m Carol Service	Claire Bull/Dot Smythe
24 th	4.00 p.m. Christingle	Linda West/Pauline Christy
24 th	11.15 p.m. Midnight	John and Merri Womack
28 th	10.00 a.m.	Stephen Howe/Malcolm Hubbard

Coffee

7 th	10.00 a.m.	Margaret Bond/Sharon Newman
14 th	9.15 a.m.	Linda and Rob West
21 st	4.00 p.m. Carol Service	Jean Mathers/Natalie Outten
28 th	10.00 a.m. Joint	Bill and Debs Howell

Church Cleaning

Friday 5 th	Mrs. C. Cordery/Mr. P. Cordery
Friday 19 th	Mrs. M. Bond/Mrs. S. Newman

Church Flowers

- 7th Donated by John Womack as a thank you to his family for all their support and arranged by Merri.
- 20th Everyone for Christmas please on Saturday 20th December from 9.30 a.m. to decorate the Church for Christmas. There should be enough holly in church gardens. Anyone passing the church for the two weeks after Christmas please help by keeping the flowers watered. Thank you.
- If anyone would like to donate towards the cost of Christmas flowers please give the money to either of the Churchwardens. Thank you.

January

Welcoming in Church

8.00 a.m. Services

4 th	St. Mary's	Stephen Howe
11 th	St. Francis	Stephen Howe
18 th	St. Mary's	Stephen Howe
25 th	St. Francis	Stephen Howe

9.15/10.00 a.m. Services

4 th	10.00 a.m.	Joint at St. Francis
11 th	9.15 a.m.	Julie Conway/Jackie Greateorex
18 th	9.15 a.m.	Natalie Outtten/Phil Nortey
25 th	9.15 a.m.	Claire Bull/Dot Smythe

Coffee

4 th	10.00 a.m.	Joint at St. Francis
11 th	9.15 a.m.	Beryl Bolton/Gifty Nortey
18 th	9.15 a.m.	Claire Bull/Jackie Greateorex
25 th	9.15 a.m.	Merri and John Womack

Church Cleaning

2 nd	Chris Bryan/Annette Cordery
16 th	Kay and Geoff Mussard
30 th	Claire and Peter Cordery

Church Flower Pedestals

11 th	Donated by Margaret Bond in memory of Richard and arranged by Beryl
25 th	Donated by Audrey Tibbles for her brother's birthday on 25 th and arranged by Merri.



Contacts

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Magazine Articles

The Parish Magazine welcomes articles from its readers. Please send to Beryl at berylbolton@hotmail.com by the 15th of the month preceding publication.

www.stmarywestwickham.co.uk

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The Avenue, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0DX**