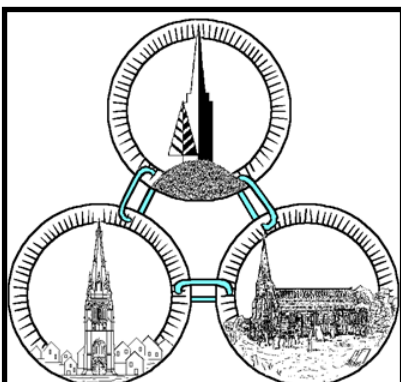


THE PARISH MAGAZINE

December 2017



The United Benefice of
St Michael Lichfield,
with St John, Wall

70p

<p>Rector:</p> <p>The Venerable Simon Baker, Archdeacon of Lichfield</p> <p>10 Mawgan Drive, Lichfield, Staffs, WS14 9SD. Tel: 01543 416232</p> <p>E-Mail: simonbaker57@outlook.com</p> <p>Day Off: Friday</p>	<p>Associate Minister (<i>Part-time</i>):</p> <p>The Revd. Linda Collins</p> <p>17, Leyfields, Lichfield, Staffs, WS13 7NJ. Tel: 07915 091128</p> <p>E-mail: lindacollins@hotmail.co.uk</p> <p>Days: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday</p>
<p>Associate Minister (<i>NSM Part-time</i>):</p> <p>The Revd. Denise Youngs</p> <p>10 Tame Avenue, BURNTWOOD, Staffs, WS7 9JQ. Tel: 01543 672646</p> <p>E-mail: deniseyoungs272@hotmail.com</p> <p>Days: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday</p>	<p>Associate Minister (<i>NSM Part-time</i>): The Revd. Ruth Bull</p> <p>36 Broadlands Rise, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS14 9SF E-mail: dkbrlcb@hotmail.com</p>
<p>Assistant Minister (NSM)</p> <p>The Revd. Jeyan Anketell</p> <p>7 Wissage Lane, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS13 6DQ</p>	<p>Reader: Lesley Allen</p> <p>21 Boley Close, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS14 9AR Tel: 01543 251654 E-mail: lesley.allen21@googlemail.com</p>
<p>Reader: Phil Clayton</p> <p>Glenridding, 7 Thacker Drive, Lichfield, Staffs, WS13 6NS Tel: 01543 263244 E-mail: phil@philclayton.net</p>	<p>Reader: Dr Trevor James</p> <p>36 Heritage Court, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS14 9ST Tel: 01543 258434</p>
<p>Reader: Peter Salt</p> <p>7 Redlock Field, Lichfield WS14 OAB Tel: 01543 250723 E-mail: peter.salt@btinternet.com</p>	<p>Reader: Alan Toplis</p> <p>Streethay Lodge, Streethay, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS13 8LR Tel: 01543 414651 E-mail: alan.toplis@toplis.co.uk</p>
<p>Parish Surgery</p> <p>For Baptisms, Banns and Weddings, staff are available at the Parish Office in St Michael's Church, Church Street on the 1st and 3rd Monday evenings in the month by appointment only. Please telephone 01543 262211 to make an appointment.</p>	<p>United Benefice Office</p> <p>St Michael's Church, Church Street, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS13 6ED Mon, Tues, Wed & Fri CLOSED Thursdays 9.00 am to 12.00 noon. Tel: 01543 262211 E-mail: office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk</p>
<p>St Michael's Church</p> <p>Church Street, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 6ED</p>	<p>St John's Church</p> <p>Green Lane, Wall, Staffordshire, WS14 0AS</p>

Reflection December 2017 from the Rector

These days it seems that the Christmas season begins on 1st November – if not earlier. The shops are decorated and all that we could ever need for Christmas is on the shelves or pushed at us through seasonal advertisements. We can't escape the festive songs and the glorification of Father Christmas. It all builds to a climax – 25th December, Christmas Day itself – and then it stops. Christmas is over and everything gets back to normal and we wait for another year.

It's become commonplace to appeal to people to celebrate Christmas in a way that has real meaning and is not commercial. Most of that appeal focusses on observing Advent properly. These are the four weeks running up to Christmas when Christians anticipate the coming of Christ and reflect on their lives and their personal and spiritual preparation for the good news of God come to be with us.

But there is another way to celebrate Christmas which is very traditional and quite neglected. Christmas Day itself is the *start* of a season of celebration not the *end* – 12 days in all - which does not end until 6 January, the Feast of the Epiphany or the Coming of the Wise men. Celebrating the 12 days of Christmas is more than simply another way of thumbing our noses at the commercialism of the season – or paying too much attention to a rather cryptic Christmas carol – it is a way of being open to what Christmas really means. Through the different days of the Christmas season we can see something of the profound significance and life changing nature of the Word of God made flesh, the child born in a stable and the man who lived among us, taught us, died and rose again so that we might be reconciled in love to God and to one another.

December 26 is the feast of St. Stephen—a traditional day for giving leftovers to the poor (as described in the carol "Good King Wenceslas"). As one of the first deacons or servants of the church, Stephen was the forerunner of all those who show the love of Christ by their generosity to the needy. He was also the first Christian martyr.

His death shows that there is often a price to pay for standing up for the poor and those who have no voice.

St. John the Evangelist, commemorated on December 27, is traditionally the only one of the twelve disciples who did *not* die a martyr. Rather, John witnessed to Christ in the gospel that bears his name. We read his beautiful words at the very start of Christmas “In the beginning was the Word and the Word became flesh and lived among us”. John shows us that those whose lives are touched by Christ cannot keep quiet about it.

On December 28, we commemorate the Holy Innocents, the children murdered by Herod. These were not martyrs like Stephen, who died heroically for Christ. They were not inspired like John to speak the Word of life and understand the mysteries of God. They died unjustly before they had a chance to know or believe anything. When we commemorate the Holy Innocents, we remember the victims of slavery, of war, of abuse. We renew our faith that the coming of Christ brings hope to the most hopeless. And we proclaim that all lost souls are found again in the love of God and saved not by our own efforts but by the one who is supreme love.

With the Epiphany (January 6), the celebration of Christmas comes to an end. Traditionally "Twelfth Night" is a moment of misrule – the world turned upside down. Shakespeare's play of the same name features one of his "wise fools" who understand the real meaning of life better than those who think they are sane. More than that, in the visit of Wise Men from the East to a small child in an obscure town we see the balance of power changed and the focus not on those who rule now and claim so much of our attention, but on God who rules quietly and claims the lives of each one of us.

So, to make Christmas special this year, why not join in a revival of the 12 Days of Christmas and keep the full festival, and what it means, in your hearts and minds until at least 6 January.

Simon

Magazine Prices

After a review of the costing of the magazine, it has been decided that there will be an increase in prices per issue and annually. The magazine will now cost 75p per issue or £7.50 for an annual subscription.

Anybody who would like to advertise here, these prices have also changed. These prices have not increased for some time and the increase is only 5%. The prices can be seen below:

Full page	£265
Half Page	£140
Quarter Page	£75
Eighth Page	£40

If there are problems please let us know by getting in contact with Barbara Homewood, whose details are below:

Barbara Homewood 255909

ANGEL TREE 2017

Note for your diary:

Present Buying: Monday 27th November, 10.a.m. outside B&M Store in Market Street.

Present Wrapping: Tuesday 28th November, 10a.m.-midday, and 2p.m.-4p.m. in the Community Room, Holy Cross Church, Chapel Lane, Lichfield. If you would like to donate money towards gifts or postage of the presents, please contact Rita Thompson, tel: 253822 or Teresa Lennox, tel: 677389.

Thank you for your support. *Caroline Green 262342*



Christmas Services at St. Michael's

Sunday 17th December

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion
- 10.00 am Holy Communion
- 6.00pm Lessons and Carols Service

Christmas Eve 24th December

- 8.00am NO SERVICE
- 10.00am Holy Communion
- 4.00pm Christingle Service
- 6.00pm Christingle Service
- 11.15pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 25th December

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion
- 10.00am Carol Communion

Christmas Services at St. John's Wall

Sunday 17th December

10.00am Morning Prayer

4.00pm Christingle

Tuesday 19th December

7.30pm Wall Village Carols

in ***Wall Village Hall***

Christmas Eve 24th December

10.00am NO SERVICE

11.15pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 25th December

9.00am Carol Communion



December Family Praise
is the



Toy Service

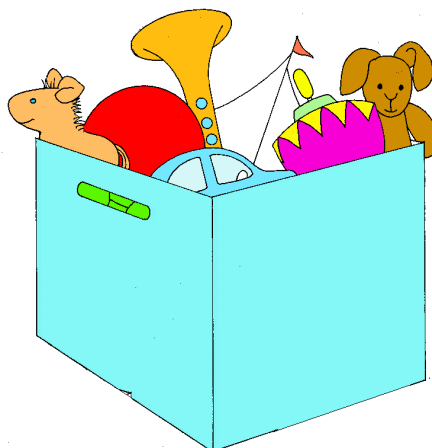
Sunday, 10th December at 10am

At this service there will be a collection of toys for children who live at the Pathway project, a refuge for women and their children in Lichfield. Often they have left home very suddenly with few possessions or toys.

Gifts of toys should be new and unwrapped, so they can be given to children of the most suitable age.

Toys, books, colouring books and crayons all make great gifts. Christmas wrapping paper is also very welcome.

Come along to the Toy Service and help make a child's Christmas very special, at a difficult time for them.





Children's Activities

The dates for Messy Church and First Steps in December and January are:

First Steps – 11th December and 15th January

at 10am in church

Messy Church = 10th December and 21st January

at 4.30pm in the Church Hall



Sing in the New Year!!



Sunday 7th January

6pm at St Michael's Church

Iona Big Sing

Everyone welcome

Refreshments afterwards

Contact Chris Polhill for more details

Water tap in the churchyard

People tending graves in the churchyard will have noticed that the tap near the new churchyard is no longer functioning and a new tap provides water where the path meets the drive. This is because when the work on the church toilets and kitchen was carried out, the old lead pipes had to be replaced with modern, safer ones.

If we had replaced the lead piping to the old tap, it would have cost almost £3000 pounds more – money we do not have to spare.

Some people have already said that they would like to donate towards the reinstatement of the old tap, close to the new churchyard as it is more convenient for them.

If you would like to pledge some money towards this, please contact the Parish Office on 01543 262211 or e-mail: office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk

At this stage we would like pledges rather than actual donations, until we see if this is going to be feasible.

Many thanks,

St Michael's PCC

Regular Services and Worship in the Benefice

Regular Services at St Michael's Sundays

8:00am Holy Communion
10:00am Holy Communion

2nd Sunday

10:00am Family Praise

Other Services at St Michael's Sundays

1st Sunday 12:30pm Holy Baptism

2nd Sunday 6:00pm Holy Communion

3rd Sunday 4:30pm Messy Church
Church Hall

4th Sunday 6:00pm Choral Evening

Tuesday

School Service

Prayer Group, St Michael's

2nd Wednesday of the month

Contact June Frayn (264920)

Brenda Liptrot (251863)



Praise & Play

1st Friday 10.30am

St John's



Bells Practice

Every Thurs 7:30pm, St Michael's

Regular Services at St John's

Sundays @ 10am

1st Sunday - Holy Communion

2nd Sunday - Holy Communion

3rd Sunday - Morning Prayer

4th Sunday - Holy Communion

5th Sunday - Wall Praise

Baptism @ 11.30am

4th Sunday

Music in the Benefice

St Michael's Church

Wednesdays

6.30pm Girls Choir

7.15pm Other parts &
St Michael's Singers

Monday before 2nd Sunday

Baptism

Preparation First Tuesday at
8:00pm at St Michael's

Parish Surgery

Every 1st and 3rd Monday by Appointment from 6:30pm at the Parish office in St Michael's Church. Please call

CHRISTMAS DAY TOGETHER

Churches Together in Lichfield are pleased to announce that the 'Christmas Day Together' lunch will be held again at Wade Street Church, Lichfield on Christmas Day.

This is a festive lunch followed by entertainment for local residents who will be on their own on Christmas Day and would like some company. Transport to and from Wade Street can be arranged.

Invitations will be sent out shortly to those who have attended the event in previous years.

If you have not attended before and would like to attend, or know anyone who you think would like to attend, please contact Maria Pavey by email to paveyfamily@googlemail.com or telephone 07505 129830.

If you would like to volunteer to help with the event, either with the preparations before the day, or on Christmas Day itself either at Wade Street or by providing transport, please also contact Maria by email to paveyfamily@googlemail.com or telephone 07505 129830.



Sound System at St Michael's

The sound system is proving more and more unreliable and it is time to replace and upgrade it. It is important for our worship together and our ministry to the school and the community through weddings and funerals.

We need to raise funds while we work out exactly what to do and how much it will cost. If you would like to make a donation to help with this please put money or cheques (payable to St Michael's PCC) in a blue envelope and mark it Sound.

If you can gift aid your donation that would help even more.

Thank you - Rector and Churchwardens.

DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD PRAYER DIARY

<https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/documents/category/prayer-diary/>

Saturday 2nd Dec

Lord God, you have brought us together in partnership.

You have caused us to depend on each other.

We thank you for this.

May we use this opportunity to discover each other.

Open our hearts to see the problems and needs of our partners, strengthen us as we give and receive, sharing material and spiritual gifts.

We commit ourselves to You as we journey together, united with one another in Your love.

Amen.

*(Güstrow Cathedral; Christian Höser
2013)*



'Bark! The Herald Angels Sing' Carol Service

Sunday December 10th 1.30pm at St. Michael's Church all are welcome with their dogs (or without!) to celebrate the role of dogs in God's creation as workers and companions.

Hall Green Retired Greyhounds Trust will be there again with their greyhounds to enjoy the singing (barking) and to raise funds for their work in rehoming ex-racing dogs. <http://www.hallgreenrgt.co.uk/>

Their website says: *'Our kennels near Sutton Coldfield is at Watford Gap Kennels, Watford Gap Road, WS14 0QG and is convenient for those living in Lichfield, Tamworth, South Staffordshire and North Birmingham. Although based in the Midlands, Hall Green RGT have re-homed dogs across the UK. You can find Hall Green dogs living in homes from Jersey to the Orkney Island and abroad too, including France and Switzerland.'*



WHAT DO WE DO?

- *Socialise newly retired racers and prepare them for re-homing*
- *Place retired racers into loving and responsible homes*
- *Raise people's awareness about the true nature of these wonderful dogs*

WHY DO WE DO IT?

- *Because approximately over 9,000 greyhounds retire each year from racing*
- *So ex-racers can live out the rest of their lives loved as someone's pet*
- *Because greyhounds are very adaptable and our rehoming policies are flexible so even if you work, have small children or have cats, we may well have a dog for you*
- *Because we believe that every home should have a greyhound and every greyhound should have a home'*

Last year this was a unique and lovely short Carol Service, with refreshments afterwards, so do come along to celebrate and support this cause! More info – contact Revd Linda Collins. Tell your friends – all welcome!

CHRISTMAS - OR AT ANY TIME!

I have been stockpiling my home-made toys in anticipation of a church sale but, as that does not seem to be in the offing, I thought I would try a bit of direct marketing in the hopes that I could clear some stock and also keep myself busy.

Some of you will know that I make a variety of wooden hand-pulled toys; egg houses for the kitchen and Christmas stables. The latter are made to order as they need to match the size of your figures.

ALL proceeds go to Church funds and I welcome home-viewing or just grab me in Church.

Thank you all.

Peter Boggis



STAYING SAFE ONLINE

More and more people are using computers, smartphones and tablets to get online. It can be a great way to do shopping and banking, but ...

How can I stay safe when shopping and banking online?

Shopping online can be quick and convenient, but you need to protect your financial information. Make sure that you're using a secure website before entering any personal details.

There are ways to spot that a website is secure, including:

- the website address starts with 'https' - the 's' stands for secure
- the address bar is green, which is an additional sign that you're using a safe website
- a padlock symbol in the browser where the website address is (but don't be fooled if the padlock appears on the page itself).
- a current security certificate which is registered to the correct address. (this appears when you click on the padlock). Be aware that a padlock symbol is not an absolute guarantee of safety. If you ever have doubts it's best to leave the page.

To help protect you while shopping or banking online, follow these simple tips:

- Beware of pop-up messages that warn you about a website's security certificate. They may direct you to a fake website that's designed to get you to hand over your security details.
- Use online retailers with a good reputation, as either high-street shops or established online stores.
- Look for the company's full contact details. A reputable company will always display this information on its website.
- Cross-check information on the internet to see if anyone has experienced problems with the retailer.
- Find out where the seller is based because consumer rights vary from country to country. For more information about buying from sellers based in other EU countries, you can visit the UK European Consumer Centre website.
- Use the same credit card for internet transactions only. If anything goes wrong, you can always cancel this card.

And finally:

Remember, if a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is, and be cautious of anything offered in an unsolicited email.

The Bishop of Stafford's pastoral letter for November 2017



Back in the summer I was reading some accounts concerning a particularly sad problem in one of our churches where some of the members are not getting on with one another. At the same time on the television screen there were pictures of the devastating forest fires that swept across parts of Europe and I was reminded of some verses from the Letter of James:

‘How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire... no one can tame the tongue – a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God’ (James 3:5ff).

As always, scripture gets to the heart of the problem and challenges us. If only we could be better at thinking about what we are going to say before we say it, so much upset could be avoided and relationships healed rather than broken down. The kind of threats that some leaders of nations make reported in the world’s press have no place in the Christian Church. We have to be prepared to make a stand and if necessary tell our Brothers and Sisters in Christ when what we are hearing them say is unacceptable to us, but try to settle our disagreements in an agreeable way and use our common Baptism in Christ as the ground for appropriate discussion in language that aims at reconciliation – and is acceptable to God.

But it is not just the spoken word that can cause offence and misunderstanding and make bad situations ever worse. If James were writing now he might well add that social media, email or text can equally become inflamed into a roaring inferno and lead to a situation getting completely out of hand. If only we paused and thought about how we would feel if we were to receive the text or email we are about to send!

In a recent survey undertaken by YoungMinds and The Children's Society 83% of young people think that social media companies should do more to tackle cyberbullying. The survey of over 1000 people aged 11-25 showed the extent to which this bullying takes place. Some 48% said they had experienced threatening, intimidating or nasty messages and 20% had personal, private or embarrassing information being shared publically. However, 60% said that despite all of this social media had a positive effect on their friendships and could help to promote good mental health for young people.

These are important issues and we cannot shrug them off and say they are someone else's problem because they start with you and me. How we relate to each other does have an impact on those around us and through them goodness or disagreement spreads out into the wider community. Listening to gossip or saying unpleasant things about another member of our church family or failing to challenge unacceptable comments gives a passive acceptance to the kind of attitude and behaviour that causes bullying like that highlighted in the survey. It also turns people away from the Church because they think (with some justification) that we are hypocritical – and Jesus reserved his strongest condemnation for those he judges as 'hypocrites'. We need to express our opinions with care.

The English author Edward Bulwer-Lytton coined the adage 'The pen is mightier than the sword' and in this month of Remembrance it is good to be reminded that good communication is a more effective tool than direct aggression. But we also have to remember that bad communication – spoken, written or through social media – can result in unhappiness and violence and ultimately even war.

At most Services of Remembrance we make an Act of Commitment to 'pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men and women: that we may help, encourage and comfort others, and support those working for the relief of the needy and for the peace and welfare of the nations'. Perhaps our starting point should be thinking more about what we are going to say or write or text or email or place on our social media before we actually do it!

With best wishes and every Blessing,

+Geoff
November 2017



Lichfield Cathedral Chorus

Musical Director: Benjamin Lamb

presents



Handel's Messiah

in Lichfield Cathedral

on Saturday 9th December

at 7.30pm

Tickets: £22 and £17 (reserved)

£10 (unreserved)

from

Lichfield Garrick Box Office

01543 412121 www.lichfieldgarrick.com



United Benefice Walking Group

We had an wonderful walk in October around Brownhills Common. A real eye-opener for many of the group who didn't know that this natural spot existed in Brownhills. Unfortunately, a lot of the mushrooms had past their best but there were still many to see, if you looked carefully.

We all enjoyed our autumn Walk and the food at The Hussey Arms.

Walking Group will be taking its traditional winter break in December and the next walk will be in January.

Ray Allen 01543 251654



FLOODLIGHTING

Sponsor St Michael's floodlights to mark a special occasion or remember a loved one!

Your donation will brighten up the skies over Lichfield for the night.

**Contact the United Benefice Office
on 01543 262211**



St. Michael's Film Club

1. A Street Cat Named Bob

(Cert PG. 103min. Drama/Comedy. 2016.)

An uplifting film based on the true story of Bob's role in changing the life of homeless James!

Monday December 4th .

Refreshments £2.50 from 1.00pm.

St. Michael's Church Hall
(behind Aldi). All welcome.

Contact: Parish Office 01543 262211

2. Hampstead

(Cert 12. 103min. Romantic Comedy. 2017.)

The hilarious, heart-warming story of widow (Diane Keaton) who finds love with a man (Brendan Gleeson) living on Hampstead Heath when they take on the developers who want to destroy his home.

Monday JANUARY 8th.



My Cousin Rachel

Orphan Philip is raised by his older cousin Ambrose on the latter's country estate. It is a very male establishment with no female staff in the house or on the estate. The only female we see is Louise, the daughter of Philip's godfather, a sensible, patient girl.

After boarding school which he disliked, Philip returns to help run the estate but is soon left in charge when Ambrose is taken ill and advised by his doctor to take a break in Italy with its warmer climate. His letters home take a joyful turn as he describes meeting a distant cousin, Rachel who is a widow. She apparently nurses him devotedly and they marry. Then the letters become unsettling as he believes she is trying to poison him. When he dies Rachel comes to England to stay in Ambrose's old home. Philip is not happy. He is convinced that she is a murderess and does not want her but sensible, patient Louise helps him to prepare rooms for her.

Rachel arrives, a quiet, lady-like woman who seems not to want to upset anyone and gradually Philip becomes infatuated. Against the advice of his god-father and the family lawyer he showers her with gifts of family jewels and also changes his will. She seems to the viewer to be, at one moment sincere and honest, at the next scheming and devious. Finally Philip's suspicions overcome his infatuation and when she goes out riding he recommends a cliff-top path which he knows to be dangerous. No surprise then, that the cliff crumbles and Rachel falls to her death.

Our audience were divided as to whether Rachel did cause Ambrose's death or if he would have died from his illness. He was a very sick man. Was she trying to claim Philip as her next husband or did he not understand her? He had told us that he was a dullard at school.

The film ended with a scene showing Philip and sensible, patient Louise enjoying a day out with their two children. To paraphrase the great Charlotte Bronte "viewer, she married him". Let us hope he was worth patiently waiting for.

Betty Lyne



Lichfield and District RSPB LOCAL GROUP

Are you interested in birds and wildlife in general?

Join us at our monthly meetings at Lichfield Guildhall for illustrated talks on a variety of bird and wildlife subjects.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month and begin at 7.30pm and end at about 9.30pm with a half-time break for refreshments and chat. Admission £3.

Our 2017/18 Winter programme is:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 14 th November | - Wildlife of the Malvern Hills |
| 12 th December | - Christmas social |
| 9 th January | - Inspired by Birds |
| 13 th February | - A Fish with Feathers |

For more information call Dennis Muxworthy on 0121 353 6886 or email dennis.muxworthy@btinternet.com.

rspb.org.uk/localgroups

Gannets by Denny Green (rspb-images.com). The RSPB is a registered charity in England & Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037854, 383-1906-13-14



Mothers Union Report for December Magazine

At the end of October our numbers were swelled by many visitors who came to hear Diana Baker's talk on transforming gardens. Clergy wives have a great deal in common with army wives. No sooner are they settled in one place and have made it their own than their husbands are relocated and they start all over again. For some, this could be unsettling, for others it presents a challenge. Diana is definitely in the second group.

We saw pictures of her childhood home close to a brickworks where 3 generations of her family had worked. Ash from the kilns and manure from nearby chicken sheds was dug into the soil so that it was rich and fertile. (The first rule of successful gardening is to take care of your soil). The older generations concentrated on vegetables but Diana's father also grew flowers and Diana "fell into gardening" as a child when she helped him.

When Simon and Diana were still in their 20's he became rector of a parish near Reading. Like most of their subsequent residences it had an overgrown garden and this one was especially large. Fortunately the local garden club helped to clear the worst undergrowth and rubbish. Next Diana asked the cat's protection league for their two most vicious cats. They soon solved the problem of the resident pigeons, rats, mice and rabbits. Then she could plan the structure of the garden.

In this, and all the other gardens she inherited, she stressed the importance of a strong structure, enrichment of the soil, a good colour scheme and most important, space for entertaining. We saw many pictures of dazzlingly colourful borders, containers overflowing with annuals and trellises supporting climbing plants to give height to the scheme. Diana advocates using plenty of containers which can be moved to fill gaps in borders and, of course, to take plants to the next garden. On one move she took 150 plants to start her new garden. Thanks to Diana and Ron the film maker we had a delightful and informative evening which gave us plenty of incentive to improve our own gardens.

In November we welcomed Beryl Metcalfe who spoke to us about gender based violence. She gave us some worrying statistics about incidences of physical and mental abuse of women and children, female genital mutilation and infanticide and cyber harassment. We discussed what we can do to raise awareness and if we could help in anyway. One way would be to back Matthew Ellis, our Crime Commissioner who is calling for more hostels and safe houses. Another is to be always ready to listen to a woman or child who may need to talk about a problem. This was not one of our more cheerful meetings but we really need to know what is happening and to try to raise awareness.

Betty Lyne



WINTER IS ALMOST HERE!



Here are some useful tips from Age UK to help us prepare for winter. We may already be aware of many of them, but there may also be one or two we have forgotten!

- Get your heating system serviced by a qualified engineer to ensure it's running safely and efficiently.
- Never block air vents and if you have wood-burning, coal or gas heaters make sure there's adequate ventilation.
- If water pipes freeze they can burst. Make sure you know where the main stopcock is and check that it's easy to turn so you can turn off the water if you need to.
- Have your electric blanket serviced at least every three years.
- Make sure your smoke alarm is working. You can ask your local fire service to check your home for fire safety. It's free and you may be eligible to get free smoke alarms fitted.
- Install an audible carbon monoxide alarm in each room that has a gas appliance.
- Make sure you claim all the financial support you can to help with heating bills.
- Dress in plenty of layers and make sure you have warm shoes or boots with non-slip soles.
- Keep a mixture of salt and sand handy to put on steps or paths in icy weather.

- Consider fitting a grab rail if you have steps at your front or back door.
- Keep simple cold, flu and sore throat remedies in the house.
- Follow up your GP's invitation to have a flu jab.
- Order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time, particularly if bad weather is forecast and check if your local pharmacy offers a prescription pick-up and delivery service.
- Eat healthily – and keep basic food items in the cupboard or freezer in case it's too cold to go shopping. You could also do your food shopping online and get it delivered to your door.
- Keep a torch handy in case you lose power and keep battery operated items fully charged, so you can use them if there's no electricity. If there is a power cut you can call 105 for free. You'll be put through to your local network operator who can give you help and advice.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers, such as your utility companies, by your phone.



Guarding Letocetum Part Five

The pale light of a half-moon shone down brightly from the night sky, clouds that might have masked it had long since disappeared. Summer had slowly faded into winter, and as the nights grew longer and the air bit harder, the small settlement had grown brighter. Candles shone brightly at every window, making the small settlement shine like a beacon in murkiness of its dark surroundings.

It had been a few weeks since the new commander had arrived, some of the soldiers had expected change and feared that the lax attitude which had accompanied Drusus's reign might vanish. They had, for a few days, but once the dead had been respected and honoured with a huge feast, life had gone back to normal. For Marcus there seemed to be no real change, just different variations on the same idea, and most of the men didn't complain so long as the bath house was kept open a little longer than it should be.

His watch had ended almost half an hour previously, but the young man still clad in heavy armour and trapped with pensive thoughts, stayed out in the cold night. After a while the harshness of the night dulled against the rest of his senses. His feet had taken him to the small memorial that stood away from the hubbub of the town. The bodies had already been taken away, taken to the *necropolis*. Most of them couldn't afford a sarcophagus, all except perhaps Drusus, but the old commander had always demanded he be buried by his men, and so he had been.

The memorial hadn't been much, but the lads had cobbled together what little pay they had and gotten a marble marker. It stood gleaming in the moonlight, but Marcus knew that it would weather and likely be lost to the mists of time. The battle had given him a lot to

think about and he'd been unable to stop. The others seemed to be dealing with it, taking it their stride, but they were used to it, accustomed.

"Thought I'd find you 'ere."

Marcus didn't need to turn to recognise that voice, Quintus sidled over. He too was in his armour, though his was a lot more battered and barely even reflected the moonlight. A few days' worth of stubble clung to his thin face, a sign that the new commander had given up trying to enforce thorough standards among the men. It was impossible, men like Quintus were on night duty purely so as no civilian ever had to see him.

"And yet I had no idea."

"Well, you wouldn't, would ya?" Marcus just nodded, he didn't want to say anything else. Quintus, it seemed, had other ideas. "You holdin' up alright?"

"How could I even possibly be?"

"I thought that, most of us do," He was silent for a moment, staring at the memorial like Marcus was.

"I remember, first time it 'appened to me. Me and this lad Cassius, been together what, three weeks? You know what it's like, put the rookie with someone else, show 'em the



ropes. Well, we were just patrolling, nuffin' serious, then out of nowhere these barbarians jump us. Take him out in a second and drag me off a prisoner. Didn't get out of there for three weeks. Learn a lot about yourself when you're stuck with a bunch of nutters who don't even speak Latin."

Marcus had to resist the temptation to point that Quintus was hardly the model of perfect Latin speaking.

"And what did you learn?"

"That I was lucky," Quintus answered simply, "I got to keep goin', Cassius didn't and that the only thing we can do is to remember. Promise never to forget, not ever. It don't mean we stop our lives, if anythin' means we have to keep going. That's what this lot are doin', it's what you've gotta do."

"And if I don't?"

"Then you'll lose yourself to it, lad. They're with the gods now, ain't nothin' we can do."

Marcus just nodded, Quintus gave him a heavy pat on the shoulder. He didn't need to say anything else, he didn't have to. An understanding passed between the two men, one that transcended the petty ideologies that Marcus had clung to, or their stature in society, or even language. Everywhere in the world, no matter creed or culture, it was possible to see moments like that the men shared. It was grief, and acceptance, and love.

"I'll see ya later, yeah?"

"Alright," Marcus heard himself say, he wasn't really aware of it, nor did he truly know when Quintus had left. He wasn't sure how long he

go back to his bed and start another day. Eventually he would be transferred, leave Letocetum and join the armies in the west before returning to Rome, a decorated soldier and nothing like the boy that had struck out from Italy's shores in search of glory and fame.

But that was later, and it would come. A future for another time. All Marcus could do in that moment was look back, not forward, and promise never to forget those he'd served by; even if one day he himself would be forgotten, a name lost to the mists of time.

History was about ideas, great leaders and chunks of time, not the people. It would be impossible to accurately record and recollect the life of everyone who had ever been and would be. Even Letocetum itself would become a ruin, a shadow of its former self. But Marcus would never forget it, even if though it would lose sight of him. The Roman Empire would exist only as an idea, a story to tell future generations and it was in those stories, no matter how indirectly, that men like Drusus, Quintus and Marcus would be remembered. They would never truly be forgotten. Not really.

A long sigh escaped Marcus's lips, he took one final look at the memorial, turned and walked away. He wasn't letting go, he realised as the clouds finally pulled themselves in front of the pale moonlight and plunged his world into a darker hue; rather he was moving on.

Chris King

With special thanks to Anna Czoch for drawing Marcus and Quintus.

St Michael's Rota - December

Sunday 8.00 am St Michael's	3 December	10 December	17 December	24 December	31 December
Sidesperson	Sandy Baker	Martin Dewes	David Bull	No service	Brian Smith

Sunday 10.00 am St Michael's	3 December	10 December Family Praise	17 December	24 December	31 December
Welcomers	Pat Toplis	Mary and Robert McAllester Jones	Angela Burgess	Margaret Goodwin	Maureen Brand
Sidespersons	Lynn and David Edge	Joan and Ken Sharman	Ray Allen Barbara Homewood	Judy and Mike Godfrey	Viv and Stephen Oliver
Reader	Brenda Liptrot		Caroline Green	Mike Godfrey	Stephen Barton
Servers	Maggie Easton Elizabeth Salt		Maggie Easton Peter Salt	Kay Martin Elizabeth Allen	Elizabeth Salt Phil Clayton
Communion Assistant	Maggie Easton		Ray Allen	Sheila Vaughan	Elizabeth Salt
Intercessor	Trevor James		Ted Green	Amy Staines	Phil Clayton
Coffee	Brenda Liptrot Pam Towle	Alison Anketell Judy Godfrey	Caroline Green Brenda Eley	Anne Lingwood Shirley Trelfa	Lynn and David Edge
Junior praise	TBA		TBA		
Healing				TBA	
Transport	Ron Lewis	Elizabeth Allen	Brenda Liptrot	Ray Allen	Martin Dewes
Flowers	No flowers	No flowers	No flowers	Christmas flowers	Christmas flowers

Sunday 6.00 pm St Michael's	3 December Advent car- ols	10 December Communion	17 December Lessons & Car- ols	24 December See below	31 December No service
Sidesperson	David Rock Ray Allen	Margaret Frean	Brenda Liptrot Maureen Brand		
Reader		Margaret Frean			
Communion Assistant		Phil Clayton			

Christmas Eve/ Christmas Day	24 December 4.00 pm Christingle	24 December 6.00 pm Christingle	24 December 11.15 pm Communion	25 December 8.00 am Communion	25 December 10.00 am Communion
Sidesper- sons	Barbara Homewood David Bull Maureen Brand Ted Green	Maureen Brand Mary and Robert McAllester Jones	Lynn and David Rock	Sandy Baker	Pat Toplis
Reader			Kay Martin		Kay Martin
Servers	All please	All please	Maggie Easton Kay Martin Elizabeth Allen		Maggie Easton Kay Martin
Communion Assistant			Elizabeth Allen		Maggie Easton
Intercessor			Stephen Bar- ton		TBA

Bible Readings

Sunday 3rd December
First Sunday of Advent
[Purple]

Isiah 64.1-9
Mark 13.24-end

Sunday 10th December
Second Sunday of Advent
[Purple]

Isiah 40.1-11
Mark 1.1-8

Sunday 17th December
Third Sunday of Advent
[Purple]

Isiah 61.1-4,8-end
John 1.6-8,18-24

Sunday 24th December
Christmas Eve
[Purple]

2 Samuel 7.1-11.16
Luke 1.26-38

Monday 25th December
Christmas Day
MIDNIGHT MASS
[White]

Isiah 9.2-7
Luke 2.1-20

Monday 25th December
Christmas Day
[White]

Isiah 52.7-10
John 1.1-14

Sunday 31st December
1st Sunday of Christmas
[White]

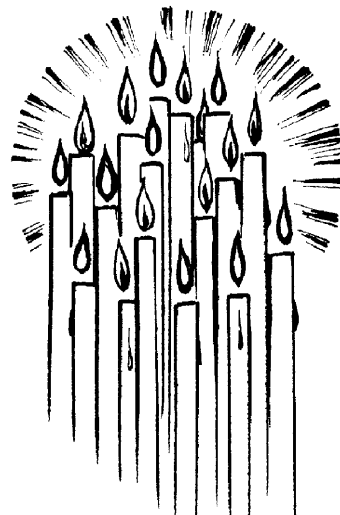
Galatians 4.4-7
Luke 2.15-21

Sunday 7th January
1st Sunday of Epiphany
[White]

Ephesians 3.1-12
Matthew 2.1-12

Sunday 14th January
2nd Sunday of Epiphany
[White]

Revelation 5.1-10
John 1 43-end



From The Registers

Baptism



St. Michael's	5th Nov	Arthur William Donovan Lewington	5 mths
St Michael's	5th Nov	Hallie Anne Jean Yardley	8 mths

Wedding



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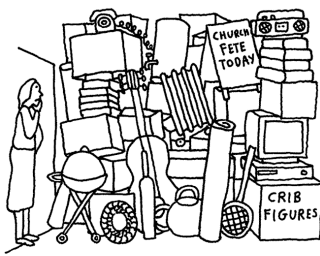
At Rest



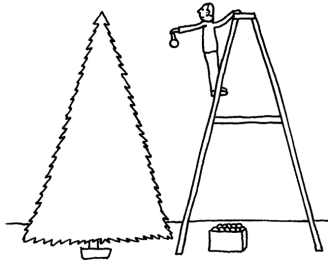
St Michael's	17 th October	John Wray	69
St Michael's	20th October	Jose Williams	89
St Michael's	2nd Nov	Mary Catherine Lees	86
St Michael's	3rd Nov	Yvette Patricia Green	68
St Michael's	16th Nov	Pamela Mary Rackham	92
St Michael's	17th Nov	Maurice Tweed	70

THE CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

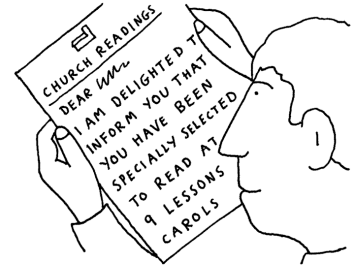
FOR CHURCHES



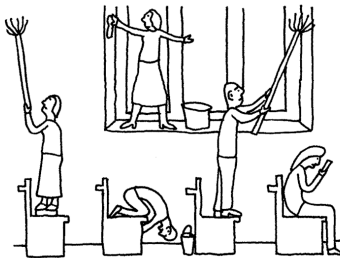
DIG OUT THE CRIB FIGURES ☐



DECORATE THE TREE AND CHURCH ☐



CHOOSE PEOPLE TO READ THE LESSONS ☐



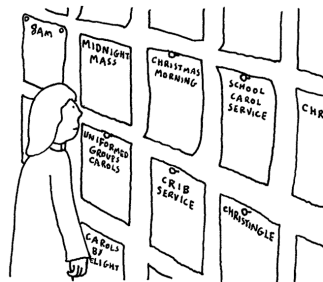
CLEAN EVERYWHERE ☐



DECIDE WHICH CLERGY DO WHICH SERVICES ☐



BUY PRESENTS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED HARD ☐



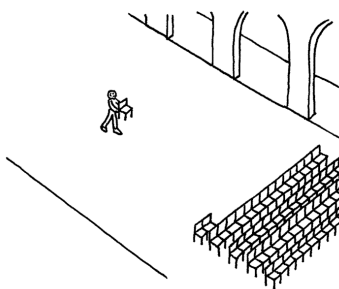
WRITE ALL OF THE SERMONS ☐



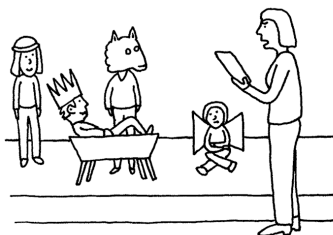
PREPARE THE CANDLES ☐



MAKE SURE THE CHOIR IS READY ☐



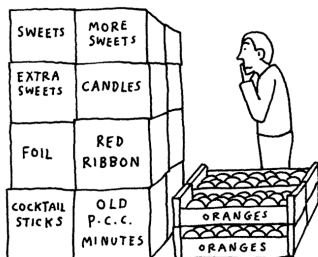
CARRY IN EXTRA CHAIRS ☐



REHEARSE THE NATIVITY PLAY ☐



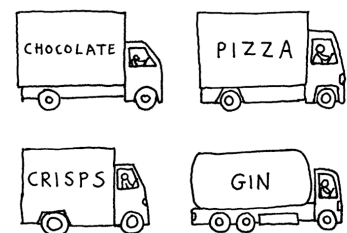
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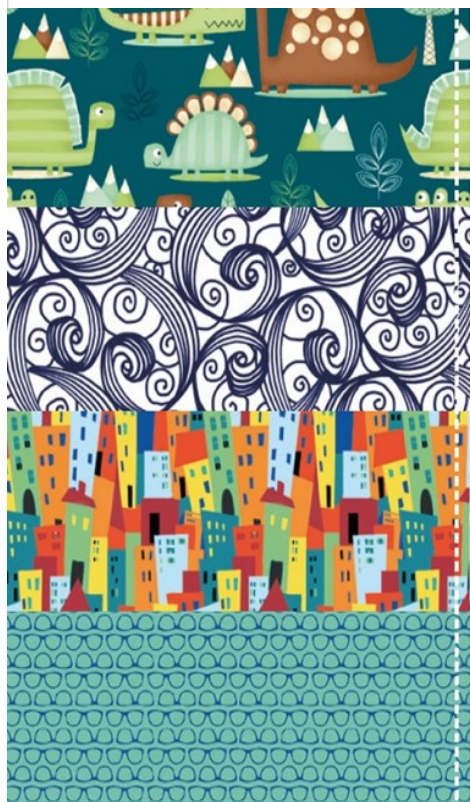
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