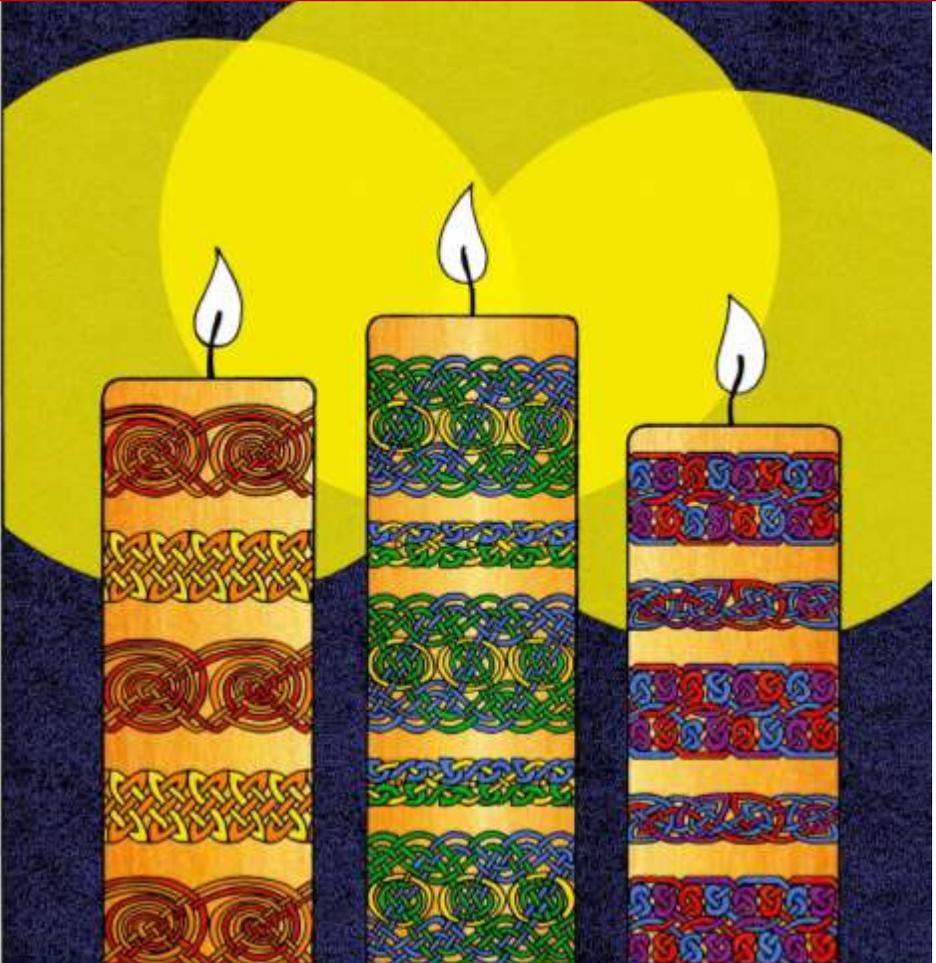


december 2021  
january 2022



grapevine

50p

the magazine of st mary's church rushden  
& st peter's newton bromswold

# Who's who

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So this it what it feels like? A *Brave New World* without Steve and Sue and with the emphasis on us being brave!

Unnecessary to say how much they are already missed and grapevine may well be carrying the minutiae of their settling in and finding their feet in Gloucestershire for the foreseeable future. Apart from a strategically sprained ankle on Steve's part everything is going to plan . . . It would be callous in the extreme to suggest this was *part* of the plan . . .

Life goes on and is just about to get more exciting - Christmas is coming, Epiphany follows. Covid can still flex its muscles at times - the world is still far from normal but there are encouraging changes in worship freedom, socialising and a rumour that the choir may well be dusting off their robes and wondering *where* they put the spray starch for the ladies' collars and cuff frills way back in February 2020 . . . See you in church with the Flash Mob choir!

*Jude Curtis, Editor*

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*Items for the*  
**February 2022 edition should**  
*be sent by*  
**Sunday 16 January**  
preferably by email to:  
[missjudecurtis@btinternet.com](mailto:missjudecurtis@btinternet.com)

## Tony writes . . .



What a year it has been. Covid lockdowns, clear signs of dangerous climate change, fuel and food shortages, travelling curtailed, arguments with the EU, just to name some of the bad news stories that have dominated the media this year. However, if we pause and reflect, we can often remember good news stories. The availability of effective Covid vaccines, the dedicated, unselfish work of many who have served the public to the point of exhaustion and people rediscovering a sense of community. I am sure you will have your own list.

Being asked to write this letter is a challenge, especially after the last twelve years during which Steve has been our Rector. He is a hard act to follow as a letter writer. We said our farewells to Steve and Sue during November, having been richly blessed by them in so many ways. Now, individually and as churches we must prepare ourselves for the future. December and January contain three important seasons in the Church calendar, Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. For many people the days observed as “the Christmas holiday” will dominate their thoughts for much of this period; ordering the food and drinks, buying presents, sending cards, sending invitations to parties and paying the credit card bill. How well all their plans work will probably determine their answer to the question “Did you have a good Christmas? “. I would like to suggest that as Christians we should have a different perspective, that we should use the framework provided by the Church’s seasons to focus our priorities in the coming weeks. We should expect that to do so will bring blessings, make this period memorable and help us to prepare us for the challenges we will all face in 2022.

Advent begins by reminding us of the big picture, God’s eternal plan, the backdrop to the events of the here and now which so dominate our lives. It reminds us to see events in the light of eternity. It calls for an honest assessment of where we stand in God’s eyes, how prepared we are for kingdom life. Advent also reminds us of the centrality of the Bible in the shaping of our Christian lives. God’s word is our reliable guide book for us as we “build back better”. It provides us with the basis of an action plan that can uniquely bless the church and the community, healing what is

broken, bringing new life. In the ministry of John the Baptist we see the importance of witnesses who “prepare the way of the Lord”. As members of Christ’s Church we are expected to make the effort to prepare the way for others to meet Jesus and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Mary, the mother of Jesus, shows us the way of faithful service that is essential if the Gospel message is to have a meaningful impact in our lives and in the lives of the wider community.

If, during the Christmas season, we hear that “it is all about the children or the family”, will we gently but firmly insist that actually it is “all about Jesus”, a celebration of God’s gift to us of our Lord, who came that “we should not perish but have everlasting life”? As we see the celebrations that the world indulges in, will it cross our minds just how absurd it is to have a great birthday party where the person whose birthday it is will not be welcome, will not be invited to attend and will be the one person who is not given a gift? As a well-known carol reminds us, the gift we can give to Jesus, the gift that will delight him, is our heart. A pledge of faith that can be both a Christmas present for our Saviour and a New Year resolution.

During January we will be in the Epiphany season. Jesus came to be the Saviour of the whole world. The Gospel stories of the life of Jesus from his birth to his Ascension reveal to us the fullness of who Jesus is. During the Epiphany season we are reminded of this revelation. As we hear the unfolding story the question Jesus asks his disciples “Who do you say that I am”? (Luke 9.20) will also be posed to us.

As 2021 draws to an end and 2022 unfolds, a prayer from Saint Paul seems to be a suitable ending for this letter.

*“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened  
in order that you may know  
the hope in which he has called you,  
the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints and  
his incomparably great power for us who believe”.*

[Ephesians 1.18]

Tony Smith

## What do I see?



Six years ago I had double cataract surgery.\* It didn't occur to me, and I don't remember being asked about, what kind of vision I would end up with. I blithely and naively thought it would be my own, idiosyncratic brand of myopia and astigmatism with all the bleeps ironed out. Dream on, Jude.

Plonked back in the Waiting Room after a nerve-wracking but utterly painless procedure the first shock was being able to read the wall clock with the naked eye for the first time ever. Enough to make me smile, yes.

Being driven home later I got over-excited at the Brave New World around me and went full-throttle into my Linus imitation of, "Hello fields, hello sky" etc, etc. The colours were Disney on speed and the whole world doubly intense. A full moon was up that night and my natural lunacy enhanced by seeing, for the first time in my life, why people talked about The Man in The Moon. That had been one of life's perpetual mysteries and lo, there he was! Clear as mustard.

The next few days were full of little revelations and queries. Why had I painted the living room pink when I moved in? I can't stand pink! I hadn't, knowingly, it was meant to be a dusky terracotta.

Then reality hit hard, and I plummeted from this high when I tried to do what constitutes 99% of my normal activities - I mean, basically, looking at what is under my nose. The list of what is no longer possible without portable correction began with reading, writing, desktop publishing [DTP], applying make-up, needlework, machine and hand sewing, knitting, crochet, and watching TV: up to, and including, trying to get a splinter out of my own finger.

I had to sit down - big stuff like furniture was still recognisable if you didn't get too close.

It was a paradigm shift that took a lot of getting used to. Hideously what I could see - so, so clearly - were swags of distant cobwebs of which Miss Haversham would have been proud, and the titles of books up on the eighth shelf. There were a myriad of other housekeeping 'oversights' disclosed that I'd rather not acknowledge.

Close work was out of the question but it didn't stop my brain making my hands hold things closer, that I wanted to see in detail. Six years on, I still do it instinctively to my own perpetual frustration.

But, I wouldn't change back! It was only with the arrival of Covid and my simultaneous desire to 'own' acres of Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire by tramping, walking and scrambling through it, that the advantages of this huge change in perception became clear.

Considering along the back alley of Tanglewood a few days ago alongside Ron the relative characteristics of a pair of red kites overhead would have been impossible six years ago. Identifying corvids in trees half a mile away by eye is now reality not fantasy. Now I can immediately spot those elusive yellow arrows and posts that mark genuine, working, footpaths, rather than tempting invitations to impassable streams and irate farmers. Marking the topology and seasonal status of great swathes of cultivation, cloud formations - all this is the gift of surgery. And a very welcome one albeit a complete change of perspective.

So, I guess I have to contain my frustrations about close work by placing spectacles of varying dioptries at strategic intervals around my work spaces, carrying one in my pocket and keeping my eyes firmly on the far horizons otherwise. Can't be bad. Yes, I know I could have varifocals but being glasses-less feels obscurely liberating! I just look on it now as God's gift to me and am eternally thankful.

*Jude Curtis, Editor*

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*\*Not at the same time! There was an interim stage where I drove [perfectly legally] to Launde Abbey and back with one eye set for close vision and the other for distance - the extra brain effort needed to integrate the two proved too exhausting in the end to make it a permanent option.*



*... and many thanks to Ron Elverson for the conversation which put this Editorial into my head.*

# St Mary's News

## From the Registers

### Baptisms

**Sunday October 24**  
Alana Jayden Loveday

**Sunday October 31**  
Leona Vitkauskaite-Mandinga

**St Mary's Church Office** will be open on **Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10.00 to 12 noon**. We ask you, please, to be alert to current Covid regulations and avoid gathering inside the office.

### Craft & Coffee [or Tea]

The next meeting is on **Tuesday 7 December** from 10.00 to 12.00 noon. There is no charge for the craft (just the usual £1.50 admission).

We meet again in the new year on **Tuesday January 4** and the craft is making a calendar, led by Brenda Dixon. Admission is £1.50 as usual and there will be a small charge for materials used. Contact is Lynne on 01933 353655.

### St Mary's Ladies' Group

The Ladies Group will not be meeting until Spring 2022. More information in the February grapevine.

**Cont on facing page . . .**

# Flower Rotas

## December 2021

### ***Behind the Communion Table***

- 5 Kathy & Chris MacKenzie
- 12 Rita Nutter [in memory of Keith: arranged by Ellen Inwood]
- 19 Christmas
- 26 Christmas

### ***Memorial Chapel***

- 5 Mrs Alma Walters in memory of Gail and Valerie
- 19 Christmas

## January 2022

### ***Behind the Communion Table***

- 2 Christmas
- 9 Mary Hadley
- 16 Lynda Sandiford
- 23 Rita Nutter [in memory of Alice, arranged by Ellen Inwood]
- 30 Jude Curtis

### ***Memorial Chapel***

- 2 Mrs Marion Bates
- 16 Mrs Kelland in memory of her husband
- 30 Gerald and Alice in memory of Fred & Elsie Bass

*If anyone wishes to give flowers in memory of loved ones please contact me, Brenda Dixon, 358982*

Note for arrangers: *Please check for times of weddings and funerals in the week you plan to arrange. Also contact Bob Bates [358005] if you wish your expenses to be reimbursed.*

# St Mary's News

## Thank You

We wish to thank our friends at St Mary's for the cards and gifts received from the church on the occasion of our Diamond Wedding Anniversary. God Bless,  
*Jan and Richard Denny*

## PCC Meeting - November

- 17 PCC members attended the meeting held in the Lower Vestry Hall with Steve & Sue Prior joining the meeting towards the end.
- Several unanimous votes took place, including electing Paul Adams and Kate Woodfield as our two reps on the panel to choose our new incumbent who could be of either sex. The Parish Profile will soon be created following consultation.
- As Helen Smedley has formally handed in her resignation, it was agreed to search for her replacement to continue the good work achieved so far.
- Covid & Lockdown restrictions have been eased further and slowly we are getting back to "normality" with another review in 2 months' time.
- Date of the next meeting is December 7 at 7.30pm in the Lower Vestry Hall.

**Please remember there will be no PCC meeting in January 2022**

**Joy Holloway** will continue to publish and sell John's quizzes and send the proceeds direct to **The Children's Society**. **Closing date for the Autumn Quiz entitled 'This England' is December 31** but a new Quiz **'There's No Place Like Home'** will be on sale from the middle of January.

## Peter Chamberlain's latest

**Quiz ...** is still available. Each answer contains the word Bus, Car or Van. Cost £1 for Mission funds. If you do not catch him in church, then the quiz is available on 01933 386826 or [cephasxwords@gmail.com](mailto:cephasxwords@gmail.com).

## Christingles

The Annual **Christingle Service** will be held as usual on **Saturday December 4 at 2.30pm** and . . . .



. . . **Helen Smedley** will be in the **Church Hall on the Friday afternoon [December 3] from 2.00pm making the actual Christingles**. Anyone who would like to join her will be very welcome! Refreshments will be provided.

**News continues over the page ...**

# St Mary's News cont . . .

## Carol Singing at Rushden Lakes

On 12 December from 3.00pm local churches will again be singing carols at Rushden Lakes as a witness to the real meaning of Christmas. Come join us!

## Confirmation Service

**Sunday 12 December, 3.00pm at St Mary's, Higham Ferrers**

Please pray for those from our church who are being prepared for Confirmation: Kaylee Stock, Linda Wilson and Tracey Cave.

## Advance Notice

**World Day of Prayer in 2022** will be held in **St Mary's Church, Rushden** at **2.00pm on Friday 4 March** - **Please put the date in your diary now!**

**Bishop John . . .** will be preaching at both morning services on **Sunday 9 January: The Baptism of Christ**

**Children's activities at St Mary's**  
**Monday 10.00am**  
**Bumps & Babes @ Church**



- meeting up with songs, prayers, crafts and activities.
- **Sunday Club during the 9.30 am Sunday morning service** (except for Parade Sundays)

**Contact: Helen Smedley: 01933 312198**



*Monthly event for dads, stepdads, granddads or male carers and their younger children [0-6 yrs]. Children enjoy a range of toys including bouncy castle, sit-on cars and inflatable ball pool.*

**Saturday 18 December**

**Saturday 15 January 2022**

9.30am—12noon

St Mary's Church Hall

**Adults £5: children free**

## Editor's Feedback

Thank you for the brimming 'post bag' of private asides, comment, emails and messages on last month's **Editorial about Mindfulness**. A gratifyingly positive response to both Mindfulness and also Christian Mindfulness - a couple of books to note :

**Tim Stead, Mindfulness and Christian Spirituality [SPCK]** and **Phileena Heuertz, Mindful Silence: The Heart of Christian Contemplation [IVP]**

## Parish News

**Steve & Sue** have successfully made their move to Gloucestershire. The new address is

**41 New Town  
Toddington  
Cheltenham  
GL54 5DU**



*Dear Church!*

*Sue and I would like to thank you for all your very many cards and generous gifts given to us upon our retirement. They are all expressions of the love and kindness which you have shown to us during our years in Rushden and we value them because of that.*

*We are slowly getting our new home into some sort of order - very slowly indeed, I'm afraid, as I sprained my ankle the very first Saturday after we left! So I have been forced to be more sedentary than I imagined. Grey November has arrived in Gloucestershire at the same time as we have, but with so much to organise indoors it doesn't affect us at the moment.*

*You all continue in our thoughts and prayers, praying particularly that the Holy Spirit will bring the person of his choosing as Rector, so that Jesus may be known through your ministry together. May his kingdom come!*

*With love and every blessing, Steve and Sue*

Other means of communication are still a work in progress, with a new joint email address planned and WiFi due to be installed soon. There is unlikely to be a landline.

They have also [rashly] issued an open invitation to visitors but perhaps we should give them a little breathing space first!

“For anyone who wants to stop in for a coffee or a night’s lodging (reasonable rates!) (only kidding, says Steve, the rates are very high!) No, no, we are NOT doing B&B!!! But are very happy to have guests.)” S&S

Picture shows the empty shelves at the Rectory filled with cards and gifts instead of books!

## Newton News

### Flower Rota

#### December

5 Mrs Turner

19 Mrs Dangerfield

#### January

9 Helen Lines

23 June Clarke

### From the Registers

**Baptism - Sunday 26 September**

**George Stokes**

### Rector's Farewell

On Sunday 24 October, the congregation of St Peter's Church marked Steve's last Sunday with a presentation of a card and present and a cake, kindly made by Marion. We wish Steve every blessing on his retirement and Steve and Sue every happiness in their new home.

### Carol Singing

Newton Church will be Carol Singing in **The Swan, Newton Bromswold on Monday 20 December starting at 7.30pm**. Please come and join us.



## Good to know

### Rushden and Newton WI

The next Rushden & Newton Bromswold WI meeting will be held at **The Windmill Club, Glassbrook Road, Rushden NN10 9RP** at 7.30pm on **Thursday 9 December** and will be a social meeting with refreshments. Visitors welcome. Look forward to seeing members and new members: come and give us a try. There is also a Quiz scheduled for January 2022 - for more details the contact is Julia, 01933 317846

### So where did COP26 get us?

Scientists and leading climate experts have voiced concerns about the outcomes of the COP26 climate conference, in Glasgow. Those who spoke to the BBC praised the conference for getting countries to agree to meet again next year to pledge deeper emissions cuts. And they welcomed agreements on forests, innovation and especially methane - from fossil fuel extraction and livestock.

But the scientists fear politicians won't deliver. And they say the hope of holding temperature rises to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels is far too unambitious anyway. The experts say that with a temperature rise so far of just 1.1C, the world is already in a state of dangerous

## Good to know

heating, with record temperatures, wildfires, floods and droughts. Prof Sir David King, former UK chief scientist, told me: "Even if we cut emissions completely we'd still be in a difficult place because of the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere already."

*BBC News, 17 November 2021*

### Winners of Prince William's Earth Shot prize

#### **Protect and Restore Nature:**

**The Republic of Costa Rica:** Costa Rica was a country that once cleared most of its forests, but it has now doubled the number of trees and is seen as a role model for others to follow. The winning project is a scheme paying local citizens to restore natural ecosystems that has led to a revival of the rainforest

#### **Clean our Air:**

**Takachar, India:** A portable machine created to turn agricultural waste into fertiliser so that farmers do not burn their fields and cause air pollution

#### **Revive our Oceans:**

**Coral Vita, Bahamas:** A project run by two best friends who are growing coral in the Bahamas, designed to restore the world's dying coral reefs. Using

special tanks, they have developed a way to grow coral up to 50 times faster than they normally take in nature

#### **Build a Waste-Free World:**

**The City of Milan Food Waste Hubs, Italy:** Another challenge is waste - and the city of Milan in Italy wins a prize for collecting unused food and giving it to people who need it most. The initiative has dramatically cut waste while tackling hunger

#### **Fix our Climate:**

**AEM Electrolyser, Thailand/Germany/Italy:** A clever design in Thailand using renewable energy to make hydrogen by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen. Hydrogen is a clean gas but it is usually produced by burning fossil fuels

*BBC News Daily 20 October 2021*



## Good to know . . .

### Useful contacts

**Action Fraud:** If you have been scammed, defrauded or experienced cyber crime [computer crime], report it directly to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or go to [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)



**Cyber Aware** offers the UK government's advice on how to stay secure online. [www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberaware/home](http://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberaware/home)

### Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS)

Discover how to report a potential phishing message to the NCSC using SERS. [www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/report-suspicious-emails](http://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/report-suspicious-emails)

**Royal Mail Scam Mail** - If you or a family member, believe you are receiving scam mail, report it to the Royal Mail. Phone: 0800 0113 466 or Write to: Royal Mail, Freepost Scam Mail or email: [scam.mail@royalmail.com](mailto:scam.mail@royalmail.com)

### Telephone Preference Service [TPS]

Individuals can register to opt out of receiving unwanted legitimate sales and marketing phone calls. Phone: 0345 070 0707 Email: [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk)

*On behalf of Neighbourhood Watch I wish you a very Happy Christmas and all the very best for 2022. Take care.*  
**Chris MacKenzie**

### Launde Abbey

**Alison Myers**, the new Warden of Launde Abbey is leading an **Epiphany Retreat on 7-9 January 2022**. In the darkest time of the year it's an opportunity to reflect on the Light revealed in the stories of Jesus. The cost is £270. More details and booking at [laundeabbey.org.uk](http://laundeabbey.org.uk)

### Christmas Presents?

**Alan and Evelyn Fitch** have two items which could be perfect bargains [or gifts] for Christmas.

Alan's Bike is a **Malvern Cross 700 Hybrid** with 28" wheels, 18 gears [Shimano] and hardly used. Cost was £140 new. Offers invited to Alan on 01933 410586

They also have an **artificial Christmas Tree**: green, approximately 1.35m [4 and a half feet] high. Offers to Evelyn at the same number.

### Can You Help?

**ENCS** are asking for volunteers for the café they plan to start at their **new premises at 19-21 Church St**. They intend to provide a good, low cost, hot meal for those who are

## Good to know . . .



*Brian had found a Nice Little Earner*

14th Century Persian poet, Hafiz: "I wish I could show you, when you're lonely or in darkness, the astonishing light of your own being."

*BBC News Daily*  
22 October 2021

### Long Greenway

Entirely unlike Long Covid, have you noticed that there has been an addition to the Greenway in Higham, taking you through to Kimbolton Rd? It's probably always

isolated, marginalised or vulnerable. They cannot get this up and running unless they have people who can help cook and serve clients. If this is for you email [info@encs.org.uk](mailto:info@encs.org.uk)

### Poetry Pharmacy

It's a pharmacy with a difference. Instead of plastic bottles of pills, William Sieghart has created a dispensary of books to ease loneliness and depression at Belfast Central Library. And visitors to **the author's poetry pharmacy** say their mood can be transformed by hearing him speak for 20 seconds.

One of Mr Sieghart's favourite lines to prescribe, he says, is by

been there, but it has now been cleared and new signage is up. Stanwick Rd is now only a swift walk away along Elizabeth Way and over the Bypass Bridge. *Ed*

### Christmas Gift Suggestion

Sign up a friend or family member to the local **Wildlife Trust BCN** [Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire].

Membership includes discounts to events, the local Wildlife Magazine three times a year, a comprehensive nature guide and much more. Search on line **Wildlife Trust BCN** and visit the shop.

# Book Reviews



Because this is being published in the December and January edition of Grapevine I have selected three books which I hope will appeal to a wide range of tastes. It is appropriate of course that they all in some way have Jesus, “the reason for the season” as a foundation of their contents.

## ***Simply Jesus, Tom Wright [SPCK]***

This book is an appropriate read at this time of year. It seeks to remind us who Jesus, the true subject of our Christmas celebrations, was and is. Three questions form the framework of this book; who was Jesus, what did he do, and why does it matter? In the opening chapter Tom Wright, recalling Jesus’s question to his followers, “**Who do you say that I am?**” poses what he regards as a valid question to ask Jesus, reflecting lyrics from the musical Jesus Christ, Superstar - “Jesus, who do you say that you are”? The first five chapters of this book provide a comprehensible answer for a society that has little Bible knowledge. Chapters 6 to 14 lead the reader through a review of Jesus’s public ministry, as recorded in the Gospel accounts, in which he established God’s kingdom. The final chapters, relevant to the situation in the post-pandemic era, are a call to follow Jesus in his project of bringing God’s rule to bear on his world.

## ***Soul Fuel, Bear Grylls. [Hodder and Stoughton]***

The writer is well known through his many appearances on TV. An interesting life story is full of adventurous and often dangerous exploits. In this book of daily devotions he shares the inspiration that helps him to stand strong and find peace each day. His themes include friendships, failure, courage and risk. These devotions reflect the writer’s advice that we should embrace faith wherever we find it. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

## ***The Gospel according to a Sitcom Writer, James Cary [SPCK]***

If in the past you have been amused by masterpieces such as “The Gospel according to Peanuts” or “The Old Testament according to Spike Milligan” or “Lives of the Improbable Saints” then this may be just the book you will enjoy on the Feast of Stephen.

James Cary is a sitcom writer for the BBC. In his spare time he is a member of the Church of England’s General Synod and the Archbishop’s Council. This is a book by a committed Christian who sees the funny side of things.

Tony Smith

## The forty days of Christmas

**W**henever I write a December letter, several people tell me off because I don't major on the theme of Christmas. I have my reasons, not least that I think Advent is important, neglected, and comes first. This year, though, I'll give in (partly) to the clamour.

I'm not against Christmas: I believe in and celebrate the virgin birth and incarnation of the fully human, fully divine, Jesus Christ. I understand that for all sorts of practical reasons we have to do some of the teaching and rejoicing before the day itself: for example, we celebrate with schools before they break up for their holidays, and we try to reach Christmas shoppers through carols and in other ways to help them see a bit more of the meaning of it all. I understand that we live in and reach out to the world as it is, full of commercialisation and shopping for things we don't remotely need which seems to begin earlier each year.

I do wish, though, that within our church communities we could experience the excitement and power, the peace and joy, of Christmas at the right time: from the evening of Christmas Eve, either to twelfth night and the Epiphany on 6 January; or, if we are bold enough, right through to the Presentation of Christ (Candlemas) on 2 February, forty days after we remember the birth. That would have the huge advantage of changing our perception of January to being a month of Christmas light and joy, rather than the dark and miserable time that it is for many now. And wouldn't it be good if we could help the world see the



joy and celebration of Christmas flowing into and through the first month of the year?

On another note: Canon Tim Alban Jones steps down as my chaplain at the end of this month. His role has always been part Chaplain and part Cathedral Canon, but the Cathedral part has been expanding, and after six years this seems the right time for him to become full time Vice Dean. Tim has been a brilliant support to me and my office, and we will miss him very much from that role.

+ Donald

With best wishes  
+Donald

## Wildlife on your doorstep ...

As the year draws to a close we thought that an update on our previous report may be of interest to some readers.

Throughout lockdown, and afterwards, we continued to wildlife watch locally and add to our 'county' bird list. We were regularly amazed at what turned up.

Unfortunately we missed the spoonbills at Rushden Lakes by about ten minutes, but later in the year caught up with the one that briefly touched down at Summer Leys. Further down the Nene Valley at Irthlingborough Lakes we were surprised to find brent goose and avocet normally found on the coast.

In addition to all the usual and common garden birds we were pleased to record stock dove, sparrowhawk and blackcap in ours, while the great spotted woodpecker regularly visited our neighbours' feeders but not ours! We were privileged to have peregrines nesting and rearing four young on Higham Ferrers Church and these birds could often be spotted on Rushden Church too. A juvenile screaming for food was even heard from our garden.

Tree sparrows and yellowhammers were found at Pitsford Reservoir and on one occasion an osprey drifted slowly overhead too. Wheatear, stonechats and yellow wagtails were seen at the area around Chelveston Wind Farm, not to mention many beautiful orchids, and, on one fine, sunny evening, a friend very kindly took us out in search of turtle doves, now a declining species.

Walking round Summer Leys on another evening, we were stopped in our tracks by the unmistakable sound of a bittern booming – unbelievable, a bittern on our local patch! It took several visits through the summer before we saw it and, among many other species, garganey, spotted redshank, ruff, black necked grebe, Mediterranean gull and grasshopper warbler were seen at this amazing little reserve 'just down the road'. In addition, a ring ouzel (mountain blackbird) was *just* about visible at the far end of an adjoining field through a heat haze, the neck and head of a purple heron was *just* sighted after several hours spent sitting in a packed hide after an early morning

## ... an Update



start, and a blue headed wagtail was spotted among the yellow ones – minus the one taken by a sparrowhawk as we watched.

The nearby Hardwater Lake should not be overlooked – a young cuckoo was photographed posing on the telegraph wires – and amazing starling murmurations have been seen here, as well as at Stanwick Lakes.

We have recently added fungi forays to our list of interests, and mammals (fox, otter, muntjac) plus an abundance of butterflies and dragonflies can also be seen in Northamptonshire. Fermyn Woods, near Brigstock is one of the few sites in the UK where the beautiful purple emperor butterfly can be found.

Whilst watching the fox cubs at Summer Leys, we were alerted to a hoopoe (normally seen in Europe or Africa) at Wellingborough, so a quick dash down the road and we were just in time to add it to the list and get a blurry photo before it disappeared into the gloom of the evening.

Obviously there were birds we missed – the scoters at Ringstead due to Covid isolation, and the rose coloured starling at the Nene Barrage, Northampton, (such a huge area to search!) - and some local birders with more experience will have seen others, but we're more than happy with this year's county list (128), as well as having turned lockdown into a positive. There are a few missing links, most notably the mistle thrush, another declining species, but there are still a few weeks of the year remaining so nothing is impossible.

We hope you have enjoyed reading this and are inspired to get out into the countryside yourselves.

*Anne and Alan Savage*

PS Remember - stay alert, you never know what might turn up. Our sister-in-law recently found a woodcock, resting after migration, on her parents' doorstep on the Lincolnshire coast!

## Good to know . . .

Andrew's land at **Midshires Covert** [Kelmarsh Road, Harrington, NN6 9ND] is now hosting a **Forest Church** that the Naseby Group of Churches holds monthly. They say,

"We are looking forward to our next **Forest Church** session on Sunday 19 December (3 to 5pm). We are inviting families, Children (7+), and young people from across the benefice [and beyond] to come along to our outdoor location as we gather together and make connections with God in creation sharing faith and friendship. There will be fun activities, games to play, bible stories and snacks around the fire pit, so why not come along? For further information please contact Fr. Kris ([curate@nasebygroup.org](mailto:curate@nasebygroup.org)) and we look forward to welcoming you."

More details at: <https://www.facebook.com/Nasebygroup> and photo of a recent service on The Back Page



### Help the Rushden foodbank

Our food bank is experiencing low stock and low funds. Can you help? We post what we need every week on our Facebook page or alternatively, you can give via our giving page which will allow us to buy what we need each week. <https://www.give.net/20217071>. Please share or donate if you can.



**From the archive!**

# Mission Matters



## Lea and Petra Williams

After a very long car journey, the Williams family arrived safely in Brno, in the Czech Republic. Since then, Lea and Petra have been working hard to make a previously neglected house into a home for themselves and children, Olivia and Ted. Another essential but time-consuming task has been that of dealing with important paperwork, including residency permits.

The location of their house, next to a well around which people socialise in the evenings, has helped Lea and Petra to meet and begin to get to know their neighbours, who have given them a friendly welcome. Olivia and Ted have also been making friends with the children, playing with them and riding their bikes together. The local mayor has asked Lea to give English lessons to the children, which Lea plans to start in the New Year.

Recently, Petra tested positive for Covid, and when she contacted us, the rest of the family were waiting for test results. Now, Lea and Petra are looking ahead to Lea's licensing, and to Christmas activities, services and outreach. They ask us to pray

- for their recovery from Covid
- for the family as they enter the local community in Brno and begin building relationships
- that the church community, which has not been meeting, will come back together, that services will start again, and that God will guide the believers as they share the Gospel with those around them
- for the Czech Republic at a time of unexpected political change.

Let's pray that the Lord will make Lea and Petra and their family a light and a blessing in the Czech Republic, which is thought to be the most secular country in Europe.

*Sue Eagles, on behalf of the Mission Committee*

**CPAS:** In the first half of this year, thirty three appointments were made to CPAS patronage churches. Pray for God's blessing on those appointed as they lead their churches forward. Pray too that He will cause the person of His choice to become our new Rector. **SE**

# FunFest

Based on 'It's a Knockout' the Fun Fest is organised by Rotary and is scheduled as a great Family Fun Day.

Cynthia Spencer - and its local Hospice in Northampton - are one of the charities that will benefit from the funds raised.

How about entering a team on Sunday 22 May at Rushden & Higham Rugby Club from 12.00-17.00?

For further details contact Judy Webb on 07593 581127 or [judy.rotary@yahoo.com](mailto:judy.rotary@yahoo.com)

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or ring 01933 412235 from 10.00-12noon on Tuesday - Thursday

## Last Minute

### Pure Indulgence?

Less than a week ago I was tempted into another computer game on [king.com](http://king.com) - *Blossom Blast*. It has a limited range and fewer explosions than most.



The real bonus is that when sent to sleep it plays, very quietly, a tiny sound loop of muffled beach waves and tweeting birds. Very soothing between frenetic bouts of DTP. Ed



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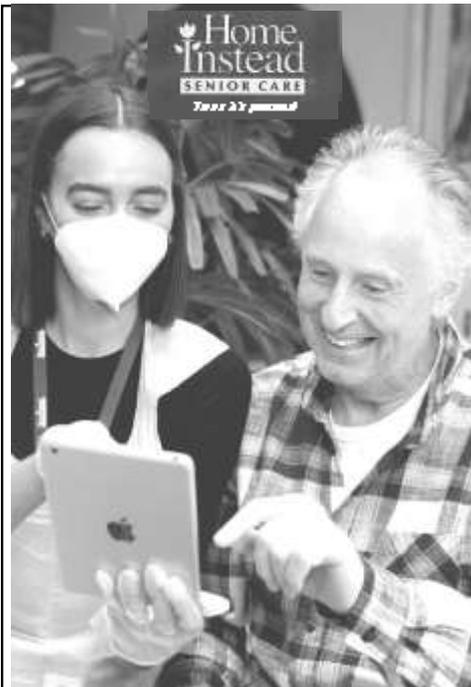
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# Looking Back at Parish Magazines

50 years ago  
December 1971

## Holy Land 1972

The Diocesan Information Officer is leading an Ecumenical Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, 12-26 August 1972. Cost £135 (inc.) by scheduled services, not a charter flight.

## In Brief

The Church of England Children's Society is this year holding two Christingle Services in the diocese. The first is at the Cathedral at 3pm on Saturday, 11 December; and the second at Earls Barton parish church at 2.30pm on Saturday 18 December.

The Archdeacon of Loughborough, [and other staff] took part in a fortnight's Parish Mission [Teach-In] at Daventry. It was supported by house groups, 4 of which have decided to continue regular meetings

25 years ago  
January 1997

## Wise Words?

The ancient Egyptians believed that as they took off their clothes at the end of the old year and put on fresh ones, they rid themselves of all that soiled their lives during the year. But by January 2nd they were in trouble again.

Of course, the Believer doesn't have to wait for the new year to be cleansed. 1 John.7 says, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.



# Crossword No 384

## ACROSS

1 Cathedral in northern England (4,7)

7 'Just as poor as was the -- then', (carol) (6)

8 Eccentric person (6)

9 Lout (3)

10 Constrain (6)

12 Equipment (6)

13 Setter (anag.) (6)

16 C S Lewis' make-believe land (6)

18 'Still through the -- skies they come', (carol) (6)

19 Invent (6)

21 Cretan mountain (3)

22 Flinching (6)

23 Witchcraft (6)

24 'Fear not said he for ---', (carol) (6,5)

## DOWN

1 'O come ye, O come ----', (carol) (2,2,9)

2 Jewish priest (5)

3 What rubbish (2,3)

4 'Worship Christ the -- King', (carol) (7)

5 Tornado (7)

6 Pantomime (3,6,4)

11 Command to speed up (3)

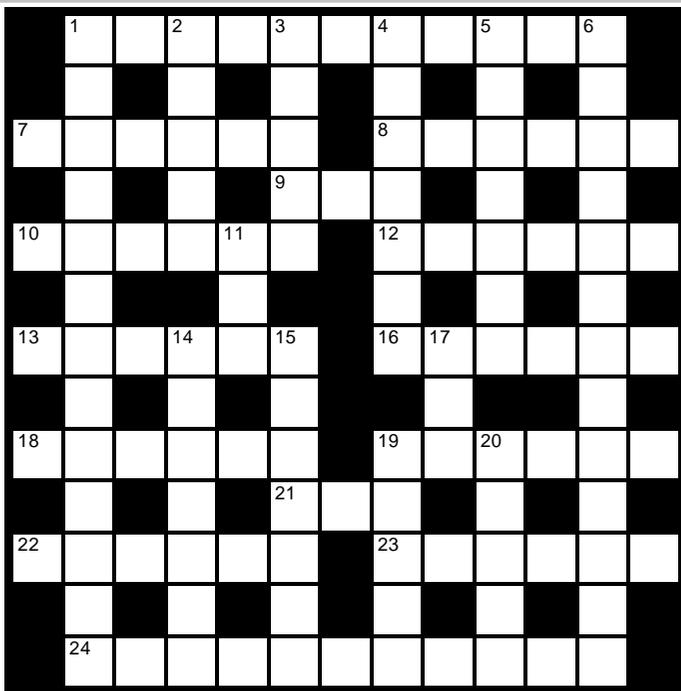
14 Begrudging (7)

15 This evening (7)

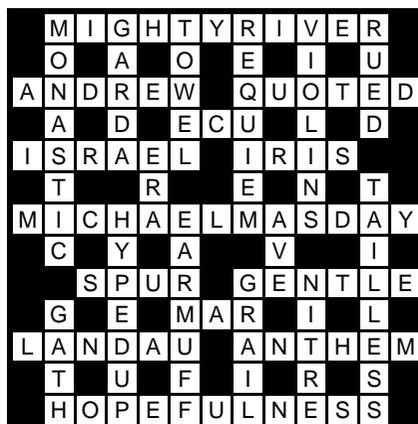
17 'We three kings of Orient --', (carol) (3)

19 'Is born of --'s line', (carol) (5)

20 'Brightly -- the moon that night', (carol) (5)



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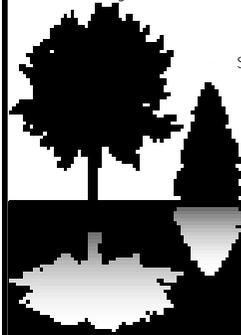
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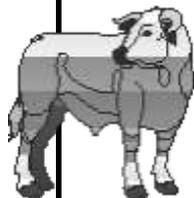
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# Belfry Gossip

With the changing of the clocks to GMT and the prospect of cooler evenings we borrowed the Guild Carbon Dioxide meter to test the efficiency of our ventilation strategy in the belfry. We took readings with different combinations of door and windows open (and closed) while different numbers of bells were being rung and the number of ringers in the belfry. We now know the best approach to staying safe and not suffer too badly from the cold and loudness of the bells. We take ventilation, sanitising, face coverings and distancing seriously.

On the Saturday prior to Steve and Sue leaving us we rang for three quarters of an hour as a compliment to them, and to wish them all best wishes for their future.

It was a privilege to be able to ring half-muffled for the service at the war memorial again following last year's restrictions and it was good to see such a big crowd attending to honour those who had died during conflicts.

The Peterborough Guild held their first 10-bell practice since ringing has resumed, this was on the bells at Kettering parish church and was attended by about 35 ringers. A variety of different methods were rung making a very good morning indeed.

The Wellingborough Branch will have held their next meetings before you read this so more next time.

Tintinnabulum



! One of the bell-ringers was secretly proud of his part in the Nativity Play

# Church Diary

## December

- 3 **Friday: 2.00pm onwards - Making Christingles for Christingle** - see p9
- 4 **Saturday: 2.30pm - Christingle Service at St Mary's**
- 7 **Tuesday: 10.00-12noon - Craft Group** meets in the Church Hall: more detail on p8  
**Tuesday: 7.30pm - PCC meeting** in the lower hall.
9. **Thursday: 7.30pm - Rushden & Newton Bromswold WI**, at The Windmill Club, Glassbrook Rd. This will be a social meeting with refreshments. Visitors Welcome.
- 12 **Sunday: 3.00pm onwards - Carol Singing at Rushden Lakes** - come and join local churches singing carols as a witness to the real meaning of Christmas and ...  
**Sunday: 3.00pm - Confirmation Service at St Mary's, Higham Ferrers**
- 18 **Saturday: 9.30-12 noon - Who Let The Dads Out?** More detail in the box on p10
- 20 **Monday: 7.30pm - Newton Church** will be **Carol Singing at The Swan, Newton**. Please come and join us.

## January

- 4 **Tuesday: 10.00-12noon - Craft Group** meets in the Church Hall, more detail on p8
- 7-9 **Friday - Sunday: Epiphany Retreat at Launde Abbey**: more details on p14
- 13 **Thursday: 7.30pm - Rushden & Newton WI - A Quiz Night** - Windmill Club, Glassbrook Rd, Rushden. Contact is Julia 01933 317846
- 22 **Saturday: 7.00-10.00pm - The Northampton Male Voice Choir [Lite] with Elli McAspur at the Bede House, Higham Ferrers** in support of Rotary charities. Tickets £12 from Sidey Design, Higham Ferrers

## Looking Further Ahead

**World Day of Prayer in 2022** will be held in **St Mary's Church, Rushden** at **2.00pm on Friday 4 March** - **Please put the date in your diary now!**

# Services in Church - December

St Mary's  
Rushden

St Peter's  
Newton Bromswold

## Saturday 4 December

2.30pm Christingle Service

## Sunday 5 December - Second Sunday in Advent

9.30am Holy Communion

11.00am Family Service

11.15am Morning Prayer

## Sunday 12 December - Third Sunday in Advent

9.30am All Age Service

11.00am Holy Communion

11.15am Morning Prayer

## Sunday 19 December - Fourth Sunday in Advent

9.30am Nativity Service

11.00am Carols by  
Candlelight

11.15am Holy Communion

6.00pm Nine Lessons & Carols

## Friday 24 December - Christmas Eve

4.00pm All Age Service

6.00pm Carol Service

11.00pm Holy Communion

## Saturday 25 December - Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion [BCP]

9.00am Christmas

10.00am All Age Service followed by  
Holy Communion

Communion

## Midweek Services in St Mary's Church

Thursdays December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 at 10.30am Holy Communion [BCP]

No Services on Sunday 26 December - Boxing Day - at either church

# Services in Church - January 2022



**St Peter's**  
Newton Bromswold

## Sunday 2 January - Epiphany

10.30am Joint Service of Carols                      11.00am Family Service

## Sunday 9 January - The Baptism of Christ

9.30am All Age Service  
11.15am Morning Prayer                      11.00am Holy Communion

## Sunday 16 January - Second Sunday of Epiphany

9.30am All Age & Parade Service  
11.15am Holy Communion                      11.00am Morning Prayer

## Sunday 23 January - Third Sunday of Epiphany

9.30am All Age Service  
11.15am Morning Prayer                      11.00am Holy Communion

## Sunday 30 January - Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

9.30am All Age Service                      11.00am Morning Prayer  
11.15am Morning Prayer

## *Midweek Services in St Mary's Church*

Thursdays January 6, 13, 20, 27 at 10.30am Holy Communion [BCP]

# Live-Streaming

**Both of St Mary's Sunday Services - at 9.30 and 11.15am - are now live-streamed.** They can also be found later through our website on YouTube: search or go to [stmaryschurchrushden.org](http://stmaryschurchrushden.org) for the links

— The Back Page —



11



4



20



18