

December Newsletter

We would like this monthly publication to be something that will lift your spirits and be thought provoking too! So there are articles, jokes and puzzles to keep you amused and smiling at this difficult time. Printed copies will be available in Lady St Mary Church and can be picked up at the 10am service and taken to people who do not have the internet and so if you can share it by posting a copy to a neighbour, being careful to practise all necessary precautions, please do so.

News from the Ministry Team ...

Hope in uncertain times

As I write this, details of the easing of Covid restrictions for Christmas have just been released, and people around the country are working out who they can 'bubble' with and how they can see loved ones this Christmas. This comes in the context of recent good news about promising vaccines, but also the sobering reality that despite the lockdown, the virus is still very much present in communities across the country, and the risk involved in meeting others indoors during the cold winter months remains high.

Recent headlines in the media have told us that 'Christmas is cancelled' due to the pandemic, we see the NHS under great pressure and unemployment continuing to rise. People long for some good news, and the easing of rules to allow festive family gatherings are seen by some as the government's attempt to 'save Christmas'.

We have not known a time of such uncertainty and upheaval for generations. Normal concerns about finding the right present for Auntie Mabel or ordering the turkey in good time are dwarfed by fears about our relatives, our health, and our jobs. In the midst of this, where do we find hope?

In the Christian faith, Advent is a time of waiting, hoping and longing. This year, in our waiting there's an invitation to bring our fears and anxieties to God. To be reminded of his faithfulness, to find hope in him, perhaps to hear familiar words with a new resonance:

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:2, 6)

Jesus himself was born into a time of uncertainty and upheaval. Away from home without the support of friends and relatives, his parents fled the country fearing for the life of their newborn son. And yet, in our present time of darkness, his light still shines.

Christmas cannot be cancelled, and Christmas does not need to be saved. Two thousand years ago, God sent his Son into a dark and troubled world to save us. Today, our dark and troubled world needs Jesus more than ever. Our Christmas celebrations may look rather different this year, but Jesus, Emmanuel, is still with us. In the parish, join us for our services, in person or online, as we celebrate our Saviour's birth.

In the midst of all the uncertainty, may you find hope in Jesus this Advent and Christmas time.
Every blessing, Stuart

Could you help a family in need in our community?

Safe Families is a Christian charity which offers support, hope and belonging to improve the lives of families in local communities. They link children, young people and families with local church volunteers who can offer them help and support. We are exploring how we could work with Safe Families to support families in our area, through things like befriending and practical help.



“Safe Families is a fabulous body to encourage church members to become involved with. It demonstrates God’s love and care to those who are vulnerable and in need. It is a place for building caring relationships that can transform lives. Brilliant training and support are given.” (Rt Reverend Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham)

If you would like to know more about what it would involve to become a volunteer, please speak to Stuart or Helen. You can also visit the Safe Families website at: <https://safefamilies.uk>

Giving of Donations

“Thank you” to all of you who have supported the Parish and Overseas mission and charities through giving over the past months, it has been truly amazing. We have raised;

- Monies donated during lockdown to the Parish. - £10157 including Gift Aid for Mission Sunday. - £12027 including Gift Aid for the Parish Gift Day. - £8331 has so far been fundraised by the Antiques and Collectables Auctions with two future auctions still to be held. - Thirty three people took part in the Tearfund Big Quiz Night, joining with over 17000 people from around the UK from 473 different church groups. Our group raised a wonderful £740 with another £140 to be collected in gift aid.

Well done everybody!





Young Families Ministries An Update



After a very quiet year with our toddler groups not being able to meet since March we have had a busy and exciting November.

On Tuesday 3 November Becky Green and I started a new weekly support group for mums with little babies in the Parish Hall. We have been grateful that the current restrictions not only allow us to continue, but have actually allowed us to increase our numbers! We therefore now have 10 bookable spaces each week which we can more than fill, showing what a need there is for groups for new parents.

We meet for an hour which is mostly a led discussion (often with a relevant theme for the week) but also includes the odd spoken nursery rhyme or music from a CD (as we can't sing). We finish with a short thought for the day often based around a verse or two from the Bible, followed by playing 'May God's Blessing Be Upon You Now' on a CD whilst having a bubble machine on for the babies. It is all very new to us and we're very much learning as we go but have been delighted to see our mums come back week after week, please pray for us as we seek to build relationships with the mums.



So far, we haven't been able to hold any toddler groups in person due to the restrictions on numbers and the difficulties in getting toddlers to socially distance. So instead, recently we have distributed over 50 gift bags to the families with toddlers who normally come to our groups or services. Thank you to Jean Dixon, Judith Holmes and Becky Green who have helped deliver these bags. The bags include: The Meaningful Chocolate Company nativity advent calendar and activity book, a pack for making home made nativity cards, home made play dough and double sided play dough mat, a wax melt gift for the parents (handmade by one of our mums as part of her recovery from post natal depression - see Jars of Wishes online), a tea light, a Baby Jesus Rock and a note including suggestions for how to use the items to pray with their children. Please pray for our families that the activities in the packs will help to bring Jesus into their Christmas.

Rachel Cocksedge



December Bible Book Club - Jonah

Last month we started a new initiative called the Bible Book Club, the idea is to look at a different book of the Bible each month, reading it and then coming together as a group and/or on Zoom to discuss what we have discovered about: God, God's people and ourselves, and what that particular book can teach us today.

We started with the book of Ruth and this month we are staying in the Old Testament, looking at the book of Jonah. It is a much-loved story and one that is very popular with young and old alike, but it is also very challenging and raises many questions. What sort of book is it, and what particular genre does it come under? Is it history, prophecy, wisdom or a mixture of all of these? What sort of example does Jonah give? The book ends with a big question from God to Jonah about whether he was right to be merciful or not. How might we interpret that today?

We will be following the Bible Society notes (www.biblesociety.org.uk), then look up Bible Book Club – Jonah). However, if you do not have access to the internet, or would prefer a hard copy of the notes and questions, please contact the Office. I hope that we will be able to meet in the Parish Hall (please notify Parish Office, in advance) or by Zoom on Wednesday 9th December at 3.00pm. It would be good to have you join us.

Simon Everett

The Christmas Trail

This Christmas the characters in the nativity story are going to be out and about in Wareham!

Certain shops in the town will be hosting in their window a poster of a Christmas story character. Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus and lots of others will be there. All you will have to do is go for a wander round the town taking your



list of characters with you (we will make this list available to anyone who wants it) and write down which character you have found in which shop. Chocolate prizes will be available for anyone who finds all 12 characters. Each poster will also have a QR code in the corner and if you scan this on a smart phone it will take you to a short song, poem or thought about the character on the poster. More details will follow. "Children" of all ages are welcome to take part.

Christmas Services 2020

Christmas Eve Thursday 24th December

7.00 pm Christmas Communion at Sandford St Martin's Church

11.15 pm Christmas Communion at The Priory Church of Lady St Mary, Wareham

Christmas Day Friday 25th December

9.30 am Christmas All Age Service at Sandford St Martin's Church

10.00 am Christmas Family Communion at The Priory Church of Lady St Mary, Wareham

11.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) at St Nicholas Church, Arne (TBC)

10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) at St John the Evangelist Church, East Holme

Saturday 26th December - Feast of St Stephen

11.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) at St Martin-on-the-Walls Church, Wareham

Sunday 27th December

10.00 am Parish United Service with Communion at The Priory Church of Lady St Mary, Wareham

Thursday 31st December

11.30 pm Watchnight Service at The Priory Church of Lady St Mary, Wareham

***Weekly Sunday services are as normal unless otherwise stated**

Please note that due to Covid-19 restrictions the above services may change.



It shouldn't happen to a Vicar...

Tidings of Great Joy and Laughter!

It was the evening of the school carol service and the church was already full to overflowing. For a rural church it was very large, but it was never large enough to hold all the parents, grandparents and siblings who turned up to support the boys and girls of the local primary school.

This was one of the few occasions when I had relatively little to do other than welcome everyone and close with a prayer of blessing. Nevertheless, I was expected to sit at the front in all my robes for all to see. It started well, with all the different classes singing their carols and songs, or performing sketches they had written.

Towards the end of the service the headteacher had introduced a new feature which involved many of those who had taken up learning to play musical instruments over the past year. First up was Jessica*, who had started trumpet lessons earlier in the year and she was going to play 'Good King Wenceslas'. There was absolute silence as everyone waited expectantly. The tension mounted as she filled her lungs and pursed her lips preparing to start, but not a sound was to be heard. The seconds passed, feeling more like minutes, her face grew redder and redder, her cheeks bulged, her eyes were popping out of her head and we all feared she would explode at any minute. Then, all of a sudden, there was an incredibly loud burp, followed by a similar sound from the trumpet!

We were off! Well I was, I just couldn't stop giggling, even though I tried – after all the poor girl was only a couple of feet in front of me. But the more I tried, the harder it was. I tried kicking myself, pinching myself, even gouging into the back of my hands with my fingernails. All to no avail. Whilst not laughing out loud, my shoulders were shaking with stifled mirth and it wasn't long before I could see the gathered congregation all nudging each other to 'look at the Vicar!' Many of them were laughing too but, of course, they had the luxury of being in a jam-packed church, whereas I was on full display. Meanwhile Jessica valiantly played on, coming out with random notes that bore no resemblance to the tune she was meant to be playing.

It wasn't long before the whole congregation was 'watching the Vicar', who by this time had tears spraying horizontally from his eyes whilst doing his very best to shrink into his robes. Then to my relief it stopped. And to release the pent-up laughter, I grabbed the opportunity to stand and clap wildly hoping everyone else would do the same. They remained seated. And unfortunately Jessica took my enthusiastic outburst as cue to play a second verse!

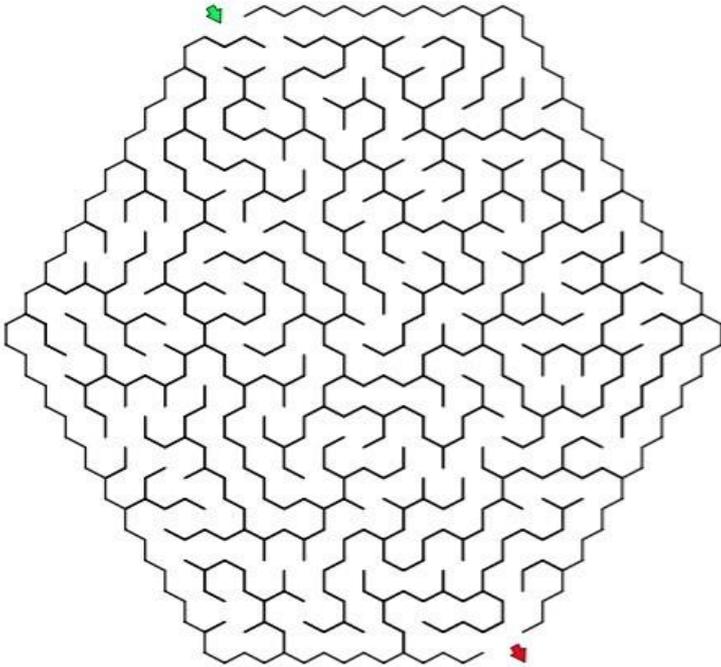
Needless to say I never lived it down whilst I remained in that parish, and the following year the headteacher gave me a box of drawing pins and a three-inch nail before the service, just in case there was a repeat performance!

S.E.

* *Not her actual name.*

Puzzle Page

The Maze



Sudoku

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

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Word Search

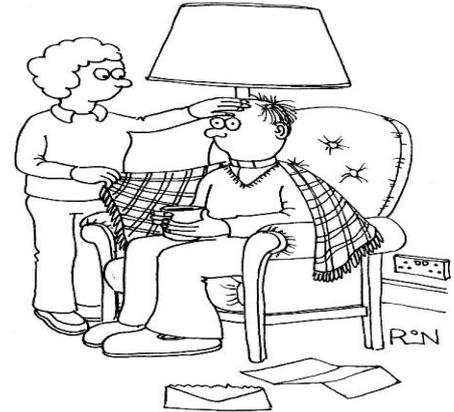
S I I O E V E T E T A L
 T H I R D G H N L F Y E
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 I E I A I N E L N T U O
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 C N O S L I R H U P E T
 I E L L A H R V G A H U
 V M E L O D Y S B I N G
 S S A M N A C H T H N H

Silent - Night
 Loved - Carol
 Austria - First
 Sung - Stille
 Nacht - Heilige
 Christmas
 Eve
 Father - Joseph
 Mohr - Young
 Priest
 Organist
 Midnight
 Mass
 Melody
 Single
 Bing
 Version
 Third

Something to make you smile!



"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think that the Angel of the Lord Zooming with the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."



Martin received the latest Christmas coronavirus regulations from the diocesan office.

Seasonal Jokes

Jokes from a year of lockdown!

- With hair salons, nail salons and beauty salons closed, things got rather ugly out there.
- "What did you think about the 2020 disaster?" "Could you narrow it down a little?"
- Surely someone with 20/20 vision should have seen this coming.
- I ran out of toilet paper and had to start using old newspapers. Times are rough.

Has COVID-19 forced you to wear a mask and glasses at the same time? If so you could be entitled to condensation.

Last Christmas I was given a book on medical procedures. When I opened it I found the appendix was missing!

Last night an aeroplane crashed into my bedroom. Turns out I left the landing light on.

Contact information

Members of the Team are available for confidential help, support and advice.

Please contact:

The Reverend Canon Simon Everett (Team Rector) Day off Friday 01929 289236

The Reverend Stuart Cocksedge (Team Vicar) Day off Friday 01929 550972

The Reverend Dr Helen Williams (Assistant Curate) Day off Monday 01929 288845

The Reverend Hilary Bond (Children's Worker and Pioneer Priest) Day off Friday 01929 551219

The Reverend Michael Young (Officiating Minister) Day Off Monday 01929 552582

The Reverend Brigid Barrett (Officiating Minister) Day off Tuesday 01929 553460

The Parish Office opening times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am – 1pm
telephone: 01929 550905 or please do contact Debs Barclay any other time by Email:
parish.office@warehamchurches.org.uk