

CHRISTLETON

ST JAMES'  
CHURCH



2016

CHRISTMAS  
GREETINGS!

# DECEMBER DIARY

Thurs	01	12.00pm 07.00pm	United Prayer Lunch - Methodist Church Advent Study course and Compline - St James
Sun	04		<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b>
		08.00am	Holy Communion (BCP) followed by breakfast in Parish Hall
		10.45am	Holy Communion (CW) followed by refreshments
		04.00pm	Christingle Service
Mon	05	10.30am	Holy Communion - Tarvin Court Nursing Home
		11.00am	Holy Communion - Oaklands Nursing Home
		02.00pm	MU Advent Service - St James
Wed	07	10.45am	United Holy Communion (BCP) followed by refreshments
		02.00pm	Pastoral Group Meeting
		06.00pm	Choir Practice
Wed	08	07.00pm	Advent Study Course and Compline St James
Sun	11		<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b>
		08.00am	Holy Communion (CW)
		10.45am	Toy Service - You are invited to bring a wrapped gift which should be labelled accordingly for a boy/girl with a suitable age range.
Wed	14	10.45am	Holy Communion (BCP) Followed by refreshments
		11.30am	Holy Communion – Birch Heath Lodge
		06.00pm	Choir Practice

Thurs	15	07.00pm	Advent Study Course and Compline - St James
Sun	18	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>	
		08.00am	Holy Communion (CW)
		10.45am	Holy Communion (CW) Followed by refreshments
		04.00pm	Messy Christmas- Parish Hall
		06.30pm	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight
Mon	19	12.30pm	Community Lunch-Parish Hall
		02.00pm	Primary School Nativity Service St James
		07.00pm	Primary School Nativity Service St James
Wed	21	10.45am	Holy Communion (BCP) Followed by refreshments
		06.00pm	Choir Practice
Thurs	22	07.00pm	Advent Study Course with Compline
		<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b>	
Sat	24	04.00pm	Crib Service
		07.00pm	Carols Round the Tree
		11.30pm	First Holy Communion of Christmas
		<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>	
Sun	25	08.00am	Holy Communion (CW) Followed by breakfast in the Parish Hall
		10.45am	Holy Communion
Wed	28	<b>FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS</b>	
		10.45am	Holy Communion (BCP) Followed by refreshments

# Message from our Rector



Finance is such an emotive subject in church and indeed in the community. Many people have no great understanding of how church finances operate, and in many cases, have no desire to know.

However, there comes a time when we must face what lies ahead of us without fear or reservation.

That was the position of the PCC (Church Parochial Council) recently, when we had to address the finances of St James.

There is a popular misconception that the church is funded by government or by the diocese, or some other organisation, however, all this is incorrect, the finances of the church comprise of gracious donations of those who come to St James week by week, and occasional much welcomed donations.

I have always hesitated from preaching in church about finance, as those who hear are usually, the people who are giving all they can. However, our expenditure creeps up and up each year, with our biggest single outlay being to the Diocese in what is known as the “Parish Share”. This figure is almost £70,000 for 2016, and will no doubt increase in 2017. With our annual regular income in the region of £66,000, you can see how we have needed to be creative in order to balance our finances.

The parish share helps cover the cost of clergy, training for curates, support and administrative costs in the diocese, and also helps to support churches who have less income than others.

Many people seek to use the church for weddings, funerals and baptisms and it’s right the church is available and in good order when people wish to use the church, however, this all comes at a cost, for

maintenance of the building, utility services and church ground maintenance.

We have over many, many years adjusted any shortfall in our year end accounts, by moving money from our reserves to enable our accounts to show as an equal balance of income and expenditure, however, our reserves are almost depleted and as the cycle above continues year in, years out, is not sustainable any longer.

We have therefore needed to pray and reflect on how (in the absence of additional income from friends and supporters of St James) we might reduce our expenditure. Sadly, one of the ways is to cease (at least in the short term) publication of the parish magazine and replace it with a short monthly news letter which will enable us to keep everyone appraised of the service times, and news of events or special services, but which will also save St James considerable and much needed funds, as the magazine currently operates at a loss of £1,500 each year.

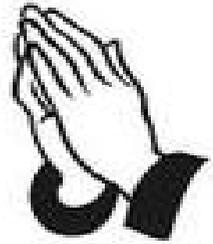
It is therefore with regret, that I write this article to inform you of the decision of the PCC to cease publication of our monthly magazine and to introduce a monthly news letter. I am sure you will be as disappointed as the PCC were when making this decision.

This will of course be reviewed when we have an uplift in our finances.

I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to David Bull who has been editor of the magazine for over 30 years and has worked tirelessly in ensuring we have a top quality and informative magazine each month, and to Ann Smith, who over many years has coordinated the magazine advertisements, and also to Jenny Davies and Valmai Griffiths who each month have collated the magazines ready for collection and distribution.

Thank you to everyone who has delivered the magazine on behalf of St James.....and of course, thank you to each of you for your support and friendship.

We do look forward to the future and to re introducing a new magazine when finances permit.



Your faithful Servant,  
Malcolm

**St James' Church**  
**A Traditional Service**  
**of**  
**Nine Lessons and Carols**



**December 18th**  
**6.30pm**

# WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH

## CHRISTLETON METHODIST CHURCH

We meet for Informal Prayers and a Simple Lunch on the first Thursday of each month at 12 noon. All welcome. There is no charge for the lunch but a donation to cover costs would be appreciated.

## CHRISTLETON W. I.

Meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 7.15 pm in the Parish Hall. Further details may be obtained from the Secretary, Miss Ida Rogers, Chester 350060.



## CHESTER FLOWER CLUB

Meetings are held in Christleton Parish Hall on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1.30pm. Details of any events can be obtained from the Club Secretary - 01745 856126.

## MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTORS

The **December** magazine will be available for collection from Church on Sunday 27th November

## MONTHLY LUNCHEON CLUB

Meets in the Parish Hall on the 3rd Monday of each month at 12 noon for a 12.30 pm start. There is no charge but donations are welcome. For further details contact Janet Milton (325529) or Christine Abrams (335562)

## RSPB CHESTER GROUP

Meetings are held from September to April in Christleton Parish Hall, usually on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm. Occasional field trips. Details from Norman on 01244 335670 or [www.rspb.org.uk/groups/chester](http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/chester)



# The History File

## **Margaret Croston BEM**

Margaret Croston from Bridge Drive, Christleton, who died on October 23rd after a short illness, was a truly remarkable lady, someone who served Christleton so well during her lifetime. This is a short tribute to commemorate her outstanding contribution to both the village and city.

Margaret was awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Years Honours List 2014, to commemorate her 50years of outstanding service to the community of Christleton and nearby City of Chester. Margaret was a Parish Councillor at Christleton for 30years, and its first Lady Chairman. She was a Governor at the Primary School for 25years, including many of those as its chair. She helped organise the annual “Charles Mack Concerts” when young people from both Primary & High Schools came together annually to raise money for charity in memory of much loved Rector Charles Mack who died in 1986.

She was also secretary of the John Sellers Educational Charity, for 36years until her death, and was proud to say that she was still using the original minute book from 1779. Her expertise as a Secretary was much in demand, and amongst her many roles, was secretary of St James’ Parochial Church Council for 21years. She organised many of the fund raising activities, fairs and special events for the church and local community.



She was a founder member of the Christleton Village History Group, and carried out research for the 1977 book “Christleton a Cheshire Village”, for “Christleton 2000years of History” published to

commemorate the Millennium, and “Christleton Great War Voices” telling the story of the village through the years of the Great War 1914-18. Margaret was also correspondent for the Chester Chronicle and other local newspapers, contributing weekly village news columns until the practice was discontinued much to her disgust. During her lifetime in Christleton she created the most wonderful series of scrap books of cuttings and printed information published about the village. These form a unique collection, a living history that portrays a fascinating account of village life for well over 40 years. She also contributed regular articles for the Parish Magazine.

Margaret compiled the original Christleton Cook Book, drawing on her own expertise in baking and cooking, to add to those recipes she persuaded many of her friends to contribute. This small publication can still be found in use in many kitchens throughout the village, and was later updated and revised as “The Christleton Millennium Cook Book. Margaret was a valued member of the Village Show Committee, a regular competitor and prize winner in many of the categories on offer at the annual show.

Margaret was a keen participant in traditional village events, especially The Fete, and together with husband Alf always entered the Fancy Dress Competition. They would always dress in the theme for each Fete, and take part in the Rose Queen procession through the village. They were so well dressed in their many disguises, that they almost always won a prize, and did so as recently as this last summer. Margaret was delighted to have been asked to open the Fete in 2014 in recognition of her honour of the award of the BEM, and subsequent visit to a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

She was Chairman and Committee Member of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association for many years, and during her period of office as Chairman raised enough money to purchase guide dog “Chrissy”. She was a valued guide at Chester Cathedral, and an active member of the Chester Ladies Luncheon Club, Chester Ladies Circle and Chester Tangent.

Margaret was an extremely good and efficient organiser, and her many skills came to the fore as Speaker Secretary of the Chester Society for Natural Science, Art & Literature, for its lecture series at the Grosvenor Museum. She was always able to source and find excellent speakers, and provide a simulating programme of lectures for the members. One of her most popular speakers, Rosie Swale often stayed with Margaret and Alf, and carried a little toy mouse named “Christleton” in her rucksack as she travelled all round the world on her many amazing adventures.

In her working life Margaret was Secretary to the Treasurer of Cheshire County Council, Secretary to the Dean of Law at Manchester University, and Secretary to “Croston Engineering”, the well known storage and bulk handling engineers, of which she was co-founder with her husband. Despite all the above she also supported the activities of her beloved husband Alf to whom she had been married for 66years, their sons Nevil and Roger, and cared for a strong loving extended family, to whom she was a very special mum, grandma and great grandma.

Margaret was a unique lady, someone who contributed so much to the village and people of Christleton, and the wider community of the City of Chester for all of her life. She was a kind, generous, loving and a specially gifted person who devoted her life to others. She had a strong faith and was a regular and faithful worshipper at St James’ Christleton and it is fitting that she will be laid to rest in the churchyard, of the village for whom she gave so much.

David Cummings

October 2016

## Acknowledgement

Alf and the family thank everyone for the many cards and tributes received in recognition of Margaret’s loving kindness to everyone she met. Between our marriage in 1950 and 1964 my work involved six moves which Margaret accepted without complaint. On arriving in Christleton in 1964, we decided that this seventh move would be the

final one as we were so welcomed into the community of this special village.

We have never regretted our decision which has given us so many happy years of friendship and pleasure. Thank you all for your affection and appreciation of a life dedicated to serving the communities of Christleton and Chester.

## **Death of our Christleton cob**

Villagers will be sad to learn of the recent death of our male swan, nicknamed Sam. He was at least 27 years old, very old by mute swan records, and he died at RSPCA Nantwich of a combination of old age and long term injuries. He first appeared at The Pit in Christleton in 1996/7 with his mate TOV, and together with two more partners C175 & CDS9 was responsible for over 116 eggs with 101 cygnets being hatched. 75% of these cygnets survived to fly, an incredible record, one of the most productive records for a mute swan nest site in the country. During his lifetime he regularly walked his pen and their cygnets through the village, bringing traffic to a halt and causing great amusement to villagers. This happened when the cygnets were from 3 days up to three weeks old, and could happen at any time of day. In 2012 and 2013 the pair walked in the reverse direction from the canal up to the Pit, due to the fact that the cob had a longstanding hip injury. By this stage he couldn't fly and was content for three years to nest on a canal side garden at Rowan Park. Despite the loss of his mate C175 predated by a mink in 2014, he quickly found love with his last mate CDS9 who was just three years old. They produced 17 eggs in the last two seasons and 6 cygnets survived to fly. Four of them were still on the canal in October 2016. The mute swan has been the emblem of the Village since at least 1737, so we hope a new pair can be attracted either to The Pit, or the canal in the near future. DC



# **New Year, New Beginning**

The start of a New Year often means New Year's resolutions, the sense of a new start with a renewed resolve.

The Anglican Church marks the start of a New Year with a service simply called 'for the Beginning of the New Year'. This has actually been used in many churches for years, called the Covenant Service in which we are all invited to renew our covenant with God, offering ourselves in His service afresh for the coming year.

This will be included as part of our Communion Service on January 1st 2017 at 10.45am

## **Date for your diary**

**January 28th 2017 at 7.00pm  
Christleton Parish Hall**

**The Wonderful World of Wildlife, including  
a history of Christleton Swans**

**Tickets £6 including refreshments  
All proceeds for the refurbishment of the Parish Hall.**

## **Cover Picture**

We are grateful once again this year to Phil Hodges who has drawn the front cover for the December Magazine.

## **Back Cover**

Images of St James & the village in snow from the LHG Historic collection

St James' Church

## Crib Service



**Christmas Eve**

**4.00pm**

A very short service to tell the Christmas Story in action and songs for younger children and their families

## **Statistical Information**

New Church of England statistics for 2015 have been published and show that just under one million people attend services each week. The survey, carried out over four weeks in October 2015, found 960,000 people attending church each week, with 820,000 adults and 140,000 children. Schools services added a further 160,000 attenders.

The total worshipping community of churches across the Church of England was 1,142,000 people, of whom 20% were aged under 18, 50% were aged 18-69 and 30% were aged 70 or over.

The worshipping total figures for Advent are 5 million and 2.3 million at Christmas. So that is 7.3 million people attending services which focus on the festival of Christmas.

In 2015, the Church carried out just under 1,000 weddings, 2,000 baptisms, and almost 3,000 funerals every week of the year.

Attendances at these services are not recorded but conservative estimates of 50 at each of those 6000 services would add up to 300,000 attendances each week or more than 15 million each year.

Some 11% of births during 2015 were marked by a Church of England infant baptism or thanksgiving service whilst 30% of deaths were marked by a Church of England funeral.

## **A call for reform and renewal**

Despite so much service to the nation, as a whole the figures represent a continuing trend that has shown an 11% decrease in attendance over the past decade with an average decline of just over 1% a year.

William Nye, Secretary General of the Archbishops' Council, said: "The Church of England is setting out on a journey of Renewal &

Reform, aiming to reverse our numerical decline in attendance so that we become a growing church in every region and for every generation.

“The Church of England is open to and for everyone in England, building up the Body of Christ and working for the common good. For some of those who support our work, weekly attendance at services is part of their discipleship.

There will be many others, as we know from the Census, who identify with us but who worship on a less regular basis. These figures represent a realistic assessment of where we start from in terms of weekly attendance. We are confident in a hopeful future where our love of God and service of neighbour will form the basis for future growth.

The statistics are available at:<https://staging.churchofengland.org/media/3331683/2015statisticsformission.pdf>

## **90th Birthday Celebrations for Betty Dunning**

Congratulations to Betty, a long serving and well loved member of St James' Community who celebrates her 90th Birthday on the 3rd December. She has carried out many roles in the church over the years with great enthusiasm, and you rarely see her without a smile.



Betty also cared for the Rose Queen and her attendants at the Village Fete for many years, and was part of the Fete Organising Team, often seen leading the parade through the village. She will be celebrating her birthday on the 3rd, surrounded by daughter Helen, sons, Michael, Brian & Colin and their families, including her 8 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

Congratulations Betty from all your friends at St James'



## Christmas Services at St James, Christleton

**Our services celebrate Christmas and are suitable for young and old alike, and everybody in between.**

**Sun 4th Dec: 4.00pm: Christingle Service (*Children's Society*).**

**Sun 11th Dec: 10.45am: Toy Service. You are invited to bring a wrapped toy labelled for a boy and/or girl and labelled for a suitable age. These will go to a local charity.**

**Sun 18th Dec:**

**6.30pm: Service of Nine Lessons & Carols.**

**Sat 24th Dec: (Christmas Eve):**

**4.00pm: Crib Service - a short service around the Crib for the very young, their families and friends to enjoy the message of Christmas.**

**7.00pm: Carols 'Round the Tree, complete with donkey. Outside in the churchyard.**

**11.30pm: First Holy Communion of Christmas.**



**Sun 25th Dec: (Christmas Day):**

**8.00am: Holy Communion (followed by breakfast in the hall);**

**10.45am: Holy Communion; (no 6.30pm service).**

**Sun 1st Jan 2017:**

**8.00am: Holy Communion (followed by breakfast in the hall);**

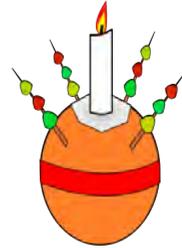
**10.45am: Holy Communion; (no 6.30pm service).**

**Sun 8th Jan:**

**4.00pm: Churches Together United Service; (no 6.30pm service).**

**We look forward to seeing you ...**

# Celebrate Advent Christingle with us!



*Please join us for a special candlelit celebration  
On Sunday 4th December at 4:00pm St.James' Church,  
Christleton*

**Help us to be there for vulnerable children in this country.**

Charity Registration No. 221124

THE MONTHLY  
CHRISTLETON

**LUNCHEON  
CLUB**

IN PARISH HALL

Next Lunch:

**Monday  
19th December 2016**

**Christmas Lunch with all the Trimmings!**

**Places limited, so please ensure you book.**

12 noon for 12.30 serving  
No charge, donations welcome



Book a place by calling:

Liz: 409414, or Janet: 325529,  
or Christine: 335562,  
or sign a list in Church.



# Birch Heath Lodge



## Christmas Fair and Festive Hog Roast

Come celebrate with us on Wednesday 14th December 4 - 7pm

Tickets available from Birch Heath Lodge Care Home

**Adults £5    Children £2.50**

Joint fundraising event with The Hospice of the Good Shepherd

# HOSPICE

OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Tel: 01244 851811

Registered Charity Number: 515516.

Birch Heath Lane, Christleton, Chester CH3 7AP  
**Tel: 01244 434321    birchheath@mmcg.co.uk**

## Holy Mowers!!

What's going on here?

These are just some of those who came on 5th November to have a go at gardening in the churchyard. (The rest were gardening!) This is necessary as we are trying to reduce costs and 'do it ourselves'. We hadn't sown, but we did reap, and the rewards were great. We made a difference, had very good soup and bread and cheese for lunch, and enjoyed fellowship together.

This is not an exclusive club—oh no, far from it - plenty of opportunities to welcome more hands to help us show that the churchyard is loved and cared for. Do join in.



### When next?

**Saturday 10th December.**

**Time - 10.30am.**

**Lunch & fellowship provided.**

**More details from Mike or Tina Lightfoot.**

## Christmas Candles

As we approach Christmas time, our thoughts and prayers will turn towards those who we love and see no longer. We will again this year, decorate the Church window ledges with candles, which will bear the name(s) of our loved ones. The candles will be lit during the services of Nine Lessons and Carols (Sunday 18 December at 6.30pm), First Holy Communion of Christmas (Christmas Eve at 11.30pm) and Christmas morning (at 10.45am).

If you would like a candle or candles bearing the name of your loved one, please print the name of the person you wish to be remembered on the form at the back of Church (there is also a donation box, should you feel able to make a donation) or ring the Rector (335663) or Janet Milton (325529) for more information.

# Christmas: The story of the Christingle

The word 'Christingle' actually means 'Christ Light', and celebrates the light of Jesus coming into the world. Stories of how the Christingle began look back to the Moravian Church, which is found in the Czech Republic. The Moravians have held Christingle services for more than 200 years, and according to them, this is how the first Christingle might have been made: Many years ago the children in a village were asked to bring a Christmas gift to put beside the crib in the church. One family was very poor, and had no money for gifts, but the three children were still determined to take something. The only nice thing they had was an orange, so they decided to give the Christ-child that.

But then they discovered the top was going green, so the eldest cut it out, and put a candle in the hole. To add some colour, one of the girls took a red ribbon from her hair and tied it around the middle of the orange. It was hard to make the ribbon stay still, so they fastened it in place with toothpicks. The toothpicks looked a bit bare, so the youngest child added some raisins to them.

The children took their decorated orange lantern to the church for the Christmas Mass. The other children sneered at their meagre gift, but the priest seized upon it with joy. He held it up as an example of the true understanding of the meaning of Christmas, for the following reasons: the orange is round, like the world; the candle gives us light in the dark, like the love of God; the red ribbon goes round the 'world', as a symbol of Christ's blood, given for everyone; the four sticks point in all directions, and symbolise that God is over all: North, South, East and West; and the fruit and nuts remind us of God's blessings.

The Children's Society first introduced the Christingle Service to The Church of England in 1968, and it has since become a popular event in the church calendar. This candlelit celebration is an ideal way to share the key messages of the Christian faith, while helping to raise vital funds to help vulnerable children across the country.

Visit: [www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)

## **Christmas: Why was Jesus born in a barn?**

Our pretty Christmas cards do not do it justice – the stable that Jesus was born in would have been smelly, dirty, and full of mess. So why did God not provide something better for His beloved Son? Why let Joseph and Mary scrounge around until they ended up in a smelly stable?

Perhaps because the King of Kings being born in a foul stable is a perfect picture of redemption. Jesus came from glory into a world filled with the dirt, filth and darkness of sin. And Jesus was not put off by darkness in the least – instead, He came to be the Light of the World. Thank God for His unspeakable gift. No wonder the angels sang “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14)

## **Christmas: Thank Dickens for Christmas as you know it!**

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount of our modern Christmas celebrations can be traced back to the well-loved story of ‘A Christmas Carol’, by Charles Dickens.

When you read ‘A Christmas Carol’, you discover almost a template of the ‘ideal Christmas’ which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later.

So, for instance, in A Christmas Carol, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity (!).

And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In ‘A Christmas Carol’ there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present. Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported ‘a pretty German toy’ that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society.

## **Christmas: Christmas and St Luke’s Gospel**

It is to St Luke’s wonderful gospel that many Christians turn as the year draws to a close and Christmas approaches, for it is to St Luke that we owe the fullest account of the nativity.

Luke alone tells us the story of Mary and the angel’s visit to her, and has thus given the Church the wonderful Magnificat of Mary.

Luke alone tells us the story of Simeon’s hymn of praise, thus giving us the wonderful Nunc Dimmittis. Imagine an Anglican evensong without the Nunc Dimmittis.

Luke alone tells us the story of how the angels appeared to the shepherds and how the shepherds then visited the infant Jesus. So imagine Christmas cards and nativity scenes every year without the shepherds arriving to visit baby Jesus. Imagine school nativity plays without our children dressed as shepherds or sheep. So – thank you, Luke!

What makes it so amazing is that Luke was not a Jew! The man who wrote the fullest nativity story, and indeed more of the New Testament than any other single person, was a Gentile!

## **26 December On the Feast of Stephen**

Everyone knows that it was on the feast of Stephen that ‘good king Wenceslas looked on’, writes David Winter. After all, it’s in a Christmas

carol - but why? There's nothing about Christmas in it: a splendid young page who rustled up some flesh, wine and logs, an old man out in the snow ('deep and crisp and even') and a kindly monarch. But Christmas?

The clue is in 'the feast of Stephen', which falls on 26th December, or 'Boxing Day', as we know it. That, too, has nothing to do with Christmas, beyond the fact that in the past people put a contribution in tradesmen's boxes as a kind of Christmas present for their services during the year.

The Stephen whose feast day falls on the day after Christmas was the first Christian martyr. (You can read his story in the book of Acts). He was a member of the church in Jerusalem in its very early days, and found himself involved with six others in administering the allocation of food to those in need. The apostles, who were the leaders of the church, felt that it wasn't appropriate for them to abandon preaching and 'serve tables', so they selected these seven to do the job for them. Stephen, however, quickly revealed hidden gifts as an eloquent spokesman for the Christian cause.

The Temple authorities, who had already had trouble with the apostles, were soon alerted to this new and hitherto unknown evangelist. They decided to make an example of him, thus firing a warning shot, as it were, across the bows of the apostles themselves. So they arrested Stephen and accused him of speaking against the two central elements of their religion - the 'holy place' (the Temple) and 'the customs Moses handed down to us' (the Law). It's always dangerous to criticise a monument or a custom!

Given the right to defend himself, Stephen instead launched into an eloquent and at times biting account of Jewish history, culminating in the accusation that they had committed the worst possible sin by killing the Messiah. Inflamed by his words, his hearers abandoned any pretence of legal impartiality, rushing towards him and dragging him out of the city to a place where they began to stone him to death. Stephen, the rank and file Christian, died under a hail of rocks for

claiming that Mary's Son was the promised Messiah.

That, I suspect, is the reason why the first martyr is honoured on the day after we celebrate the birth of the Saviour. It's a bit like the myrrh in the gifts of the Wise Men - a reminder, as we celebrate, that the bitter shadow of a cross is never far away from this story.

## 24 December Christmas Eve

How do you celebrate Christmas Eve? It has its own customs, the most popular of which is going to Midnight Mass, or the Christ-Mas. This is the only Mass of the year that is allowed to start after sunset. In Catholic countries such as Spain, Italy and Poland, Midnight Mass is in fact the most important church service of the entire Christmas season, and many people traditionally fast beforehand. In other countries, such as Belgium and Denmark, people dine during the evening, and then go on to the Midnight Service.

The British are behind some countries when it comes to exchanging presents: in Germany, Sweden and Portugal the custom is to exchange on Christmas Eve. But the British are ahead of Serbia and Slovakia, where the Christmas tree is not even brought into the house and decorated until Christmas Eve.

Yule logs are not so popular since the decline of the fireplace, but traditionally it was lit on Christmas Eve from a bit of the previous year's log, and then would be burned non-stop until 12th Night (6th January). Tradition also decreed that any greenery such as holly, ivy or mistletoe must wait until Christmas Eve until being brought into the house.

### **Ask now**

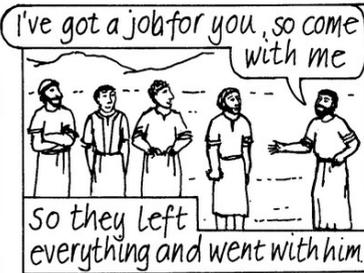
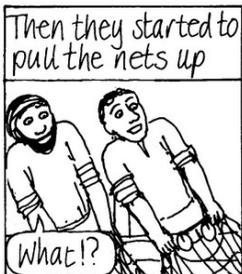
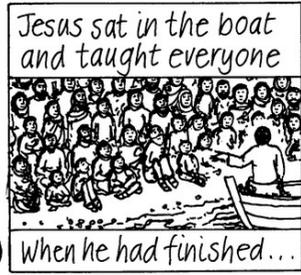
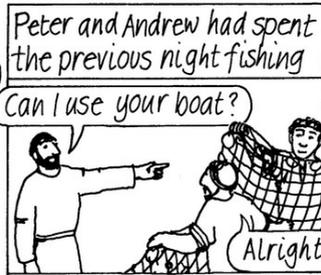
You might as well do your Christmas hinting early this year.

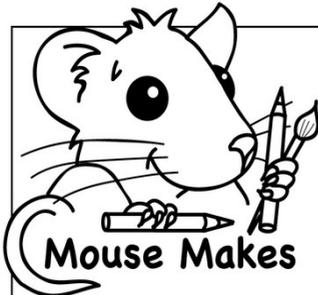
# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Lk 5:1-11, Mt. 4:18-22, Mk 1:16-20

On the shore of Lake Galilee, Jesus was trying to teach people but there were so many that he couldn't be heard.





Jesus is coming, ADVENT is here!



Advent is the time we celebrate the arrival of Jesus, who is God's Son and our Saviour. In Advent we remember



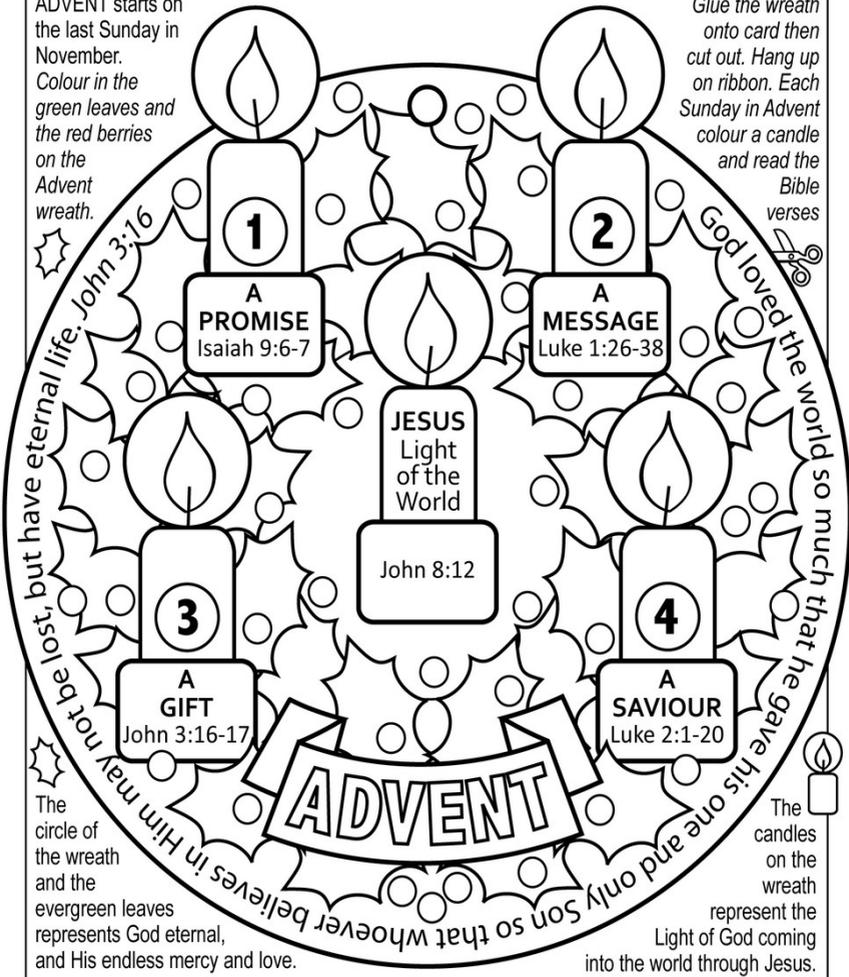
**God's promise** to the world,  
**God's message** to Mary,  
**God's gift** to us and



**God's promise** come true in Jesus.

ADVENT starts on the last Sunday in November. Colour in the green leaves and the red berries on the Advent wreath.

Glue the wreath onto card then cut out. Hang up on ribbon. Each Sunday in Advent colour a candle and read the Bible verses



The circle of the wreath and the evergreen leaves represents God eternal, and His endless mercy and love.

The candles on the wreath represent the Light of God coming into the world through Jesus.

# Holy Baptisms

06 November 2016 James Wheeler  
05 November 2016 Dylan James Wheeler  
06 November 2016 Owen James Wheeler

# Funerals

16 October 2016 Dorothy Rushton  
07 November 2016 Margaret Croston  
09 November 2016 Arthur (Archie) Davies

# Dear Readers,

As you have read from the Rector's message this issue will be our last. But it does not have to be so - if we get funding to the tune of £1500.00 per year. The PCC voted that they wish to review the magazine and re-introduce it so it covers its own costs rather than financially supporting a loss.

I am exploring with Rev'd Malcolm how we can keep the Parish Magazine sustainable i.e. through charitable donations etc. I have opened dialogue with Big Lottery Funding and will explore other avenues of funding. I want to also graciously say a big THANK YOU to the PCC for sustaining the magazine all these years and the privilege of serving the community all these years.

I hope that with your support we can find a way to continue the production of the monthly magazine which has become a part of the Christleton Parish Community. I wish every one a HAPPY CHRISTMAS and GLORIOUS NEW YEAR.

Yours Sincerely,  
Ike Efobi - Magazine Compiler.

## PARISH CHURCH OF ST JAMES, CHRISTLETON

### REGULAR WORSHIP

SUNDAYS:	8.00am:	Holy Communion
	10.45am:	Holy Communion (1st & 3rd & 5th Sundays) Morning Worship - a less formal service for all (2nd Sunday) Morning Prayer / Mattins (4th Sunday)
	6.30pm:	Evening Prayer / Evensong (1st Sunday) Holy Communion (2nd & 4th Sundays) Evening Prayer / Evensong (BCP) (3rd Sunday) Evening services on a 5th Sunday vary - see notices.

WEDNESDAYS:	10.45am:	Holy Communion (BCP) (United service on 1st Wednesday)
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Special services take place at festivals and at other times, and other variations occur, so please check the diary at the front of this magazine, also the church notices and the Christleton website. A 'United' service is where Churches Together in Christleton congregations come together.

'Book of Common Prayer' (BCP) services use the older traditional language, other services are 'Common Worship' using modern language.

Children are welcome at all of our services. Sunday Club, Messy Church and the Crew Youth Group also available for younger members.

Refreshments are generally served after the 10.45am Sunday service in the Parish Hall across the road, and are also served in the church after the 10.45am Wednesday services. Once a month on the 1st Sunday breakfast is served in the Parish Hall from about 8.45am. These give splendid opportunities for fellowship and you are invited to join in.

## WHO'S WHO & CONTACT NUMBERS

Rector:	Rev'd Malcolm Cowan, B.Th. The Rectory, Birch Heath Lane, Christleton, CH3 7AP jandmcowan@gmail.com (The Rector's day off each week is normally Friday)	335663
Administration:	Janet Milton (Janet is your initial contact point for Baptism, Wedding and Appointment requests)	325529
Other local clergy who may assist:	Rev'd Gill Hibbert	336544
Churchwardens:	Tina Lightfoot Bettie Gilliatt	07557 352592 335645
Deputy Wardens:	Chris Platel	332466
Verge:	John Milton	325529
Sacristan:	Betty Dunning	335652
Organist:	Vacant	
PCC Secretary:	Brian Inall	336500
PCC Treasurer:	Vacant	
Gift Aid Secretary:	Nigel Seddon	335588
Planned Giving Envelopes:	Betty Dunning	335652
Deanery Synod Representative:	Betty Gilliatt	335645
Electoral Roll Officer:	Brenda Bailey	335034
Churches Together Representative:	Jan Bowden	335705
Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator:	The Rector	335663
Messy Church:	Rev'd Malcolm Cowan	335663
CREW Youth Group:	Mike & Tina Lightfoot	328436
Church Library:	Valmai Griffiths	335884
Church Flowers:	Olive Hammond	336562
Bellringers' Secretary:	Nikki Dromgoole	351124
Parish Hall Bookings:	Janet Milton	325529
Children's Society Sec:	Lesley Morgan	335088
Church Missionary Society Sec:	Janet Brown	335785
Mothers' Union Branch Leader:	Janet Brown	335785
Magazine Editor:	David Bull	332234
Assisting Magazine Editor:	Huw Morgan	335088
Magazine Adverts	Ann Smith	332434
Magazine Distributors:	Jenny Davies, Valmai Griffiths	335884
Magazine Compiler	Ike Efobi	336072

(Phone numbers have Chester code: 01244 unless stated otherwise)



The village in snow from the LHG Historic collection



Images of St James

### **No Room**

The Sunday School teacher was telling the story of the Nativity, and had just finished the part about there being ‘no room at the inn’. A small voice piped up: ‘I blame Joseph. He should have booked.’”