

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS



St James' Church
CHRISTLETON
2015

Countdown to Christmas

Wed	2	10.45 am	United Communion - followed by refreshments
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice
Sun	6	Second Sunday of Advent	
		8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP) followed by breakfast in the Parish Hall
		10.45 am	Holy Communion (CW) - followed by refreshments in the Parish Hall
		10.45 am	Sunday Club - Parish Hall
		6.00 pm	The Crew - Parish Hall
		6.30 pm	Evensong (CW)
Mon	7	2.00 pm	Mothers' Union Advent Service - St James
Wed	9	10.45 am	Holy Communion - followed by refreshments
		11.30 am	Holy Communion at Birch Heath Lodge NH
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice
Fri	11	NB: Last date for contribution to January Parish Magazine to Janet Milton (325529). You can attach your Word Document and e-mail to: christletonmag@gmail.com	
Sun	13	Third Sunday of Advent	
		8.00 am	Holy Communion
		10.45 am	Toy Service -You are invited to bring a wrapped gift which should be labelled accordingly for a boy/girl and with the age for which the gift is suitable. The gifts will be given to a local charity. Refreshments served in the Parish Hall
		6.30 pm	Holy Communion (CW)
Mon	14	12.00 for 12.30	Christmas Luncheon Club --Parish Hall
Wed	16	10.45 am	Holy Communion - followed by refreshments

		6.00 pm	Choir Practice
Sat	19	1.00 pm	Wedding - Katherine and Benjamin
Sun	20	Fourth Sunday of Advent	
		8.00 am	Holy Communion (CW)
		10.45 am	Holy Communion (CW) - followed by refreshments in Parish Hall
		4.00 pm - 6.00 pm	Messy Christmas - Parish Hall
		6.30 pm	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols
Wed	23	10.45 am	Holy Communion - followed by refreshments
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice
Thur	24	CHRISTMAS EVE	
		4.00 pm	Crib Service
		7.00 pm	Carols Round the Tree
		11.30 pm	Holy Communion (CW)
Fri	25	CHRISTMAS DAY	
		8.00 am	Holy Communion (CW) - followed by breakfast in the Parish Hall
		10.45 am	Holy Communion (CW)
Sun	27	First Sunday of Christmas	
		8.00 am	Holy Communion (CW)
		10.45 am	Holy Communion (CW) with Baptism of Ellie White
			No evening service
Wed	30	10.45 am	Holy Communion - followed by refreshments

COVER STORY

This month's cover, from an original water colour, is an early Christmas present to the magazine from the artist Phil Hodges. Many thanks indeed Phil.

The back cover photograph "White Christmas in Christleton" was taken by David Cummings. *DCB*

Message from our Rector



As we enter the season of Advent, and await the coming of the light of the world, we are painfully reminded of the darkness, especially so in the recent dreadful attacks in Paris.

Those who were peacefully, enjoying a football match, a rock concert, or a meal out with friends, were suddenly and violently attacked, by those seeking to bring death and destruction.

The darkness they created that night, and in the days which followed, is a measure of their desire for hate, however, as the stories of the survivors began to be told, we hear of wonderful acts of love and grace as those caught up in the horror, cared for and helped others.

The Gospel of Saint John tells us “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it”
(John 1)

As we prepare for the Christmas season and the coming of the Prince of Peace, we refuse to allow those who agenda is hatred and violence to walk in the darkness. We must ensure that the light of love and peace and harmony floods into those dark places.

The Moslem community are rightly appalled by the actions of those who seek to import their agenda of hatred under the guise of Islam and they rightly say that such people do not speak or act in their name, or in the name of their religion.

As we prepare to keep the Feast of Christmas, we will hear again the wonderful news of the Angels praising God, and singing Glory to God in the highest and peace to all people on earth.

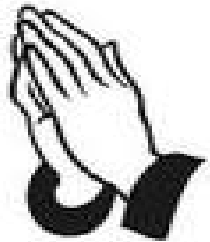
Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given and he will be called the Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9)

However, we know, that even as the Prince of Peace was born, there were those who would seek to bring darkness and chaos as Herod, sent his troops to kill all male babies, with the Holy Family fleeing into Egypt to safety.

How little mankind has learned in 2000 years.

If we truly wish to honour the memories of those who died in Paris, then let us all pursue for that which brings love and peace and unity, and may we pray for those who died using the words of that wonderful Christmas Carol, Silent Night

Silent Night, Holy Night, all is calm all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace



Your faithful servant,
Malcolm

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 20 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) Please ring the Rector (335663) or Janet Milton (325529) for more information.

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH

SUNDAY CLUB

Held in the Parish Hall from 10.45 am – 11.45 am each Sunday during term-time, except when Family Service is held at St James.

For further details please contact Berenice Kirwan, 336779.

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 Secretary, Mrs Lilian Hopley. Telephone: 07803964548.

MAGAZINE CONTRIBUTIONS

Please ensure that all items for inclusion in the **January** edition are sent to **christletonmag@gmail.com** or , if you do not have access to e mail, please give or send them to Janet Milton(325529), as soon as possible **BEFORE Friday December 11th**

MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTORS

The **December** magazine will be available for collection from Church on **Sunday 29th November**.

IN MEMORY OF LUCY PARTINGTON

Lucy's daughter Kathleen and her sister Mary and their families would like to extend their thanks for all the kind messages of condolence that they have received from the members of the W.I., St James' Church and the village community.

**APPEAL FOR FUNDS FOR A
NEW HEATING SYSTEM
at
ST JAMES' CHURCH**

Our Central Heating System at St James is nearly 30 years old and coming to the end of its working life. We need to install a new Boiler and Heating System as soon as we are able to raise £10,000 in the next few months towards the cost.

Are you able to help us with a donation towards the cost?
Any contribution will be welcome and should be sent directly to the Treasurers:

Brian and Loraine Lewis
51 Parkfield Road
Broughton
CH4 0SE

Any cheques should be addressed to:
“Christleton Parochial Church Council”.
Thank you for your continued support to St James.
John Pearson

BREAKFAST on CHRISTMAS DAY

Many of you will be aware that Mike & Tina Lightfoot prepare breakfast on the first Sunday of each month following the 8.00 am Holy Communion service. They've been doing this for several months now and it is welcomed by all those attending.

Mike & Tina will now be preparing breakfast for anyone who would like to join them on Christmas Morning following the 8 o'clock Holy Communion Service.

Do come along and join us – it really is most enjoyable & good company too!

What we do in Messy Church

Messy Church, which we read about in last month's magazine, is alive and thriving at St James, Christleton. On the third Sunday of every month between 4 and 6pm a number of families with children under 11 are welcomed into the Parish Hall to share and learn more about their faith through celebration and creativity.

The Mums and Dad's and children come as they are "in all their mess" to take two hours out of their busy lives to be together having fun in a community of faith – meeting God through play. Each month we have a different Bible related theme, eg this term we've had Ruth, Hannah, and Esther, 3 important women from the Old Testament, around which all the hands on activities and crafts are centred.

The families spend the first hour moving between the various craft areas – usually about 6 tables. – which the craft leaders have designed around the theme of the month, learning and sharing the experience with each other and with the other families. A quiet time of worship follows all this noisy, enjoyable activity and we move into a smaller room where we have a story, again connected to the theme of the month, some live, clarinet and guitar music, some hymn singing and some prayers.

By then everyone is ready for the delicious tea which has been prepared for us in the kitchen.. The craft tables are now laden with fantastic hot and cold food which we all sit down to share. Sharing food is an important part of Christian life so this is an appropriate and enjoyable end to a busy afternoon from which we hope everyone will go back to their busy lives revitalised and spiritually refreshed. *Liz Evans*

What do you get Dad?

December is the month when the family begins to discuss what to get Dad for Christmas. Some argue for a shirt; others hold out for a pair of socks. But the argument usually ends in a tie.

Hydraulic Power

Power provided by electric motors is now common place, vacuum cleaners, hand tools in the home through to large electric motors in factories, but it wasn't always the case. The first practical motor was invented in 1886 but couldn't be widely used until distributed power systems became available. Thomas Edison installed the first system in London in 1882 but this was for lighting only, Chester got its first one 1897 and it must have been about the 1900's when electric motors began to dominate.

There was a much earlier power source available now largely forgotten. In 1874 the Chester Hydraulic Engineering Company was formed specialising in the application of high pressure water machinery. In 1880 the company established the London Hydraulic Power Company, which was one of the first companies in the world to apply a high pressure water system to public services by means of pumping stations and underground pipes supplying power to cranes, lifts and presses etc; The system was adopted in various parts of London and Liverpool and almost all the steam engines and pumping plant needed were designed and manufactured in Chester.



The Hydraulic Engineering Company also undertook construction of hydraulic installations for the Great Western Railway Company, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board and the Port of London Authority. The Hull Docks System, Tyne Docks and the naval dockyards of Chatham, Devonport and Portsmouth, all utilized hydraulic machinery built in Chester. The company also built port installations for use in places as far afield as Gibraltar, Malta, Hong Kong, Bombay, Calcutta, Karachi, Melbourne

and Barcelona. When my eldest daughter was 17 and taking her A levels she decided to do a project on the hydraulic accumulator. The Ellesmere Port Boat museum site was at the time derelict and she climbed up the 30 ft tower took measurements removed some of the iron slag which was used as a weight medium and submitted drawings and calculations. She received a physics A. An accumulator is used to store high pressure water, it's a vertical cylinder with a heavy weight on the top which is filled with water by a steam driven pump. Many accumulator towers still exist although not in use any longer. There is a very fine Italianate one at Hamilton Square station Birkenhead which was used to supply power to three lifts.

I have been able to see two working pieces of equipment. About 40 years ago on one of our trips to Paris we went to see the Eiffel Tower's last working lift [the other two had been fitted with electric winches] In an underground chamber there was a large horizontal hydraulic ram with pulleys at either end, a wire rope was wrapped round the pulleys [imagine a block and tackle] as the ram expanded the rope was drawn in, all cranes and lifts worked this way. I believe this lift has now been taken out of service. The other, and its still working, is Tower Bridge. If you go down into the bottom of the towers beneath the bascules you can see the enormous rams which can open the bridge in 5 minutes. It is also interesting to see embossed on some of the equipment Chester Hydraulic Engineering. It has been converted to oil hydraulic although the original water equipment is on display.

About 30 years ago when I was doing some work on lead extrusion [the factory where I worked had two ram presses] I phoned the engineer at the lead works for some information. He said they had a number of presses some dating from before W.W.1 he invited me to go and see them, I regret I never went. It's hard to believe now that Chester was once an industrial City. Chain and anchor making and boat building at Saltney also boat building in the Crane Warf area. There were 100 Pubs and two breweries within the city walls with many active Churches. Now there's a Business Park a University and a surfeit of places to eat. *Ben Williams*

FUN QUIZ NIGHT

Over 80 people joined in the fun at the Quiz night organised by the Christleton Wednesday Group on November 7th. The questions, crafted and posed by question masters Mike and Paula, covered topics to suit everyone - from sport and soap operas to films, science and Greek mythology.

As usual the Christleton Wednesday Group put on an excellent repast and the evening raised lots of money for this year's charity, LIVE!

Many thanks to Mike and Paula who donated their professional services and to all who supported the event."

St. Paul's Evensong attended by the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire

On Tuesday 10 November 2015 at 5 p.m. the congregation represented a great variety of public service. I was invited because of my receiving the BEM and was allowed to take one guest. St Paul's has a special relationship with the Order and also through the presence of the Chapel dedicated to the OBE in the Crypt. A procession from the Great West Door moved through the Nave.

It was led by a Virger (St Paul's prefers an "i" rather than an "e"), The Crucifer and Acolytes, The Cathedral Choir, The College of Minor Canons, a Virger, Officials of the Order, a Virger, The College of Canons, a Virger, The Prelate, a Virger, The Chapter, the Dean,, and last of all The Grand Master, who is Prince Philip, the Duke of .Edinburgh. The Processional Hymn was "O Praise ye the Lord", followed by prayers and responses and Psalm 24. The First Lesson was read by the Rev. Canon

Tricia Hillas, followed by the Magnificat and the Second Lesson read by The King of Arms. The Nunc Dimittis, The Apostles' Creed, The Lesser Litany, the Collect of the Day, The Collect for Peace, and The Collect for Aid against all Perils were followed by an Anthem "Let all the World in every corner sing" song by the Choir. The Sermon was given by the Prelate of the Order of the British Empire - Dr Richard Chartres - The congregation sang "Christ is made the sure foundation" during which a collection was taken for the Queen Elisabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust

The National Anthem was sung after the Blessing. St Paul's has a terrible echo and sometimes it was difficult to hear the spoken word. I was seated on an end seat a short distance from the altar and had a wonderful view of the procession as it made its way up the Nave after the service - and a smile from Prince Philip!!!

We had to remain seated until invited to leave by a Steward. It was a very memorable occasion. The service is not held every year and the next will be in 2017.

The music before the service was played by Organ Scholar Rachel Mahon and during the service by Richard Hills. The instructions in the letter of invitation said "no hats" which I found rather surprising but I proudly wore my Medal. The lady seated next to Alf had come from Skye and had had to leave home at 3 a.m.

Next day, 11 November at 11 a.m. we were at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. MC

AROUND THE PARKS

I was recently invited, along with other husbands, to join Tangent members for a themed coach trip to Birkenhead and Liverpool to visit their parks. Having picked up Sue, our very knowledgeable Blue Guide, the first tour was of Birkenhead Park which is now in very good health. Birkenhead was the first

publicly owned free park in the world funded

by local wealthy business men who built grand houses on the city's outskirts. Central Park, New York and many others were inspired by and designed, copying Birkenhead's example.

Following light refreshments in the newly-built cafeteria, it was back on to the coach and through the tunnel to the heights of Everton Brow with its spectacular view over the River Mersey. The proposed visit to Stanley Park had been cancelled on account of traffic problems caused by an on-going extension to Anfield, the home of the Liverpool Football Club. Turning towards the city we passed the "beehive" which features on Everton's football shirts. My old school - Liverpool Collegiate - built to Victorian standards in the early 1840's, still looked as grand now as part of Liverpool University. Past Liverpool Institute, now an Arts and Music Centre part funded by Paul McCartney, past the Roman Catholic Cathedral, known locally as "the Wigwam" and on to the Anglican Cathedral for a short tour.

Lunch was at a quirky cafe in Brunswick Street near the docks where those who braved it, chose scouse which was delicious. The only complaint being from one husband who only found one piece of succulent meat in his bowl whilst his wife had three. Princes Boulevard next, where the trams used to run down the centre to the elaborate entrance gates of Princes Park, named in honour of the sons of Queen Victoria. Finally to Sefton Park, the queen of them all and my play ground before the war. The outskirts rivalled London's Rotten Row for horse riders. The Eros statue, a replica of the one on Piccadilly Circus, brought back memories, although the aviary that was near by is no more, having been replaced by a cafe

Next to the lake with its newly renovated bandstand on an island, where brass bands played on Sundays when young and old, dressed in their best, promenaded or sat on the grassy banks with the boys eyeing the girls - and vice versa! A short walk took us to the renovated Palm House whose design was based on the Crystal Palace, surrounded by statues of well-known personages from the past plus the re-locate Peter Pan . We enjoyed afternoon tea and home made cake baked by lo-

cal volunteers. Poignant memories for me as a young teenager in the war when the field in front was a barrage balloon site controlled by ATS personnel. I was nearby when, one day, the balloons were suddenly raised to operational height, followed five minutes later by air raid sirens as we scurried home on our bikes to the accompaniment of anti-aircraft guns firing at a German raider; The big houses beyond the field had been requisitioned for accommodation for the WRNS whose operation room underground near the docks controlled the convoys in and out of the Western approaches. Sefton Cricket Club is nearby and "Dig for Victory" allotments were set up on the boundary - they are still very much in use. My father rented a plot and one day I was sent on my bike to pick some vegetables. I found the approach road closed with a rope across and a hand-written sign "NO ENTRY - UN-EXPLODED BOMB" How different from today when every minor incident seems to be elevated to cause maximum disruption. Exploring the area three weeks later the sign had gone and I found that nature, left on its own, was flourishing and I loaded my bike with as many cauliflowers, cabbages and potatoes as possible, to be welcomed at home with open arms.

From the Palm House we had a quick visit to Penny Lane and its association with songs by the Beatles - then back through the tunnel to Chester after a full and nostalgic day. *AEC*

Holy Days in December

December 3rd Birinus – an apostle to the English
Thousands of our churches are currently involved in various initiatives across the UK. If it is tough going at times, we should spare a thought for poor Birinus, a priest from Lombard, who was sent here on his own 14 centuries ago. Pope Honorius 1 gave him the daunting task of being the apostle to Wessex. It was about 635 that Birinus first sailed across the Channel. He planned to convert all of Wessex, and then press on into the Midlands, where no Christian preacher had ever yet been. But once he began ministry in Wessex, Birinus found the West

Saxons so pagan that he decided he better just stay among them. So Birinus began his ministry, endlessly travelling around Wessex, and preaching to whomever he encountered. Gradually he became known, and his message began to seep through. Then a great breakthrough occurred: the King of Wessex, Cynegils, asked Birinus for instruction in the Christian faith. His daughter was going to marry Oswald, the Christian king of Northumbria, and for political reasons Cynegils now wanted to convert. So Birinus taught and baptised Cynegils and his family, and in return they gave him the Romano-British town of Dorchester as his see, and Birinus became the first bishop of Dorchester. It was an excellent strategic move: Dorchester was on a main road and river in the centre of an area of dense Anglo-Saxon settlement.

From his new 'headquarters', Birinus spent his last 15 years going on to build many churches around Wessex, and to baptise many people. Towards the end of his life Birinus dedicated a church at Winchester, which later became the ecclesiastical centre of the kingdom. (There is no record of Wessex bishops at Dorchester after 660.) Any lesson in all this? Bloom where God plants you, and be faithful to your calling, however tough things may look at first. Birinus' obedience and faith planted Christianity in a key part of Britain.

December 6 St Nicholas – another look at this much loved saint

The true story of Father Christmas, or Santa Claus, began with a man named Nicholas who was born in the third century in the Greek village of Patara, on what is today the southern coast of Turkey. His family were both devout and wealthy, and when his parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas decided to use his inheritance to help people. He gave to the needy, the sick, the suffering. He dedicated his whole life to God's service, and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. As a bishop, he joined other bishops and priests in prison under the emperor Diocletian's fierce persecution of Christians across the Roman Empire. Finally released, Nicholas was not bitter, but all the more determined to shed abroad the news of God's love. He did so by

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Christmas Services at St James, Christleton

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

Sun 13th Dec: 10.45am: Toy Service. You are invited to bring a wrapped toy labelled for a boy or girl or both and labelled for a suitable age. These will go to a local charity.

Sun 20th Dec:

6.30pm: Service of Nine Lessons & Carols.

Thur 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 - weather permitting. (*Children wishing to take part please come to the Parish Hall by 6.30pm.*)

11.30pm: Holy Communion. ('Midnight Communion')



Fri 25th Dec: (Christmas Day):

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

10.45am: Holy Communion

Sun 27th Dec:

8.00am: Holy Communion;

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

Sun 3rd Jan: 10.45am: Joint Covenant Service with Communion (*Churches Together in Christleton*).

Sun 10th Jan: 4.30pm: Christingle Service (*Children's Society*).

We look forward to seeing you ...

THE MONTHLY
CHRISTLETON

LUNCHEON CLUB

IN PARISH HALL

12 noon for 12.30 serving
No charge, donations welcome

Next Lunch:



Monday
14th December 2015



.... after that: 18th Jan 2016; 15th Feb; etc.



All welcome. Book a place by calling:

Liz: 409414, or Janet: 325529,
or Chris: 335562, or sign the list in Church



Christleton Primary School Association

Christmas Fair

Sat 5th December 2pm - 4.30pm



Craft Stalls • Games • Grand Draw
Very Special Visit from Father Christmas!

Admission £1 (Children free) • Refreshments Available



giving. One story of his generosity explains why we hang Christmas stockings over our mantelpieces today. There was a poor family with three daughters who needed dowries if they were to marry, and not be sold into slavery. Nicholas heard of their plight, and tossed three bags of gold into their home through an open window – thus saving the girls from a life of misery. The bags of gold landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. Hence the custom of children hanging out stockings – in the hope of attracting presents of their own from St Nicholas – on Christmas Eve. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols of St Nicholas.

The example of St Nicholas has never been forgotten - in bygone years boys in Germany and Poland would dress up as bishops on 6th December, and beg alms for the poor. In the Netherlands and Belgium 'St Nicholas' would arrive on a steamship from Spain to ride a white horse on his gift-giving rounds. To this day, 6th December is still the main day for gift-giving and merry-making in much of Europe. Many feel that simple gift-giving in early Advent helps preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.

December 7 Lazarus of Bethany – back from the tomb
Some people have near-death experiences.... Lazarus should be their patron saint. Except that he went all the way, and died for four days. He was quiet in his tomb and the mourners of Bethany were in full swing - before Jesus called him back to life. (See John 11: 1 – 44.) What happened next to Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary? The New Testament never tells us, but there are some clues from early church history and legends.

It seems that Lazarus became very popular with the early Christian Church because he was living evidence that Jesus could bring people back from the dead. It also seems that Lazarus was NOT popular with the local Jews, for the very same reason. They wanted to forget Jesus, and here Lazarus was still walking around, talking about resurrection...So eventually some exasperated Jews decided to act. According to an early Eastern tradition, they placed Lazarus and his sisters into a leaky boat and set them adrift in the Mediterranean.... where the little boat

carried them safely to Cyprus. Here Lazarus became bishop and lived for another 30 years. Another, later, tradition has it that the boat had no rudder or oars, but still bore them safely to Gaul, where Lazarus founded a church and became the first bishop of Marseilles, so to speak... until he was martyred under Domitian (81-96AD). Either way, second time round, Lazarus stayed dead. But it was thought he was still at work. By the late Middle Ages, anyone who had a vision of the after-life knew just whom to thank for this 'postcard from heaven' – St Lazarus!

26 December St Stephen – the first martyr (died c 35 AD)

Have you ever stopped to consider that the very first martyr of the Christian Church was a deacon? (But no, he wasn't worked to death by his church.) It was Stephen, one of the first seven deacons of the Christian Church. He'd been appointed by the apostles to look after the distribution of alms to the faithful poor, and to help in the ministry of preaching. Acts 6 and 7 tells us all that we know of his life, and the passages seem to suggest that he was an educated Hellenistic Jew. Certainly Stephen's famous challenge to the Jews reveals him to have been learned in the Scriptures and the history of Judaism, besides being eloquent and forceful. Stephen's proclamation on the day of his martyrdom pulled no punches. He told the Jews that God did not depend on the Temple.

The Temple was but a temporary institution destined to be fulfilled and superseded by Christ, who was the prophet foreseen by Moses as the Messiah for whom the Jewish race had so long awaited. Stephen then challenged his hearers for resisting the Spirit and for killing the Christ, as their fathers before them had killed the prophets. The Jews were so outraged by this that they stoned Stephen on the spot for blasphemy. As he died, Stephen saw a vision of Christ on God's right hand. The men who were witness to the stoning placed their clothes at the feet of Saul (afterwards Paul), who (to his deep regret later) consented to Stephen's death.

By the fourth century Stephen had his own feast day in both East and West Churches. When his supposed tomb was discovered in 415, his popularity soared. His (supposed) relics

were taken to Constantinople and then Rome, along with some stones (allegedly) used at his martyrdom.

Early on the Church made Stephen the patron saint of deacons. In the late Middle Ages he was also invoked against headaches (?!). In England, 46 ancient churches are dedicated to him, most of them built after the Norman Conquest. In art Stephen is usually given a book of the Gospels and a stone, and sometimes the palm of martyrdom.

The ‘wonder’ of the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem

Shepherds in first century Palestine would have been attuned to the wonders and ravages of nature: star-lit nights, cold and heat, storm and calm, and the unwelcome attention of predators, both animal and human. They would have been more aware than we of human dependency on the seasons, and more respectful than us of the precarious nature of existence. Fear, as well as appreciation, would have shaped their religious sensitivities. Some think the shepherds near Bethlehem may have been guarding sheep for the Jerusalem Temple, which used them as part of the sacrificial ritual of Judaism in those days. Yet the kind of work shepherds did and the hours they had to keep barred them from orthodox religious observance; they were regarded as uncouth and untrustworthy and were not allowed to give testimony in law courts.

It was typical of St Luke (the only New Testament writer to refer to the shepherds) to put them in the forefront of his narrative. Luke is the writer who favours the underdog: tax collectors, sinners, women, old and poor people and non-Jews all figure favourably in his account. Deliberately he sets before us shepherds as the first Christmas worshippers. They already knew how to wonder.

William of St Thierry wrote: “A man who has lost his sense of wonder is a man dead”. The 19th Century scientist Michael Faraday wrote: “Let us consider... how wonderfully we stand

upon this world. Here it is that we are born, bred and live, and yet we view these things with an almost entire absence of wonder..." This is no plea for anti-intellectual faith, but rather for the discovery of an extra dimension. Wonder is the prime ingredient of worship and we need to recover it and use it. It takes practice. The late Michael Mayne, Dean of Westminster wrote, "A sense of the sublime leads to a sense of awe, which is I suppose that combination of wonder and fearfulness you may feel in the presence of what takes your breath away.

It is not afraid in the sense of feeling scared, but rather an awe-struck sense of amazement that the ordinary is rather more extraordinary than the extraordinary... it is not the rabbit out of the hat but the rabbit out of the rabbit that is so surprising..." So, in the astonishing story of heaven-come-to-earth in Bethlehem, of divinity in a cowshed, it is shepherds who receive the revelation.

Not priests, not presidents, not philosophers. "An angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified." For all they knew it might have been bad news. "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord'."

The response of the shepherds was to go and see. Not to question or even to reason. The main constituent of their belief was already wonder. They were accustomed to marvelling, for they were surrounded by a world of marvels. So they went to look. And as they looked, they marvelled. Later, they were to return "glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard."

Ven. *John Barton*

December

December, December, A month to remember, A month full of darkness and light, A month full of rushing And sharing and hoping, A month full of one special night. By Daphne Kitching



A Spotlight on

A member of St James' congregation

John Milton



Live: *Glovers Loom, Great Boughton*

Nationality: *British*

Originally from: *Born within the City Walls of Chester,*

A true Cestrian

Occupation: *Retired*

Family: *Wife Janet, Son Simon, Daughter Rebecca*

4 Grandchildren

Interests: *Supporting Liverpool F.C.*

Model Railways

Following James Last and his Orchestra

Gardening



Favourite Quotation

'Yesterday's gone, tomorrow's another day, enjoy today

Things that may surprise the reader:

Owned the First MINI Motor Car in Chester in August 1959

650 NFM, which kick started a keen interest in Rallying





The Parish of St James, Christleton



**What are you
doing on
Christmas
Eve?**

Join us in Church for our
Crib Service
at 4.00pm on 24th Dec 2015

**A short service around the Crib
for the very young, their parents,
grandparents, godparents, family
and friends to enjoy
the message of Christmas.**

Celebrating the Queen's 90th Birthday

In her 2014 Christmas broadcast the Queen said: 'For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role-model of reconciliation and forgiveness, He stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing. Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people of whatever faith or none.'

It is the most recent of many references the Queen has made to her Christian faith. In 2016 people around the county and throughout the Commonwealth will gather in their communities to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. Her actual birthday on 21st April will be celebrated with four days of celebrations in Windsor 12th-15th May; a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral on Friday 10th June; the traditional Trooping the Colour ceremony - the Queen's birthday parade - on Saturday 11th June on Horse Guards Parade, and a massive street party for 10,000 people on The Mall on Sunday 12th June.

The whole country is invited to join the celebrations in our own villages, towns or cities. HOPE is working in partnership with Bible Society and the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity to publish a very special book focusing on the Queen's Christian faith. This beautifully produced, illustrated book is much more than a souvenir picture book. It tells the story of the Queen's service to her people as she follows the servant King – Jesus Christ.

It will be an ideal gift from churches to people in their communities. Just like the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012, HOPE will be supporting churches with ideas and resources to bring communities together. HOPE is also working with our partners to provide: street-party planners, posters, invitations, bunting all with the Queen's 90th birthday theme school assembly ideas and lesson plans church service ideas and liturgy to mark this special milestone in the Queen's life. We can start planning our local events now. We could work with

other churches to bring our whole community together. We could use this opportunity to start conversations about what it means to be a follower of Jesus, and join with the Queen in praying for our communities, as she said in 2012, ‘that his example and teaching will continue to bring people together to give the best of themselves in the service of others’. Visit www.hope-together.org.uk for resources and ideas.

All We Can – response to refugee crisis

As the headlines continue to be dominated by news about refugees and migrants, All We Can – the Methodist relief and development partner - has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting those who have fled the conflict in Syria, and to contributing to addressing some of the root causes of the crisis.

As the organisation has done for the last two and a half years, All We Can will continue to provide humanitarian support to those fleeing the conflict in Syria through work with partner organisations in neighbouring countries. Donations to the Syria appeal (<http://www.allwecan.org.uk/where-we-work-parent-emergencies/syria>) will particularly help All We Can’s partners to improve conditions and prospects for people living in temporary accommodation in Jordan.

A fund is now open to receive donations to support Methodist Churches that work with refugees in Macedonia, Serbia, Germany and Italy. Please visit <http://www.allwecan.org.uk/what-we-do/emergencies> for details.

Christmas carols

One night as Christmas approached, some friends decided to go carol singing. A man answered the door of one house, and gasped as they launched into the opening lines of the first carol. Within half a minute, he looked stricken. Soon tears were welling up in his eyes. The carollers sang and sang, and the man looked more and more moved by what he heard. At last the carollers stopped, and one ventured: “I understand – you are sad because our singing reminds you of your happy childhood Christmas days.” The man looked at her with misery in his eyes. “No,” he whispered back. “It’s just that I am a musician!”

Diary for December

Wednesday 02 December

10.45am United Holy Communion (BCP)

Sunday 06 December (2nd Sunday of Advent)

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.45am Holy Communion
06.30pm Evening Worship (CW)

Monday 07 December

10.30am Holy Communion (Tarvin Court NH)
11.00am Holy Communion (Oaklands NH)
02.00pm MU Advent Service

Wednesday 09 December

10.45am Holy Communion (BCP)
11.00am Holy Communion (Birch Heath Lodge NH)

Sunday 13 December (3rd Sunday of Advent)

08.00am Holy Communion (CW)
10.45am Toy Service
06.30pm Holy Communion

Monday 14 December

12.30pm Community Lunch (Parish Hall)

Wednesday 16 December

10.45am Holy Communion (BCP)

Saturday 19 December

1.00pm Holy Matrimony (Benjamin Rodgers & Katherine Beard)

Sunday 20 December (4th Sunday of Advent)

08.00am Holy Communion (CW)
10.45am Holy Communion

06.30pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Wednesday 23 December

10.45am Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 24 December (Christmas Eve)

04.00pm Crib Service
07.00pm Carols round the Tree
11.30pm First Holy Communion of Christmas

Friday 25 December (Christmas Day)

08.00am Holy Communion (CW)
10.45am Holy Communion

Sunday 27 December (1st Sunday of Christmas)

08.00am Holy Communion (CW)
10.45am Holy Communion with Holy Baptism of Ellie White
No Evening Worship

Wednesday 30 December

10.45am Holy Communion (BCP)

Sunday 03 January (Feast of the Epiphany)

08.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.45am United Covenant Service with Holy Communion
06.30pm Evening Worship (CW)
Wednesday 06 January
10.45am United Holy Communion (BCP)

Sunday 10 January (Baptism of Christ)

08.00am Holy Communion (CW)
10.45am Holy Communion
04.30pm Christingle Service

Parish Registers (November)

Holy Matrimony

07 November Christopher Glynn Hulley & Laura-Jane Hopley

Funerals

15 October Sheila Pickavance, Rock Cottage, Christleton
(St James)
16 October Betty Dandy, Tarvin Court NH
(Blacon Crematorium)
28 October Raymond Colin Roberts, Tarvin Court NH
(Blacon Crematorium)
02 November Derek Large, 27 Littleton Lane, Littleton
(St James)
03 November Leonard & Mary Hendry
(Interment of Cremated Remains, St James)
03 November Mary Irene Riley, 22 Weaver Road, Ellesmere
Port (Blacon Crematorium)
06 November Audrey Pamela Brown, Ft 39, Bowling Green
Court, Mill Street, Chester (St James)

Christmas Prayer 2015

*Loving, giving Father, Thank you for Jesus, Emmanuel.
Thank you that he came at Christmas and is alive and just as relevant
today as he was all those years ago, and will be forever.*

*As many of us celebrate your coming to us, with our families, in warm, safe
homes, in a democratic country, we pray for everyone who has left their home-
land because of persecution, for everyone who is without shelter, or food, or
family.*

*Give us compassionate hearts, like yours, Lord. Help us, as Christ's
body here on earth, to love and serve and make room for each other t
his Christmas. In Jesus' name. Amen*

By Daphne Kitching

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)

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. There is a good organist at St James and a robed choir sings at many of the services.

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
Curate:	Rev'd Barbara King, B.Ed. 17 Cathcart Green, Guilden Sutton, CH3 7SR	300756
Administration:	Janet Milton	325529
(Janet is your initial contact point for Baptism, Wedding and Appointment requests)		
Other local clergy who may assist:	Rev'd Gill Hibbert	336544
	Rev'd Elizabeth Inall, MA	336500
Churchwardens:	Carl Cumiskey	330028
	Bettie Gilliatt	335645
Deputy Wardens:	Chris Platel	332466
	Keith Smalls	335688
Verger:	John Milton	325529
Sacristan:	Betty Dunning	335652
Organist:	Bob Owens	01928 724088
PCC Secretary:	Brian Inall	336500
PCC Treasurer:	Brian & Lorraine Lewis	534323
Gift Aid Secretary:	Nigel Seddon	335588
Planned Giving Envelopes:	Betty Dunning	335652
Deanery Synod Representative:	Berenice Kirwan	336779
Electoral Roll Officer:	Brenda Bailey	335034
Churches Together Representative:	Jan Bowden	335705
Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator:	The Rector	335663
Pastoral Worker / Visiting:	Berenice Kirwan	336779
Sunday Club / Messy Church:	Berenice Kirwan	336779
CREW Youth Group:	Mike & Tina Lightfoot	328436
Church Library:	Gwen Knight	336236
Church Flowers:	Olive Hammond	336562
Bellringers:	Nikki Dromgoole	351124
Bellringers' Secretary:	Nikki Dromgoole	351124
Parish Hall Bookings:	Clare Holland	332819
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

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



The Christleton Village sign and Christleton Christmas lights.



St James Church Christleton during the Yuletide Snowfall.

Anecdote

What would you like for Christmas?

A little girl went to visit Father Christmas in the local garden centre grotto. He welcomed her with a smile and the question of what she would like for Christmas. The little girl gasped, and stared up at him in horror. "Didn't you get my email?!"