

Services held every
Sunday morning
10:30 am

**Volume 17 Issue 12 December 2021/
January 2022**

Next issue: First Sunday February 2022

Chaplaincy
Information

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The Anglican Chaplaincy of Twente

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND





December 2021 & January 2022

Canon Paul Hardingham considers 2022

The month of January is named after the Roman god Janus, who is depicted as having two faces. As we look back on a difficult year dominated by the pandemic, how should we look forward to 2022 with fresh hope? The apostle Paul writes: *'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.'* (Philippians 3:13,14).

Firstly, to make a new start, you need to **forget the things which are behind**. Paul saw himself as an athlete running for Christ and purposely not looking back. He refused to allow his past sins and difficulties to define who he was. By God's grace, he no longer saw himself that way. The same can be true of ourselves, as we confess our sins and failures to receive God's forgiveness and new life.

Secondly, we need to **focus on the things that lie ahead**. The athlete is entirely focused on winning the race and gaining the prize. Like Paul, we have to be single-minded in making Jesus the focus of everything we do. How can we go deeper in our prayer life and Bible reading this year? What will it mean to better serve Christ in our workplace and neighbourhood, or family and children?

Paul looked forward to the day when he would stand before God, who would say *'well done, good and faithful servant'*. In light of all that Jesus had done for him, Paul wanted to give his very best to Jesus. As we stand at the beginning of this New Year, let's ask ourselves, '

What can I do this year that will help me bring glory and honour to God?'

*A Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
to all the readers of
St Mary's Magazine*

St Mary's Chapel Carol Service

News



Carol Service

The Carol Service will be on 12 December. Cleaning and decorating the Chapel for Christmas will take place on Saturday 11 December

Bishop's Advent Appeal for European Climate Disaster Relief

This year the Bishop's Advent appeal is focused on assisting agencies, working in Europe, that bring support to those who are affected by man-made climate change. At St. Mary's we will support this appeal by having extra door collections 5 and 12 December.

Thank you

Thank you to the Revd David Mumford, our locum priest, for taking all the services he has taken over this past year. Sunday, 28 November, was David's last service before he returned to Scotland. David was presented with a book on behalf of the chaplaincy by our warden Jeanet.

A Word from Wales

On 14 November, Marilyn and I experienced our first Remembrance Sunday in Wales. How different to those held in St Mary's Chapel. The church service started half an hour early and was a regular sung Eucharist. Afterwards, we all walked up to the impressive Ware Memorial in Hawarden. About as far away as the Woodshed is from the Chapel.

The Rector processed up the road behind the choir, resplendent in robes of red and white, following the crucifer bearing an enormous cross. At the Memorial, the Revd. Jones met with Fr. Chirayil, the Catholic priest. Townsfolk and churchgoers gathered at the point where three roads came together. The splendid Memorial towered some 10 metres above us at the junction. An Air Cadet Brass band came marching down from the High School, followed by a small army of veterans.

Korean War, Falklands War, Iraq Campaign and Afghanistan medals, and the General Service Medal were all on display. Proudly worn, mainly by men, ranging in age from late eighties to early twenties. A stark reminder that peace still evades our troubled world.

The Revd. Jones opened the Service with the Chester Symphonic Wind Band, providing the hymn music. Fr. Chirayil read Psalm 67. The Service course followed the regular route. The Chairman of the Royal British Legion,

Camels

In Jane's Christmas drawing, two of the camels were approaching the inn, over which was pictured a large star. The third camel and its rider were going directly away from it.

"Why is the third man going in a different direction?" her mother asked. Jane replied: "Oh, he's looking for a place to park."

Snowmen

Two snowmen were standing next to each other. One said to the other: "Can you smell carrots?"

Christmas Carols

One night Freda went carol singing. She knocked on the door of a house and began to sing. A man with a violin in his hand came to the door. Within half a minute, tears were streaming down his face. Touched, Freda sang every carol she knew - and some she didn't. The man continued to

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Hawarden Branch, read the address. Then, magically, several trumpeters lined up and played the Last Post. There was not a cloud in the blue sky. A chill wind gently flapped the banners as they were slowly lowered. The sound did not disturb the silver tones bringing some three hundred plus people to a profound two-minute silence. Reveille, when it finally came, sounded impossibly loud. The Chair of the Hawarden Community Council, Councillor Helen Brown, supervised the laying of some thirty wreaths.

The Service concluded with prayers, several more hymns and the National Anthems. As at St Mary's, two anthems were sung in two languages. It was noticeable that the people gathered sang the hymns and *God Save the Queen* dutifully. However, when *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* was played, over three hundred voices let rip at full volume. I could not understand a word, but it brought tears to my eyes. Here is the first

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Magazine Payments

St. Mary's Magazine plays a valuable role in helping to keep the congregation informed on what is going on in their church and the chapel community. If you wish to receive a printed copy of the magazine, issued ten times a year, an annual donation of €15 will help to cover printing costs. If you cannot pick up your copy in the chapel and want to have it posted to you, we need to ask for an additional donation of €20 to cover postage.

Payments Due

With the start of the new year the call has to go out again for those people who receive a paper copy, to make their annual donation. During 2020, Lub Gringhuis took over the job of arranging the printing. With some skilful home printing and costing the magazine for the covered its costs. With Lub's skilled management and your prompt donations, the magazine will survive.

Intercessions

If you wish to have someone included in the intercessions, or who is in need of a pastoral visit, please contact one of the Churchwardens or the Chaplain, before the Service. Alternatively, if you want to have someone included in the intercessions you could contact the Intercessor via the Prayer Request Tool on the Chapel Website. The Chaplain, the Wardens and the Intercessor will simultaneously receive your message via this tool. The link below will take you directly to the Prayer Request.

<http://anglicanchurchtwente.com/home/service%20%26%20readings/prayers%20requests.html>

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weep gently throughout her performance. "I understand," she said softly at last. "You are remembering your happy childhood Christmas days." "No, not exactly," he replied in a choked sort of voice. "I'm a musician!"

Hymns for the road

If you MUST speed on the road during this Christmas season, at least sing these hymns loudly as you go:

at 80 kph.
'God Will Take Care of Me'
at 90 kph.
'Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah'
at 100 kph.
'Nearer My God to Thee'
at 110 kph.
'Nearer Still Nearer'
at 120 kph.
'This World is Not My Home'
at 130 kph.
'Lord, I'm Coming Home'
at 140 mph.
'Precious Memories'

Easy come, easy go
Father Christmas enters through a hole in the chimney and leaves through a hole in your pocket.

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New bank

Mother decided that ten-year old Cathy should get something 'practical' for Christmas.

"Suppose we open a savings account for you?" she suggested. Cathy was delighted.

"It's your account, darling," mother said as they arrived at the bank, "so you fill out the application."

Cathy was doing fine until she came to the space for 'Name of your former bank.'

After a slight hesitation, she put down 'Piggy'.

Silence?

Christmas is the season when your neighbour's radio keeps you awake playing 'Silent Night'.

Angel tidings

The little boy was to be an angel in the Christmas play and his one line was: "Behold, I bring you good tidings."

He asked what tidings were and his mother explained that the word meant news.

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On parish accounts, teapots and Labrador retrievers

The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'...

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

Your annual accounts - all 146 pages, bound in their plastic covers and laid out in faultless detail - really are most impressive. I was rather envious to note you have a clergy 'discretionary fund'; if I were to be given such a thing, my cellar of claret would improve immeasurably - although that is perhaps the reason why I am not given one.

The size of your office expenses makes me wonder if you have a staff rivalling that of the European Community. I suppose that at least you are doing your bit for job creation. Our dear Miss Marigold, who spends two hours a week randomly filing pieces of paper, mistyping rotas and failing to re-order stationery, is only rewarded by being the first to find out who are booking marriages and having their babies baptised - and if they do not happen in that order, that will be another piece of information remembered for future use. All this is information beyond the price of jewels in village communities.

Our accounts have more by way of charm than they do of accuracy, generally consisting of one sheet of handwritten paper. There are only ever three copies for circulation, as that is the limit of Colonel Denster's carbon paper. It seems to be an unalterable tradition that they never balance, until we find the following year that the missing £20 was found months later under the teapot on the mantelpiece. One footnote to this was the occasion when the Colonel suspected an unaccountable £5 had been eaten by his Labrador. Our greatest expenses by far are categorised as 'miscellaneous', which is a catch-all for everything that our treasurer is unable to recall where it really went.

The thousands paid on church maintenance and diocesan fees are nodded through without comment - but if the money spent on Easter lilies or packets of tea for the Summer Fete increases by anything more than 50 pence, there will be much agonised debate and speculation about whether this is an indication of money laundering.



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I see that your accounts were professionally audited. Fortunately, it does not matter too much about the accuracy of our own, as I have an arrangement with our auditor who lives in the village: if he refuses to sign them off, then I refuse to baptise his grandchildren.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Sitting down in church

Did you ever wonder how our churches first acquired pews? Dr Nicholas Orme, Emeritus Professor of History at Exeter University, has written a book, *Going to Church in Medieval England* (Yale University Press), in which he points out that "no medieval church pronouncement ordered the provision of seating in churches other than for the clergy. General seating was a lay invention."

It is easy to understand those laity of long ago: the services could go on for hours. And so, as Dr Orme explains, general seating "seems to have begun with the nobility and gentry who wished for comfort The desire spread downwards to the congregation during the 14th and 15th centuries."

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verse if you want to try it.

*Mae hen wlad fy nhadau yn i mi,
Gwlad beirdd a chantorian, enwogion o fri,
Ei gwrol ryfelwyr, gwlasgarwyr tra mad,
Tros ryddid gollasant eu gwaed.*

(Try putting the title in You Tube and listen).

The Service concluded with the Head Boy and the Head Girl of Hawarden High School coming forward to read alternative verses of a poem called The Last Post. As the young man and a young woman read the words, reminding us all of the sacrifices made by previous generations, a second deep silence fell across the people.

Following the Blessing by the Revd Jones, the gathering dispersed. Marilyn and I walked back to our car in silence, reflecting on the beautiful Service here in our new home in Wales.

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On the night of the play, the youngster had stage fright and, after a long silence, blurted out: "Hey, have I got news for you!"

Grandfathers

I was talking to my young Sunday School class, and a four-year-old boy suddenly asked me: "Miss, do you have a grandfather?"

I replied, "I used to have two, but they both went to Heaven to be with Jesus."

He thought, shook his head sadly, and said, "One of my grandfathers hasn't gone to Heaven."

(Long pause while I tried to decide how to proceed.)

"He's gone to Bexhill -on-Sea."

Replace

Did you know? By replacing potato chips with grapefruit as a snack, you can lose up to 90% of what little joy you still have left in your life.

Long gone

Customer (to headwaiter): "Just for a point of information, did the

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waiter who took my order leave any family?"

Peace

Blessed are the peacemakers; they will never be unemployed.

Split

A professor was lecturing his physics class.

"If molecules can be split into atoms and the atoms split into electrons, can the electrons be broken down any further?"

"I'm not certain," replied one of his pupils, "But a sure way to find out would be to post some of them in a Christmas package marked 'fragile.'

STAR

At a rehearsal for a Sunday school Christmas tableau, the teacher carefully lined up four little 'cherubs'. Each carried a huge cut-out letter. As they stood side by side, the letters

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Moving on from Glasgow

Our little family decided to brave the grim Glasgow weather instead of enjoying the jokes and camaraderie of the Dunbar gathering. The March for Climate Justice was something to behold: a two-mile long caravan of humanity, fish on bicycles and dancing polar bears!

Now the delegates have jettied off, the exhibits are dismantled, the marches have been marched, the songs sung, and the prayers prayed, what did the COP achieve? It's hard to distinguish the hype from the spin from the propaganda (you can read the Glasgow Climate Pact in its entirety here, if you want to draw your own conclusions).

Boris Johnson, of course, hailed it as a "big step forward." Nicola Sturgeon said, "there can be no doubt that the Glasgow summit has made progress on some important issues". In contrast Extinction Rebellion stated "COP26 has failed ... the G20 leaders have left [1.5C] to die", and Greta Thunberg lamented "It's very, very vague". The COP26 Coalition slammed the Pact as an "utter betrayal of the people".

The good news ...

- Prayers for constructive negotiation were answered: independent observers described a new spirit of cooperation between nations.
- For the first time, a COP agreement makes explicit mention of the fossil fuel industry as one of the root causes of climate change.
- More than 130 countries signed declaration signed to halt deforestation by 2030. Some delegates admitted they interpret this as a licence to cut as much as possible before the end of the decade 😞.
- A pledge to reduce methane emissions was signed by more than 100 countries and could, alone, avert 0.2C of global heating.
- There was new recognition of the crucial interconnection between climate and nature.
- A consortium of more than 450 major financial institutions committed to align their \$130 trillion investment portfolio with Net Zero by 2050. But will that be too late?

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- A global charity alliance joined forces with the UK, US, German, Dutch and Norwegian governments in a \$1.7 billion pledge to support Indigenous peoples and local communities, hopefully a first step towards recognising Indigenous rights as central to just climate action.

... and the bad

- A last-minute watering-down of the agreement to "phase-out" the unabated use of coal - the most climate-damaging fuel, currently responsible for around 40% of carbon dioxide emissions - to a "phasedown" at the insistence of major coal-using countries including India, China and South Africa, was certainly disappointing. While 40 countries have pledged to quit coal altogether, major emitters, such as Australia, China, India and the US, did not.
- An initiative to phase out the other fossil fuels was launched, but has only 13 member states and associates. Scotland is not signed up - and projects such as the Cambo oil field are still projected to go ahead.
- Despite recognising a need for the Global North to increase financial support to those countries already suffering the effects of climate change, little funding materialised. It is broadly true that the of lower-income nations and small island states were sacrificed to the cause of getting a deal agreed at all costs. To quote the COP26 Coalition: the G20 sat there, "talking about their future children and grandchildren, when the children of the South are suffering now".

The net effect

Most world leaders now appear to be taking the UN's 'Code Red for humanity' - and its causes - seriously. The Glasgow Climate Pact is, unequivocally, the strongest set of measures against climate change agreed by any COP yet - but it's nowhere near strong enough.

Our world has already warmed by 1.2C above pre-industrial levels. Already glaciers are shrinking, ice-melt is earlier, sea ice less extensive, plant and animal ranges are shifting, and flowering times disrupted. There are more frequent and

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would spell out "STAR".

A slight mix-up occurred, and those present in the church auditorium nearly fell out of their pews as the four little performers took their places - in reverse order.

With Epiphany in mind...

I was telling my three boys the story of the Nativity and how the Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh for the infant Jesus.

Clearly giving it a lot of thought, my six-year-old observed, "Mum, a Wise Woman would have brought nappies."

Cry Pharaoh!

A visiting minister was very long-winded. Every time he felt he'd made a good point in his sermon, he would repeat it all over again. Finally, the host pastor started responding to every few sentences with 'Amen, Pharaoh!' The guest minister wasn't sure what that meant, but after several more

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Forthcoming Services

Links to the services can be found on

www.anglicanchurchtwente.com

During the interregnum, changes and Covid rules may affect the Rota

December 5 2021

10:30 Eucharist

Advent 2

Celebrant and Preacher

Klaas Prins

Duty Warden

Intercessor:
Dave Thomas

Sidesperson/Reader

Readings

Linda ten Berge

Malachi 3.1-4

Philippa te West

Philippians 1. 3-11

Gospel

Luke 3. 1-6

December 12 2021

10.30 Lessons and Carols

Advent 3

Celebrant and Preacher

Jeanet Luiten

Duty Warden

T.B.A.

Intercessor:

T.B.A.

Sidesperson/Reader

Readings

T.B.A.

T.B.A.

T.B.A.

T.B.A.



Forthcoming Services

December 19 2021

10:30 Eucharist

Advent 4

Celebrant and Preacher

T.B.A.

Duty Warden

Klaas Prins

Intercessor:

Simone Yallop

Sidesperson/Reader

Readings

Rachel Koster

Micah 5. 2-5a

Arthur Cass

Hebrews 10, 5-10

Gospel

Luke 1. 39-45[46-55]

December 25 2021

10:30 Eucharist

Christmas Eve/ Morning

Celebrant and Preacher

T.B.A.

Duty Warden

Jeanet Luiten

Intercessor:

Jeanet Luiten

Sidesperson/Reader

Readings

Elisa Hannan

Isaiah 52, 7-10

Simone Yallop

Hebrews 1. 1-4 [5-12]

Gospel

John 1, 1-14



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'Amen, Pharaohs' he concluded his very lengthy sermon.

After the service was over and the congregation had left, the visiting minister turned to his host and asked, "What exactly did you mean when you said 'Amen, Pharaoh?'"

His host minister replied, "I was begging you to let my people go!"

Visitors

The minister came home after church one Sunday morning looking very satisfied.

"Many people in church?" asked his wife, bustling around the kitchen.

"Yes, and we had at least three strangers, though I didn't see them."

"Then how do you know?"

"Because there were three €20 notes in the collection plate."

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intense storms, floods, heatwaves, droughts, wildfires and even earthquakes.

The Pact accepts the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's assessment that, by 2030, carbon emissions must fall by 45% compared to 2010 levels to keep alive the notion of limiting global heating to 1.5C. Meeting this target would save at least some of the Arctic ice pack, protect a small proportion of the world's coral reefs, and limit sea level rises to around half a metre (which is already enough to render much of the Maldives under water).

The Glasgow Pact pledges will not limit global heating to 1.5C. The independent Climate Action Tracker predicts that full implementation of all nations' pledges made up to and including Glasgow would give an estimated rise of 2.1C, and even if all net zero targets were achieved and long-term strategies implemented, warming would be in the range of 1.8C. As the BBC's Roger Harrabin put it, "The bad news is that if every government does everything it promises, the world will still face a catastrophic temperature rise of around 2C."

Reasons to be cheerful

It's easy to feel tired, jaded, and disheartened. How can Boris be so cheerful? The answer is, he has managed to pass the buck. Or, as Extinction Rebellion puts it "kicked the can down the road." Again. A key clause in the Glasgow Pact commits all signatory nations to re-consider their Nationally Determined Contributions (national climate action plans, policies and targets) in time for COP27, scheduled for November 2022 in Sharm El Sheikh.

Of course, they should have come up with new plans in time for Glasgow; only one nation - India - did, aiming for net zero by 2070. But new action plans within a year, rather than five-yearly as previously agreed, keeps open the possibility of achieving 1.5C - just. This shift also opens the door to annual updates from now on, which may help ratchet-up climate ambition in this crucial decade.

This commitment also gives climate campaigners one more crucial year to shout as loud as we can. It gives us one year to shift our pensions and savings out of fossil-fuel subsidising banks and investment funds - one of the most effective ways to make an impact. One year to make behavioural changes which, individually, may seem pointless, but have a crucial cumulative 'nudge' effect by changing societal norms and showing our leaders the direction of travel. One year to advocate ceaselessly for our neighbours

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in the Global South. One year to challenge our politicians at every turn. One year to pray for wisdom and justice, for our leaders and our most vulnerable.

Climate catastrophe draws ever closer. For many, it is already here. COP26 kept the dream of 1.5C alive, but its heartbeat is faint and its breath feeble. I'll leave the last words to Diana Hall: "We need resolve, resilience and courage. The stakes are getting higher all the time."

- St Anne's Eco-Group meets on the first Wednesday of each month in Church - the next meeting is Wednesday 1st December at 9.45am. All welcome.
- There is a virtual meeting to discuss the climate emergency and what the Scottish Government should be doing about it, with Martin Whitfield MSP at 2pm on Monday 29th November. Contact David Mumford (dmumford@phonecoop.coop) if you would like to come.

©Alex Davey, contributed by the Revd. David Mumford



Help your garden, help your planet

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has launched a modern-day 'Dig for Victory' campaign to help tackle climate change.

It is asking the UK's 30 million gardeners to consider digging up their garden paving and instead to plant trees, grass

and bee-friendly flora, to help nature survive.

The RHS has calculated that if every gardener in the UK grew at least one medium-sized tree in their garden, then that would be the equivalent of storing the carbon produced from driving 11 million times around the planet.

Further research from a YouGov survey has found that only 19 per cent of gardeners say that they have adopted sustainable gardening practices.

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Inspection

My husband, a US Coast Guard pilot, was on an exchange tour with the Royal Navy in England. Everyone who drove through the base's gates was required to hold an official ID card up to the windscreen for inspection by the guards.

As a friendly competition, my husband's squadron started flashing different forms of ID, such as a driving licence, just to see how far they could go to fool the busy guards. The winner? The fellow who breezed past waving a piece of toast.

Winter travel

A government warning said that anyone travelling in icy conditions should take: shovel, blankets, sleeping bag, scarf, hat and gloves, 24 hours supply of food and drink, de-icer, rock salt, torch, spare batteries, road flares,

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reflective triangles, tow rope, a five gallon petrol jerrycan, first aid kit, and jump leads. So ... I looked a complete idiot on the bus this morning!

What children have to say about angels

It's not easy to become an angel! First, you die. Then you go to Heaven, and then there's still the flight training to go through. And then you have to agree to wear those angel clothes. - Matthew, age 9

Angels work for God and watch over kids when God has to do something else. - Mitchell, age 7

My guardian angel helps me with maths, but he's not much good for science. - Henry, age 8

Angels don't eat, but they drink milk from holy cows. - Jack, age 6

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6th December: What's in a (Christmas) Name?

What do your family call him, that cheerful old man in a red robe and floppy hat who pops up everywhere at Christmas? Sometimes he's Father Christmas, sometimes Santa Claus, and in parts of Europe he's Saint Nicholas. That's his real name, abbreviated to 'Santa Claus' by Brits and Americans who don't like to follow the Europeans, and then turned into a more homely, cuddly kind of name for the children. Whatever he's called, his function is the same - delivering presents to children at Christmas.

The first St Nicholas was bishop of Myra, in the country we now call Turkey, in the fourth century. He was known as the friend of the poor, and especially poor or abused children. At (or just before) Christmas he went around handing out presents to them, as well as rescuing some from dreadful circumstances. The red robe our modern Santa Claus wears may be a vague representation of a bishop's garment, and the floppy hat is his mitre!

The original good bishop from 1600 years ago is remembered by the Church on 6th December, and the lucky children in Belgium and the Netherlands get their presents then.



A letter to Johanna

Dear Johanna,

This will not be a long letter since I am frantically busy hunting after presents for the coming all-family Sinterklaas party. After not being able to do so last year, due to the Covid-19 restrictions, we have decided to go on this year, whatever may happen. My youngest granddaughter came last weekend to help me with wrapping the presents with pretty paper. For me, there is still the task of writing all the poems that traditionally have to go with every gift. The younger generation is very good at making surprises, and we have so much fun and laughter.

Do you remember the way we used to run through the house when we were teenagers? We would follow a lot of

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directions to discover surprises hidden in all kinds of places. How once we ended up in the attic, where on a chair (or on the bathroom toilet in your case), we discovered a male figure, made of old pants and ragged sweater filled with enough old papers or rags to look like a man with a pumpkin or a painted balloon as a head was seated, who was supposed to be our future lover?

I am no longer making surprises; I'll leave that to the younger generation. But I still write long poems that are sometimes very naughty. I also cook an excellent chicken soup and brew a mulled wine for the family.

My Christmas begins, strangely enough, on the Sunday before Sinterklaas because that's the first Sunday of Advent. I hang a big star in the hall to show me the road to Bethlehem. Nowadays, the TV and the shops are full of Christmas items, and nearly every house has a Christmas tree in the home or garden. But that is not the real meaning of Advent. Advent is just as in Lent, a period of reflection and preparation for the coming of the little baby who will be our mediator here on earth.

But what many people forget, also the yet-anticipated coming of Christ. That, too, has always been an essential part of Advent. And Johanna, I have many thoughts about this world in which we live now. It frightens me, and Advent will this year be a time for me to ponder over all these horrible things that happen everywhere on this planet, with us and through us. And the longing for the coming of Christ, the light of the world, will be this year more as ever be very strong.

And then there will be the joy of the birth of the child Jesus. Music, candlelight and being together with loved ones... a wonderful time. White is the colour of Christmas. In the church the colour of feast and celebrations. The Gloria, like in Lent time not sung, will again be part of the liturgy. Of course also a Christmas tree in the church, an ancient symbol like holly and ivy of surviving evergreen. You remember my father, who was an atheist. He thought the tree to be pagan, and he saw that there was no tree in the house. But to me, it was just always a symbol of eternal life. And we will have the Caroll Service, and after church, I'm looking forward to hot chocolate and mulled wine.

And I can tell you what, to me, is the best moment. That is driving home after the service on Christmas Night through a dark and silent world with the promise of a safe, warm house and with two beautiful days in prospect. Later this month, you will get a card, but I wish you already a merry beautiful Christmas in advance.

With love,
Erica

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Lint

Considering all the lint you get in your dryer, if you kept drying your clothes would they eventually just disappear?

Free travel

Living on earth may be expensive, but it includes an annual free trip around the sun.

Moses revisited

Nine-year-old Joseph was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday school. "Well, Mum, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he radioed headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved."

"Now, Joseph, is that really what your teacher taught you?" his mother asked, somewhat alarmed. "Well, no, Mum. But if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

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Spotted on a church notice board:

When you were born, your mother brought you here.

When you were married, your partner brought you here.

When you die, your family will bring you here.

In the meantime, why not try coming on your own sometimes?

Parish News

A church news sheet reported that Mr and Mrs Brown had left for a ten-day motor trip, and that their two young daughters were starving with relations during their absence.

One Birmingham parish newsheet announced: 'Pram Service this Sunday in church. Followed by a talk about the wind.'

From a church bulletin: 'Don't let worry kill you off. Let the church help.'

Winter Solstice

A Midwinter festival has been a part of life since pre-Christian times. When the hours of daylight are fewest, the warmth of the sun weakest, and life itself seemingly at a standstill, our ancestors, the pagan peoples of Europe and Western Asia, kept festival by lighting bonfires and decorating their buildings with evergreens.

Perhaps they believed that the dying sun could be enheartened by fire, and the life of the buried seed assured by the presence of evergreen branches.

With the advent of Christianity, the Spring gods became identified with Christ, and the birthday of the sun with the birthday of the Light of the World.

The early church father Tertullian did not approve of Christmas decorations. "Let those who have no light in themselves light candles!... You are the light of the world, you are the tree ever green...." But by the time of St Gregory and St Augustine, four centuries later, this had changed. Pope Gregory instructed Augustine not to worry about harmless outward customs, as long as the right God be worshipped through them. And so many Anglo-Saxon customs were never discarded, but simply endowed with a new significance.

By 1598 one John Stow of London wrote how: 'Against the feast of Christmas, every man's house, as also their parish churches, were decked with holme, ivie, bayes, and whatsoever the season of the yeare afforded to be greene.'

Why the world was ready for Christmas

Ever wonder why Jesus was born when He was?

The Bible tells us that "when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son..." The Jewish people had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. Why did God send Him precisely when He did?

Many biblical scholars believe that the 'time had fully come' for Jesus because of the politics of the time. The Roman Empire's sheer size and dominance had achieved something unique in world history: the opportunity for travel from Bethlehem to Berwick on Tweed without ever crossing into 'enemy territory' or needing a 'passport'. For the first time ever, it was possible for 'common' people to travel wide and far, and quickly spread news and ideas. And all you needed were two languages - Greek to the east of Rome, and Latin to the west and north. You could set sail from Joppa (Tel Aviv) and head for any port on the Med. And the Roman roads ran straight and true

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throughout the empire.

So the Roman Empire achieved something it never intended: it helped spread news of Christianity far and wide for 400 years. After that, the Empire crumbled, and the borders shut down. Not until the 19th century would people again roam so freely. The time for Jesus to be born, and for news of Him to be able to travel, had indeed 'fully come'

What about the gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh?

The story of the coming of the Magi grew in the telling. By the 6th century they had acquired names: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. By medieval times they were considered to be kings. Whoever they were, we do know from Matthew that they brought three gifts to Jesus.

What about their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? While we cannot know for sure what was in the minds of first century Magi, one Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation as to the significance of their gifts. He was the Rev John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, who in 1857 wrote his much-loved Christmas carol, 'We Three Kings of Orient Are'.

Gold, said John Henry Hopkins, was a gift that would have been given to a king. Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as they worshipped God in the Temple. Myrrh was a spice that the ancients used in preparing bodies for burial.

If that is true, then you could say that the Wise Men, in choosing their gifts for this infant, honoured Jesus with gold because He was King of the Jews, with frankincense because He was to be worshipped as divine, and with myrrh, because He would also become a sacrifice and die for His people.

The Wise Men were the very first gentiles ever to worship Jesus. What faith they had! They travelled for months over difficult terrain, they never saw any evidence of Jesus' kingship, His divinity or His sacrificial death. They worshipped Him through faith in God's promises about Him. Isaiah foresaw this response to Jesus: 'Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi's eyes of faith saw clearly and far into the future.

Compare that with the High Priest and religious leaders whom the Wise Men saw in Jerusalem when they first arrived. These head priests knew all about the prophecies of their own coming Messiah, but NOT ONE Jewish religious leader travelled to look for Him in Bethlehem. And it is only six miles down the road! ©Parish Pump

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Knock knock

The passenger tapped the taxi driver on the shoulder to ask him something. The driver screamed, lost control of the car, nearly hit a bus, went up on the pavement, and stopped inches from a shop window.

For a second everything went quiet in the car, then the driver said, "Look mate, don't ever do that again. You scared the daylight's out of me!"

The passenger apologised and said he didn't realise that a little tap could scare him so much.

The driver replied, "You're right. I'm sorry, it's not really your fault. Today is my first day as a taxi driver. I've been driving a hearse for the last 15 years."

Chocolate

When I look at chocolate, I hear two voices in my head.

The first one says, 'You need to eat the chocolate.'

The second one says, 'You heard. Eat the chocolate.'

Excerpt from 'The Glory in the Grey'

*Almighty God, Redeemer...
Sunshine and storm, mist and greyness
Eddy round our inner lives.
But as we trace the pattern, looking back,
We know that both darkness and light have
been of thine ordaining,
For our own soul's health.
Thy constant care in all, and everywhere,
Is manifest.*

*By George MacLeod, founder of the Iona
Community*

Mission Statement

Founded in 1979, the Anglican Church Twente belongs to the Church of England's Diocese in Europe. The Church of England forms a part of the worldwide Anglican Communion of more than 80 million people

The Anglican Church Twente, based at St Mary's Chapel, Weldam provides a Christian ministry in the East Netherlands. Most of the congregation live in the towns and villages of the East Netherlands and across the border in Germany. Some come from further afield.

The Anglican Church Twente holds a service every Sunday at 10:30 am in English. The church offers Holy Communion to all baptized Christians, Sunday School to nurture and educate children in the Christian faith, and a warm welcome to people of all nationalities.

The main aims of the Anglican Church Twente are to:

- † Offer Christian worship by the rites of the Church of England in the English language.
- † Provide pastoral care to all who are in need of such help.
- † Promote a lively fellowship among those who attend the services.
- † Support outreach in Christian ministry wherever there is a need.

Stewardship

We are a self-supporting church and raise all income from our giving and stewardship. As God has blessed us, we thank Him by giving accordingly.

A Prayer for St Mary's

*Almighty and everlasting God
Creator and ruler of all things in heaven and earth,
Hear our prayer for the St Mary's family.
Strengthen our faith,
Fashion our lives according to the example of your Son,
And grant that we may show the power of your love,
To all among whom we live.
Inspire us in our worship and witness,
Grant us all things necessary for our common life,
And bring us all to be of one heart and mind
Within your Holy Church
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who lives and reigns with you in the Holy Spirit
One God, now and forever,
Amen.*

