

There is no
longer Jew or
Greek, there is
no longer slave
or free, there is
no longer male
and female; for
all of you are
one in Christ
Jesus.

GALATIANS 3:28



WORTH PARISH magazine

£1.00 February – March 2024

ST BARNABAS', POUND HILL
ST NICHOLAS', WORTH
Reg. Charity No. 1131090

CLERGY SERVING THE PARISH

Rector	Fr Michael Boag	rector@worthparish.org	01293 882229
Associate Vicar	Revd Sarah Upchurch	vicarstb@worthparish.org	01293 524804
Assistant Priest	Revd Gordon Parry	gordonmwparry@btinternet.com	07802 432398
Assistant Priest	Fr Francis Pole	francis.pole@virgin.net	07764 752608
Associate Vicar	Revd Greta	associatevicar@worthparish.org	

REGULAR SERVICES

Our regular services are shown below.

	St Nicholas', Worth	St Barnabas', Pound Hill
Sundays	08.15 Holy Communion (BCP, 1662) 10.00 Sung Eucharist	10.00 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays - Eucharist 10.00 4th Sundays Child-Friendly Eucharist
Tuesdays		10.30 Eucharist
Thursdays	10.30 Eucharist	

And here's what's happening in the café each week:

St Barnabas' Café RH10 7DY		
Wednesdays	10.00 - 13.00	Coffee Shop
Thursdays	14.00 - 16.00	Knit 'n Natter
Fridays	10.30 - 12.30	Coffee Shop
	12.30 - 14.00	Friday Lunch Club (Please book - see P18)
Saturdays	10.00 - 13.00ish	Coffee Shop

CONTACT US



worthparish.org



office@worthparish.org



Worth Parish Office
St Barnabas' Church
Worth Road Crawley RH10 7DY



0300 111 8150



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Clergy

To contact Fr Michael, please phone 01293 882229 Tuesday to Sunday or email rector@worthparish.org

To contact Revd Sarah, please phone 01293 524804 Tuesday to Sunday or email vicarstb@worthparish.org

To contact Revd Gordon, phone 07802 432398.

Office

If you have a Baptism, Wedding or general enquiry, call the office on 0300 111 8150 or email office@worthparish.org

Churchwardens

David Anderson stbwarden@worthparish.org
Colin Smith 01293 889894

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NOTE FROM YOUR ED

I am going to a wedding the weekend this mag is due to be in the churches. Weddings are always a joy and the Church of England is making progress to making marriage a *total* joy, but there is still some way to go! The ceremony we are attending has been in the planning for a long time and well before the new guidelines (see P13), so as a same-sex couple, they were unable to have it in the church where our god-daughter was baptised, confirmed and worshipped since she was adopted at the age of three. It will take place in a barn. It is a matter of editorial protocol to check with relevant parties before putting things into print so, bearing in mind the step that we as a parish are about to take, you can imagine my sadness when I heard the following piece of news. Returning to the family home for Christmas, the couple asked the vicar, who has been in that parish for the past 4 years to bless their wedding rings in preparation for the service. He refused. It was against his personal principles. The best he could manage was to suggest someone in an adjoining parish. Is ostracised too strong a word to use in this case? Do you really think that an all-loving God refuses to even bless the rings of a couple who, after 10 years, wish to commit to each other for life? Thank goodness that our clergy, our leaders and our congregation follow Jesus' example in opening their welcoming arms to everyone and that our god-daughter's faith remains strong in adversity.

So having drawn your attention to the most important page of this edition, I hope you also enjoy the memories of our past events as well as keeping abreast of the various groups within our parish and the articles submitted by some of our regular contributors. If you have any themes that you would like us to explore over the coming months, please do not hesitate to ask via office@worthparish.org

Happy New Year,

Sue xxx



Our heartfelt Congratulations

go to Eric van der Merwe, erstwhile member of the St Nic's congregation, for graduating from Sussex Uni with a PhD in Theoretical Particle Physics - or from what I (Ed) have read, studying something which can't be seen, but you know must be there because they cause a real effect!

Eric & Amanda now live in the Isle of Man and as you can see, the family is growing with the arrival of a very handsome Bradley!

In essence, String Theory describes spaces and time, matter and energy, indeed all of God's creation.... as music.

Roy H Williams

"And these are but the outer fringe of his works; how faint the whisper we hear of him! Who then can understand the thunder of his power?" (Job 26:14).

VECTORS FROM THE VICAR

Revelation, Collaboration and Inclusivity

Life certainly is an adventure in many ways. I am sorry if you don't feel that way at present, peace be with you in whatever circumstances you find yourself.

In our lives we are always learning. I personally feel that I am always learning and very often being surprised by what I discover. Maybe it is something to do with being a 'teacher' or at least attempting to unravel truth found in life and scripture that points to love and justice as I preach/teach most weeks, whether I am in church, the café or in schools.



Recently the Bible passage was about the Wedding at Cana, where Jesus famously turned water into wine. I was intrigued to discover deeper meanings associated with this miracle as revealed to me through study and prayer. There were three themes that I identified which may hopefully help you and me with our faith and lives in general.

The first theme is of **Revelation**. Simply put, the miracle of the water turned into wine revealed Jesus as having divine power. It revealed his divinity. It's all about the truth of Jesus being known to the world. The second theme that occurred to me was **Collaboration**, let me explain.

What do think may have happened in between Jesus saying to his mother, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' Then Mary saying, 'Do whatever he tells you.' There must have been some interim discourse or 'something' to change Jesus' mind, don't you think? Jesus was initially reluctant to intervene, then he saved the day.

We will never know this side of heaven what happened or what was said, but Jesus himself is a 'Holy Collaboration' between God and humanity. Perhaps this is a glimpse of a continuation of that partnership, an exchange between a Mother and the Son?

Finally, God in his revelation and collaboration *never leaves people out*. On the night Jesus was born it was the lowly shepherds who got the best seats, and during this miracle it was the servants who saw and witnessed everything! So, our final theme is **Inclusivity** which is an important topic discussed later on in this edition of the magazine.

How might you respond to these three themes of Revelation, Collaboration and Inclusivity?

Peace be with you,

Reverend Sarah

In looking for quotes to go on this page I (Ed) came across Stephen Parsons' blog. It makes interesting reading.

<https://survivingchurch.org/2023/11/09/a-vision-for-inclusivity-in-the-church-insights-from-book-of-revelation/>

"I saw a great throng from every class, colour, sexual minority, and ethic/religious group. People were caught up in the worship of God on the throne because of their membership of humanity and through their attempts to feel after God and find him. (Stephen Parsons' re-statement of Revelation 7)"

"Of all the sins of which we are guilty, possibly the most prevalent is this act of shunning another for being different from us. It is probably necessary to be alert to the possible malevolence of other people which may affect our human flourishing but there is never room for pushing another away on the grounds that they are different from us."

PARISH ROUNDUP



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Worth & Pound Hill Branch Update November 2023 – January 2024

The more observant of you will be thinking I thought November was mentioned in the last magazine. Well, it was, in a way, it was telling you what we had planned for that month, now I can confirm what we did!

During November we always have a service in preparation for Advent when we think about what Advent means to us and how the Bible tells of our forthcoming Saviour and warns the people to be ready. We begin with Isaiah telling of a voice crying out in the wilderness, then Luke tells us to be sober and prepared. Finally,



once we are 'ready', Revelation reminds us to tell everyone that the Saviour of the world is 'Coming soon' and we should be ready to meet Him. As Mothers' Union Members, we are ready! Why not join us this year in November and be part of this uplifting and moving service of preparation. After the eucharist service we adjourned to the café for seasonal refreshments and packed 100 sock parcels for the Gatwick Detainees, another MU Project we are heavily involved with.

In December, Mary Fry and Joan Tick erected and decorated the Blue Christmas tree ready for the Blue Christmas Service.

The tree is decorated with blue and white decorations and lights and then it is taken into St Barnabas' church for the service later that month. It has become a tradition for Mothers' Union to do this ever since Revd Sarah decided to hold the service for those who are bereaved or lonely and who find celebrating Christmas difficult. A quiet, gentle and reflective service for all.



Farewell to 2023.

Now, here we are in 2024, a belated "Happy New Year" to you all.



In January we have our New Year Supper and this year will be no exception. We have planned a 'shop prepared' cold buffet with desserts, made and supplied by the Committee and we are looking forward to a jolly evening for, and with, one and all who attend.

Please look out for the notices in the pew sheet during the year for various events or Coffee Mornings that we will be running, as well as interesting Branch Meetings in which you may wish to

join. Everyone is welcome!

Wishing you a refreshing and thought-provoking Lent. Actually, why not come to the Shrivng Service on Tues 13 February 10:30 at St Barnabas', followed by refreshments, with pancakes, in the Café and kick off Lent in style?

Joan Tick on behalf of the Committee.



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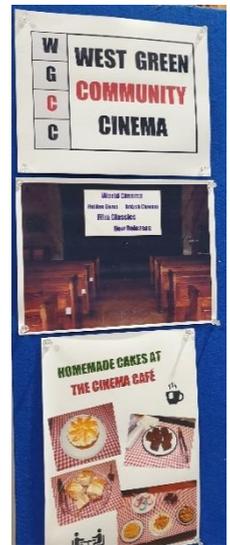


The Circle

In January the Circle meeting took the form of a Wine, Cheese and Cake evening and nine of us enjoyed catching up on what we all did over Christmas and discussed what the future could hold for the group as a

whole. Our numbers vary considerably according to health, commitments and interests so we discussed what we can do, especially when we are in GMT. Along with Cheese and Wine evenings we thought we could join with other groups such as the West Green Community Cinema at St Peter's Church where, on 7 February, they are showing *The Great Escaper* starring Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson. Doors open at 18.00 when the café sells hot drinks and homemade cakes and the film starts at 19.00 - £5 a head

Max Perry max.perry@datamax.co.uk 07435 788127



St Nicholas' Churchwarden's Update

Looking at my pre-Christmas report to you all, reminded me that Church Road had been excavated for gas main replacements which really impacted upon our services, mainly due to access and parking. Fortunately, the Gas Board (or rather their Contractors) managed to complete the job just in time for our Christmas Services. Talking of which I think you will all agree that this year was very special indeed.

Preparations were well under way for Nine Lessons and Carols when Sue in the Parish Office was contacted by SUSY Radio requesting that they record the service for transmission on Christmas Day. More of this is included in Mark's article on Page 10. Suffice it to say that the service was inspirational. 127 people attending was 45% up on last year which was very impressive. It was a wonderful service.

But then, all our services were up on attendance this Christmas - you might think that this is surprising as Christmas Eve was on a Sunday which meant there were four services on that day alone. The 8:15 and 10:00 services saw about the same number as last Christmas, but our Nativity Service at 16:00 was through the roof; 217 adults attended with their offspring numbering 60. Joan T., who organised the service, including rehearsals, did an amazing production. She has written about it on Page 28.

Christmas Eve culminated in our Midnight Mass which was about 40% up on 2022 with 138 in attendance. On Monday, which was Christmas Day, we held another two services, 8:15 and 10:00 which were attended by more or less the same as last year. And then there followed a well-earned break.

The vast majority of you reading this will know the huge effort put into organising these services and events. The raffle and refreshments following 9 Lessons and the preparation for the big services with a stage to erect and 70 extra chairs brought out of storage is hard work. On the 1 December, two enormous Christmas Trees were delivered and once again our volunteers and Clergy erected and dressed the 4 metre trees with lights. Our volunteers are amazing and our sincere thanks go to them as always.

Whilst talking about our volunteers I should perhaps mention that Adela Hawley, one of our choristers, has volunteered to take over from Noreen Oxlade, who has retired from her role organising flowers at St Nicholas'. Noreen's contribution has been immeasurable and has continued over many, many years. The flowers in our Church have always been amazing for festivals and weddings alike. Your contribution, Noreen, will be written about in much more depth in our next issue of our magazine.

Now that Christmas is over and we begin a New Year, it is time to go forward with projects that have been identified as essential to enhance the experience of attending services at our magnificent Church. The lighting and sound systems are on our 'to do' list and additionally, our Bell Ringers have voted to return to their former bellringing chamber on the first floor immediately beneath their current chamber. This chamber was until recently used by our choir for rehearsals and warming up before the Sunday service and is no longer required by them.

Once again thank you for all your support in 2023. May you all be blessed with good health and enjoy a happy and successful New Year.

Colin Smith Deputy Churchwarden (Interim Churchwarden)

St Barnabas' Churchwarden Update

We had a simply wonderful Christmas – see the middle pages.

Following the completion of the Young Communicants course three of our young people celebrated their 1st Communions on December 10th. Congratulations to Renex, Bethany and Zara.

We will continue to run our Young Communicants course, preparing our young people to take communion; this has been running after school on Friday afternoons. If you have a young person aged 7 or over that is interested in joining the next course, please contact Reverend Sarah for details.



In January we held a service of Thanksgiving for the life of Helen Maher, a much-loved member of the St Barnabas' congregation, who died on 14th December 2023. It was a lovely service led by Reverend Sarah, that very much reflected Helen's life and character – may she rest in peace and rise in glory.



Many of you will have seen the new floor in the Hall, which is the same as the new floor in the Narthex, and will appreciate the improvement. Those hiring the Hall have given a very positive response as well. At the Christmas Fair we launched a sponsorship scheme, whereby for £10 you can sponsor a square of the new floor. There is a plan of the floor in the Hall and you can select the area of floor that you wish to sponsor – there are 1900 squares to choose from! You will receive a certificate thanking you for your sponsorship. You can pay using BACS transfer to Worth PCC, sort code 40-18-22 account 61223372; via the QR Code displayed in the Hall (and here); using the Card Reader at St Barnabas' or by cash!

Following on from our successful Youth Alpha course a number of the group have continued to meet on a Friday evening to further explore their faith, led by Reverend Sarah with support from Mary and David. This has been a wonderful learning experience for all involved.

As many will have seen, the third, and final phase of the project to provide level access to all of our buildings is well underway. We have continued to apply for grants as well as other fund raising and we have recently received notification of two further grants that will help immensely in completing the work. We are extremely grateful to all those who have contributed. All the new retaining walls have been constructed and the foundations poured for the new entrance. A start has been made on raising the levels in preparation for the laying of the finished surface of resin bonded gravel.



The next milestone will be the erection of the steelwork for the new glass entrance.

The Café at St Barnabas' continues to be well used by many groups meeting during the week and remains popular on Wednesday and Saturday for coffee and cake. More volunteers are always needed as are cakes – please let us know if you can help.

David Anderson



Music at St Barnabas' January 2024

We have been planning and praying for the music at St Barnabas' to develop in a positive way to produce quality music that people can sing in the presence of God. As of this year, we now have a rota of Worship Leaders namely Ann, John and Luke who all bring their varied styles and enthusiasm to the 10:00 Sunday morning service. Our aim is to develop a repertoire of inspiring songs that the congregation are familiar with, and introduce a few new songs. We are all about encouraging the congregation to sing out and bring a heart for Jesus, emphasising the Word of God that is contained in the words of the hymns and songs.

At St Barnabas' we are very lucky to have a sympathetic acoustic in the Church, making it possible for the congregation and band to sing together with natural, unamplified musical accompaniment at the right level. The musicians can get together before the Evening Service and, with the help and support of the Clergy, illustrate in words and music the theme and message of the week. We also have some nice, stylish music stands to make life easier for the musicians. It almost goes without saying that anyone who would like to play or sing with us is most welcome. Please contact John by email.

With the upgrading of the buildings, inside and out, well under way and due to include a smart and welcoming entrance, we are praying that many more people will discover St Barnabas' and come to know Jesus as our Saviour.

Sunday Evening Worship at St Barnabas

Having successfully tried out Prayer and Praise contemporary music services with our Ecumenical Music Group, including Luke and Tabitha last year, we are planning a range of Sunday evening services and events into the future and Parish Publicity will provide notification of the details as they are confirmed. The first Sunday evening service of the year at St Barnabas' will be on 11 February at 18:00 to mark Racial Equality Week. It will be led by Revd Sarah Upchurch with Preacher Revd Dr Godfrey Kesari.

Messy Church Worship

In addition to Sunday services there is the monthly Messy Church worship on a Wednesday at 15:00 which includes a lively song accompanied on guitar. The children and parents love to sing and we often have 'action songs' for everyone.

John Palmer - Voluntary Worship Leader at St Barnabas' Pound Hill

Email: music.stb@worthparish.org



Baptisms

Congratulations to

31 Dec 2023 Cruz Christopher Andrew Innes
4 Feb 2024 Lorenzo James Dezzani

Music at St Nicholas'

9 Lessons and Carols

The St. Nicholas' Choir had three "big" services in December - the Advent Carol Service on the 3 December, and Midnight Mass being the "bookends."



The one with the most music is the Nine Lessons and Carols.

The service of "Nine Lessons and Carols" originated in Truro Cathedral in 1880. In the early 20th century, Kings College Cambridge started singing a slightly modified version, which the BBC then picked up for broadcast.

There may only be 9 Lessons, but there are actually 11 pieces of music - which in 2023 we split as 6 for the congregation, and 5 for the choir.

In honour of the Cornish history of the service, we included the John Rutter arrangement of "Now the Holly Bears a Berry" for the choir, but being in Sussex we included David Wilcocks's setting of The Sussex Carol ("On Christmas Night, All Christians Sing"). It was just over 100 years ago, in 1919, at Monk's Gate outside of Horsham, that it was first written down.

Rehearsal was going well, with stress levels manageable, when we were approached by SUSY Radio. SUSY radio is an award-winning community radio station broadcasting to Sussex and Surrey (hence the name SUSY). Each year, they find a local church at which to record a service, for broadcast on Christmas Day.

Having met the SUSY team, Fr Michael and I decided that we were happy in principle, so on the day before the service, I (Mark) drove to Cardiff to collect Peter at the end of term, and Colin filled in to spend several hours with them helping to set up a big array of microphones.

The Choir stepped up to the extra pressure, and the final broadcast was well received.

Neil, the SUSY presenter, wrote "SUSY Radio would like to thank all of the Clergy, choir, parishioners and visitors at St Nicholas' Worth for the very warm welcome extended to us during our recording of this wonderful service."

We were very happy to have been chosen for 2023.

Mark Harrison

Home Group at Worth

During the year we recruited another member to our Home Group, making us a total of 5. We welcome Gill who hopefully has enjoyed our studies and discussions so far, she is still coming, so I believe she has!

We have looked at The Beatitudes and 'Pilgrim' journeyed through 'The Bible'; how it was compiled, gives us breath and sustenance, is a light in our lives and how we are nurtured by reading it daily. During Advent we started studying "The Case for Christmas"; this has proved a bit of a challenge, but we are also watching a DVD – "the Nativity Story" 'an incredible journey of hope and discovery'. This is helping us understand more about the times in which Mary and Joseph had been brought up, how they lived and how they followed the strict Laws of the Jews. Mary, working in the fields, was such an ordinary, humble person, chosen to be the mother of our Saviour, Jesus. We still have two sessions to complete in this book, but once finished, we will be in time for Lent and the New Testament.

Since the start of December, we have, as individuals, been reading, 31 daily Advent devotions, from a book entitled "Brightest and Best" by Philippa Ruth Wilson. It can be used over and over again each year, and I am sure we will not tire of it for many years to come; we have all enjoyed and thoroughly recommend it.

If you would like to join our daytime gathering, once every two or three weeks, please come along and give us a try. We are a friendly bunch, easy to get along with and openly admit we do not know all the answers, but willing to find out. A cup of tea and a 'nibble' is also on offer.

Please give me a call, or chat to me, Kay Molloy, Gill Thompson, Margaret Spurgeon or Sue Walshe at St Nicholas' to find out more, if you wish.

Joan Tick [tel: 01293 884695]

From the Bell Tower January 2024

The bellringers had their AGM last week, ably chaired by the Rector. This was a chance to review the past year and plan ahead. The existing officers were re-elected *en bloc* and the accounts presented. The following paragraphs are extracts from the reports presented to the meeting.

Although nominally we had 17 ringers at the start of the year and 14 of us rang for the Coronation, we really only have a core group of around 11 with an average attendance of around 8 for practice and Sunday service ringing. Nevertheless, we rang for every Sunday morning service and most of the evening services, including Greta's licensing. Christmas was particularly busy this year. Only 5 practices were cancelled because of an insufficient number of ringers being available and on two of those occasions, some of our ringers joined the Rusper practice. One practice was cancelled because of the weather forecast. We had 9 additional "advanced" practices.

There were only 4 quarter peals rung on the bells this year and one of those was by a visiting band! Two of our quarters were for the Coronation of King Charles III; Gerald is one of only 121 ringers worldwide who rang for both the last Coronation and this one, and he was interviewed and filmed by BBC South East. The subsequent broadcast news item included clips of us ringing. The other quarter rung was to mark Gerald's 75 years as a ringer. As well as Gerald himself, the band also included his three daughters, Alison, Carolyn and Marion and grandson, Ross. It was nervously conducted by me (I first rang with Gerald in 1979).

There were also two peals (also by visiting bands), bringing the total to 81 since the first peal in 1887. Peals take around 2¾ hours to ring!

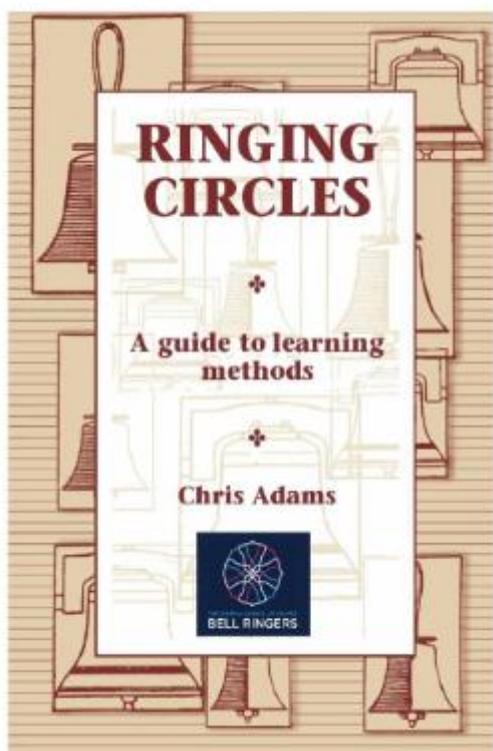
We rang for 11 weddings; Gerald and Carolyn each rang for 10 of those. This is a far cry from the 81 we rang for in 1999 (and Gerald rang for 50 of those) and is perhaps a sign of the times.

While the core of the regular band has remained constant, we've had some changes. Judy was unable to return to ringing following her illness, Sue broke her arm in November and was unable to return until after the New Year, and Sasha went off to university in September. However, Jean, who joined us last year, has become one of our more regular attendees. Chris L has recently started learning to ring, being taught to handle a bell by Carolyn.

The monthly Tuesday advanced practices have increased the range of methods we can ring and give the more experienced ringers something else to challenge them.

Not everything is about improvement, we also want to enjoy our ringing and social interactions. Going to the pub after ringing allows a more relaxed conversation, some people going most weeks, others occasionally. The Christmas Social is always popular and we are looking forward to having an annual dinner later this year.

Neil Dobson, Tower Captain



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Prayers Of Love And Faith (Plf)

One Sunday morning several weeks ago Canon Julian Hollywell of Derby came to the 10:00 service at St Nicholas' to talk to us about his role on the General Synod and recent changes that had been approved which allow for blessings during church services for same-sex couples based around texts known as Prayers of Love and Faith.

Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF) is a collection of prayers and readings amongst other resources for praying with and for a same-sex couple who love one another and who wish to give thanks for, and mark, that love in faith before God.

On the 12 December 2023 following on from a meeting of the House of Bishops, Bishop Martin our Diocesan Bishop, commended for use in regular public worship or private prayer, the final texts of Prayers of Love and Faith which can be used from the 17 December 2023.

Since the decision to allow Prayers of Love and Faith to be used we have received guidance on how these may be applied, along with the Prayers themselves. Our Clergy have decided that we will be able to offer these prayers as part of a service, with the PCC also supporting the decision of our Clergy.

This is our opportunity to become one of the first Parishes in the area to offer these new and inclusive prayers. We may also find ourselves in demand as there are no geographical restrictions on the use of Prayers of Love and Faith to bless same-sex couples.

We are excited about sharing the love of God with, not only those in our Parish, but in the wider communities that surround us. Worth Parish is inclusive and open to all who want to share in God's love. These Prayers of Love and Faith help us to project God's love, and reach every member of our community and beyond, that may have felt excluded from their faith in the past.

Revd Greta & Sebastian Pelissier

A Prayer for God's Blessing from the PLF

God of generosity and joy,
with you is the well of life and in your light, we see light:
we give thanks for N and N,
for the love and friendship they share,
and their commitment for one another.
As they come to you this day,
trusting you as the giver of all good gifts,
strengthen their love by your love,
and gladden their hearts with your joy,
that their journey through life,
may become a pilgrimage of grace.
By your blessing,
and with you as their companion and guide,
may they rejoice in hope and be sustained in love,
all the days of their life and in the age to come,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen



The full text of the PLF can be found at www.churchofengland.org and then using the search function for 'prayers of love and faith' or reach out to one of the Clergy who can share and explain the PLF to you.

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Christmas!



December started with the Parish Christmas Fair. It was an extremely popular event for all ages, the young and the not so young. It was the first time that we were able to access all interior areas of the Church, Café and Hall on the same level with no steps! The building work to lower the Narthex floor to the same level as the Church and Hall was completed just days before the Christmas Fair – thanks to our builders Ben and James (and their team of workers). There was plenty to do for everyone, activities for the children, a very successful raffle, stalls selling Christmas decorations, books and jig-saws. We also had several stalls from local businesses. Father Christmas also visited, with gifts for the children, ably assisted by his Elf!



Our Messy Christingle service followed, led by Revd Sarah, it was a joyful celebration bringing our Messy Church, Church and Community families together to share the light of Jesus and spread a message of hope. Christingles are oranges wrapped in red tape, decorated with dried fruit and sweets, with a candle on the top. Each element has a meaning and helps tell the Christmas story. The orange is the world, the red tape, the love of Jesus, the sweets and dried fruit represent all of God's creation and the candle is Jesus' light in the world bringing hope to people living in darkness.





Carols for All was a wonderfully uplifting service, with all the familiar Carols accompanied by live music, readings taking us through the Christmas story and the visitation of an angel to the 'Elf who had forgotten the True Meaning of Christmas' as told by Mother Christmas!



We were proud to host the Sussex Army Cadet Force carol service which was led by Reverend Sarah, who is a Padre to the ACF. The Church was packed, with over 134 Cadets, staff and family in attendance. They were all in good voice singing the carols heartily and Sarah recounted the Christmas story in chocolate – which went down very well with everyone!



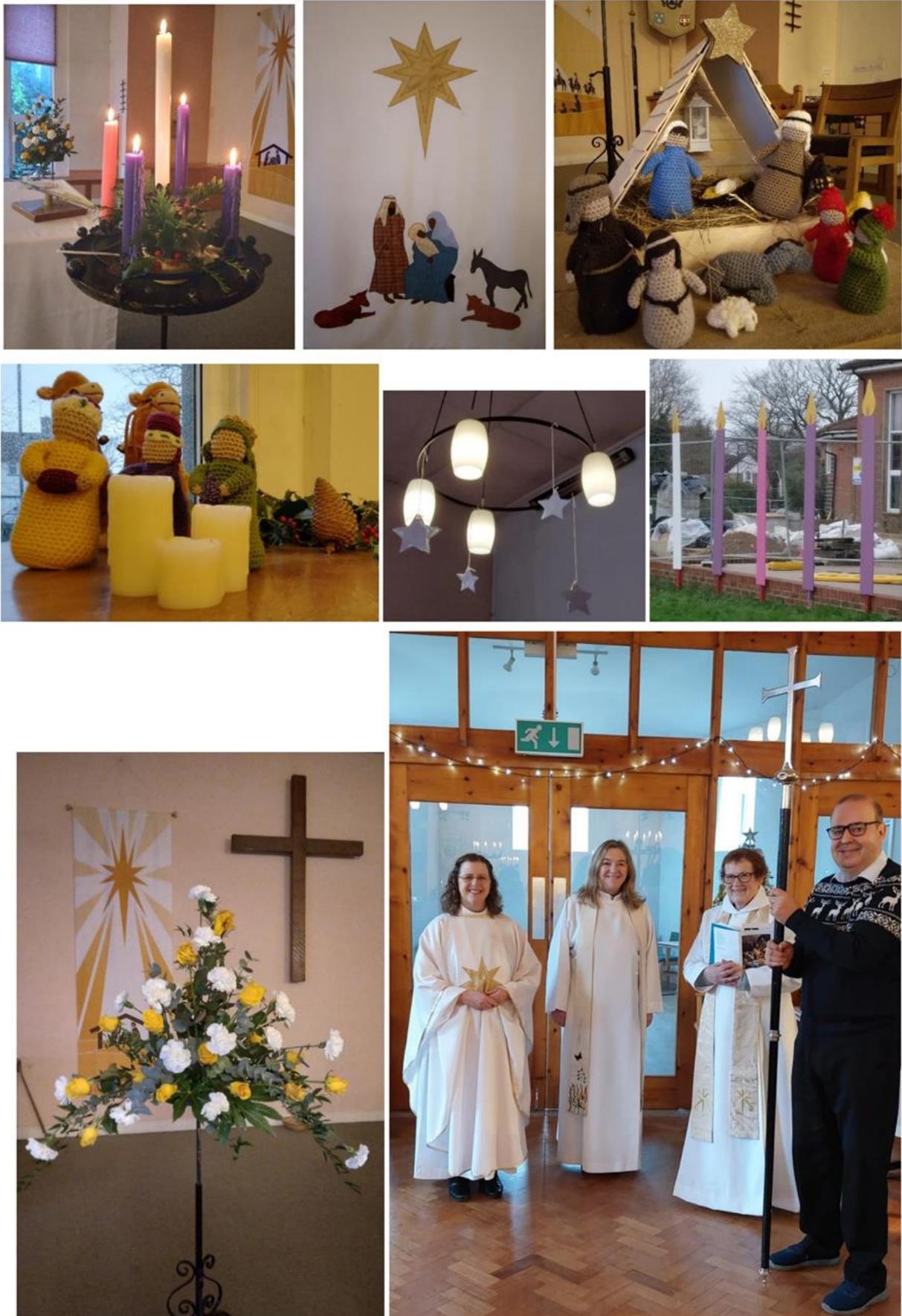
In mid-December we held our Blue Christmas service. This was a quiet candlelit service for those who find Christmas difficult. It provided a space for sadness to be acknowledged alongside hope. The Christmas story was told together with prayers and reflection.



Our Crib Service, was held on Christmas Eve and was very well attended, we had 27 children, many taking part in the re-telling of the Christmas story. It proceeded smoothly, thanks to the wardrobe department (you know who you are!) who made sure everybody was suitably dressed.

Then there was Midnight Mass and our Christmas day services.

Throughout Advent the large Advent candles appeared outside St Barnabas – as a visual liturgy to the preparation for the Jesus’ birth; inside the crib was prepared. As Christmas arrived, the Kings began their journey through the church and the church was beautifully dressed with flowers – thank you to the “flower ladies”. Thank you to Reverend Sarah for leading us.



Epiphany

At St Nicholas', we welcomed the Magi to our celebration of the Feast of The Epiphany on 7 January. Everyone; from the youngest to the oldest in the congregation, the celebrant and servers, sides and choir, wore gold (or knitted) crowns. It was a thoroughly joyful and festive morning. The Christmas celebrations drew to a close at the end of January on the Feast of Candlemas, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, when candles were blessed and distributed to everyone present and we sang the hymn that we sang right at the beginning of Advent: 'Christ be our Light'.



ARTICLES

When is an Altar not an Altar ?



This sounds like a simple question but, of course, it isn't.

The earliest altars were undoubtedly domestic tables, such as the one set up by St Peter in Jesus's childhood home, according to legend. Under persecution, Christians in Rome began to celebrate the Eucharist covertly on the tombs of martyrs in the Catacombs. The use of a stone altar (the sarcophagus) was thus born, as was the practice of including a relic in the altar.

The Roman Catholic (RC) rite still requires the use of a stone altar (left), consecrated by a bishop, although a table with an *altar stone* (the *mensa*) inserted is permissible as are lightweight portable altars (*altare portatile*).

After the Reformation, the Anglican arrangements became more confused. Particularly as a reaction to 'Popish' arrangements, and as a Nonconformist statement, the use of a wooden *communion table* or *Holy-Table* (right) became the norm. Interestingly, the Book of Common Prayer makes no reference to an 'altar' but only to the table.



As with much else liturgical, the legality of stone altars in the C of E was disputed in the nineteenth century, but in recent times the use of stone altars has become quite common; particularly if the stone employed has some spiritual significance.

So, to answer the question: if you are RC then if it is not, or does not contain, consecrated stone. If you are a Nonconformist, then if it is not made of wood. If you are C of E (unsurprisingly) then only if it is not regarded as an altar, and not consecrated as such. Common Worship continues to refer simply to 'the Table'.

Church Mouse



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Devotion To Our Lady



There is no topic, perhaps other than sex, likely to cause more disagreement in the C of E, than Devotion to Our Lady / The Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM) / St Mary, the Blessed Virgin.

Those of an Anglo-Catholic ('High Church') persuasion are likely to include engaging in prayer to the BVM; those of us who are Partners of the Shrine at Walsingham will have promised to say the Angelus each day; I am aware of some of our congregation who pray the Rosary as part of their spiritual life.

At the Evangelical end of the C of E such devotion is likely to be regarded as idolatry and definitely frowned upon.

Although Mary does not feature much in the New Testament, after the Nativity in Matthew and Luke and the Presentation in the Temple, up until the Crucifixion, she is rather a figure in the background. Nevertheless, in the Early Church and up until the Reformation, she was regarded as pre-eminent among all the saints. Her attribution as *theotokos* (God bearer) and her bodily Assumption into heaven (Western Church) or Domition (Eastern Church) to be crowned 'Queen of Heaven' and be enthroned at Christ's right hand, ensured her importance.

Up until the Reformation, Purgatory was an important part of Christian belief and to shorten the period of post-mortem pain, and the time spent, in Purgatory it was important that people, especially priests, pray for your soul. Hence all those chantry chapels with their priests, and prominent monuments near the door of a church, soliciting such prayers. Many splendid Lady Chapels were also created.

At the English Reformation, all this was swept away. Of the 39 Articles, Article XXII (Of Purgatory) states: The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relics, and also Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God. One result was Thomas Cromwell's iconoclastic orgy which swept away so much of our medieval statuary, paintings and stained glass.

As an aspect of the mid-19th century Oxford Movement there has been a revival of devotion to the BVM within the C of E. Contemporary sentiment was expressed in the re-establishment of the Shrine at Walsingham from 1922.

In St Nicholas' there are now only two statues of the BVM. The first surmounts the pricket stand and is the image of Our Lady of Walsingham (right); whether those who light candles believe that they are invoking the BVM, or not, is a matter of personal belief. The second is by the North window of the North porticus,



We are all aware of the Commandment 'not to make unto thee any graven image or idols neither kneel before them nor worship them'. This was the charge against those who prayed before the BVM and other saints. Modern Anglo-Catholics tread a very fine line between not worshipping such images, but praying for the intercession and assistance of the BVM and other saints. Indeed, many modern Anglican theologians adopt a position little, if at all, different from modern Roman Catholics. Many of us feel that it is appropriate regularly to pray for Mary's assistance in the form:

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.



Church Mouse

For a scholarly account of Marian belief, see the excellent 'Alone of All her Sex' by Marina Warner (2nd ed, 2013).

Christmas Hymns

The most surprising musical moment of the Christmas season for me was at the Christmas Fair. John was providing background music for the afternoon, and suddenly I recognised "Born in the Night" (words and music Revd Geoffrey Ainger) coming out of his keyboard.

I'd not heard that hymn since I was at Orpington Methodist church in the 1980s... where the Minister was the aforementioned Revd Geoffrey Ainger. It seems that it's now in the Anglican Hymn Book that is used at St Barnabas'.

Quite apart from being an excellent hymn, very well-performed as an instrumental track by John, it made me think about the way that hymns have evolved over the years.

So, with the Christmas season behind us, I wanted to give my views on the message that some of our most popular hymns give.

Snow hadn't fallen

Probably the least accurate hymn is "In The Bleak Midwinter", with its talk of frosty winds and snow falling on snow. Christina Rossetti, the poet, was clearly thinking of the weather in Highgate, not Bethlehem. The idea of a frozen Christmas may have made sense to Londoners (though, at the time she was alive, the climate had warmed a little, and London Frost Fairs were last around in her parents' childhood).

However, Bethlehem is roughly 2,000 miles south of London. It is theoretically possible that there was a small amount of snow, but had that been the case, the Shepherds wouldn't have been out in their pastures, but in winter pens, feeding their sheep on stored grain. I did check the weather for Bethlehem these days - over the last few years, it's averaged 13°C on Christmas Day.

Where did we put the spare manger?

Our next award for inaccuracy goes to "Once in Royal David's City" (1848). This starts by talking about "A lowly cattle shed" and finishes by pointing out we won't be in a stable.

There's a big Victorian misunderstanding of architecture there. The problem is that there's lots of evidence that animals were housed on the ground floor of houses, and none that there were separate buildings for them - that was a much more recent development. And the Bible talks of "laying in a manger", but doesn't talk about what building the manger was in.

Given that Joseph was returning to Bethlehem at the behest of Caesar Augustus, because "he belonged to the House and Line of David", it seems much more likely that Jesus was laid in a manger on the ground floor of a cousin's house.

How many magi?

I'm going to extend Christmas to Epiphany and make the well-known point that the Bible talks about three gifts brought by "Magi", but not about how many Magi were involved. So "We Three Kings of Orient Are" is another set of words based on a meme. (By the way, the word "meme" originally had nothing to do with pictures - it was "an idea that jumps from mind to mind".)

And that's before we start talking about whether "Kings" is even vaguely a good word for "Magi."

Herald Angels or The Welkin?

So, what are some better options? Since I've outed myself as a childhood Methodist, I have to pick a Wesley hymn. The obvious one would be "Hark the Herald"... except Wesley never wrote that. The Wesley version (of 1739) started "HARK how all the welkin rings, Glory to the King of Kings".

The "Hark the Herald" line was in an adaptation by (fellow founder of Methodism) George Whitefield from the 1750s.

In the 21st Century, we don't use "Welkin" much - but it was a common word in Wesley's era, to mean "sky" or "heavens."

I think that, even if we still used "welkin", the term "Herald Angels" is a better explanation of Luke 2... and the hymn in question is basically an interspersed version of Luke 2 with a few lines of commentary.

Watching their flocks

But my top billing goes to "While Shepherds Watched" - which we sang with the familiar tune at the St Nicholas' Crib Service, and to "the other tune" at Church Mouse's Christmas. The other tune has a far more familiar set of words - "On Ilkley Moor Bar t'At". While these are the two tunes printed in Ancient and Modern, the editors of The English Hymnal note that "it is impossible to print all the tunes which are traditionally sung to this hymn."

However, whichever tune we sing it to, it has a unique distinction. In the early 18th Century, the Church of England was trying to crack down on "secular Christmas songs" and banned them from Church services. For virtually the whole 18th Century, "While Shepherds Watched" was the only Christmas Hymn approved by the Church of England. It was only at the end of the 18th Century that such things as "Hark the Herald" crossed the divide from Methodism to Anglicanism.

Mark Harrison

TWO CLUES IN ONE QUIZ

Fans of a certain early evening show will know the rules of this quiz.

For the rest of you the clues below describe characters who appear in the NEW TESTAMENT but the initial letters of the words in the clue are also the initials of the answer.

For example in the Old Testament, **K**nowledgeable **S**overeign would be **K**ing **S**olomon.

Who are the following New Testament folk?

- 1 Totally Virtuous Maiden
- 2 Three(?) Wandering Mystics
- 3 Disbelieving Twin
- 4 Jesus's Trail Blazer
- 5 Prevaricating Potentate
- 6 Kindergarten Hitman
- 7 Supporter Of Cross
- 8 Truly Generous Stranger
- 9 Thoroughly Profligate Scion
- 10 Maligned Miss
- 11 Starter Pope
- 12 Jerusalem's Informer
- 13 Census Authoriser
- 14 Cunning: Head Prosecutor
- 15 Transcendent Announcing Guardian

The words "QUIZ" and "TIME" are written in a large, bold, 3D block font. "QUIZ" is positioned above "TIME". The letters have a grey-to-white gradient and a drop shadow effect, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.



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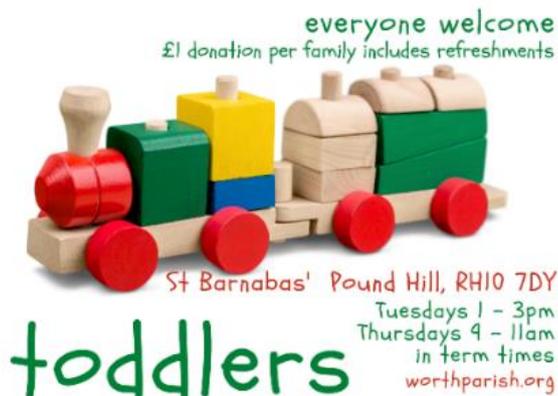
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Pound Hill Toddlers



Toddlers continues to thrive, every Tuesday (1:00pm to 3:00pm) and Thursday (9:00am to 11:00am) during termtime. Lots of fun had by all with activities to keep all the toddlers (and carers!) entertained. We have a break in the middle for refreshments followed by singing and more fun activities. The Tuesday session is quieter, but growing and the Thursday session remains as popular as ever! Why not come along!

Jenny & Neil Dobson

Sunday School

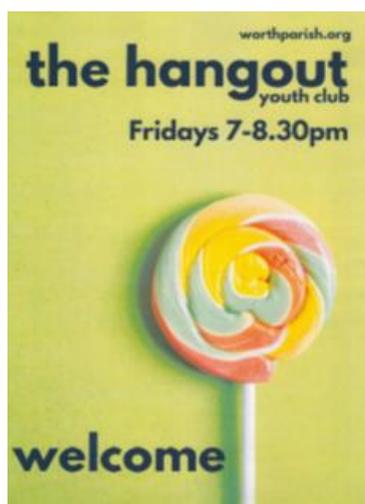
Sunday School, run by Nicky and helped by other members of the congregation; it provides a fun learning environment



to get to know Jesus. There are always activities linked to the readings of the day and it is fabulous to see and hear what the children have been doing – and to hear the prayer that they have written – when they come back into church towards the end of the service. On the fourth Sunday they stay and take part in the service. Whilst learning about the wedding at Cana and Jesus' first miracle they showed us how to turn water into wine!

David Anderson

the hangout



the hangout. for school years 7 to 11, meets Fridays in term time from 7-8:30pm.

The group continues to grow as the new year 7 students settle into their new schools. All are welcome, why not try us out - we always welcome new members. If you would like more information first, email

youth@worthparish.org

Messy Church

13 AND 17 JANUARY EPIPHANY
Turn a Christmas card into a gift box

21 AND 24 FEBRUARY HOW TO PRAY
Does holding something help?

16 AND 20 MARCH SYMBOLS OF EASTER
Cross Crafts and Eggs

10 APRIL EASTER CELEBRATION



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Child friendly services

Children are welcome to all our services at both churches. At St Barnabas', there is Sunday School each week and the 4th Sunday every month is an especially child-friendly service.



Shadow's Blog

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Do you like my Santa hat? To be honest, I wasn't too keen, but it appeared to keep my humans entertained, so I reluctantly agreed. My other presents were much more fun. A whole bag of yummy treats and a 'treat gun' that fires the treats, so that not only do I get a treat but I have some fun trying to chase after it too! Sadly, only the mini treats fit into the 'treat gun' but that means that I don't over indulge too much... unlike my humans who think that their digestive capacity is twice as large at Christmas than the rest of the year! You might have noticed that I'm posing next to a Christmas tree in the photo. I hope you have also noticed that it is resplendent with all its decorations still intact and with presents underneath. I have been very good and ignored the decorations and presents, but only because my nose has told me that they are not made of chocolate or mince pies! So sadly, I have no 'mischievous' behaviour to report, but the year is still young....

Must go, I need to chase some more treats.



Shadow

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Messy Winter

One of my mother's favourite sayings (she has many!) is 'You should never love anything that doesn't love you back!'

Well, I love Messy Church! And I certainly feel the love and the warmth of everyone who comes. In December both our Messy congregations joined together for our annual Christingle service (see the middle of the mag). In January we focused on the gifts of Epiphany and every family received some Myrrh and Frankincense to take home. Gold was also supplied but in the less expensive version of gold chocolate coins! From the pictures you can see the concentration that both the children and their helpers put into creating memories to take home with them.

Love to you all, Sue



St Nicholas' Crib and Nativity Service 2023

Our Crib and Nativity service in 2022 exceeded our expectations of the number in the congregation, as it was the first one after the pandemic; but, wow, 2023 topped that with over 270 attending. I must confess I wondered if it would be as much of a success because we were struggling to find children to take part in the tableau. The dress rehearsal saw my blood pressure rise and Revd Greta was also, but calmly, showing signs of "help, what next!". We had more narrators than angels! After a brief discussion and roping in two dads, we decided we would ask the children as they arrived on Christmas Eve if they would like to be an angel or a shepherd and perhaps one of the Magi.

We were amazed with the response and had parents, of past Sunday School children long grown up, helping find the newcomers costumes. One even rang her teenage granddaughter to come along, so Lilly and her friend joined the procession of the Kings and Pages! Another prayer of 'thanks' went up that afternoon. It looked amazing as the tableau was built and they all did so very well. Thank you to everyone involved, from the youngest angel to the oldest narrator and of course Revd Greta, her second Crib service at St. Nic's, so definitely a well-oiled pro now!

We closed the story with the children singing "Away in a Manger" this year, the children sang so well they didn't really need any help from the leaders and we were asked to sing an encore!

It is always wonderful to be able to spread the Word of the birth of Jesus to so many people in the anticipation that we are planting the seed of faith and hope for the future even deeper in their hearts and minds.



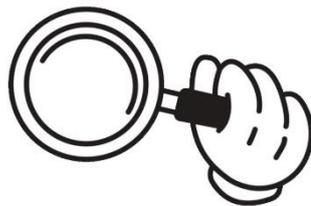
From

to



Joan Tick

Hunt the Mag



What is a treat gun?

When does Messy Church start on a Saturday?

Where are there 1900 squares?

Which community radio station broadcast the service of 9 Lessons and Carols from St Nic's?

Who is the BMV?

Why was Gerald interviewed and filmed by BBC South-East?

How many Magi are mentioned in the Bible?

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Bellringers	Neil Dobson	
Bookings (Hall, Meeting Rooms, Café, Church)	Revd Sarah	
Buildings and Facilities	See <i>Churchwardens</i>	
Children's Society	Ann Lane	
Choirs	Mark Harrison	
Christmas Fair Event	Diana Baynes	
Church Cleaning (St Barnabas')	Jane Stanford	
Church Cleaning (St Nicholas')	Jill Freeborn	
Churchwarden (St Barnabas')	David Anderson	
Churchwarden (St Nicholas')	Colin Smith	
Co-ordinator (Parish)	Sue Perry	
Events	Jane Stanford	
Families, Youth and Children's Work	Caroline Formby (lay)	
Flower Arranging (St Barnabas')	Jane Stanford	
Flower Arranging (St Nicholas')	Adela Hawley	
Friends of St Nicholas'	Colin Smith	
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Julian Group (St Barnabas')	Don Hewerdine	
Julian Group (St Nicholas')	Linda Eells	
Knit and Natter	Val Rudd	
Magazine	Sue Perry	
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Mothers' Union	Mary Fry	
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PCC Electoral Roll Officer	Jane Stanford	
PCC Treasurer	<i>Churchwardens</i>	
Prayer Group	Linda Eells	
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Social Media	David Anderson	
Stewardship Officer		
Sunday School	Nicky Anderson	
The Circle	Max Perry	
Toddlers	Jenny Dobson	
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Weddings	Parish Office	

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CALENDAR FEBRUARY - MARCH 2024

Travelling far? We recommend you check dates/times on our website calendar, or with the Office.

When?		What?	Where?
Tues 6 February	10:30	Healing Eucharist	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Sat 3 + 10 February	10:00	Saturday Market	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Sun 11 February	18:00	Service for Racial Justice	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Mon 12 February	14:00	St Barnabas' Julian Group	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Tues 13 February	10:30	MU Shriving Service	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Wed 14 February	12:30	St Nicholas' Julian Group	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
	13:00	Ash Wednesday said service with ashing	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
	20:00	Ash Wednesday Sung Eucharist with ashing	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
Thurs 15 February	10:30	Healing Eucharist	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
Wed 21 February	15:00	Messy Church	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Thurs 22 February	15:45	MU Eucharist and AGM	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Sat 24 February	11:00	Marriage Preparation Day	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
	15:00	Messy Church	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Wed 28 February	14:30	Parish Prayer Group	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
	14.30	Scrabble & Cake	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Sun 3 March	16:00	Choral Evensong	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
Tues 5 March	10:30	Healing Eucharist	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Sun 10 March	10:00	Mothering Sunday	<i>Both Churches</i>
Mon 11 March	14:00	St Barnabas' Julian Group	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Wed 13 March	12:30	St Nicholas' Julian Group	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
Sat 16 March	15:00	Messy Church	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Wed 20 March	15:00	Messy Church	<i>Sr Barnabas'</i>
Thurs 21 March	10:30	Healing Eucharist	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
	16:00	Mothers' Union meeting	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Sun 24 March	10:00	Palm Sunday with Processions	<i>Both Churches</i>
Wed 27 March	14.30	Scrabble & Cake	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
	19:00	Parish Prayer Group	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Thurs 28 March	10:30	Maundy Thursday Service	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
	18:00	Maundy Thursday Meal with Foot washing + Eucharist	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
	20.00	Sung Eucharist inc Foot Washing + The Watch	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
Fri 29 March	14:00	Good Friday Liturgy	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
	19:00	Stations of the Cross	<i>St Barnabas'</i>
Sat 30 March	20:00	Easter Eve and Easter Vigil	<i>St Nicholas'</i>
Sun 31 March	10:00	Easter Day (Egg Hunts at 10.00)	<i>Both Churches</i>



WHEATSHEAF INN - HANDCROSS NOW OPEN TUESDAY - SUNDAY



**MODERN BRITISH
MENU**



**COZY INVITING
INTERIOR**



**VARIED
DRINKS MENU**

Welcome to The Wheatsheaf Pub Handcross. We're delighted to announce that after 6 months of closure, we are reopen under new management, with doors open from Tuesday to Saturday, 11.30 am to 10 pm & Sunday 11 am - 7.30 pm. Indulge in our modern British pub menu, served daily from 12 pm to 8 pm, and don't miss our Sunday roasts from 12 pm to 5 pm

BOOK NOW



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 www.thewheatsheafplummersplain.co.uk