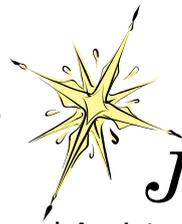


*St. John the Divine,
December 2019*



*Coppull
January 2020*

Vicar: Rev Matthew Hornby 01257 791218 Pastoral Assistant Mrs. Joyce Heaton 793501
Churchwardens: Mr. Geoffrey Magrath 794176 Mrs. Joyce Heaton 793501

From the Vicarage

Christmas Confusion

It is said that a Japanese department store once had as its Christmas window display Santa nailed to a cross. This seems to be an urban legend – I can't find direct evidence of this happening. Nevertheless, it's become a popular story, typifying Japanese misunderstanding of Western culture. Of course, we Westerners misunderstand Japanese culture. Worse than that, Westerners, too, can confuse God and Santa.

There are two confusions between God and Santa that we easily fall into here in the West. One is to treat them both as equally fictitious. Father Christmas is a nice story we tell for the sake of the children, to help them feel the magic of Christmas, and to get them to behave a little bit better during December. Some people think that God and the story of the birth of Jesus fall into the same category – no more than a nice story to make the children feel good, and give them an incentive to behave better. But the biblical accounts of Jesus' birth are messy and real. In Jesus, the true God has visited the earth in person. He came to earth, not to give us a warm feeling of general goodwill, but to give us the unimaginable joys of knowing the creator of the universe. He doesn't just want us to behave a little bit better than normal; he wants our whole lives. Christmas is for grown-ups, not just for children.

Another potential pitfall is to confuse the character and personality of Santa Claus with that of God. Santa in popular culture is a powerful supernatural being, typically depicted as a big, bearded fellow. He's depicted positively: genial, smiling, laughing; yet he's distant, living a long way away. Moreover, he's master of a surveillance society that totalitarian states can only dream of: he seeks when you are sleeping, he knows when you're awake, he knows when you've been bad or good, so be good, for goodness' sake. You need to make sure you're on his nice list, not his naughty list, because this supernaturally powerful bearded man promises reward for those whose good deeds outweigh their bad, but if not, you'd better watch out...

This depiction of Santa has much in common with how God is often depicted in Western culture, but the two are not the same. We know God the Father does not have a physical body, let alone a beard, yet artists through the ages, if they are to depict Him at all, have had to choose some way of portraying Him. More seriously, God does not give gifts on the same basis as Santa is supposed to. God promises blessing, not for those who think they're nice, but for those who admit they're naughty. As Jesus said: 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.' (Mark 2:17) The Pharisees thought they were on God's nice list, and rejected Jesus because of their pride. It is the tax collectors and others who admit they're naughty who receive blessing from and relationship with God. For Jesus doesn't just drop presents down the chimney and then fly away. Jesus Himself is the greatest present of all. Jesus gives us many gifts, but the greatest gift of all is knowing the Giver, and being known by Him.

(For a more poetic exploration of these issues, read <https://christthetruth.wordpress.com/2011/12/21/a-poetic-anti-santy-ranty/>, or watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IokTM3PEGiM>.)

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

from Matt and the family



Christmas Message

Away in a manger the baby lay,
No blankets or pillows – just some hay.
Shepherds watching their flocks by night
Angels appear midst blinding light.

Wise men travelling from afar
Following a guiding star,
Herod filled with rage within
Planning to kill this new born king.

What can this mean for us today?
Just a story some would say,
Perhaps we need to think it through,
A Saviour born – for me, for you?



Well it's that time again, another year has passed, our thanks yet again go to Julia at St. John's School for doing the photo-copying for us, it is appreciated Julia, along with all the little extras I've dropped in yet again this year. We print 200 copies, 5 pages, 10 issues per year, so you can see it is not exactly a small job especially for a very busy school office.

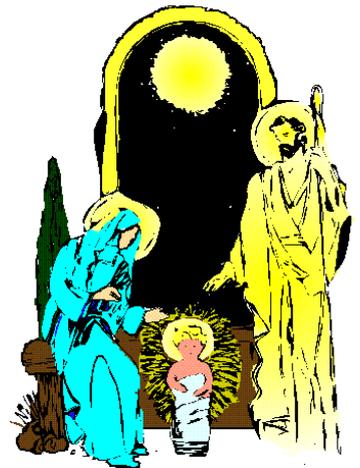
Thanks also go to those who distribute the newsletter for us, you see the newsletter doesn't just appear a lot of hard work does go into it, even the unintended mistakes



The Friends of St. John's

Wed. 4th Christmas Meal
Wed 11th Quiet Evening

**To All Friends of St. Johns
May I wish you a very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.
Sue Williams**





From the Registers:

Christian Funerals

Wednesday 6th Nov. Carole Baxendale

Friday 15th Nov. David Snailham

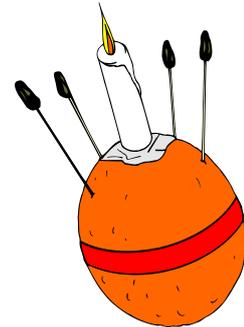
To the relatives & friends of Carole
we offer our sincere sympathy and the promise of
new life in God's Eternal Kingdom.

Support the Christingle

**We look forward to seeing you at
St. John's Christingle**

Sunday 8th December 4.00 p.m.

**Collecting Candles available from
Church & School**



BRING A FRIEND

'It's gonna be a lonely Christmas'. The pressure to have fun with friends and family is real over the Christmas period. In fact, over nine million people in the UK say they're always or often lonely. (Red Cross).

When Mary became pregnant with Jesus, she probably felt very alone. Her situation would be seen as scandalous, as few believed that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit!

Yet, God was with her: "*The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call His name Immanuel*" (which means, 'God with us'). (Matthew 1:23).

The true meaning of Christmas is that Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be with us. The separation we may feel from others is nothing compared to the distance that God has already gone for us.

Here are 5 tips for helping those who are lonely:

Take time to talk

Take time to talk to an older person this Christmas, at the supermarket, pub or on a walk. Just saying hello can make a big difference to someone who's lonely.

Give someone a call

Take the time to speak to friends and family that you won't be with this Christmas. A short phone call can have a big impact.

Give a neighbour a card

Ring the doorbell and give your neighbour a Christmas card. Start a conversation and make a connection.

Having a party?

Hosting a Christmas party or meal? If you know somebody who might be alone, invite them to join you!

Pray for Others

If you hear of someone who's on their own, pray for them. Pray that God would show you how to respond!

'The most important thing I can tell you is that we are never alone when we know Christ.' Billy Graham).

SERVICES DURING DECEMBER 2019 & JANUARY 2020

Sunday 1 st	1st Sunday of Month 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion & J.A.M. Club	SIDESPERSION Mrs. T. Unsworth & Mrs N Danify
Thursday 5 th	10.15 a.m. Holy Communion	
Sunday 8 th	2nd Sunday of Month 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion 4.00 p.m. Christingle Service followed by Seasonal Refreshments & the Grand Christmas Draw	J. Harrison & A. Leigh
Thursday 12 th	10.15 a.m. Holy Communion	
Sunday 15 th	3rd Sunday of Month 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion & J.A.M. Club	Mrs M Magrath & Mrs C Taylor
Thursday 19 th	10.15 a.m. Holy Communion	
Sunday 22 nd	4th Sunday of Month 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion 4.00 p.m. Carol Service	A Leigh & J Harrison
Tuesday 24 th	Christmas Eve 4.00 p.m. Children's Nativity 11.30 p.m. Midnight Communion – First Communion of Christmas	
Wednesday 25 th	Christmas Day 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion – Coppull Parish Church	
Sunday 29 th	5th Sunday of Month 10.00 a.m. @ Coppull Parish Church	
	JANUARY 2020	
Thursday 2 nd	10.15 a.m. Holy Communion	
Sunday 5 th	1st Sunday of Month 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion & J.A.M. Club	Mrs. T. Unsworth & Mrs N Danify
Thursday 9 th	10.15 a.m. Holy Communion	
Sunday 12 th	2nd Sunday of Month 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion	Mrs C Taylor & Mrs M Magrath
Thursday 16 th	10.15 a.m. Holy Communion	
Sunday 19 th	3rd Sunday of Month 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion & J.A.M. Club	A Leigh & J Harrison
Thursday 23 rd	10.15 a.m. Holy Communion	
Sunday 26 th	4th Sunday of Month 9.30 a.m. Morning Worship & Baptisms	Mrs S Williams & Mrs D Appleton



Saturday 1st February 6.00 p.m, Confirmation Service @ St Johns Church

Carol Service

Our Carol Service at St. Johns Church, is on Sunday 22nd December at 4.00 p.m. in the afternoon. We do hope that you will try to come along to this Service prior to having your evening meal.



Social Committee News

Grand Christmas Draw



The first prize in the St. John's Christmas Draw is a £100.00 Shopping Voucher, other prizes include, Christmas Hamper, Bottles of Whiskey, Brandy, Vodka, Gin, Christmas Cake, All in all there are many, many prizes . Tickets are priced at £1.00

so please make sure you have bought your tickets. The Draw will take place on

8th December after the Christingle Service

If you are asked to buy a ticket, please do so, all proceeds are to Church Funds.

Good luck to everyone - especially those who have bought tickets.

Room

(Luke 2:6,7)

There was no room for Him.

There is no room.
In a world full of
grasping, acquiring and keeping,
of rights and demanding and
self-centred living,
there is no room for Him,
the Child who is God.
The world is full.

And yet...without Him,
without Jesus,
this full world is empty.

Make room.
Invite Him in.
Make room.
Find life in all the fullness
Christmas offers –
Love and hope and joy and peace.
Emmanuel,
God with us and in us, always.

Make room!

by Daphne Kitching

Christmas Dilemma

What a dilemma for a slimmer
Eating all that Christmas fare,
Getting fatter, what's it matter?
It's only once a year.

Now the party has begun,
Crackers and cheese and party hats
Turkey with trimmings, presents with
ribbons,
Figgy pudding – do we still eat that?

Food a-plenty, plates all empty
Waistbands bursting, no room left,
Soon we'll reach for the Alka Seltzer
That's the truth, I do not jest.

Celebrations, assignations, party frocks with
lots of bling,
But the reason for the season
Is the Baby in the manger, came to earth as
a stranger
Peace on earth and joy to bring.

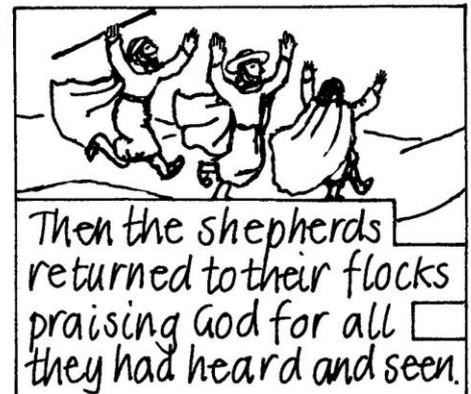
by Megan Carter

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Luke chapter 2 verses 8 to 20

Shepherds were paid to look after the flocks out on the hillside. Uneducated and rough, they were usually avoided, or overlooked.



A Very Special Baby

JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE A VERY SPECIAL BABY.

...YOU MUST CALL YOUR BABY JESUS



MARY AND JOSEPH MADE THE LONG JOURNEY FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM. THEY HAD BEEN ORDERED THERE FOR THE CENSUS.

BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL



THE ONLY SHELTER THEY COULD FIND WAS A STABLE...

...WHICH IS WHERE JESUS WAS BORN.



SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAD BEEN BORN.

WISE MEN CAME FROM THE EAST. THEY TOO WANTED TO SEE JESUS. THEY HAD BEEN GUIDED BY A STAR.



THEY BROUGHT GIFTS OF GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.

BUT MARY, JOSEPH AND BABY JESUS SOON HAD TO ESCAPE TO EGYPT...



...AS KING HEROD WANTED JESUS DEAD!!

For to Us a Child is Born

'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' (Isaiah 9:6)

Approaching Christmas, we are very aware of the political and economic uncertainties that face us. The prophet Isaiah also lived in such uncertain times, as the Assyrians had just conquered the northern kingdom of Israel (734-732 BC). This fulfilled Isaiah's warnings to the people, who had turned their back on God and His ways. However, Isaiah is able to bring a word of hope, promising a Messiah who would come like a great light: *'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light'* (Isaiah 9:2). These words are fulfilled in the birth of Jesus 700 years later and describe person of Jesus:

Wonderful Counsellor: He will give us the wisdom we need, especially when we have difficult decisions to make at work or home, or in dealing with our finances or future direction.

Mighty God: He will provide the help and strength to face a difficult diagnosis, family crisis or relationships breakdown, as we trust His plan and purpose for our lives.

Everlasting Father: He cares for us as a father cares for His children, so that we can come to Him when we feel alone or we are really struggling, knowing that He hears and will answer our prayers.

Prince of Peace: He has secured peace by His cross and resurrection, and so we can find in Him true acceptance, forgiveness and peace for our lives, relationships and future.

Christmas is the time to celebrate a God who is faithful to all His promises, *'the zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this'* (7)

Christmas - the most beautiful story ever told

On the BBC's 'Today' programme last Christmas a distinguished atheist revealed that his Christmas routine included attending Midnight Mass. Asked why, he replied that it was the most beautiful story ever told and he didn't want it to be forgotten.

Up and down the country this month, thousands and thousands of parents will be attending school and church nativity plays. They're good fun, the children like them, and they remind us of the most lovely and memorable story of all time.

First, there was the actual birth. Excluded from the shelter of the 'inn', Mary and Joseph found themselves in a stable. Soon after, Mary gave birth to a boy, wrapped Him in His birth-robe, and laid Him in the only secure place she could find – the feeding trough.

Next came the shepherds, bursting in from the fields, eager to see the baby that the angels had told them to look for, 'lying in a manger'. They worshipped him, in wonder of all that had happened that night.

Finally, at some point came the so called 'Wise Men'. The gospel calls them 'Magi', and says they were from the East. The word 'magi' comes from the Greek 'magos' (magic) and further back, from the old Persian word 'Magupati'. The Magi could have been priests from an ancient Persian religion that watched the night sky. Today they would be called astrologers.

Whoever they were, their influence at that point in history was immense. All over the ancient world their predictions were regarded with awe, but they knelt before Jesus and offered Him gifts. They were the first Gentiles to recognise a divine and kingly power and purpose in the baby in Bethlehem.

150 years later the great bishop Clement of Rome described this as the moment when the old order of fear and fate gave way before this new era of love and grace.

St Johns Church

As you may be aware, the Church of St John the Divine has a significant problem with water raining in from the roof parapet. St John's Parochial Church Council sought the advice of a high level roof repair company as recommended by the Diocese to inspect the roof area, who recommend that temporary repairs are done in the short term to make the church watertight. which means covering the roof with tarpaulin as soon as possible. Next spring hopefully, frost free weather conditions will enable essential repairs and pointing of the stonework on the higher levels of the church to be undertaken. An appeal will be made in the New Year in order to raise the necessary funds for the work to be carried out.

St John's Parochial Church Council will continue to seek grant funding to repair the Bell Tower which is also in need of repair. The church was dedicated in 1912 and no major repair work has been carried out over the past 107 year but with the support of our parishioners and the community of Coppull will remain at the centre of village events.

To Remember Our Loved Ones Our Candlelit "Christmas Tree"

In Memory of Our Loved Ones our specially made "Christmas Tree" on which we can again light a candle in remembrance of someone special to us. We require the name of the person to be remembered and also the person making the donation. The tree will be displayed in the Church Baptistery. If you wish to purchase a candle then we would like a donation please of at least £2.00 to cover costs etc., The more candles purchased the nicer the tree should look.



200 Club Winners:

November £10 Winners

No. 16 V. Moss

No. 46 J. Rowe

No. 51 R. Gray

No. 62 E. Hatton

Please remember that the 200 Club is now being drawn on the 1st Sunday of each month, in the Church Hall during Coffee after the 9.30 a.m. Service, if you would like a number in the draw, only £1.00 per month, then please see Dot Appleton 792456 Thank You.

Donations given to Church Funds:

In Memory of Dear Ronnie from Madge Rogerson
Christmas Memories of a Dear Dad Alex Scott from Jennifer
Christmas Memories of Alex Scott from Jacky, Chris, Richard
Christmas Memories of Nellie & Bill Stringfellow from Leslie
Christmas Memories of my Dad, Mum & Beloved Brothers John, Philip & Bill you are loved and missed so very much from Joyce
Christmas Memories of John Holden from Lily
In Memory of All Loved Ones from Brenda & Cliff
In Loving Memory of a Dear Brother John Charnock at Christmas and also his Birthday 11th Dec. from Christine, Bill & Family
In Loving Memory of Elsie Connor from Christine, Bill & Family
In Loving Memory of Phill from Mum, Paul, Joanne & Daughter Leah; Gone but never forgotten
Christmas Memories of All Loved Ones from Elaine & Les Hatton, Carly & Luke Roscoe, Adam & Rose Hatton
In Memory of Jack & Joyce Cutts from Steve & Geoffrey

Donations of Flowers & Money given to the Flower Fund:

Fond Christmas Memories of a much Loved Son Paul Rutter, Always in our thoughts' From Mum, Dad, Brother Simon, Amanda and Olivia
In Loving Memory of Margaret Taylor from Gerald
In Loving Memory of a Dear Brother John Charnock at Christmas and also his Birthday 11th Dec. from Christine, Bill & Family
In Loving Memory of Phill from Mum, Paul, Joanne & Daughter Leah; Forever in our Hearts

Services over Christmas at St Johns Church

8 th December	4.00 p.m. Christingle Service Followed by Seasonal Refreshments & the Grand Christmas Draw
22 nd December	4.00 p.m. Carol Service
Christmas Eve	4.00 p.m. Crib Service 11.30 p.m. Midnight Communion <i>The first Communion of Christmas</i>
Christmas Day	10.00 a.m. Holy Communion at Coppull Parish Church

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**