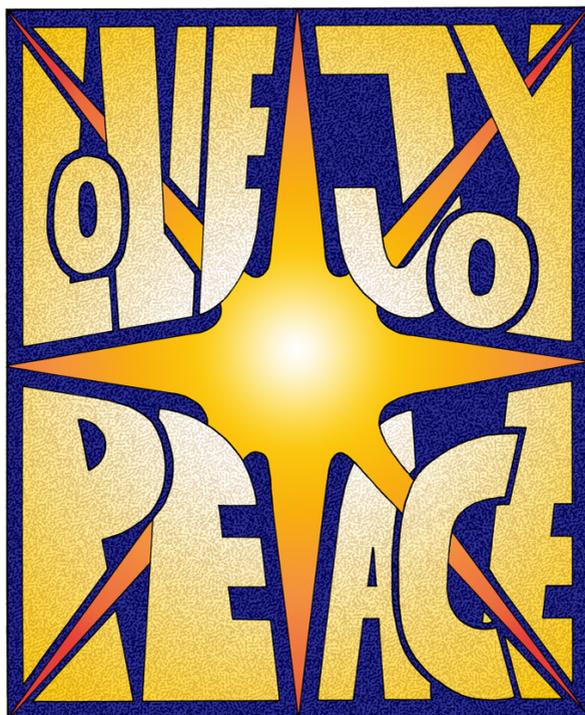


The Holsworthy Benefice Magazine December 2019

**For the Parishes of the United Benefice of
Holsworthy, Bridgerule, Hollacombe,
Pyworthy with Pancrasweek**



www.holsworthybenefice.org.uk

Your Free Copy – But a Donation of £1 in the Church
wall safe would be much appreciated.

Find us on 

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If you have anything you would like to be considered for publication in our magazine please give it to the editor by the 20th of the preceding month. It can be sent by email or hand written. Our printer in Bude can usually reproduce photographs to a reasonable standard. If you want any hard copy or pictures returned please ensure your name and address is on the back.

This magazine is produced for the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul Holsworthy; St. Bridget's, Bridgerule; St. Petroc, Hollacombe; St. Swithun, Pyworthy; St. Pancras, Pancrasweek; and is the only publication promoting the views and vision of the benefice.

The contents of this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the individual PCC's but are those of individual contributors.

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...but if you respond to one of our advertisers please tell them you saw their advert in our Benefice Magazine.

From the rectory

So we start the new church year with the season of Advent, but what is Advent? and how do we make the most of this season?

Traditionally Advent was a season which focuses on the 'four last things', death, judgment, heaven and hell. This is because during advent we think about the second coming of the new heavens and the new earth, the end times. Advent is also about new beginnings, not just the church year but also the beginning of creation and the beginnings of Christianity; the birth of Christ.



During Advent we look ahead to the Great Advent the second coming and we look back to the Birth of Christ although it feels more like it is in front of us. For some the approaching Christmas can be very daunting, overwhelming and an anguish filled reminder of being alone or having lost loved ones, for others it can be filled with excitement, parties and joy.

So as we become very aware that Christmas is in only a few weeks do take time to reflect on the second coming as well as the birth of Jesus, and not just be caught up in decorations, buying presents and preparing rich food.

It is also important to remind ourselves of the events running up to Jesus's birth, and to remind ourselves of why God became incarnate, and what Christ's purpose was.

I pray you have a reflective Advent and joy filled Christmas

Mother Elizabeth



News from the Churches in our Benefice

St. Peter and St. Paul, Holsworthy

By Bob Beckford



Photo to the right is by Rodney Parish ©



Thank you to The Friends of Holsworthy Church for organising this, to all who donated prizes and to all who came. Just over £700 was raised. A fantastic amount, thank you everyone.

Holsworthy Harvest Festivals – Foodbank

We have received a letter of thanks from the Christians Together in Holsworthy and District for the donation of food, which was made to the Holsworthy District Foodbank, following the Holsworthy Primary School Harvest Festival and our own Harvest Festival. 96kg of food was donated. Thank you, especially to the children of Holsworthy Primary School.

Christmas Hamper Appeal for Holsworthy Church

Donations gratefully received for items for the two hampers we will be selling tickets for to raise money for Holsworthy Church during the period leading up to Christmas. Donations of good quality items such as wine, biscuits, chocolates and preserves (no perishables) can be passed to the church wardens or sides people in church or to Mother Elizabeth if you see her about town.

Holsworthy Church Volunteers

We hope you enjoy the refreshments after the Sunday morning service. Are you able to help with this?

The church is dusted and vacuumed each week and the more people we have on the rota the less frequently your turn will come around. All cleaning equipment and materials provided. This tends to be done in pairs. If you can help with either of these please speak to Sue Bumby.

The Sunday Night Club

NEW for youth 13+ year olds. 1st and 3rd Sundays 6-8pm has started and is going well. If you know of anyone in that age range who might be interested, please speak to Mother Elizabeth or Ruth Jones (Ecumenical Youth Worker)

Operation Christmas Child.

Thank you to everyone who helped in any way with the Shoebox Appeal this year. The 26 shoeboxes we took to the Launceston Central Methodist Church became part of the consignment of over 300 sent from Launceston.



Two Special Service coming up at Holsworthy Parish Church

December 1st at 6pm - Advent Carol Service by Candle Light

Come and join us in Holsworthy, St Peter and Paul for an Advent Carol Service by Candle Light. In addition to Advent hymns the choir will be singing Advent carols.

Advent is a season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (adventus) of Christ in his incarnation, and also looks ahead to his final advent as judge at the end of time. The readings and liturgies not only direct us towards Christ's birth, they also challenge the modern reluctance to confront the theme of divine judgement:

Every eye shall now behold him robed in dreadful majesty.

(Charles Wesley)

December 15th at 6pm – Holsworthy Town Civic Carol Service

Come and hear the special Christmas bible readings and join in with the singing of your favourite Christmas hymns and carols. After the service there will be drinks and mince pies.

The Friend's of Holsworthy Parish Church St Peter's Monthly Jackpot Draw

The winners of the Draw, drawn on 20th November were –

1st Prize £26.25 – Ticket No. 78 Katie from Underlane.

2nd Prize £5.25 – Ticket No. 77 D from Dobles Close

You can still purchase a ticket and join in for the next 4 months, price of the ticket to be included in the December draw is £4.

Please speak to Helen Narborough our treasurer or a member of the PCC if you would like to purchase a ticket.

St. Petroc, Hollacombe

by Margaret Stacey



Services For December

Sunday 1st December 3.00pm Evensong - Lighting of Advent Wreath

Sunday 15th December 9.30am Holy Communion



Friday 27th December 3.00pm Traditional Christmas Carol Service followed by Seasonal Refreshments. All Welcome

We would like to thank everyone who has helped us in any way this last year, especially Revs Richard Freeman, Stuart Wilson & Canon Tim Newcombe.

We still continue to pray for Stuart and hope good news of his recovery comes in the New Year.

PLEASE NOTE - NO SERVICE CHRISTMAS DAY THIS YEAR.

We begin 2020 with Evensong, 3.00pm on Sunday 5th January.

It is always worth checking with the Churchwardens or Web site before travelling to St Petroc should the weather give cause for concern.

Across the Benefice

There are services in all our five churches at various time during December. Please pick up a book marker from your local church. They will also be available at the Holsworthy Christmas Lights Switch and in the Holsworthy Memorial Hall on the first Wednesday of the month when we have the Holsworthy Church Stall.

The times of all the services are also printed beside the cartoons on page 16.

Bodmin Street Methodist Church

By Crispin King

Light Up A Life Service will be held on Saturday December 14th at 7.00pm

There will be a Christmas service on Sunday December 22nd at 11.00am

On Christmas Day there will be a short family service in the morning, please check at Bodmin Street Church for time.



Holsworthy Methodist Church
Thursday Group
Programme 2018/2019



2019

Dec 12th "CHRISTMAS EVENING"

2020

Jan 2nd "FORMATION OF HOLSWORTHY TRAVEL" Ron Gerry

Jan 16th "THE MAN SHED & YOUTH CENTRE" John Allin

Jan 30th "MY JOURNEY TO HERE" Michelle Hogarth

Feb 13th "THE CINNAMON TRUST" Tricia Glover

Feb 27th "COMING UP FROM DOWN UNDER" Lynda and Cliff Vickery

March 12th "OLD LAUNCESTON" Rob Tremain

March 26th "THE MARATIME ISLANDS" John & Stella Burnard

April 9th "MAUNDY THURDAY COMMUNION" Clive Smale

April 23rd "A GAMES EVENING" Sylvia Simpson

May 7th "MY VISIT TO JAPAN" Christine Williams

May 21st AGM Followed by Hilary Vivian

All meetings at 7.30pm unless stated otherwise, for further information please contact Doreen Buckingham (Tel: 253462)

General News from The Parish Pump

Bishop says society must not accept child gambling 'crisis' following report

The Bishop of St Albans, Dr Alan Smith, has responded to a new report from the Gambling Commission looking at gambling trends of 11 to 16 year-olds in Great Britain.

Bishop Alan said: "This provides welcome and much-needed insight into the world of gambling that children are living in.

"There continue to be 55,000 children classed as 'problem gamblers' and a further 87,000 at risk. While this remains a national scandal, the Commission uses detached phrases such as: 'The 2019 results do not represent a significant increase over time.'

"Tens of thousands of families could be living in a nightmare with their child's level of gambling activity. When the average spend on gambling by children is £17 per week it is evidence of potential serious family finance problems.

"Policy calls for a public health approach to gambling-related harm, so I would have liked to have seen concrete evidence of effective solutions over the past year to reduce the exposure of children to gambling.

"A civilised, modern, society, must not accept this crisis as normal or become content with it."

Church engages millions through apps and social media

Church of England prayer apps were used more than five million times over the last year as a record number of people sought Christian contemplation and reflection online, according to new figures published today.

Apps allowing users to pray the ancient 'Daily Office' of morning, evening and night prayer were used 4.2 million times on Apple devices alone in the last 12 months, an increase of 446,000 on the year before, new figures show.

The figures do not include other social media prayers, reflections and posts by the Church of England, which now have an average reach of 3.6 million every month, an increase on 2018.

The digital figures were published alongside the Church of England's Statistics for Mission 2018, and showed that some 4,400 churches – more than a third of those responding – run courses teaching the basics of the Christian faith.

These included the Pilgrim Course, launched in 2013, and the Alpha Course which introduces participants to the Christian faith through a series of talks and discussions.

The figures showed 3,200 churches reported running activities such as youth groups or youth-focused services for children and teenagers aged between 11 and 17 years old.

The statistics showed 1.12 million regular worshippers at Church of England churches in 2018.

There were nearly eight million attendances at Church of England Christmas and Advent services combined in 2018, including special services for civic organisations, schools and local communities. The Church's reach on social media throughout

Advent and Christmas 2018 with the *#FollowTheStar* campaign was 7.94 million – up by 1.14 million from 2017.

On average, 871,000 people attended Church of England services and acts of worship each week, 2.6% lower than in 2017. A further 175,000 people attended services for schools in Church of England churches.

Other figures from the digital report show that *ACHurchNearYou.com*, the church finding website, received more than 38million page views in the last 12 months, a big increase on the year before.

Since launching in May 2018, the Church of England's Alexa skill has been asked more than 100,000 questions by Christians and people exploring the faith.

The Bishop of Ripon, Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, said: "The Church's digital innovation is enabling people to hear the good news of Jesus Christ in ways that weren't previously possible alongside regular Sunday worship and at significant moments such as Christmas and Easter.

"It is also really striking just how many churches are running courses in the basics of Christianity. This shows a readiness to explore the Christian faith."

Shake hands

If you are attending various Christmas social events this month, consider this: when you shake hands with someone, how long should you hold on for? It seems that the ideal time is no more than three seconds.

Recent research at the University of Dundee found that shaking someone's hand in a 'prolonged manner' (longer than three seconds) triggers anxiety in the other person. Apparently, the U.S. President hangs on to people's hands for up to 13 seconds.

Generous

Christmas is a time for giving, and we do it well. The British have been ranked among the most generous nations in the world, after a recent study found that six out of ten of us have helped a stranger in the past month.

The research, which surveyed 1.3 million people in 128 countries over a decade, found that despite a growing culture of charitable giving, there has been a downward trend in thoughtful behaviour in many of the world's wealthiest places.

However, the report, commissioned by the Charities Aid Foundation, found that the UK now appears 7th in the worldwide rankings for generosity.

60 per cent of us have helped a stranger in the last month, with 71 per cent of us giving money to charity, and 30 per cent offering even our time, in order to help a good cause.

The countries which topped the global rankings are: United States, Myanmar, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland and Canada. At the bottom of the table, ranked lowest in terms of generosity, were the State of Palestine, Serbia, Yemen and Greece. China was ranked the least generous of all nations.

Popular toys for Christmas?

According to the toy shop Hamleys, board games are going to be popular this Christmas – but not as you knew them. Instead, the 'smart' version of Pictionary has been called one of the 'must-have' toys this Christmas. It is just one of many classic board games which have been given a digital makeover, including Monopoly.

Another toy that is set to be popular is the Scruff-a-Luv Rescue Pet. The toy begins its life as a matted furry ball, and with love and care from the child, it is slowly revealed to be a pink or blue dog or cat. The toy features over 35 sounds and interactions with the child, from shivering and whimpering to feeding and even the hiccups.

Those newsletters inside their Christmas card...

Brace yourself – this is the month when many of your distant friends and relatives will be sending you their Christmas card with the Christmas Newsletter tucked inside.

You will read all about Grannie's arthritis and treatment, how Rupert's progress on the violin is amazing, how their summer holiday cruise of the Med was stupendous, exactly where the dog got lost for a day in Wales, how the kitchen has been re-furnished, and how extraordinarily well Helen is doing at university.

You may groan, but don't dismiss all those little bits of 'wonderful everyday' news. For of such minor triumphs and tragedies most of daily life is made. And don't blame your relatives/friends if they have somewhat 'enhanced' their yearly news roundup – this may be their one chance to star in a drama.

Just remember – there is nothing to stop you from sending a Christmas Newsletter back to them... and you can also write what you like!

Who may be most happy by your Christmas gift?

If anyone is not going to like your present, it will probably be a millennial (aged 25 – 34 years). Last year some 37 per cent of millennials unwrapped presents which they found deeply disappointing, according to recent research by Which?

You will do better with someone from 'Generation X' (aged 18 to 24 years). Last year only 31 per cent of them were unhappy with their gifts.

You are almost certain to be a success with your friends and relatives aged 55 and over, who reported only a 19 per cent disappointment with gifts last year.

As for the sorts of gifts which most disappointed? Last year an out-of-date gift voucher and a pineapple-cutting machine came high on the list.

Will you get a 'thanks' for your Christmas presents?

After Christmas, what? Just blank silence? Or a 'thank-you' note for that gift?

A survey by the insurers Ecclesiastical has found that 60 per cent of 25-to-34-year-olds said they would NOT write a thank-you note because they found writing uncomfortable, or were embarrassed by their handwriting, spelling or grammar, or just did not know what to say. It seems that saying 'thank you' can be the hardest word for many in this age-group.

Yet people who receive written thankyou notes for their gifts say that the letters make them so much happier for having gone to the trouble of choosing and sending a gift. And even a personal 'thank-you' via social media is much welcomed.



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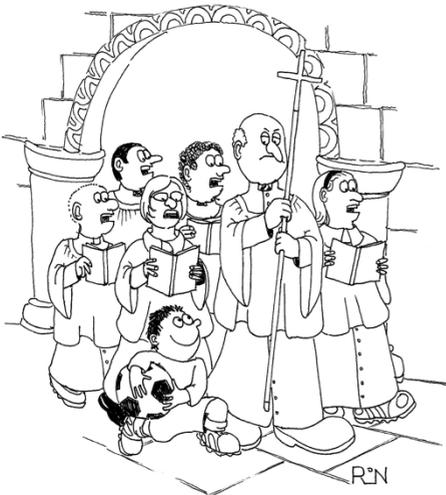
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Little Wayne couldn't sing a note, so they made him mascot



We don't sing carols no more... you 'ave to listen to 'em off me iPod!

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Benefice Services for December- <http://www.holsworthybenefice.org.uk>

	Bridgerule	Hollacombe	Holsworthy	Pancrasweek	Pyworthy
1st Dec	11.15am Sung Eucharist	3pm Sung BCP Evensong	9.30am Sung Eucharist		4pm Christingle
1st Dec			6pm Advent Procession, Holsworthy		
8th Dec	11.15am Morning Prayer		9.30am Sung Eucharist		11.15am Sung Eucharist
15th Dec	11.15am Sung Eucharist	9.30am Sung BCP Holy Communion	9.30am Sung Eucharist 6pm Holsworthy Town Civic Carol Service		9.30am Morning Prayer
22nd Dec	7pm Joint Carol Service with the Methodists at Church		9.30am Sung Morning Prayer	9.30am Sung Eucharist	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Tue 24th Dec - Day	3pm Crib Service				11am Crib Service
Tue 24th Dec - Evening			11.30pm Midnight Mass		8.30pm Vigil Christmas Mass
Wed 25th Dec	10.30am Christmas Sung Eucharist		9am Christmas Sung Eucharist		
Fri 27th Dec		3pm Carol Service	10am Said Eucharist at Holsworthy		
29th Dec		10am Benefice All Age Sung Eucharist with Carols, Pancrasweek			
Jan 5th	11.15am Sung Eucharist	3pm Sung BCP Evensong	9.30am Sung Eucharist		9.30am All Age Service

All are welcome at any of the services

This chart was correct at the time we went to press. Please check on the back of your weekly service sheet for any last-minute changes or take a look at the Benefice Calendar on our www.holsworthybenefice.org.uk/services/benefice-calendar/

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YOUR CHRISTMAS SERVICES

1st December

4pm Christingle
Pyworthy, St Swithun

6pm Advent Carol Service by Candle Light
Holsworthy, St Peter & St Paul

15th December

6pm Holsworthy Town Civic Carol Service
with drinks and mince pies afterwards
Holsworthy, St Peter & St Paul

17th December

1.30pm Holsworthy Primary School
Christmas service, St Peter & St Paul

7.30pm Carol Service
Livestock Market, Holsworthy

22nd December

9.30am Advent and Crib Eucharist
Pancrasweek, St Pancras parish church

7pm Bridgerule Carol Service
St Bridget's Parish Church

CHRISTMAS EVE

11am Crib Service
Pyworthy, St Swithun

3pm Crib Service
Bridgerule, St Bridget's Church

4.30pm Carols around the Christmas
Trees with mulled wine and treats
Holsworthy Square

8.30pm Christmas Vigil Mass
Pyworthy, St Swithun

11.30pm Midnight Mass
Holsworthy, St Peter & St Paul

CHRISTMAS DAY
The Nativity of our Lord

9am Eucharist with Carols
Holsworthy, St Peter & St Paul

10.30am Eucharist with Carols
Bridgerule, St Bridget's Church

Friday 27th December
John, Apostle

3pm Nine Lessons and Carols
Hollacombe, St Petroc

The Green Box
especially great for children



George discovered Christmas this year is December 25th

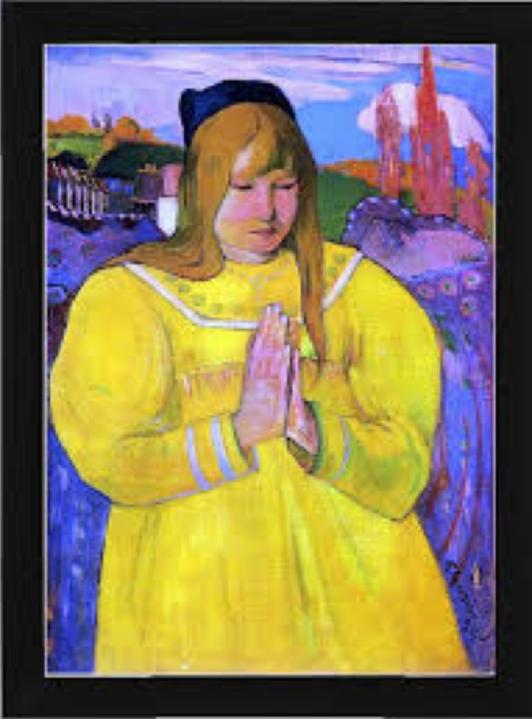


"It's easy to tell when it's Nativity Play time – I can never find a tea-towel!"

God in the Arts

Editor: The National Gallery at Trafalgar Square in London houses one of the finest collections of European paintings in the world. It is home to 2,300 works spanning the centuries of artistic creation. During this year we shall be journeying through the gallery to explore one of those treasures each month. By the Rev Michael Burgess.

He gave us eyes to see them: Gauguin's Portrait of a Breton Girl at Prayer



During this year we have been exploring the wealth of paintings in the National Gallery in London. Each year the Gallery has exhibitions highlighting the work of one particular artist, and until 26 January there is a major exhibition, 'Gauguin Portraits.' It celebrates in paintings and sculptures the life and work of Paul Gauguin (1848-1903). He is best known for the art he painted when he fled Europe to live in Tahiti in the South Seas. But from 1886 to 1891 he lived in rural Brittany at Pont-Even.

This month's painting is from those years when Gauguin was influenced by folk art and impressed by the simple faith of the Breton peasants. He has captured that faith in this

painting of a Breton girl at prayer. His own catchphrase was 'I shut my eyes in order to see.' The girl has her eyes closed as she offers her prayers, but we sense that the inner eye of her heart is open in trust to God's will for her.

At this time of the year children step into the limelight of church and school life with nativity plays. They invite us to journey with them in that same simplicity and trust to Bethlehem, just as St Francis of Assisi invited the people of Greccio to a cave outside the town in 1223. As they looked into the cave, they saw the animals and the hay, and in the centre, a new-born babe. St Francis talked to them of the simple message of God's love revealed in all humility and openness in this birth of the Christ-Child. He invited the people to respond with those same gifts.

As we look at this painting, we see something of the simplicity and trust called of us, whether young or old. Too often as we get older, we find our lives weighed down by responsibilities and pressures. We find time is swallowed up in the busyness of this season, and somehow we lose that innocence and simplicity of life.

But, pondering the Christmas story and pondering this painting, we can put our hands together and pray for that openness and childlike trust. Fr Faber wrote a hymn with the lines:

*'If our love were but more simple,
we should take him at his word;
and our hearts would find assurance
in the promise of the Lord.'*

December 2019 – Letter from St. James the Least of All

The Rev Dr Gary Bowness continues his letters from 'Uncle Eustace'...

Happily, the Church of England still retains some singular parish clergy. Take the parish of St. James-the-Least in the county of C..... for example. Here the elderly Anglo-Catholic vicar, Eustace, continues his correspondence to Darren, his nephew, a low-church curate recently ordained...



On the perils of eating with members of your church

The Rectory
St James the Least

Mr dear Nephew Darren

I am sorry I was not alive during that wonderful four-year period when Oliver Cromwell abolished Christmas. Just think! No Christmas parties, no carol services, no cards to send and no frantic last-minute shopping. That man was a hero.

Planning for Christmas at St James' normally starts on 2nd January. By Easter, the flowers for church have been colour coordinated, the seating plans and table decorations for the Christmas party have been allocated (with nominated reserves in case someone should

inconveniently die in the intervening eight months). Long before Summer is over, the tree lights have been tested, music for the 9 Lessons and Carols Service has been chosen and the service sheets printed. Way before the dark nights set in, car parking attendants will have been found, those who are to light all the candles will have been rehearsed to perfection and the brass lectern has had its annual polish.

We do not do spontaneity at St James the Least of All. If ever there was a service when time for something unexpected was allowed, its place would be announced in the order of service, how long it would happen unexpectedly would have been decided by a committee and who was to be spontaneous would have been allocated on a rota.

The one person none of these well-meaning, efficient, committed organisers can control is the Rector. You could call it a staff perk.

Carols will (accidentally, of course) be announced in the wrong order; if verse 3 was to be omitted, I announce it will be verse 4. This keeps the organist on his toes while the choir hovers on the point of a collective nervous breakdown. At the Christmas supper, my introductory welcome speech and extensive grace make those in the kitchen wonder if the vegetables being boiled should better be served as thick soup.

I offer the helpful suggestion that the tree, having been installed and decorated in the chancel, may perhaps look better in the sanctuary and I turn all the heating off throughout the season, explaining that it will help the flowers to last. All Services will start five minutes early (was my watch rather fast?) so I can look disapprovingly at those still coming in while we are singing the first carol and making it clear that I think they had spent too long in the pub next door.

And so we all reach Christmas morning, with 12 months of planning having gone yet again slightly awry, with parishioners exhausted and I exhilarated at the chaos

that has been created with such ease. Mr Cromwell, your spirit lives on.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

High Days and Holy Days in December

25th December: The history of Christmas

The Bible does not give a date for the birth of Jesus. In the third century it was suggested that Jesus was conceived at the Spring equinox, 25th March, popularising the belief that He was born nine months later on 25th December. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, encouraged Christians worldwide to make Christmas a holy day in about 400.

In the early Middle Ages, Christians celebrated a series of midwinter holy days. Epiphany (which recalls the visit to the infant Jesus of the wise men bearing gifts) was the climax of 12 days of Christmas, beginning on 25th December. The Emperor Charlemagne chose 25th December for his coronation in 800, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose. In England, William the Conqueror also chose 25th December for his coronation in 1066, and the date became a fixture both for religious observance and feasting.

Cooking a boar was a common feature of mediaeval Christmas feasts, and singing carols accompanied it. Writers of the time lament the fact that the true significance of Christmas was being lost because of partying. They condemn the rise of 'misrule' – drunken dancing and promiscuity. The day was a public holiday, and traditions of bringing evergreen foliage into the house and the exchange of gifts (usually on Epiphany) date from this time.

In the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity. Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England's Puritan rulers made the celebration of Christmas illegal for 14 years. The restoration of Charles II ended the ban, but religious leaders continued to discourage excess, especially in Scotland. In Western Europe (but not worldwide) the day for exchanging gifts changed from Epiphany (6th January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, there was a sense that the significance of Christmas was declining. Charles Dickens was one of several writers who sought to restore

it. His novel *A Christmas Carol* was significant in reviving merriment during the festival. He emphasised charity and family reunions, alongside religious observance. Christmas trees, paper chains, cards and many well-known carols date from this time. So did the tradition of *Boxing Day*, on 26th December, when tradesmen who had given reliable service during the year would collect 'boxes' of money or gifts from their customers.

In Europe Santa Claus is the figure associated with the bringing of gifts. Santa Claus is a shortening of the name of Saint Nicholas, who was a Christian bishop in the fourth century in present-day Turkey. He was particularly noted for his care for children and for his generosity to the poor. By the Middle Ages his appearance, in red bishop's robes and a mitre, was adored in the Netherlands and familiar across Europe.

Father Christmas dates from 17th century England, where he was a secular figure of good cheer (more associated with drunkenness than gifts). The transformation of Santa Claus into today's Father Christmas started in New York in the 1880s, where his red robes and white beard became potent advertising symbols. In some countries (such as Latin America and Eastern Europe) the tradition attempts to combine the secular and religious elements by holding that Santa Claus makes children's presents and then gives them to the baby Jesus to distribute.

From: <https://christianity.org.uk/the-history-of-christmas/#.W9LmchNKhsM>

25 December

Christmas and St Luke's Gospel

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

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

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

Luke alone tells us the story of how the angels appeared to the shepherds and how the shepherds then visited the infant Jesus. So – imagine Christmas cards and nativity scenes every year without the shepherds arriving to visit baby Jesus.

Imagine school nativity plays without our children dressed as shepherds or sheep. So – thank you, Luke!

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

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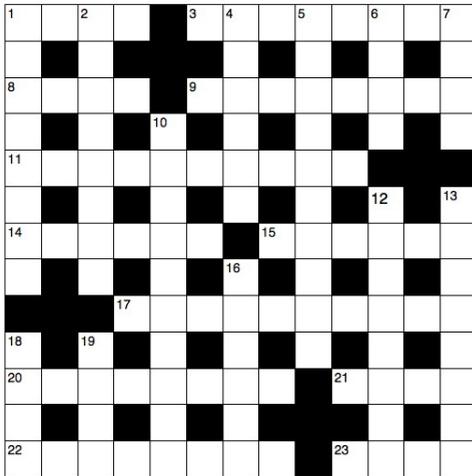
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The Puzzle Pages December 2019 Crossword

(The solution to this crossword puzzle can be found on page 28)



Across

- 1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)
 3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)
 8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)
 9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)
 11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)
 14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)
 15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)

17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)

20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)

21 Rite (anag.) (4)

22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)

23 'The eye cannot say to the — , "I don't need you"' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

Down

1 'Flee for your lives! Don't — — , and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)

2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)

4 'The tax collector... beat his — and said, "God have mercy on me, a sinner"' (Luke 18:13) (6)

5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)

6 'The day of the Lord is — for all nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)

7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)

10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)

12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)

13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)

16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and — ' (Acts 7:22) (6)

18 'Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)

19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)

December 2019 Sudoku

	9	8		2	4			
		3	5		9			
2			6			7		
1	6	2				3		4
9	7						6	2
3		4				9	5	7
		6			7			5
			2		1	4		
			4	3		8	7	

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(Solution on page 28)



All in the Month of December

It was:

125 years ago, on 3rd Dec 1894 that Robert Louis Stevenson died. This Scottish novelist, short story writer, poet, essayist and travel writer was best known for his novels *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped* and the *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

Also 125 years ago, on 29th Dec 1894 that Christina Rossetti, British poet and hymn-writer, died.

100 years ago, on 1st Dec 1919 that Lady Nancy Astor became the first female Member of Parliament (MP) to take her seat in the House of Commons.

90 years ago, on 12th Dec 1929 that John Osborne, British playwright, screenwriter and producer, was born. He was the first of the Angry Young Men, and best known for his play *Look Back in Anger* (died 1994).

80 years ago, on 1st Dec 1939 that Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer made his first ever appearance, in a children's colouring book given away by Montgomery Ward stores in the USA.

75 years ago, on 16th Dec 1944 to 16th Jan 1945 that World War II's Battle of the Bulge took place in Belgium. It was the last major German counter-offensive of the war, and an Allied victory.

70 years ago, on 1st Dec 1949 that Pablo Escobar, Colombian drug lord, was born. Head of the Medellin cartel, and considered the world's most powerful drug trafficker of the 1980s and early 1990s. (Shot dead by police in 1993, though some say it was suicide.)

60 years ago, on 1st Dec 1959 that 12 countries including the UK and USA, signed the Antarctic Treaty, setting aside Antarctica as a scientific preserve free from military activity.

50 years ago, on 18th Dec 1969 that the British Government abolished the death penalty for murder.

40 years ago, on 20th Dec 1979 that the British Government announced that council tenants would be given the right to buy their homes under a new Housing Act (effective from October 1980)

30 years ago, on 3rd Dec 1989 that US President George H W Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev announced the end of the Cold War at a meeting in Malta.

Also 30 years ago, on 22nd December 1989 that the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin was reopened, effectively reuniting East and West Germany.

20 years ago, on 1st Dec 1999 that an international team of scientists announced that they had mapped an entire human chromosome. (All human chromosomes were mapped by April 2003.)

Also 20 years ago, on 2nd Dec 1999 that the UK devolved political power in Northern Ireland to the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive Committee.

Also 20 years ago, on 31 Dec 1999 that the London Eye, at that time the world's tallest Ferris wheel – was officially opened on the banks of the River Thames. Because of mechanical problems, it didn't open to passengers until 9th March 2000.

15 years ago, on 26th Dec 2004 that the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami (also known as the Boxing Day Tsunami) took place. A massive undersea earthquake near Sumatra caused a devastating tsunami that swamped coastal areas

in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and Africa. It was one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history, killing over 230,000 people in 14 countries.

10 years ago, on 1st Dec 2009 that the Treaty of Lisbon came into effect. It amended the Maastricht Treaty and the Treaty of Rome, which form the constitutional basis of the European Union.

Smile Lines for December

Shopping

The manager of a department store put this notice in the window: 'If you need it this Christmas, we have it.' But in the window of a rival, a sign appeared, stating: 'If we don't have it, you don't need it.'

Wise?

When I told my children the story of how the Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant Jesus, my six-year-old daughter was not impressed. "Mum, a Wise Woman would have brought nappies."

Good advice

If you have a lot of tension this Christmas and you get a headache, do what it says on the aspirin bottle: 'Take two aspirin' and 'Keep away from children.'

Lost

Just as I began my Christmas Eve service, the electricity in the church failed. The wardens and I found some candles and placed them around the sanctuary. Then I re-entered the pulpit, shuffled my notes, and muttered, "Now, where was I?"

A hopeful voice called out, "Right near the end!"

Come

What is a webmaster's favourite hymn?
Oh, dot com all ye faithful!

Come and go

At Christmas friends come and go, but relatives tend to accumulate.

Bakery

Did you hear about the bakery that was burgled at Christmas? Everything was stolen!

Some Useful Numbers

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Memorial Hall	255450
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CAB (Citizen's Advice Bureau) (Weekdays 9.30 am – 4.00 pm)	02444 111 444
Samaritans	116 123



December 2019 Crossword Solution

L	A	M	E		O	B	T	A	I	N	E	D
O		A				R	C		E			A
O	M	I	T		M	E	R	C	H	A	N	T
K		N	P		A		O		R			E
B	U	R	D	E	N	S	O	M	E			
A		O		S		T		P		B		T
C	R	A	F	T	Y		P	L	E	A	S	E
K		D		I		A		I		S		T
				B	L	A	C	K	S	M	I	T
A		C		E		T		H		L		E
S	P	L	E	N	D	I	D			T	I	E
A		A		C		O				C		E
S	I	N	G	E	I	N	G			H	A	N

December 2019 Sudoku Solution

6	9	8	7	2	4	5	1	3
7	4	3	5	1	9	6	2	8
2	5	1	6	8	3	7	4	9
1	6	2	9	7	5	3	8	4
9	7	5	3	4	8	1	6	2
3	8	4	1	6	2	9	5	7
4	1	6	8	9	7	2	3	5
8	3	7	2	5	1	4	9	6
5	2	9	4	3	6	8	7	1

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