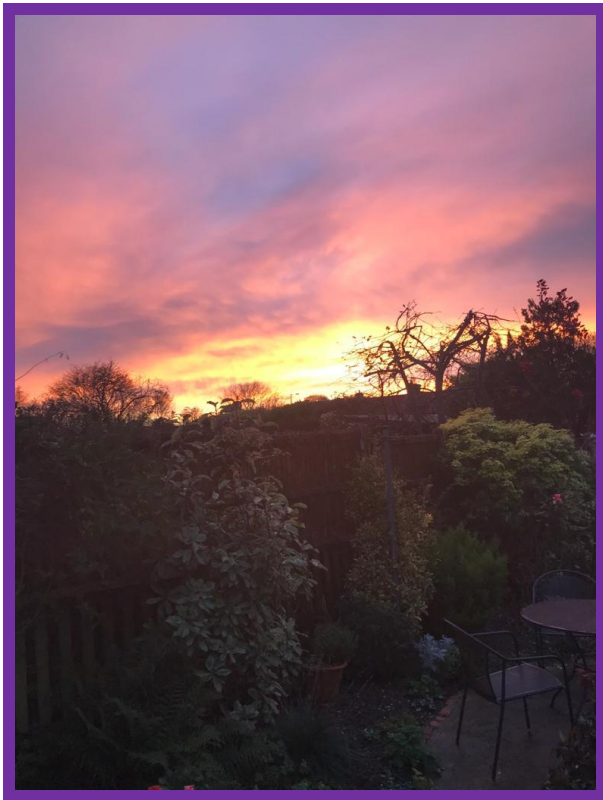


THE

# CRAYFISHER

January 2021

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The magazine for the Parish of Cray Valley

No.68

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**Front Cover Picture: Red Sky at Night by Rita McKay**

## **PARISH LETTER**

**D**ear friends, happy new year.

Sir Laurens Jan van der Post, farmer, soldier, political adviser to British heads of government, close friend of Prince Charles, godfather of Prince William, educator, journalist, author, humanitarian, philosopher, explorer and conservationist. When in his eighties, was walking through one of the remaining wild parts of his beloved Africa. His companion referred gently to his age and asked, ‘Laurens, are you looking at all this as though it might be the last time you see it?’

‘Yes, there’s always that thought,’ Laurens replied, ‘But it’s much more important to try and see it as though for the first time.’

How true, there’s more wonder in it that way. To see something you love, as you did for the first time. The joy of discovery, the sudden breathtaking revelation of beauty, whether a view of nature, a painting, a piece of music, or a person.

I went for a walk the other day with some friends and I asked them what they thought we might learn as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. They said, ‘Not to forget our glimpse of what the really important things in life were.’ Covid-19 has forced us to stop and slow down and see things as if for the first time.

We grow used to things, to people. We grow comfortable with them. It’s a good thing in its own way, a quieter, different kind of love. But that can slip imperceptibly, dangerously, into a taking for granted, into a lack of appreciation.

In Mark’s gospel, chapter 8 (verses 22-25), there is a wonderful account of Jesus healing a blind man. The passage is deliberately sandwiched between two other passages which tell of the inability of Jesus’ disciples to see clearly the truth that was before them.

If anything good is to come out of the disaster that Covid-19 has been, it is the opportunity to see more clearly a new view of the world, and of people, a new vision of what creation was meant to be, something glorious and full of beauty. A world of wonder and delight, and to reflect upon what we have made of it, and what we should make of it.

As we make, and perhaps break, our New Year resolution let’s not be too hard on ourselves. Remember God loves you as you are, and that perhaps

the best resolution you can make is to begin to love yourself too rather than listen to the voices of a culture that constantly shouts, ‘Could do better!’

Of course we also need to remember that although God does love us as we are, he loves us too much to leave us as we are!

I wish you all God’s blessings for 2021.

*Jessie x*

### **READINGS FOR SUNDAYS IN JANUARY**

Sun 3 <sup>rd</sup>	EPIPHANY Ephesians 3. 1-12 GOSPEL Matthew 2. 1-12
Sun 10 <sup>th</sup>	BAPTISM OF CHRIST Acts 19. 1-7 GOSPEL Mark 1. 4-11
Sun 17 <sup>th</sup>	SECOND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY Revelation 5. 1-10 GOSPEL John 1. 43-end
Sun 24 <sup>th</sup>	THIRD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY Revelation 19. 6-10 GOSPEL John 2. 1-11
Sun 31 <sup>st</sup>	CANDLEMAS Hebrews 2. 14-end GOSPEL Luke 2. 22-40

## **COLLECTS FOR JANUARY**

- Sun 3<sup>rd</sup>      O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: Amen
- Sun 10<sup>th</sup>      Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: Amen
- Sun 17<sup>th</sup>      Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: Amen
- Sun 24<sup>th</sup>      Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: Amen
- Sun 31<sup>st</sup>      Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh: grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: Amen

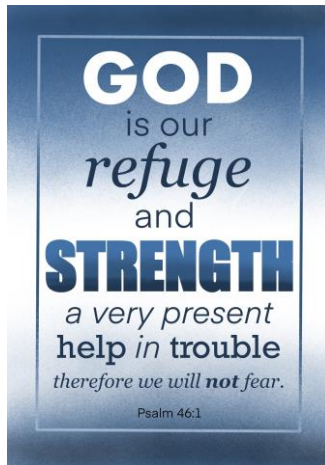
## SERVICES DURING JANUARY

Sun 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Eucharist at St Andrew's
Sun 10 <sup>th</sup>	Eucharist at St Mary's
Sun 17 <sup>th</sup>	Eucharist at St Andrew's
Sun 24 <sup>th</sup>	Eucharist at St Mary's
Sun 31 <sup>st</sup>	Eucharist at St Andrew's

**ALL SERVICES WILL BEGIN AT 10.00**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE NO TUESDAY SERVICES INCLUDING TUESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER UNTIL TUESDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2021.**

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE **FEBRUARY ISSUE** OF THE CRAYFISHER IS **WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY**. PLEASE HAVE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS IN BY THIS DATE – ANYTHING RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE WILL BE HELD OVER UNTIL THE NEXT ISSUE**



*Courtesy of Parish Pump.co.uk*

## PARISH PRAYER GROUP

We cannot meet at Muriel's home, but we are still praying for all in need especially at this time.

## FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

For further details contact Tony Lathey      01689 872742

## SOCIAL EVENTS

### AT **ST ANDREW'S** AND **ST MARY'S** IN 2020

Regretfully, our planned events for 2020 had to be postponed. We are however, hopeful that we can do some social events in 2021.  
**WATCH THIS SPACE!**

## PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL and CATHERINE OF ARAGON

**S**ir John Betjeman left us with a rich harvest of church poems, but Peterborough Cathedral was 'one that got away'. Interviewed on the Michael Parkinson show in his later years, Betjeman (1906 – 1984) confessed that he had started writing the poem but had mislaid the piece of paper and had forgotten his opening verse. He explained: 'The cathedral is a beautiful building that has got in it a chapel called St Sprite. I imagine that's the Holy Spirit and it's such a nice name for a chapel.'



I must admit that I have some unfinished business there, myself. Nancy and I often travel from King's Cross to Leeds and the train usually stops at Peterborough. The glimpse of the magnificent cathedral from the carriage window is tantalising and I keep saying it is high time we went to see it. The architecture is mainly Norman but the celebrated facade of

giant arches and towers is Betjeman's much-beloved Early English Gothic.

There's a special point of interest for Nancy and me. A few years ago while visiting our daughter in Madrid we enjoyed a day trip to the historic medieval town of Alcalá de Henares. Christopher Columbus lived there and so did Cervantes who wrote the Don Quixote stories. We spotted a small statue of a young woman holding a book and a rose. It commemorated the birthplace of Catherine of Aragon who from 1509 to 1533 was the first wife of King Henry VIII of England. She is buried at Peterborough Cathedral. Her tomb has a modern inscription in gold lettering dubbing her KATHERINE QUEEN OF ENGLAND – a title that she never received in her own life because she was officially only Queen Consort. Visitors regularly decorate the tomb with flowers or pomegranates, her heraldic symbol.



*Jerry Dowlen*

### **FINDING A JOB AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL IN THE 1960s**

I left secondary school at age fifteen in 1965 with little idea of what I wanted to do other than knowing I wanted an office job. On the last day I met with the Headmaster and he said you are good at maths, you should go into insurance. I am yet to work out the logic of that statement.

My father worked for a shipping company in the City and brought home the Evening Standard newspaper every day. From the advertisements I picked out the Insurance Appointments Office and arranged to see them and they fixed some interviews for me. I spent a day in London and had an interview with Arthur Holland, a broker I have never heard of since who offered me a job in the Marine Department, A. W. Bain who offered



me a position in the Motor Department and J. H. Minet who had a vacancy in the North American Claims Department.

As was the case back in the early 1960s, companies in Central London and the City were taking on many school leavers and I had three jobs from which to choose. I went home and told my mother who said you should discuss it with our next door neighbour Mr. Dorey. He worked as a life insurance salesman who cycled around the streets of Welling collecting weekly insurance premiums. He told me he had no idea which I should choose, but he said 'You will probably find the claims job more interesting.' As a result, I started my career at J. H. Minet, as he was the only resource that I had. I think that my experience must have been very typical of that time when there were lots of office jobs available for clerks, bookkeepers, typists, etc.

***John Heath***

*John Heath is a former resident of Welling in Kent now living in the USA.*



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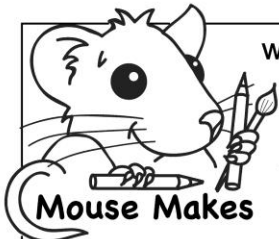
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# FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART



**Mouse Makes**

**What happened after Jesus had been born in Bethlehem?**

**READ Matthew 2:1-12**

Who came from the East? ☆

Why had they come? ☆

What were they following? ☆

Who was alarmed by their arrival?

Who had the prophet written about?


Where were they then sent?

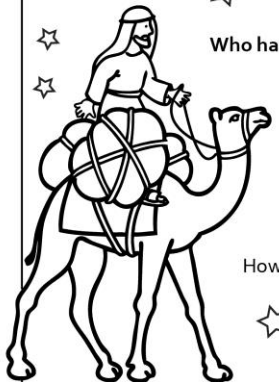
What were they to look for?  
..... and why?

Where did the star lead them?

Who did they see? ..... What did they do?

How were they warned to go home another way?





**READ Matthew 2:13-23**


Who appeared to Joseph?

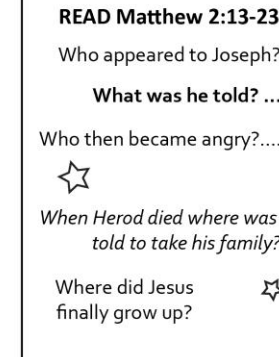
What was he told? .... Why? What did he do?


Who then became angry?..... and why? What horrible thing did he then do?

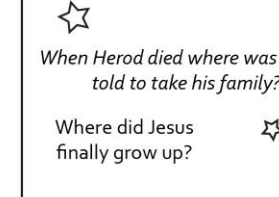
When Herod died where was Joseph told to take his family?

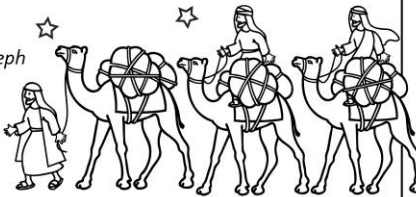
Where did Jesus finally grow up?











## **James the Least of All**

### **On how to deal with your church's correspondence**

The Rectory  
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

You may have had several years of intensive training on biblical interpretation, preaching and church history, but that doesn't cover the really important matters in parish life: how to evade disgruntled parishioners, run a brisk Summer Fete and, in your case at present, deal with correspondence, either by letter or email.

My regular practice, which I recommend to you as a New Year Resolution, is to read all the letters/emails you receive and then discard them. If the matter is truly important, you will receive a second message, to which you respond; more likely, the sender will either have forgotten all about his first letter/email after the second month or will write to some other cleric instead. In either case, you will be saved a great deal of trouble.



You only need two folders for your filing system, either for post or emails. The first is for complaints; they are to be filed and ignored, no matter how many duplicates you are sent. Should you be confronted personally, you simply say that the matter has been passed on to the bishop. Those truly dogged complainants who pursue the matter will eventually receive an episcopal reply saying he knows nothing of the matter, for which you then blame the postal system/spammed email. After letters and emails have ricocheted round the country for many months, the person complaining will either have lost energy to pursue the matter, or the will to live.

The second file receives all other correspondence/emails chronologically. The earliest letters and emails will be at the bottom of the pile and the

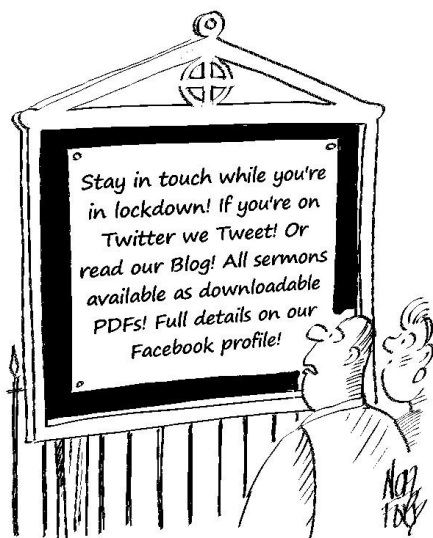
most recent on the top. In my experience, the postal file only needs attention when it reaches a height of about two feet and becomes unstable. The practice then is to discard the lower six inches and allow it to continue its steady growth. If the stack is kept in the church vestry, then mice usually attend to the papers on the bottom of the pile.

Sadly, your own church, with its electronic systems for filing, sorting and retrieving correspondence and with your parish secretaries, removes all of these blessings at a stroke. You have therefore no excuses for not dealing instantly with every note that comes your way. As ye sow, so shall ye reap.

May I also remind you that not even St Paul, that unflagging letter-writer, ever ended one of his letters with a request for a prompt reply. Need I say more?

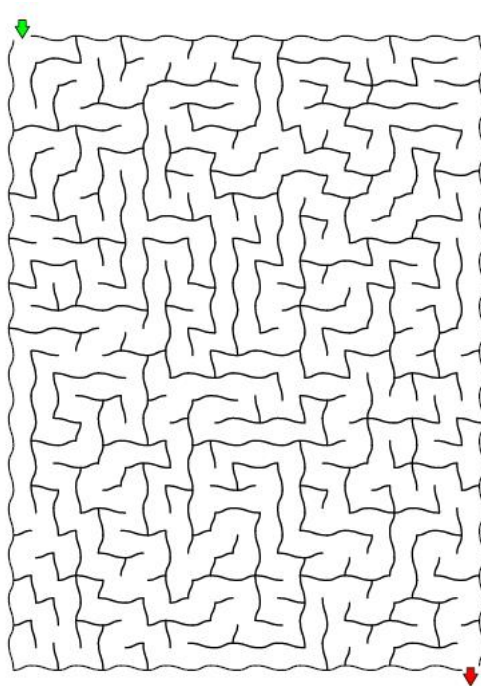
Your loving uncle,

Eustace



"...and we used to grumble about not understanding archaic church language!"

Just for a change I thought you may like a different puzzle. Something easy after a hectic New Year celebration perhaps?



## God in the Sciences

*This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.*

### **A Scientist's Letter to the UK Church: Power, love and self-control**

I want to share a message of hope that Christians in the sciences around the world can bring to the church. Dr Francis Collins, who leads medical research in the US, spoke earlier in the pandemic about his faith and his

hope in God to help us through this time. He expressed the grief that so many are experiencing, described an intensity of scientific work he has never experienced before, and shared his conviction that he is in exactly the right place just now - serving God with science. He is holding on tight to the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 1:7, 'for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.'

### **Power**

In 2 Timothy the apostle Paul encourages his friend to 'fan into flame the gift of God' that is in him. I am thankful that scientists like Francis are using their own particular talents to understand this virus, and to help prevent or treat infection. The things they discover are not just useful, but at times they can also display the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

### **Love**

A scientist shows their love for God, for people and for the rest of creation through their work in the lab. One scientist described his experiences to me: "I study God's fingerprints in His creation to learn more of Him and the world He placed us in and to learn how we should take care of it and each other...I pray for inspiration and insight into how His creation works...and that He provides the opportunities to give the glory to Him."

### **Self-Control**

It is largely our own and others' selfish actions that can turn one animal's friendly virus into our own species' personal nightmare. Thankfully Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection are the solution to evil. Our ultimate and certain hope is that one day all Creation will be renewed. We can also have hope for today, that God is with us in our suffering. When we respond in positive ways to painful events, that is evidence that Jesus is alive and working in our lives.

Science will not solve all our problems, but with God's help and wisdom we can use the tools of science to serve him and love others. Let's pray together for the strength to cope, and for an end to this pandemic.

## Book Reviews

Here are some Lent books you may like to take a look at. They are featured now so that you have time to choose before Lent begins in February.



### **Living His Story – revealing the extraordinary love of God in ordinary ways**

**By Hannah Steele, SPCK, £7.99**

This, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book for 2021, explores evangelism as a way of sharing God's love with people.

How can we convey the love of God to our neighbours in a post-Christian world that has largely forgotten the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Hannah Steele uncovers liberating and practical ways of sharing the gospel story afresh. With warmth and encouragement, she shows us how



we can live Jesus' story in our own lives simply by being the people God made us and allowing people to be drawn to Him through our natural gifts.

This Lent devotional may change the way you think about evangelism, and give you confidence in sharing God's love with the people around you.

Set out in six sessions to take you through Lent, it can be used as a single study for individuals or small groups to prepare for Easter.

The Revd Dr Hannah Steele is Director of St Mellitus College, London.

\*\*

### **Rooted in Love – Lent Reflections on Life in Christ**

**By Sarah Mullally, SPCK, £7.99**

This is the first Lent book from the Bishop of London, and it explores the ways in which we can live the Christian life to the full today.

The forty reflections will help you to go deeper into the meaning and practice of what it is to have your life in Christ today. Each reflection includes a Bible reading, a prayer and a suggestion for action.

The result is an exceptionally helpful Lent book, offering a rich array of biblical insight and spiritual guidance that Christians of all traditions will warmly welcome and appreciate.

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE is the Bishop of London. Before her ordination she was Chief Nursing Officer in the Department of Health.

## **Opening our Lives: Devotional Readings for Lent** **By Trystan Owain Hughes, BRF, £8.99**

This is the *BRF Lent book for 2021*.

Lent is not about giving up or taking up, but a radical opening up: the opening up of our lives to God's transformative kingdom.

Through practical daily devotions Hughes calls on us to open our eyes to God's presence, our ears to His call, our hearts to His love, our ways to His will, our actions to His compassion and our pain to His peace.

Other books you may like to consider are as follows:

**The Resilient Disciple - a Lenten Journey from Adversity to Maturity**

**The Way of Julian of Norwich - a Prayer Journey through Lent**  
**Stuck in the Mud - Stories of Hope when You're Stuck**  
**When Faith Gets Shaken**

### **HOLY DAYS**

**1<sup>st</sup> Jan:**        **Have you ever wondered where the name 'Jesus' comes from?**

The name Jesus is a transliteration of a name that occurs in several languages. It is of Hebrew origin, 'Yehosua', or Joshua. There is also the Hebrew-Aramaic form, 'Yesua'. In Greek, it became 'Ἰησοῦς' (*Iēsoûs*), and in Latin it became 'Iesus'.

The meaning of the name is 'Yahweh delivers' or 'Yahweh rescues', or 'Yahweh is salvation'. Yahweh is one of the Jewish names for God. It is used a lot in the Old Testament. No wonder the angel Gabriel in Luke (1:26-33) told Mary to name her baby Jesus: "because He will save His people from their sins."

*For the Young and Young at Heart is courtesy of [www.parishpump.co.uk](http://www.parishpump.co.uk)*

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## **POETRY CORNER**

### **UNTITLED**

The days are short and mainly dark  
Have to be quick for a walk in the park  
The leaves have fallen, branches bare  
Except for the ivy that clambers up there  
I'd like it to snow, earth cloaked in white  
Sparkling frost, a wonderful sight  
Today has been foggy, tonight came rain  
Oh when will we see the sun again  
Lucky for us that time flies so fast  
Bulbs will be growing up in the grass  
Tables and chairs appear in the garden  
As we once again share in Nature's pardon.

*Joyce Ozsvald*

### **DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, ACCORDING TO MY 2019 DIARY.**

A wind down after a flu packed week  
No family fun, no Christmas treats!  
The Christmas tree shedding its needles green  
Carpeting the floor where presents have been.  
Decorations and lights looking forlornly through  
On to the cherry tree, no buds anew.  
But looking closer, snowdrop spears  
And brave daffodils as January nears.  
The heart responds to their welcome signs  
And brings joy to our ever hopeful minds.

*Jacky Cook*

## **UNTITLED**

Pleased to have the opportunity  
In these difficult times,  
it's important to remember the past  
but also the losses and hardship of this year.  
Like people to know we care  
even when we're not there!--

*Joyce Ozsvald*

## **A LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

Hi Brenda,

Just to say enjoyed Poetry Corner and story of Schools Nativity reminded me of some years back we went to Frank's two nephews. Dominic was so proud to have the part as one of the three kings and a speaking part (one line) where Kieran was disappointed at only being an angel. On the big day Dominic made his entrance only to look at the crib and say "Oh don't he look just like his father ". It brought the house down!

Best wishes to you all at The Crayfisher.

Keep well stay safe.

Happy Christmas Di xx





## **Funshine Club**

### **Cray Valley Parish Toddler Group**

Every Wednesday during term  
time

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(Includes craft activity,  
tea/coffee, squash and biscuit)

Enquiries to: Sarah Rideout  
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**We will be reviewing the  
situation in January 2021  
and hope we will be able to  
see you then**

Please come along and  
join in the fun.

## **HALL FOR HIRE**

**St Mary's Church  
Centre is available  
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evenings  
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## GARDENING TIPS

**H**ope you all had the best Christmas 🎄 you could manage with safety guidelines.

Being mindful of not using plastic - instructions for table decoration - fireplace decoration.

Wrap a large potato in tin foil - level bottom with a knife before wrapping. Then commence to cover with evergreen picked from garden or whilst walking. A knitting needle or sharp knife will assist you to insert - sharpen ends of foliage will also make it easier.

Eco friendly arrangement for your New Year table & a thought for next Christmas dining table.

Advisable to place potato in container of your choice before commencing arrangement.

Have a happy & healthy New Year - God bless.

*Rita McKay*

## CHRISTINGLE

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December was Christingle for our parish, even though it was socially distanced with lots of hand sanitising. There were quite a number of people in attendance and the children all had a wonderful time. Over the page are a few photos taken on the day.



