

Rushen Parish Magazine

December 2019



**A Very Happy Christmas
to everyone living in
The Parish of Rushen**

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The Editor Writes...

During the past three months I have had the privilege of compiling a booklet of poetry for one of our parishioners. Margaret Couper writes a poem each month for publication in this magazine. You will find this month's poem overleaf. She is a wonderful person who, like us all, follows the teachings of Jesus and endeavours to be like Him in all that she does. Her poetry is inspirational, and always has a Biblical theme. Her husband, Douglas, is a critical ear, and as well as typing the poems for her, listens intently to them, and gives her the encouragement she needs. The booklet, entitled 'Pause for Poetry' is now on sale from Margaret herself and is priced at £5 per copy. All proceeds from the sale will be given to church funds. I do urge you all to buy this superb piece of literature. In fact it would be an ideal Christmas present. Thank you Margaret for asking me to do this for you.

Christmas is, without doubt, a wonderful time of year. Most of us begin to prepare early but, believe it or not, I saw a Christmas Tree, complete with fairy lights, in a bay window towards the end of October! Perhaps this is extreme, but nevertheless it shows that people treat this time of the year as something very special, and who am I to say that it isn't? It is, however, a time which some people find difficult. Our son's funeral was on Christmas Eve 2001 and I am sure there are many others who have lost loved ones at this time of year. There are homeless and hungry people at Christmas time. They see people scurrying about buying last minute presents and would love to be part of the joy of giving. There are broken families, people with little or no money of their own, those who are lonely, and those in prison, and I am probably just touching the surface of the countless people who in some way or another are suffering during this time.

Mother Teresa once said, *"There is much suffering in the world - physical, material, mental. The suffering of some can be blamed on the greed of others. The material and physical suffering is suffering from hunger, from homelessness, from all kinds of diseases. But the greatest suffering is being lonely, feeling unloved, having no one. I have come more and more to realise that it is being unwanted that is the worst disease that any human being can ever experience."*

Let's hope that we can all do something to help these people. Whether it is by prayer, or practical help, I am sure we can do something to give them hope in their despair, and the help they need to make their lives easier to bear in the future.

I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas.

David

Immanuel (God with us)

There was movement in the Heavens –
Joyous music in the sky,
Awakened drowsy shepherds,
Who on eastern hills did lie.
News! Glad news! The angels gave them
Of a Saviour's birth nearby.

Hasten! Hasten! Go and see Him,
View the little darling's birth.
Awake now! heed the message –
Leave your sheep and sodden turf.
He your life has come to ransom,
Freedom give from sin's black dearth.

Thus, the lowly paid their homage,
Brought their gifts and blessed His name.
Also, the wise and mighty,
Sought His presence, knew His fame.
For the Christ-child in a manger
Was to prove for all, the same.

These were awed and re-awakened,
Humbled far beyond compare –
There a mother held her baby.
And peace prevailed everywhere,
As tiny fingers stretched upwards
Clutching at the still night air.

Mary, the accepting maiden,
Foresaw mystery beyond compare.
Joy was to be her portion,
As she bowed her head in prayer.

*"Mary treasured up all these things
and pondered them in her heart"*
Luke 2 v 19 (N.I.V.)

Margaret Couper



Experience the Joy of Advent

***'Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings
of great joy, which shall be to all people.'***
Luke 2:10

Advent starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. The word 'Advent' is from the Latin word 'adventus' meaning 'coming'. Sometimes called 'Little Lent', it's a time to prepare our hearts for the future Second Coming, as well as the birth of Christ. We celebrate the season with advent calendars, candles and evergreen wreaths - symbolising Christ as Light of the world, bringing new and everlasting life.

Here are seven simple tips to help you experience and share the joy of Advent!

Connect with your inner child: Think back to the time when you were a child, on the simple things that made you happy at Christmas. Focus only on the good and feel the joy of Christmas come flooding back!

Keep it simple: This year, go for gifts and cards that share the meaning of the season, shop early and stay within your budget.

Be people focused: Remember the story of Mary and Martha – keep meals simple and allow yourself time and space to focus on enjoying the company of your guests.

Make Room for Jesus: Take some time at the beginning of each day to read your Bible, meditate on Scripture and pray. Focus on giving thanks to God for His gift of Christ to the world and for all He has done for us.

Me Time: God wants us to prosper in body, soul and spirit, so try to eat healthy, don't overindulge, take time for long walks and enjoy the good and simple things in life!

Wear a smile and share the Joy! Finally, being joyful is a choice, it's not about your circumstances. So, decide to be thankful this season. Wear a smile, act and talk positively, do small things with great love, be on the lookout for opportunities to do good to people. Give to the homeless, visit the sick, or take gifts to lonely neighbours.

If people ask you about your joy, don't be afraid to share your faith. Simply explain to them that 'Christ lives in my heart, and He can live in yours too.'

Norma Murrain

Ladies Working Party – St Mary's



We would like to say a very big thank you to all who attended our Pre-Christmas Coffee Morning on 15th November. We are thrilled to report that to date over £950 has been raised which is a wonderful result. Huge thanks must be given to all who helped us reach this total, in any way: by helping to set up the hall and clearing away, by donating goods for sale and raffle prizes, by baking, by manning stalls, by washing up and so much more. Once again, a great team effort – thank you everyone!

We are looking forward to the Crib Service at 4pm on Tuesday 24th December in St Mary's church and will be providing refreshments afterwards as usual. Our LWP Christmas lunch has been postponed until 14th January. Our last meeting of 2019 will be on 10th December, and we shall resume our regular Tuesday afternoon meetings at 2.15pm on 7th January 2020.

An important part of our weekly meetings is when we hear news of people we remember in our prayers, and we think of them particularly at this time. We pray that they will find peace, comfort and hope in the message of the Advent season. Life can sometimes prove to be a challenge, and this time of year can present difficulties for some.

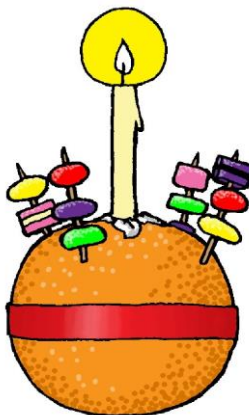
May we take this opportunity to wish you and all whom you hold dear, a very blessed, peaceful and happy Christmas.

With love from us all in the Ladies' Working Party.

Pat Thomson

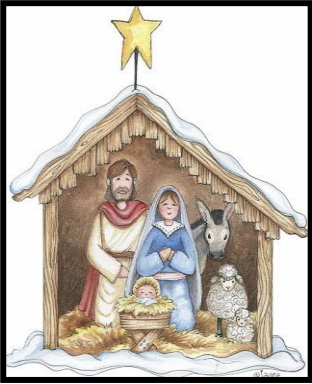
A note from the Editor

I would like to thank all of you who kindly contribute articles to the parish magazine. As you are aware Christmas is a busy time for us all, including me! Can I ask you if you would kindly let me have your articles for January's magazine no later than 15th December? Many thanks.



**Christingle
Service
Sunday
8th December
2019
at
St
Catherine's
Church
4pm**

Trusting God in all things



For many, Christmas is a time of happiness and holiday. An opportunity for parties, concerts, pantomimes and watching children perform nativity plays. We exchange colourful cards, and presents, and prepare special meals for family and friends. We sing carols. We adorn our homes and churches with all kinds of decorations.

All our celebrations are a far cry from that first Christmas. In our festivities it is easy to forget that when Jesus came

life was hard. The Romans were an occupying force in Israel. There was poverty. The Jews were a captive and oppressed people. They had numerous worries and fears and awaited their Messiah to give them freedom.

Mary was looking forward to marrying Joseph and living with him in Nazareth. Suddenly she meets an angel; told she will be pregnant with God's Son and then her fiancé wants to divorce her! Her world is changed. Joseph too is distressed. In the turmoil, God speaks to Joseph in a dream and while this explains the miraculous pregnancy, he can't stop the hurtful gossip or the doubters.

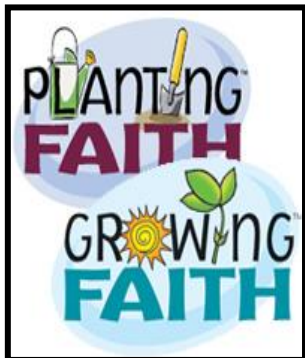
Even if he wanted to face his critics, Joseph can't stay in Nazareth. He is compelled to take Mary with him to Bethlehem to complete a census. The long journey, possibly all on foot, must have been horrendous. Then in Bethlehem there is unsuitable accommodation for a birth.

It was likely that when the shepherds came and shared their experience of an angel messenger and the singing heavenly host, that their difficult circumstances began to make sense. Then, perhaps, sometime later when the Eastern men came with gifts that they were reassured and encouraged that God was with them in their difficulties. Also, when God told Joseph in a dream to go with Mary and the infant to Egypt to escape Herod's cruelty, they knew that in a foreign land they could trust God with their lives.

Our Christmas comes amidst life's traumas and troubles. We may have on-going difficulties. In our struggles we need to know that God can be working out His purposes. Mary and Joseph came to know that in their hardships they were in God's will. Like them, we too must trust God in life-changing events.

"I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Lester Amann



St Mary's Children's Work

Since our last all-age service at St Mary's, we have started our new Scripture Union "Mosaic" material for mixed age groups: "God is good". Our first series is all about David – the young shepherd boy who was chosen by God against the odds to be the future king, because God doesn't look at outward appearances – God looks at the heart! As well as playing a game and learning a new song ("The Lord looks at the heart"), we made medals with a coin hidden

inside, and we thought about what God sees when He looks at our hearts. We thanked God that although He knows us through and through – the good bits and the not-so-good bits, He still loves us unconditionally, more than we can imagine.

In our following session, the children enjoyed dressing up and acting out how David beat Goliath the giant, with God's help. We talked about how David's time as a shepherd boy fighting off lions and bears as well as his complete trust in God had prepared him for the task and made him succeed and overcome the giant. With a game and 'floating prayers' we learnt that God will help each one of us to grow into the person He wants us to be, and that we can always ask for God's help if we're struggling at times to be kind or to share or to say sorry.

At the time of writing, we have just had a fun morning of preparation for next Sunday's all-age service to celebrate "Christ the King." We matched up jigsaw pieces of kings and queens, princes and princesses and worked out who they all were (bit of a History lesson!), before thinking about what monarchs have and do, what makes a good or a bad king, and how Jesus is a very different kind of king – the king of our hearts. We enjoyed dressing up as kings, queens and princesses, practising the song "Jesus is our King" and making paper flags to wave, as well as practising the dramatic gospel reading and prayers for the service. More about that in next month's article...

As the Christmas season is fast approaching, we are looking forward to our annual Christingle service on 8th December (4pm at St Catherine's), our Junior Church Christmas party on 15th December, and our very special Crib Service on Christmas Eve (4pm at St Mary's). All very welcome!

The leaders and helpers involved in our children's and youth ministry across the parish would like to encourage you all to pray for the young people currently attending any of our churches (including Messy Church), and for their families. May the Lord bless them all. We wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas, full of love, joy, hope and peace.

Claudia König and Sam Bowman



News from St Catherine's & Kirk Christ



As we approach Christmas and the end of the year we look back and reflect on all that has happened in our Churches during 2019.

At Kirk Christ and St Catherine's we have had the pleasure of hosting many weddings and baptisms. In July the Flower Festival was held at Kirk Christ and this was a great success.

Fellowship has been had at the Lenten Lunches when our Methodist friends joined us, and also at the Soup Inn which has also involved the community in providing food and enabling them to meet together.

The Christmas Coffee Morning in St Catherine's Church Hall, on the last day of November, is the next event and it is hoped that this too will be a great success. When you read this report it will already have taken place.

Christmas then becomes the focal point for all our churches, and it is hoped that as many of you who are able will attend the services provided.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the congregations of Kirk Christ and St Catherine's churches, to wish everyone a Very Happy Christmas with God's Blessings.

Gerry Callister

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

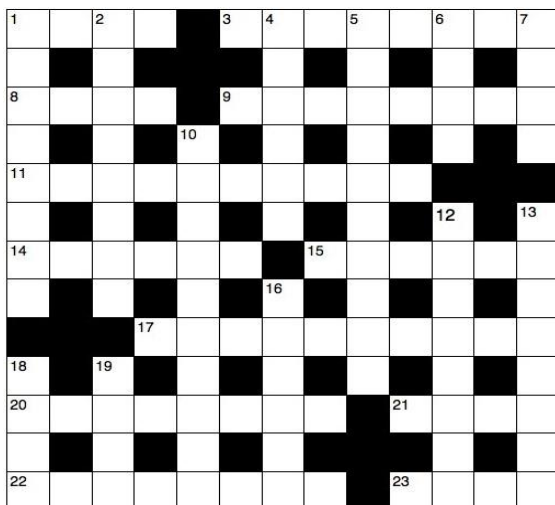
What do your family call him, that cheerful old man in a red robe and floppy hat who pops up everywhere at Christmas? Sometimes he's Father Christmas, sometimes Santa Claus, and in parts of Europe he's Saint Nicholas. That's his real name, abbreviated to 'Santa Claus' by Brits and Americans who don't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

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

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

Parish Pump

December Crossword

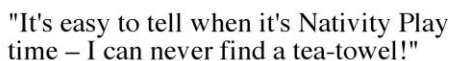
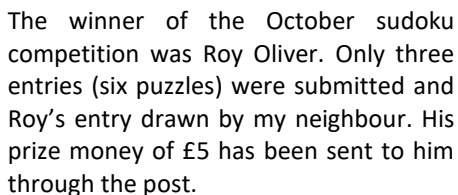


Across

- 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 (Deut. 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 (Deut. 29:18) (4)



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I would like to take this opportunity to thank Vicar Joe, and St Mary's congregation, in a big way, for the wonderful send-off they gave me on Sunday 3rd November, prior to my move to Scotland. Regards, Ray



The News Quiz for 2019



1. What is a Gillet jaune?
2. The famous fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld died this year leaving his £150 million fortune to Choupette. Who or what is Choupette?
3. In March an aeroplane left London City airport flight with number BA3271 to Düsseldorf. Where did it land?
4. Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelensky won the Ukrainian Presidential election in April. What was his job before the election?
5. There was a serious fire at Notre Dame in April. Who wrote a book in 1831 about the cathedral and to draw attention to the restoration it then needed?
6. What is Pteridomania? The Victorians had it.
7. Blackpool Tower celebrated its 125th anniversary in May 2019. What landmark inspired it?
8. Which former member of the cabinet was named after a battleship?
9. Which country has coins nicknamed loonie and toonie?
10. Politicians talked about red lines. What was the thin red line?
11. What would you use a French press to make?
12. In July we were told to look out for a "Painted Lady Summer". What is that?
13. What were male members of the RAF allowed to grow this year that that they have never previously been allowed?
14. What were seashiders were advised to stare at to stop them stealing chips and bothering them?
15. Which person has the following titles in other languages? (All one person)
Leading Star
The Son of the Big Boss
The Sun Looks at Him in a Good Way
The Helper of the Cows (literally he whom the cows love so much they call for him when they are in times of distress)
16. Which territory did Donald Trump say he was interested in buying for the US?
17. Where would you find a small copper and an Essex skipper?
18. What did Goldsmiths, University of London, ban the sale of to try to fight global warming?

Gardening's still good for you, even in December!

By Perfectplants.co.uk: an on-line shop offering delivery to your door of plants, gifts and accessories: Tel: 01323 833479



Braided Stem



Christmas Decorations

Find time in the depths of winter to commune with plants. You don't even need to stay outdoors but for a few minutes. You can bring the benefits of gardening inside. Make your door wreaths, swags and table decorations from real greenery and your house will fill with the delightful scents of nature.

What do you need? Gather ivy, holly, laurel, Eucalyptus, olive branches, mistletoe, sprigs of conifer and pine cones. If you want to make a door wreath, start by constructing a basic ring using bent hazel or willow (you can soak it for a few hours to make it more pliable). Tie on your greenery and secure using unobtrusive wire or twine. Add some ribbon, pine cones or dried fruit such as oranges. Voila!

Making real Christmas decorations is a great task to enjoy alone, with friends or with the kids. If doing the latter, ensure to collect non-toxic plants. Avoid yew and be aware that many berries from evergreen plants, including holly, are poisonous to humans. Don't let that put you off, however. Children love to create little bunches of joy and you can teach them about the wonders of nature while they are dabbling in creative experimentation.

Winter is also a great time to appreciate indoor plants too. The 'plant parent' revolution knows no bounds, especially for working people who don't have time for pets, children or maybe even friends! Caring for plants is officially good for us. We can exercise our natural 'nurturing' gene. Those who live alone rarely feel isolated if they have plants to care for.

And of course, plants work hard for us too. They filter toxins from the air and studies have shown they can even absorb bacteria and mould spores.

What's more, there's nothing wrong with talking to plants either. Studies by the Royal Horticultural Society have shown that the sound and vibration of voices can help plants to grow faster. They apparently respond most energetically to female voices. And the optimum time for speaking to your beloved Ficus, Monstera, cactus or Hoya house plants is at dusk. In further studies it was discovered that plants that are spoken to in a negative tone grow more slowly than those given positive vibes!

We have all gone completely potty over house plants and on Instagram there are now literally millions of posts using the hashtag 'houseplant' and #plantparenthood. There's even a story book which has been released especially for people who want to read stories to their plants! Launched by flatshare site SpareRoom, the book has been designed for 'plant parents' to reach out to their 'plant babies' in order to encourage botanical development.

Bedtime Stories for Plants has been written by children's author Alice Hemming and illustrated by Livi Gosling. The literature for the leafy makes it easier than ever for people to give their plants a daily dose of vocal encouragement. What's more, it's good for humans too. Communicating with nature can help reduce stress and anxiety and give a sense and meaning to many people's lives.

Wake up! It's Christmas!

Do you remember the excitement of Christmas Eve when you were a child? There was so much to look forward to the next day, and when you went to bed that night, probably later than usual, you were buzzing with excitement. Eventually you fell asleep and then the next morning you were woken by either a sibling or a parent, saying 'Wake up! It's Christmas!'

As we get older the excitement of Christmas probably fades somewhat and we perhaps feel overwhelmed by all that has to be done and worn out by the busyness around us. But still it is good to 'wake up to Christmas' in the sense of becoming conscious again of what the Christmas season is all about.

What are we celebrating really? The coming of the Saviour of the world, born as a little babe in the stable at Bethlehem. God's salvation plan coming to pass, and the opportunity for us to be brought into relationship with Him again. These are wondrous truths, and we need to wake up again to the meaning of Christmas.

Bethlehem was a busy place when Christ was born. The inns were full, with visitors returning for the census, there was no room for the young couple from Nazareth. In the busyness many must have missed what was happening right before their eyes that night as the babe was born. The greatest event in history but because they were not 'awake' they missed it!

Don't be asleep this Christmas time. Don't be so busy that you fail to notice the significance of what we are celebrating. Let the wonder of it capture your heart again and create in you a sense of gratitude and thankfulness for all that God has done for you. The Saviour has come, rejoice and be glad!

Tony Horsfall

In praise of Good King Wenceslas



When I was a choir boy many years ago, writes **David Winter**, 'Good King Wenceslas' was a very popular carol. A man sang the King's lines, a boy sang the Page's, and the choir filled in the narrative. It was not of course technically a Christmas carol but one for which most people know as 'Boxing Day' – the 'Feast of Stephen' the first Christian martyr.

But you don't hear Good King Wenceslas these days. It fell foul of political correctness. The king was wealthy and very kindly, helped a poor man, but the last verse was the problem. It called on 'Christian men, wealth and rank possessing'. To help the poor and be blessed in doing it. All very patronising, class-conscious, and chauvinistic. So, it has simply disappeared.

I think that's a pity, and I also think it's a serious misunderstanding of the carol. It relates to the good deeds of a tenth century Duke of Bohemia, Wenceslas I, and concerns a king and his page, and a poor man freezing and potentially starving whom he saw from his window.

The king didn't, as he might well have done, simply order some minion to take the man some food or fuel. He decided to do it himself assisted by his young page. Together they braved the bitter wind and snow in order to take pine logs and food to this humble dwelling. That is not patronising but true Christian grace.

Yes, the last verse does express a Victorian view of characters but that's when it was written. No one should condemn the carol and its message. Who would shrink from following its example? I'm afraid texting a token ten quid to a charity does not quite qualify.

Love requires action, if we don't see that then we have missed the point. That is the message of this lovely carol.

A Christmas Prayer

Lord, as I enter into the fast-paced season ahead, help me walk slowly and quietly. Let me stop and listen to the angels sing of the greatest news ever told. Let my heart, mind and soul join the chorus. "Glory in the Highest!! The Messiah has been born!"

Among all the bright sparkling lights and cheery holiday tunes, let my spirit travel once again toward Bethlehem to honour and worship Jesus, my King, The Prince of Peace, the Lord of Hosts, Mighty Counsellor, Son of God, the Lamb. All Your love, mercy and power somehow made flesh in the tiny form of a humble baby born in a manger. Let me worship the only one who is worthy to take our sin away and open the gates of all eternity! Amen

All in the month of December



300 years ago, on 31st Dec 1719 John Flamsteed, British astronomer died. He was the first Astronomer Royal, and founder of the Greenwich Observatory.

150 years ago, on 31st Dec 1869 Henri Matisse, the French artist, was born. He became leader of the Fauvist movement.

125 years ago, on 3rd Dec 1894 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 Christina Rossetti, British poet and hymn-writer, died.

100 years ago, on 1st Dec 1919 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 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 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.

60 years ago, on 1st Dec 1959, 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 the British Government abolished the death penalty for murder.

30 years ago, on 3rd Dec 1989 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** the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin was reopened, effectively reuniting East and West Germany.

20 years ago, on 1st Dec 1999 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** the UK devolved political power in Northern Ireland to the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive Committee. **Also 20 years ago, on 31 Dec 1999** 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 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 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.

From the Registers

Funeral (October 2019)

Monday 21st October

Arthur George Corrin

Kirk Christ @ 1pm

Baptisms (October 2019)

Sunday 6th October

Logan James Dunn

Reuben Finlay Joynes

Alexander Michael Harrison

St Catherine's @ 11am

Sunday 20th October

Harvey Elwyn Brotherton Lewis

Kirk Christ @ 11am

Sunday 27th October

Thea Jessie Bell Costain

Kirk Christ @ 9.30am

Sunday 27th October

Freddie John Brooks-Lund

St Mary's @ 11am

Safeguarding

The Parish of Rushen is committed to the safeguarding, nurture and care of **everyone** within our church community. If you, or someone you know, are concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk or has been harmed, or are concerned about the behaviour of someone towards children or vulnerable adults, please contact:

Rushen Parish Safeguarding Officer, Claire Jennings (Tel. 830850)

The **Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser** has now been appointed. For more details contact the diocese.

A copy of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy is available on the Diocesan website: http://www.sodorandman.im/safeguarding_inclusion



Rushen Mothers' Union



We are indebted to Mrs Ann and Mr Jim Cottier who found time in their very busy schedule, to come to speak to us on November 11th in St Catherine's hall, on the work of the Royal British Legion. The well attended meeting was ably led by Mrs Sue Maddrell, who warmly welcomed members and guests. Mrs Valerie Vaughan had carefully chosen and played our hymns; "Make me a channel of Your peace", and later, "When we walk with the Lord". Mrs Audrey Hibbert read "Lie in the Dark and Listen", by Noel Coward and also a lovely poem written by Mrs Margaret Couper. Valerie and Gerry had kindly laid out the hall for our meeting and ensured it was warm and inviting. Thank you all.

Valerie gave us a short talk on St Thomas's MU 120th Anniversary event which she had attended, and Mrs Elsie Faragher gave us more information about the Diocesan Advent Service at 7pm on December 3rd in St Catherine's Church, which Rushen MU are hosting and to which members are invited to bring some mince pies, shortbread or cakes, and also their envelopes with donations to the MU charity for this year "Monitors4kids". Mrs Sue Bould has kindly offered to pick up members with no transport. MU Diocesan newsletters, and the magazines "Families First" were distributed.

While Mr Jim Cottier produced the power point display, Mrs Ann Cottier accompanied each slide with an explanation of the many and varied aspects of the work of the RBL, from its inception as the Manx Legion in 1917, to the present day. This fascinating talk left us all in admiration of the work done and the people helped, teaching us about aspects of welfare, benevolence, comradeship, fundraising, education and so much more good work of which we had no previous knowledge. If anyone had previously thought the RBL was only for two weeks in the year, we no longer do – 365 days! We would love to have them back.

Mrs Pat Thomson gave the vote of thanks and after a very appreciative round of applause, followed by The Grace, we all enjoyed tea and biscuits supplied by Sue B and Elsie.

The Diocesan Advent Service is mentioned above, after which our next meeting will be our Christmas Party on Monday 9th December at 2pm in St Mary's Hall when members are asked to bring a small plate of food please, and a reading of their choice. As always, we warmly welcome guests.

May we all take this opportunity to wish any member unable to attend, and especially our indoor members, a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Pat Thomson

God in the Arts

Gauguin's Portrait of a Breton Girl at Prayer

*The National Gallery at Trafalgar Square in London houses one of the finest collections of European paintings in the world, with some 2,300 works spanning the centuries. During this year, with the help of the **Rev'd Michael Burgess**, we are journeying through the gallery to explore one of those treasures each month. (Editor)*



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.'*

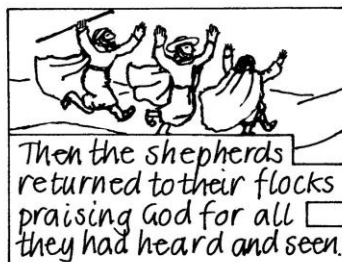
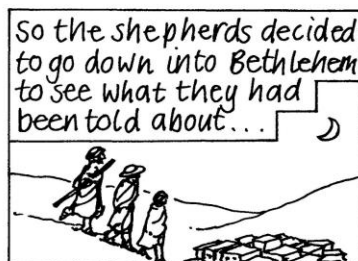
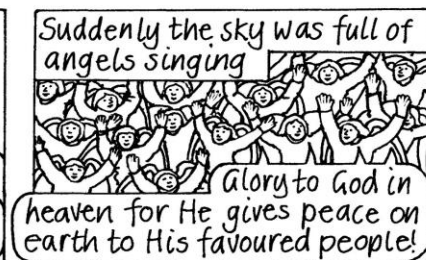
Children's Page

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.



The Story Behind the Hymn



In the Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breast full of milk
And a manger full of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air,
But only His mother
In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.

Christina Georgiana Rossetti (1830-1894) gives us one of the most beloved Christmas hymns. The author of three collections of mostly religious poetry and four devotional books, she came from a family steeped in the arts. Her deep faith is thought to be partially the result of the solace that she found in writing as a result of her poor health from age sixteen.

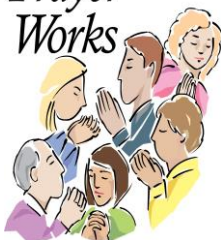
Christina's father, Gabriele Rossetti, was a professor of Italian at King's College, London, living in exile in England. Her brothers Dante Gabriel and William Michael gave birth to a nineteenth-century art movement, the Pre-Raphaelites, for which the beautiful Christina often served as a model (*see the photo*), especially for portraits of the Madonna. Among the family friends was Charles Dodgson, who, under the pseudonym of Lewis Carroll, authored the famous *Alice in Wonderland*. An ardent Anglican, Christina rejected one suitor because he was Roman Catholic.

In the first memorable verse, Rossetti creates a dreary and desolate image of the world into which the infant Jesus appeared by drawing on the experience of a British winter. She is not suggesting that it literally snowed in Bethlehem, but is drawing on a long-established literary idea of associating snow with Christ's birth.

The second verse uses the device of antithesis to make the point that the eternal One whom "heaven could not hold" nor "earth sustain" appeared during the "bleak winter" of human existence where "a stable place sufficed." This paradox of the eternal One born in a humble setting is a primary theme of many hymns of this season.

The third verse explores the intimacy of the manger scene, and fourth contrasts the heavenly glory of gathered "Angels and archangels" and "cherubim and seraphim" with the mother who alone "worshipped the beloved with a kiss." The final verse is perhaps one of the most endearing to singers of Christmas hymns. The writer invites us to offer our own gift to the Christ Child just as the shepherds and wise men did. Rather than the present of a lamb or expensive gifts, however, we offer the most important gift -- our hearts.

Prayer Works



Rushen Parish Prayer Diary

During this season of Good Will let us pray that we can do our part to bring Peace to the world: God our Father, Creator of the world, please help us to love one another. Make nations friendly with other nations; Make all of us love one another like brothers and sisters. Help us to do our part to bring peace in the world and happiness to all people. Amen

Prayer Works



December 2019

This is your invitation to pray day by day for:

- 1st Shopkeepers during the busy build up towards the Christmas period
- 2nd All Christians preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ
- 3rd The Mothers' Union Advent Service at St Catherine's Church this evening at 7pm
- 4th Our fellow neighbours and the love and respect we have for them
- 5th People in care homes preparing for Christmas and all that it means to them
- 6th Rushen Parochial Church Council and the work it does for the parish
- 7th The hope that Christmas will bring families together again who have been apart
- 8th The annual Christingle Service at St Catherine's Church at 4pm this afternoon
- 9th Children with disabilities which require them to be cared for by others
- 10th The relatives of those who have died throughout the parish during 2019
- 11th Nativity plays being performed at our island's primary schools prior to Christmas
- 12th Soup Inn taking place in St Catherine's Church Hall this lunchtime
- 13th Those who have no homes and are wondering what Christmas will bring to them
- 14th The vicar, readers and retired clergy and all they do for the parish
- 15th All those who do such good work for charities across the island
- 16th Sidespersons and the important role they play during church services
- 17th Sportsmen and women providing enjoyment and competitiveness
- 18th The Carols, Candles and Cake event at St Peter's Church this evening at 7.30pm
- 19th The Port Erin Commissioners' Carol Service at St Catherine's Church at 7pm
- 20th Those travelling away from the island to celebrate Christmas, and their safe return
- 21st All Christian children and their many expectations during this Christmastide
- 22nd The Parish Carol Service at Kirk Christ at 6.30pm this evening
- 23rd People in hospital hoping to be home during the Christmas season
- 24th The Crib Service taking place in St Mary's Church at 4pm this afternoon
- 25th Peace throughout the world
- 26th St Stephen, the first martyr, who is remembered today
- 27th Those who have suffered, in one way or another, during the Christmas period
- 28th People who have had to work throughout Christmas to maintain vital services
- 29th Teachers preparing for a new term at school
- 30th Preparations for the New Year and the hope it brings for everyone
- 31st New Year celebrations throughout the world and the hope for peace

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| Services December 2019 |
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| 1 st December (Advent 1) | 8am | St Catherine's Holy Communion (BCP) |
| | 9.30am | Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW) |
| | 11am | St Mary's Holy Communion(CW) |
| | 11am | St Catherine's Morning Prayer (CW) |
| | 3.15pm | St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP) |
| | 6.30pm | St Catherine's Advent Meal |
| 4 th December | 11.15am | Southlands Holy Communion (CW) |
| | 2pm | St Mary's Play & Praise |
| 8 th December (Advent 2) | 9.30am | Kirk Christ Holy Communion (CW) |
| | 11am | St Catherine's Holy Communion (CW) |
| | 11am | St Mary's Morning Prayer (CW) |
| | 3.15pm | St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP) |
| | 4pm | St Catherine's Christingle Service |
| 15 th December (Advent 3) | 8am | St Catherine's Holy Communion (BCP) |
| | 9.30am | Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW) |
| | 11am | St Catherine's All Age Service (CW) |
| | 11am | St Mary's Holy Communion (CW) |
| | 3.15pm | St Peter's Holy Communion (BCP) |
| 22 nd December (Advent 4) | 9.30am | Kirk Christ Holy Communion (CW) |
| | 11am | St Catherine's Holy Communion (CW) |
| | 11am | St Mary's Morning Prayer (CW) |
| | 3.15pm | St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP) |
| | 6.30pm | Kirk Christ Parish Carol Service |
| 24 th December (Christmas Eve) | 4pm | St Mary's Crib Service |
| | 7.30pm | St Peter's Holy Communion (BCP) |
| | 11.30pm | St Catherine's Midnight Communion (CW) |
| 25 th December (Christmas Day) | 10.00am | Kirk Christ Joint Holy Communion (CW) |
| 29 th December (Christmas 1) | 11.00am | Kirk Christ Holy Communion (CW) |

(Times of services correct at time of publication)

(CW) Common Worship (BCP) Book of Common Prayer

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Mrs Susan Maddrell, Athol Lodge, Fistard, Port St Mary 833151

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Mr & Mrs G Callister, 60 Ballamaddrell, Port Erin 474924/834627

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Ballafesson, Port Erin

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**Articles for January's parish magazine should be submitted to the editor
no later than 15th December.**

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Mr M D Porter, 10 Fairway Drive, Rowany, Port Erin 832143

Churchyard Enquiries:

Please contact Mr Harry Dawson: 478050/835770
or Mr G Callister: 474924/834627

December Sudoku Competition

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This is the last sudoku competition. In future there will be one puzzle in the magazine for you to solve which hopefully will give you the opportunity to have some fun when you have a spare moment. It has been a pleasure holding the competition, but the number of puzzles submitted each month has dropped from over ten in the early stages, to no more than three or four during the past couple of months and I feel this makes it less competitive. I would like to thank everyone who has taken part. Do please enter this last competition. The last date for entries is Friday 27th December 2019. Good Luck!