



December
2020

Rushen Parish Magazine



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From the Editor

My Dear Friends

I am writing this in the middle of November on a cold and dark day. It is exactly five weeks to Christmas Day, a day that most people look forward to in earnest. I am already considering writing my Christmas cards and wondering whether the people to whom I write them are still well, are suffering from Covid-19, or have succumbed to it and are now in God's hands. It is a stark reality to the situation as it is, and one which I would never have considered a year ago.

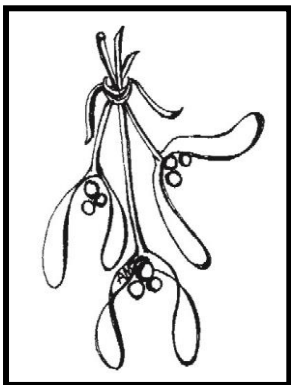
In a way it has become part of our daily lives, and even if we put it to the back of our minds, we are constantly reminded of it in news bulletins, on social media, or in the newspapers. It has split families apart and meant that in some cases, because of government restrictions, the time when families normally get together to celebrate the birth of Jesus, may not come. Of course, all that may change in the next five weeks and the picture I have painted above may be totally different. Let us hope so!

Earlier in this editorial I stated that 'most' people look forward to Christmas. There are, of course, those who do not for one reason or another. It could be that it reminds them of the anniversary of the death of someone who was once close to them, or of a marriage breakdown, or that it is a time of loneliness for them when everyone else is having a good time. There could be financial difficulties or that redundancy is on the horizon, or that their religion does not celebrate the event, or that they have no belief in the birth of our Lord. Whatever their situation happens to be, we who are enjoying ourselves, should spare a thought, or say a prayer, for these people. Every one of them has been born into God's world, and as such should be treated as equals.

Christmas for me this year is also going to be difficult, and certainly like no other I have experienced. Not only have I lost my wife and best friend, but also, I cannot see my sons and their families, especially my grandchildren, and it hurts. However, it does not detract from the fact that Jesus was born into the same world as me. It had its own problems, like those we are experiencing. There might not have been a pandemic, but people were suffering from disease, homelessness, poverty, and a lack of hope. Nothing has really changed except that we were given a gift far greater than anything we have been given in the past or will ever receive. Whatever our circumstances are this Christmas, let us take the gift of Jesus Christ into our lives and make the world a better place for everyone.

David

Mistletoe



*Editor: Another different common flower by **Kirsty Steele**, a retired teacher and active church organist.*

This time of year you can see all sorts of traditions played out with regard to Christmas decorations. Strict adherents use holly, ivy and of course, mistletoe. While holly and ivy are to be found in gardens and hedgerows, mistletoe usually only appears in greengrocers' shops, or high in a tree well out of reach.

Mistletoe is *hemiparasitic*, meaning that although its leaves enable it to feed itself through photosynthesis, its roots invade the host tree or shrub to extract water and other nutrients. Its favourite host trees are apple, lime, hawthorn, poplar or oak and it normally hangs as a large globe, tantalisingly high and totally visible once winter arrives and it is the only green left on the tree. There are some spectacular examples in Windsor Great Park, clearly visible from the path on the opposite side of the River Thames.

We all know about the almost translucent white berries, fleshy and sticky, which form in the forks of mistletoe's many branches. While they are toxic to humans, they are attractive to birds. When birds have enjoyed the juicy flesh, they wipe the remaining seeds off their beaks onto the nearest branch [somewhat like small children wiping sticky hands on any surface close by – mummy's face or clothes?]. With luck the seed remains stuck to the bark and solves mistletoe's problem of reproduction.

In Greek mythology, mistletoe gave access to the Underworld. Romans thought it represented Peace, Love and Understanding and perhaps that is how it has sidled into our Christmas celebrations. The earliest documentary evidence for kissing under mistletoe dates from the sixteenth century. Some people think a berry should be removed after each kiss. Given the small size of pieces generally available these days, perhaps that is a practice not to be pursued!

Picture

The teacher asked her Sunday School class to draw a picture of a Bible story with a Christmas theme. She was puzzled by Kate's picture, which showed four people on an airplane. She asked her which story it was meant to represent. 'The Flight to Egypt,' was the reply. Pointing at each figure, the teacher ventured: 'That must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. But who's the fourth person?'

'Oh,' explained Kate happily, 'that's Pontius - the pilot!'



Ladies Working Party – St Mary's

Our recent meetings have seen us discussing Christmas 2020, which this year for many people may be a very different time as family members may be unable to travel to be together. We are blessed that here on the island we are able to plan and prepare while being aware that in the UK things are very different. Students will be returning this month and we wish them and their families a safe and happy reunion.

The ladies now provide refreshments in the church after morning service each Sunday and will resume in the hall for All Age Services on 22nd November. We shall decorate the church with fresh poinsettia plants and battery-operated candles on 30th November, which shall also be our last meeting until January 2021. Our LWP coffee morning will take place on 30th January and our LWP lunch on 2nd February 2021. (to be confirmed)

More immediately, we shall be helping to make Christingles on Sat 5th December for the Service on 6th December in St Catherine's, and with refreshments in the hall after the Crib Service in St Mary's on 24th December.

We are pleased to be in a position financially to help to maintain our lovely Church gardens, and have arranged that they be "wintered", to look cared for, until Spring requires greater effort. We are grateful for Bruce's efforts to achieve this, and for his help in ensuring that Eddie's garden layout be maintained.

Each week we hear about those whose health is giving cause for concern and we pray for them. Now may we take this opportunity to wish you all and those whom you hold dear, a very blessed, peaceful and happy Christmas.

With love from us all in the Ladies Working Party.

Pat Thomson

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Christmas Foretold

*From untold glory to a manger of straw
Who could imagine such a thing?
From Eternity stepping down into Time
With very few to welcome Him in.*

*The Books of the Bible all tell of His coming
His life, His death, redemption's plan,
The King of glory revealed in God's Word
Touching our earth in the form of a Man.*

*Mary and Joseph, shepherds and wise men,
In His mother's arms the Baby lies,
Scripture describes these amazing events
As prophecy unravels before our eyes*

Megan Carter



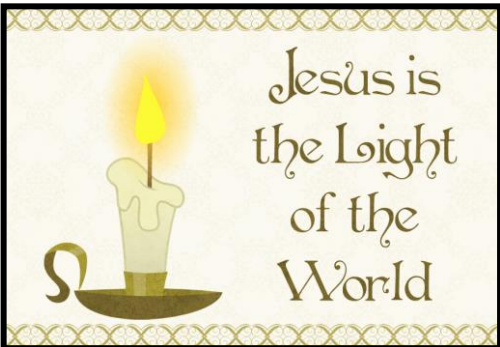
Jesus, Light of the World

There's a light that has been shining
 since before the world began,
 and it cannot be extinguished
 by bird or beast or man.
 It will shine on in the darkness,
 through all eternity.
 A sign of everlasting hope
 for all mankind to see.

Though sometimes we forget it,
 when our days are bright and clear,
 it is waiting in the darkness
 when our days are dark with fear.
 It is always there to guide us
 when we seem to lose the way,
 and its rays have been a comfort
 through many a weary day.

This light, it is a gift from God
 to his beloved earth,
 for he knew that we could stray from him
 from the moment of our birth.
 So he gave it as a safeguard
 until the battle's won,
 for this light that guards and guides us all,
 is Jesus his own son.

Pauline Bowman



John Lennon 40 years since his death

It was 40 years ago, on 8th December 1980, that John Lennon – rock musician, peace activist and a founder of the Beatles – was shot dead, aged 40, outside his New York City apartment by Mark Chapman, a deranged fan.

Lennon is usually regarded as anti-Christian, but he denied being “anti-Christ or anti-religion”. Three months before he died he said he had a spiritual side, but “the whole religion business suffers from the 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' bit. There's too much talk about soldiers and marching and converting”.

As a youngster Lennon attended St Peter's Anglican Church in South Liverpool, where he was a member of the youth group, but his post-Beatles single *Imagine* is widely regarded as being an “atheist anthem”, and his remark in 1966 that the Beatles had become more popular than Jesus led to threats, protests and record-burning in America.

However, in the 1970s Lennon did in fact show a strong interest in Christianity, saying the Beatles were always on the side of Christ. In 1977 he wrote some Christian songs and told friends he had become a born-again Christian. But his wife Yoko Ono took him to Tokyo and pulled him away from this; eventually he was said to have retained only universalist ideas.

Tim Lenton

St Mary's Sunday School



In October and early November, we spent several sessions learning about prayer and specifically The Lord's Prayer. We discussed what prayer is (talking to God), why we pray and how we can pray, and that God is always listening when we pray. The children enjoyed learning the song 'Prayer is like a telephone' and making our own prayer dice to give thanks, say sorry and pray for ourselves and other people.

Our November all-age service was held at the festival of Christ the King, the last Sunday of this church year. The service was led by our curate Liz Hull, who explained that the celebration of Christ the King concludes the Kingdom season, as the last few weeks since All Saints Day had been focusing on parables about the Kingdom of God. The Sunday School acted out the gospel reading about the king separating the sheep from the goats at the final judgement, the sheep being those who show love for their neighbour in various ways and therefore showing their love for Jesus, while the goats may say they love Jesus but don't actually show practical love to their neighbour and are therefore not welcome in the kingdom.

Liz made the congregation think about how we view certain groups of people (e.g. the homeless, drug addicts, Muslim refugees) and whether we would consider them deserving of our help. She concluded that we are probably all partly sheep and partly goats and encouraged us to try and see everybody through God's eyes, offering help to all who need it regardless of their faith, background or political views. She finished by telling the story of Papa Panov who shared what he had with several needy people one Christmas Eve while waiting for Jesus to come and visit him. When Jesus appeared to him in a dream, Papa Panov asked him why he hadn't come after all, but Jesus answered that he had been in all the people Papa Panov had helped that Christmas Eve. May we see Jesus in all the people around us who need help in various ways, and may we, like Papa Panov, be willing to help them, especially this Advent season. "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

The Sunday School led the congregation in singing 'Give me joy in my heart', accompanied by percussion instruments and with Lukas playing the mandolin, and the children and young people also read the prayers. Everybody did very well with their readings as well as the singing – we are very fortunate to have such talented and willing young people in our congregation! Following the service, we all enjoyed refreshments in the hall for the first time since lockdown. Many thanks to Peter for setting up the hall and to the ladies for serving the refreshments – much appreciated! We are now looking forward to the season of Advent leading up to the celebration of Christmas, with our annual Christingle service on 6th December (4pm at St Catherine's), our December all-age service on 13th December, our Sunday School Christmas party on 20th December, and our very special Crib Service on Christmas Eve (4pm at St Mary's). All are very welcome! 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



On Sunday 1st November at Kirk Christ, on a very wet evening, an 'All Soul's Service' was held. Thirty nine family members and friends, all who had lost loved ones, attended a very moving service. The response from those present was positive and regarded it as a very moving service which had given them comfort during what is for them, a difficult time.

The Remembrance Day Service on 8th November was attended by just over one hundred and fifty people. Many organisations, including children from the scouts, guides, and from our two schools, laid wreaths in memory of those who had fallen.

A successful Soup Inn was held in St Catherine's Church Hall at the beginning of the month. Messy Church was held on the third Saturday of November.

Tickets for the Murder Mystery Evening have all been sold and details of how this was enjoyed will be reported in next month's magazine.

Please do attend the Christingle Service which is being held in St Catherine's Church at 4pm on Sunday 6th December.

Gerry Callister



Please Note

If you wish to submit an article for inclusion in January's Parish Magazine it will need to be sent to the editor no later than 15th December 2020

Sudoku December 2020

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

Christmas cake

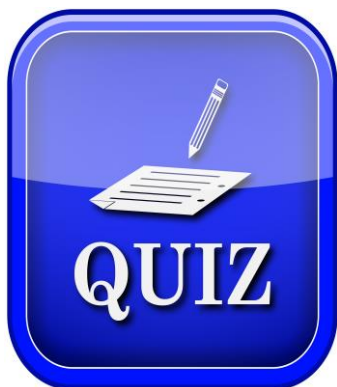
Every Christmas, composer Giacomo Puccini would have a cake baked for each of his friends. One year, having quarrelled with Arturo Toscanini just before Christmas, he tried to cancel the order for the conductor's cake. But it was too late, as the cake had already been dispatched. The following day, Toscanini received a telegram from Puccini: "Cake sent by mistake." He replied by return: "Cake eaten by mistake."

November Sudoku Solution

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

November Crossword Solution

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



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A Quiz for 2020

1. Job applications from weirdos and misfits were invited from people to work at which place in London?
2. Which famous actor who died this year is associated with the phrase "I am Spartacus?"
3. In February the Church of England advised against the practice of 'intinction' – what is it?
4. In a world "where you can be anything, be _____" – what, wrote actress Caroline Flack on Instagram in December 2019?
5. What were we supposed to do in March while singing the National Anthem or Happy Birthday twice?
6. This year was a leap year. What do we call other years?
7. Which village in the Peak District is associated with self-isolation during a previous plague?
8. How long, literally, is quarantine?
9. Why did President Macron visit Britain on 18th July? What other Anglo-French anniversary could he have remembered but for some reason it was not mentioned?
10. How many countries launched space rockets to Mars this year?
11. Who, in their resignation letter in August, on Twitter posted, "I have championed our work, built our relationships and celebrated the diversity of our staff... and will always be an ambassador for the UK and the new Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office" after a four year career in Downing Street which had included scraps with a neighbour? He was going to spend more time with a family in the country.
12. Which day is the furthest away from Christmas Day?
13. What was the Battle of the Tennis Court and why was it remembered in August?
14. The BBC banned singing the lyrics from which song from the Last night of the Proms, because it had a link in their mind with slavery and colonialism?
15. This year marked the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the *Mayflower*. What event did they start which led to a public holiday?

Answers in January's Magazine

Advent

Grant us the patience of Mary –
As she held the child in her womb;
Month into month had progressed –
Expectant time would be soon.

Grant us the wisdom of Mary,
To know when to obey and do
Whatever was requested, and
Revealed to a chosen few.

Grant us the courage of Mary;
She protects the hope of our World;
Via care and contemplation,
Salvation's plan is unfurled.

Grant us the foresight of Mary,
To anticipate the divine:
The Lord will return triumphant,
And establish peace sublime.

Grant us the sheer joy of "Advent" –
Join Mary's magnificent song,
With hopefulness in the Saviour,
To whom all Christian's belong!

*'.....my spirit has rejoiced in God
my saviour' - The Magnificat*

Margaret Couper

Next Christmas

The grandson had just taken a photograph of his grandmother who'd come to stay for Christmas and her 89th birthday. 'Grannie, I sure hope I'm around next year to photograph you on your 90th birthday,' he said tactfully. 'Why not?' his grandmother shrugged. 'You look healthy enough.'

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Christmas Eve

How do you celebrate Christmas Eve? It has its own customs, the most popular of which is going to Midnight Mass, or the Christ-Mas. This is the only Mass of the year that is allowed to start after sunset. In Catholic countries such as Spain, Italy and Poland, Midnight Mass is in fact the most important church service of the entire Christmas season, and many people traditionally fast beforehand. In other countries, such as Belgium and Denmark, people dine during the evening, and then go on to the Midnight Service.

The British are behind some countries when it comes to exchanging presents: in Germany, Sweden and Portugal the custom is to exchange on Christmas Eve. But the British are ahead of Serbia and Slovakia, where the Christmas tree is not even brought into the house and decorated until Christmas Eve.

Yule logs are not so popular since the decline of the fireplace, but traditionally it was lit on Christmas Eve from a bit of the previous year's log, and then would be burned non-stop until 12th Night (6th January). Tradition also decreed that any greenery such as holly, ivy or mistletoe must wait until Christmas Eve until being brought into the house.



The end of a strange year. Celebrate life itself as we prepare for better times ahead!



Schlumbergera Purple



Chinese Money Plant

As we enter the last month of the year, most people will be heaving a sigh of relief. It's certainly been a strange and difficult time and there will be few that aren't looking forward to better things to come.

But out of all the uncertainty, gardens have proved to be a winner. Our outdoor spaces continue to provide a sanctuary and healing. We have become accustomed to immersing ourselves in plants and nurturing the living world that is virtually immune to all the troubles that we humans have endured. More people have tuned into gardening this year than ever before and property sales of flats and houses with gardens have soared.

A love of gardens naturally leads to an interest in plants and winter is the ideal time to do some swotting. This is the season to make plans for the spring so that your garden is ready for full enjoyment as soon as the weather allows. Here's our checklist of activities for you to enjoy in December:

- View your garden from above if you can. Gaze from an upstairs window and see what pleases you. Do you like the shapes?
- Make a note of anything you see that doesn't look the way you want it to.
- Perhaps your lawn could benefit from re-shaping?
- Do you need a tree or some structural shrubs?
- Are there plants ready to bring you spring colour in just a few weeks' time?
- If not, you can think about planting some in order to help you look forward to the next season.
- You can plant pansies, violas, primroses, primula and polyanthus in pots or in your beds. Make sure they will be easily seen – i.e. position them close to the house. Maybe at the front of the house so that passers-by can enjoy them too.

If you can't get outside, or you don't want to, why not bring the garden indoors? There are so many beautiful houseplants that are hugely beneficial in so many ways. They clean the air, provide opportunity for nurturing thereby have been proven to aid mental health, and they look amazing too. Enjoy the concept of 'shinrin-yoku', or 'plant bathing' this coming year and enjoy multiple benefits.

Here are the coolest, 'on-trend' houseplants that everybody wants at the moment:

- Philodendron Xanadu: a great plant for a slightly shady indoor site. The glossy leaves are held on stiff stems, forming a delightful, mounded shape.
- Epiphyllum anguliger, the fishbone cactus. This is the perfect, easy-care plant for sitting on a shelf or a semi-shaded windowsill where its 'zig zag' succulent foliage can cascade rather elegantly over the edges.
- Monstera, the cheese plant. This giant climber has been reborn since the 1980s. It is all part of the current desire to create a jungle theme and its huge glossy green leaves develop characteristic holes and splits as they mature. The variegated forms are highly sought after because they are so rare.
- Pilea peperomiodes, the Chinese money plant. It has round foliage that looks a little like coins. Also called the 'pass-it-on-plant' because it is so easy to propagate.
- Ficus lyrata, the fiddle-leaf-fig. The leaves look a little like violins and as it grows, this house plant loses the leaves from the lower portion of the stem. It therefore forms into more of a tree-shape as it matures.
- Calathea, in all its varied shapes and forms. The ultimate foliage plant because the leaves have so many different markings. Some look like rattlesnakes, some have contrasting stripes and many have purple on the undersides. What's more, the leaves tend to move during the day as they make the most of the light.

By Perfect Plants Ltd.

Visit Perfectplants.co.uk for houseplants, garden plants and garden-related gifts including growing kits suitable as Christmas gifts.





All in the month of December

400 years ago, on 21st December 1620, the first landing party from the British ship Mayflower arrived at what would become Plymouth Colony (now Plymouth Massachusetts). They began building houses there two days later.

300 years ago, on 31st December 1720, Charles Edward Stuart, commonly known as 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' was born. Stuart claimant to the British throne and leader of the unsuccessful Jacobite rebellion of 1745-46. Grandson of King James II of England and Ireland (also known as James VII of Scotland).

250 years ago, on 16th December 1770, Ludwig van Beethoven, German composer and pianist was born.

90 years ago, on 2nd December 1930, in his second State of the Union address, US President Herbert Hoover announced a huge public works programme to stimulate the economy and create jobs during the Great Depression.

80 years ago, on 29th December 1940, Germany dropped thousands of incendiary bombs on London, causing the worst fire damage since the Great Fire of London in 1666. About 200 people were killed.

75 years ago, on 27th December 1945, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development were formally founded.

60 years ago, on 9th December 1960, the first episode of the television soap opera Coronation Street was broadcast in the UK.

40 years ago, on 8th December 1980, John Lennon, rock musician and peace activist and a member of the Beatles, was shot dead, aged 40, outside his New York City apartment by Mark Chapman, a deranged fan.

30 years ago, on 1st December 1990, British and French construction workers on the Channel Tunnel broke through the last wall of rock separating the two halves, and Britain and France were linked for the first time in thousands of years.

25 years ago, on 13th December 1995, the Brixton riot took place in south London. Hundreds of youths rioted on the streets following the death of a black man in police custody.

20 years ago, on 13th December 2000, George W Bush finally claimed the US presidency, 36 days after the election was held, following a legal battle over disputed votes in Florida.

15 years ago, on 19th December 2005, the Civil Partnership Act came into effect in the UK. The first civil partnership under the act was formed in Belfast, that same day. The first in England and Wales were on 21st December.

10 years ago, from 18th December 2010 to December 2012, the Arab Spring took place in North Africa and the Middle East. The Tunisian Revolution spread and became a wave of demonstrations, protests, riots, coups, foreign interventions, and civil wars in North Africa and the Middle East. The leaders and governments of several countries were overthrown and ousted, and Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was killed (October 2011).

Follow the Star



Jesus' welcoming committee included Eastern scholars who learned about His birth through their study of astrology. I can't help thinking that the arrival of these people at Bethlehem is a link between a very early form of science (albeit mixed in with their own form of religion) and Christian faith. What better way to discover God than to explore the world and follow the evidence wherever it leads? But what exactly was the star of Bethlehem? Scientists have investigated this question over the centuries, coming up with a variety of answers.

First, there is the idea of a supernova: the massively bright explosion caused by a dying star. On rare occasions a supernova can be seen from Earth with the naked eye, remaining visible for several months. We now know that Herod the Great died around 4BC, so the actual date of Jesus' birth must be a little earlier. The supernovae that might match this timing were one in the Andromeda galaxy between March 8BC and September 7BC, and another in the constellation of Capricorn in the Spring of 5BC.

Next, comes a planetary conjunction. The alignment most commonly associated with the star of Bethlehem was between Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces in 7BC, but not everyone is sure whether this would be extraordinary enough to be the 'star' mentioned in the Bible.

Finally, the bright astronomical object that drew the Magi could have been a comet. This idea came from Sir Colin Humphreys, Professor of Materials Science at Cambridge University, and Oxford astronomer WG Waddington, who found that a comet was recorded by Chinese astronomers between March and May, 5BC. Humphreys then speculated that the 'no room at the inn' scenario came about because Jesus was born during Passover, and the Magi visited Jesus in May or June.

People interpret the biblical account of Jesus' birth in all sorts of ways, but there's very little argument from serious historians that Jesus of Nazareth actually existed. Whatever the true explanation for the 'star of Bethlehem' may be, there's plenty of evidence that an astronomical event could have happened at the time of His birth.

I think it makes perfect sense that if God was going to enter His own creation and take on the form of one of His own creatures, it should be marked by a very significant physical event!

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz

From the Registers

Wedding

Saturday 24 th October	@ 2pm	Kirk Christ	Gemma Louise Rodger & Jonathan Michael Corke
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Funerals

Thursday 8 th October	@ 3pm	Kirk Christ	Erin Tasker
Friday 23 rd October	@ 1pm	Kirk Christ	William (Bill) Ward
Monday 26 th October	@ 1pm	Kirk Christ	John Rourke

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



Angels?

Two daughters had been given parts in a Christmas pageant at their Church. At dinner that night, they got into an argument as to who had the most important role.

Finally, the 14 year-old said to her 8 year-old younger sister, 'Well, you just ask Mum. She'll tell you it's much harder to be a virgin than it is to be an angel.'

Rushen Mothers' Union



Our meeting on 9th November was very well attended, and a warm welcome was given to all members, guests and to our Speaker Mrs Kathleen Trustrum. Mrs Pat Thomson led the meeting in place of Mrs Sue Maddrell whose painful hip had prevented her attending. We all send her our love and best wishes. Mrs Valerie Vaughan played for us her carefully selected hymns; "Let all the World", and "The Day Thou Gavest, Lord, is ended". Pat led the prayers, and

Mrs Sue Bould treated us to two lovely and very relevant readings; "Shoebox" by Mrs Margaret Couper, and "Poppies for Remembrance". Thanks to Gerry, the hall was warm and set up ready for us. Thank you everyone.

Kathleen had arrived early and set up a table with many interesting items on display with which she illustrated her talk, entitled "Around the World in 80 Years". It was fascinating. She took us on a journey which included memories of her early childhood and family life in England, her Mathematical studies, and lacrosse playing, at Cambridge, and her further Research in Applied Maths also at Cambridge where she met and married Brian in Trinity Hall Chapel. Together they travelled to Massachusetts, on to Canada, and back to England, where they both found work in the University of Sussex, Brighton. After the birth of their daughter Anne, followed by David two years later, they moved to Nigeria, lecturing in a new university there. Brian having relatives in New Zealand and Kathleen having a keen interest in seeing the country led to a trip there, and before retirement they managed two terms sabbatical in Sri Lanka. A trip to the Holy Land followed retirement, and they ultimately found themselves, in 2009, in St George's Apartments, Port Erin.

We all enjoyed Kathleen's talk very much, and appreciated her bringing so many photos and items of memorabilia which she explained and passed around for us all to examine. After an appreciative vote of thanks from Mrs Audrey Hibbert, followed by our closing hymn and The Grace, we enjoyed our tea and biscuits together, further discussing aspects of Kathleen's talk.

Our next branch meeting is our Christmas Party on Monday 14th December to which members are invited to bring a small plate of food, and a reading. Also, if anyone wishes a lift to the Diocesan Advent Service at Kirk Braddan on Friday 4th December at 7pm, please do let either Pat or Sue Bould know.

May we 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 - He gave us eyes to see them: St Kevin of Glendalough and the blackbird



*Editor: The **Revd Michael Burgess** concludes his series on animals and birds as seen in art and scripture:*

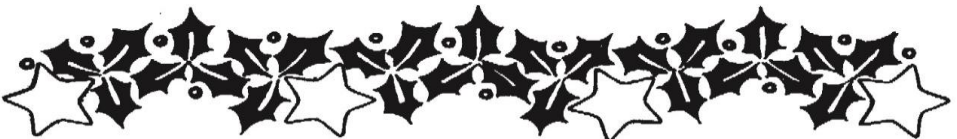
During this year we have explored the beauty and wonder of our world in the rich variety of all creatures great and small. In the months of lockdown and restrictions, many of us have used the time to look afresh at the world of Nature and have learnt to value it once again.

When we look at the life of the 6th century Irish hermit saint, Kevin of Glendalough, we see someone who had that special relationship with the birds and animals. An otter, the wolf and a wild boar were his co-hermits. We are told that during Lent as he was kneeling in prayer in his cell, he held

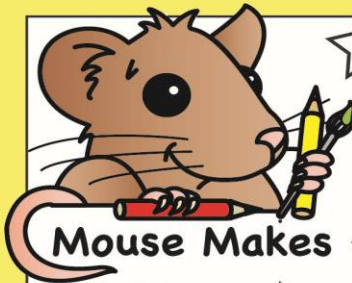
his arm out of the window. A blackbird mistook the arm for the branch of a tree and built its nest in the saint's hand. The saint waited until the eggs were laid and hatched and the fledglings had flown.

One of the earliest depictions of this story is a marginal drawing in *The History of Ireland* by Gerald of Wales in the early 13th century and now in the British Library. He visited Ireland several times and was entranced by the marvels he saw and the tales he heard. To accompany the story of St Kevin, an unknown artist drew the saint sat in his cell, cradling the blackbird gently in his left hand. Seamus Heaney captured the story in a poem in which he wondered if the saint was self-forgetful in all those months or perhaps in agony. The poet praises St Kevin because he sought no reward but offered time and patience to care for this sign of new life.

So much has happened to us during this year for good and ill, and we wonder what the new year will bring. Perhaps St Kevin can inspire us to journey with faith and hope, and to travel through the months ahead with a renewed concern for the created order around. The Gaelic name Kevin means loved. Like him, we pray that we will love and cherish this planet, and care for the wonder and beauty of birds like the blackbird and all the animals. Then we can rejoice with him in the wonder of Creation that displays the handiwork of God the Creator.



Children's Page



**HAPPY
CHRISTMAS!**

Read the Christmas
story in Luke
1:1 - 2:21

"I bring you **good news** that will bring
great **joy** to all people. The **Saviour** has
been born today! ...

*Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom
God is pleased".*

from Luke 2 vs. 10,11,14



A picture to colour
for Christmas. Colour in
one star each day as you
count down to Christmas!

The Story Behind the Carol



Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come
 Let earth receive her King!
 Let every heart prepare Him room
 And heaven and nature sing
 And heaven and nature sing
 And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns
 Let us our songs employ
 While fields and floods
 Rocks, hills and plains
 Repeat the sounding joy
 Repeat the sounding joy
 Repeat, repeat the sounding joy

No more let sins and sorrows grow
 Nor thorns infest the ground
 He comes to make
 His blessings flow
 Far as the curse is found
 Far as the curse is found
 Far as, far as the curse is found

He rules the world with truth and grace
 And makes the nations prove
 The glories of His righteousness
 And wonders of His love
 And wonders of His love
 And wonders and wonders of His love

One of the most interesting things about the popular carol "Joy to the World" is that it wasn't written about Christmas, or even as a song. Isaac Watts, a minister, and prominent hymn writer, in 1719 published "The Psalms of David: Imitated in the Language of the New Testament," a book of poems based on the psalms. More than a century later, the second half of the poem that drew on Psalm 98 was adapted, set to music, and became "Joy to the World."

Instead of being written for Christmas, the original poem was composed to celebrate the Second Coming of Jesus. No one seems to know how it eventually was associated with Christmas.

The music accompanying the song is thought to have been composed in 1839 by Lowell Mason, another prominent hymn writer, with some notes possibly borrowed from Frederick Handel's masterpiece "The Messiah." Some writers believe that the Handel himself wrote the music.

Watts believed that the songs performed in worship services in his time lacked joy and emotion "To see the dull indifference, the negligent and thoughtless air that sits upon the faces of a whole assembly, while the psalm is upon their lips, might even tempt a charitable observer to suspect the fervency of their inward religion," he said. It's unfortunate, then, that he never heard what began as Psalm 98 set to such joyous music.

In 2014 TIME magazine set out to determine the most popular Christmas carol, also called a noel, in recent times. After combing through files at the U.S. Copyright Office going back to 1978, the magazine learned that "Joy to the World" was the second most recorded Christmas song over that period, following (distantly) only "Silent Night."

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

December 2020

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 vicar, readers and retired clergy and all they do for the parish
- 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 The annual Christingle Service at St Catherine's Church at 4pm this afternoon
- 7th The hope that Christmas will bring families together again who have been apart
- 8th Rushen Parochial Church Council and the work it does for the parish
- 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 2020
- 11th Nativity plays being performed at our island's primary schools prior to Christmas
- 12th Sidespersons and the important role they play during church services
- 13th Those who have no homes and are wondering what Christmas will bring to them
- 14th The Mothers' Union Christmas Party taking place this afternoon
- 15th All those who do such good work for charities across the island
- 16th The Carols, Candles and Cake event at St Peter's Church this evening at 7.30pm
- 17th The Port Erin Commissioners' Carol Service at St Catherine's Church at 7pm
- 18th Sportsmen and women providing enjoyment and competitiveness
- 19th Gerry Callister, his dedication to the parish, and all he does for everyone
- 20th The Parish Carol Service at Kirk Christ at 6.30pm this evening
- 21st All Christian children and their many expectations during this Christmastide
- 22nd Those who are unable to visit friends and relatives in the UK because of Covid-19
- 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

Services December 2020

2 nd December	11.15am 2pm	Southlands Holy Communion (CW) Play & Praise at St Catherine's
6 th December (Advent 2)	9.30am 11am 11am 3.15pm 4pm	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW) St Mary's Holy Communion(CW) St Catherine's Morning Prayer (CW) St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP) St Catherine's Christingle Service
13 th December (Advent 3)	9.30am 11am 11am 3.15pm	Kirk Christ Holy Communion (CW) St Mary's All-Age Service (CW) St Catherine's Holy Communion CW) St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)
20 th December (Advent 4)	9.30am 11am 11am 3.15pm 6.30pm	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW) St Mary's Holy Communion (CW) St Catherine's All-Age Service (CW) St Peter's Holy Communion (BCP) Kirk Christ Parish Carol Service
24 th December (Christmas Eve)	4pm 7.30pm 11.30pm	St Mary's Crib Service St Peter's Holy Communion (BCP) St Catherine's Holy Communion (CW)
25 th December (Christmas Day)	10am	Kirk Christ Joint Holy Communion (CW)
27 th December (Christmas 1)	11am	Kirk Christ Joint Holy Communion (CW)
3 rd January (Christmas 2)	9.30am 11am 11am 3.15pm	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW) St Mary's Holy Communion(CW) St Catherine's Morning Prayer (CW) St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)
10 th January (Epiphany 1)	9.30am 11am 11am 3.15pm	Kirk Christ Holy Communion (CW) St Mary's All-Age Service (CW) St Catherine's Holy Communion CW) St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)

Dates and times of services/activities subject to alteration)

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

Contact Details for Rushen Parish cont'd....

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(Mobile: 07808254356 email: lesley@pharmaconsulting.co.uk)

St Mary's Hall Bookings:

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

St Catherine's Hall Bookings:

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

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***Articles for January's magazine should be submitted
 to the editor no later than 15th December 2020.***

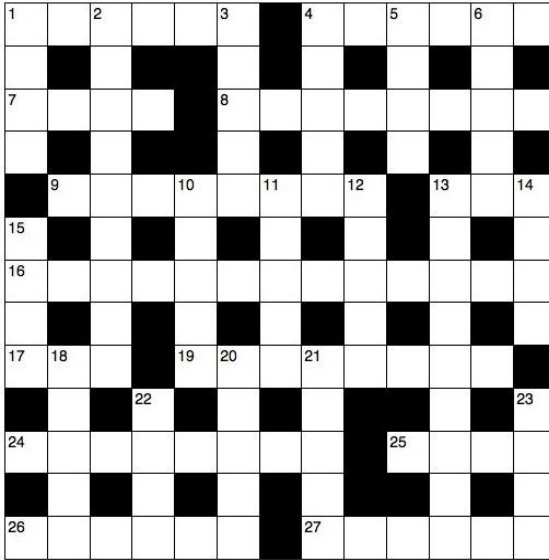
Parish Director of Music:

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

Crossword December 2020



Across

- 1** Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
4 'He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)
8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)
9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)
13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)
16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)
17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)
24 Able dock (anag.) (8)
25 The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)
26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)
27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

Down

- 1** Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)

- 3** 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)
11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)
15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)
18 Narnia's Lion (5)
20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5)
21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)