

Contact

A magazine for our community



Happy Christmas

St James' Church, Exeter - Winter 2023



Rector
Fr Henry Pryse



Licensed
Lay Minister
Joan Ridgway



Churchwarden
Rachel Martindill



Churchwarden
Andrew Mimmack

Parish Office

Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter. EX4 7AH.
01392 420407. office@stjamesexeter.org
www.stjamesexeter.org

Please contact us here for baptisms, weddings, hall bookings and any other Church-related matters.

Regular Services

Sunday	8.00 am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
	6.00 pm	Evening Prayer with Benediction (1 st Sunday)
	6.00 pm	Evening Worship (3 rd Sunday)

Wednesday 12.00 noon Holy Communion

Daily 8.30 am Morning Prayer

Online: Monday and Wednesday

In the church: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

At www.stjamesexeter.org/services/web-services-and-reflections you can find the Parish Eucharist on Sundays available to watch live or later.



From the Rectory

As a child, I knew that Christmas had nearly arrived when we drove out in the snow to a little church in Chamcook, New Brunswick in Canada, for a Christmas Eve service, with real candlelight. It could be a challenge to get there in the snow, and we had to keep well

wrapped up. At the service, we often met patients of my mother, a community physiotherapist who visited folk in their scattered, rural communities. Despite the often extreme cold, there was a special warm feel in the church, which was dedicated to St John the Baptist.

Normally we worshipped at the Anglican church in town, but Chamcook was counted as a part of the parish (like a mission community in our own diocese of Exeter today) and Christmas somehow felt special out there. After restrained, 'good' behaviour in church, there was the unbridled excitement and anticipation of what was to come overnight, when an empty stocking was mysteriously filled. In those early years, someone else usually joined us on Christmas Day. In later years, our reduced family was on the receiving end of kind and loving hospitality.



All families have their own customs, routines and way of doing things around Christmas. Sometimes people say to me, 'Christmas has really begun,' after they have attended the Crib Service at St James'.

The dates ahead on page 15 of this issue cover four Church seasons: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and Lent – at least as far as the fourth Sunday of Lent, which is also Mothering Sunday. On Christmas Eve the Crib will be set up in time for the Crib Service, and it will remain up until 28th January, when the Church remembers Jesus being presented in the Temple forty days after his birth. The crib itself reminds us of the precariousness and fragility surrounding the birth of Jesus, and of potential danger in the form of the murderous King Herod.

The experiences of the Holy Family – Mary, Joseph and Jesus – resonate with all that is now unfolding in the Holy Land. Yet, coming through all the suffering we are witnessing is the word 'Shalom' (peace), uttered by a hostage to one of her captors as she was released. Despite everything, she had been able to keep faith in the hope of peace.

This Christmas, may the peace of the Christ child help us to keep hoping and praying for peace in our world, now and in the year ahead.



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Friends of Mount Pleasant Health Centre

During 2023 we have financially kept our heads above water. No large purchases have been made but yearly commitments, such as the servicing of the automatic doors and CTG (foetal heartbeat) monitor, have continued. The 'Place to Pause' garden has also looked lovely, thanks to those volunteers who attend to it regularly. Some mobile CTG monitors have also been purchased.

At our recent committee meeting I learned that there is a waiting list of patients who require home blood pressure monitors. When this was discussed, it transpired that a number of these are not returned by patients when they are no longer required. This leads to problems for those who are unable to

travel to the health centre easily and who cannot afford to purchase their own monitor. So, if you have a home blood pressure monitor that you no longer need, please return it to the health centre. If you cannot do this in person, one of the Friends of Mount Pleasant Health Centre will gladly collect and return it for you, so that it can be used to help another patient.

Our former co-ordinator, Debbie, is now working more hours for the Primary Care Network. Beverley Todd has therefore taken over the role completely and is available on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings. To contact Beverley, call 01392 499291, and please do leave a message if there is no answer.

Once again, many thanks to all who contribute and participate in our events. Your support is invaluable.



Nesta Scales



A Walk Around Dolbury Hill

This is an easy walk for a winter's afternoon, along well maintained footpaths on the National Trust's Killerton estate. The route is entirely outside the Trust's paywall, so it is not necessary to be a member of the Trust or to have an admission ticket. A short detour can be made in order to visit the shop and café in the stable yard, and there are plenty of opportunities to make diversions and to explore both the woods (full of bluebells in spring) and the prehistoric Dolbury hillfort. The Killerton estate is criss-crossed by permissive footpaths, many of them signposted, which members of the public are encouraged to enjoy.

For those who travel here by car, there is a free car park by Ellerhayes Bridge, a medieval packhorse bridge that carries the old Exeter to Tiverton road over the River Culm. However, the car park is popular with dog walkers, so you may need to pick a quiet time of day.

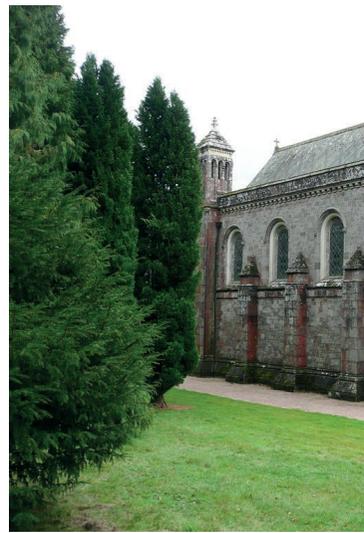
Your walk begins by leaving the bridge and heading towards Columbjohn. On the right is a fine view across the Culm valley towards Silverton. The flood plain in the foreground is currently being improved by the National Trust to create a wide variety of habitats for wildlife. After about 500 metres, the main track veers off to the right. Ignore this, and keep left on the path that hugs the edge of Park Wood.

The trail gradually climbs up some zig-zags, until it is joined from the right by another path that comes through Columbjohn Wood. If you follow this path for a short distance towards Columbjohn, you will find the footings of an abortive, eighteenth-century mansion, which was intended to have been the centre of the estate. This project was abandoned by the Acland family, when it was found that a good water supply could not be established.

As you continue along the route, you will now come through a gate onto a sloping meadow. In front of you is the boundary of the park

and garden that belong to Killerton House. To your right is an open vista towards Exeter, with Dartmoor visible in the distance on a clear day. Follow the public footpath as it hugs the boundary of the garden and you

will pass the monument erected by friends of Sir Thomas Acland, the tenth baronet, on his death in 1871. Sir Thomas was largely responsible for laying out the garden and park. A long serving MP, he was a leading light in the anti-slavery movement and held in immense respect throughout the county.



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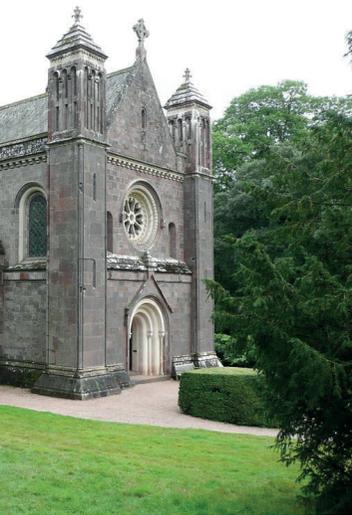
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The walk continues gently downhill until you see the gardeners' compost heaps on your left. A wooden stile takes you into the Front Park. From here, the path leads along the southern boundary of the garden and

offers a splendid view towards the arboretum, which is full of colour, especially in the autumn and in spring when the magnolias are in bloom. Various gates into the grounds serve as reminders of the need for an

admission ticket, so do keep the fence on your left until you reach the park gates. Turn left here, onto the public road.

A few yards after the gates, take the left fork in the road, signposted for Silverton. Before proceeding though, you may wish to divert into the stable yard for some refreshments at the café and a look around the well stocked shop. The road takes you past the Chapel of the Holy Evangelists, built by Sir Thomas in 1841 and currently under restoration. Immediately after the chapel you will see some stone gate piers on your left. Follow signs to the permissive footpath through the gate. You will now find yourself in the Back Park, on a gentle path that leads you back to Ellerhayes Bridge in about ten minutes.

Andrew Mimmack



Charity Focus: Melanesian Mission UK

The Melanesian Mission is a mission agency that works with the Anglican Church of Melanesia in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

One of the projects that the charity has been working on over the last year is the review and expansion of the Environment Observatories, which help communities to understand the causes behind climate change and the effects of environmental destruction. With this knowledge, communities can implement adaptation projects, such as replanting mangroves and protecting coral reefs to help break waves and lessen coastal erosion. These projects might also include relocating buildings away from flooding risks, installing water tanks to replace spoiled wells, or growing more heat-resistant crops. After a review of the four original test sites, the programme is expanding to schools and the four Anglican religious households. With this expansion programme in mind, MMUK staff, trustees and supporters undertook a 60-mile pilgrimage in September to pray for and raise funds for the project. The charity hopes to raise £3,000, and to date the pilgrims have raised £2,000. The address to visit is www.justgiving.com/fundraising/katieadrew if you would like to add your support.

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After three years of construction, the new chapel of the Community of the Sisters of Melanesia at their training headquarters in the Solomon Islands was consecrated on Pentecost Sunday. The previous chapel had become unsafe, so the community had been worshipping in its own rooms or in the refectory. Sisters from this community visit remote communities, as well as running Bible studies and literacy courses, and helping victims of domestic violence. The Sisters renew their vows of poverty, obedience and chastity every three years, or they can leave to serve their own communities and families with the training and skills they have acquired. With generous support from donors in the UK, the Melanesian Mission contributed £30,000 to the rebuilding of the chapel.





This year saw the charity's placements programme recommence after COVID. The Rev Lydia Cook from Ottery St Mary undertook a two-week placement, visiting schools, parishes, and meeting members of the Mothers' Union and the Anglican religious orders. MMUK offers partial grants for placements and is looking to send more volunteers to the region in 2024, to learn about Melanesian spirituality and to offer teaching in schools and theological colleges.

After a request from the Melanesian bishops, MMUK put out an appeal for sewing machines and materials to set up sewing workshops. Income generation opportunities for women in the region are limited, as many do not complete their education or have paid jobs. Sewing workshops give women the skills to make clothes for their own families and to make other items to sell, thus improving their self-esteem and livelihoods. The first shipment of goods was sent in October 2022, the second in March 2023, and a final shipment will go in December. The majority of donated goods was collected by the Mothers' Union in Exeter Diocese, which lovingly collected

patterns, threads and 40 machines, as well as raising the funds for servicing and shipment to Melanesia.

Katie Drew



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It has been a quiet term for the group, mostly sheltering from the autumn storms. When the sections have managed to get outside, they have been armed with torches, high-visibility vests and raincoats.

The Cubs have been outside the most, walking the city wall to complete the local knowledge badge, and undertaking a local park clean-up as part of the community/environment badge. Using equipment kindly lent out by Exeter City Council, they managed to fill two large sacks with litter collected from Priory Park, Abbot's Park and surrounding streets. The Cubs also pitched a couple of lightweight tents, which the group acquired as a result of a grant application to the RDC foundation.

A decent hike was achieved by the Air Scouts, who walked the section of the Green Circle from Mincinglake Valley Park to the Mill on the Exe. [Ed.: A 2-part article on walking Exeter's Green Circle featured in *Contact* in Winter 2020 and Spring 2021.]

Of all the sections, the Beavers have sheltered indoors the most, concentrating on badges and games nights, exploring their senses, solving problems and learning basic first aid.

Changes are afoot in the leadership team for Beavers and Cubs. Dan Triggs, the current Beaver leader, will step to Cubs after Christmas, where he will help to run the pack whilst Chris Barton continues to recover from a stroke. This move has prompted a little adult recruitment, and we are pleased that two keen parents will be joining us to run the Beaver colony. The group welcomes

Rhiannon Neale and Alex Marshall, both of whom have previous Scouting and Guiding experience.

Recent events for the group have included Remembrance Sunday, when the Beavers and Cubs attended St James' Church and the Scouts attended the council service of Remembrance in Northernhay Gardens. Once again, the Scouts were honoured to carry the wreaths for the dignitaries from the Guildhall to the war memorial.



On a night of Bushtucker Trials, the Scouts won stars by completing tasks and answering questions from Kiosk Keith. The whole group has been fundraising at The Range on Alphington Road, and the term will finish with the annual group tenpin bowling night at Haven Banks.

Planning is already underway for a couple of large events next year: a Scout trip to London to play monopoly, a group/district weekend at PGL Barton Hall. There is also a possibility that several members from each section might attend the Scoutmoor 24 camp at Westpoint in August.

There are currently spaces available in the Air Scout section for children between the ages of 10 and 14. We would also love to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer as a helper. To join us, please e-mail info@exeterairscouts.org.uk.

Brad Warwick

Parish Profile: The Corbett Family

Kat and Andy both originate from seaside towns. She is a primary school teacher from Jersey. He comes from Bournemouth and works in research science. They are both sporty, love the outdoors and, together with their daughter, Molly, have become a key part of the Church family at St James'.

The couple met in 2011 at Exeter University, where they were both members of the badminton club. Kat was studying Psychology and Andy was reading Mathematics. His research took them to Bristol for four years and then to Germany for two years. Eventually though, they were bound to return to their favourite place, Exeter. After a slight delay caused by the lockdown, they were married and found a house in July 2021. A year later, Molly arrived.

After several years moving from place to place, the family wanted to return to Church and join the community. Kat emphasises that they were welcomed with open arms and remembers how she enjoyed attending Messy Church with Molly when she was on maternity leave.



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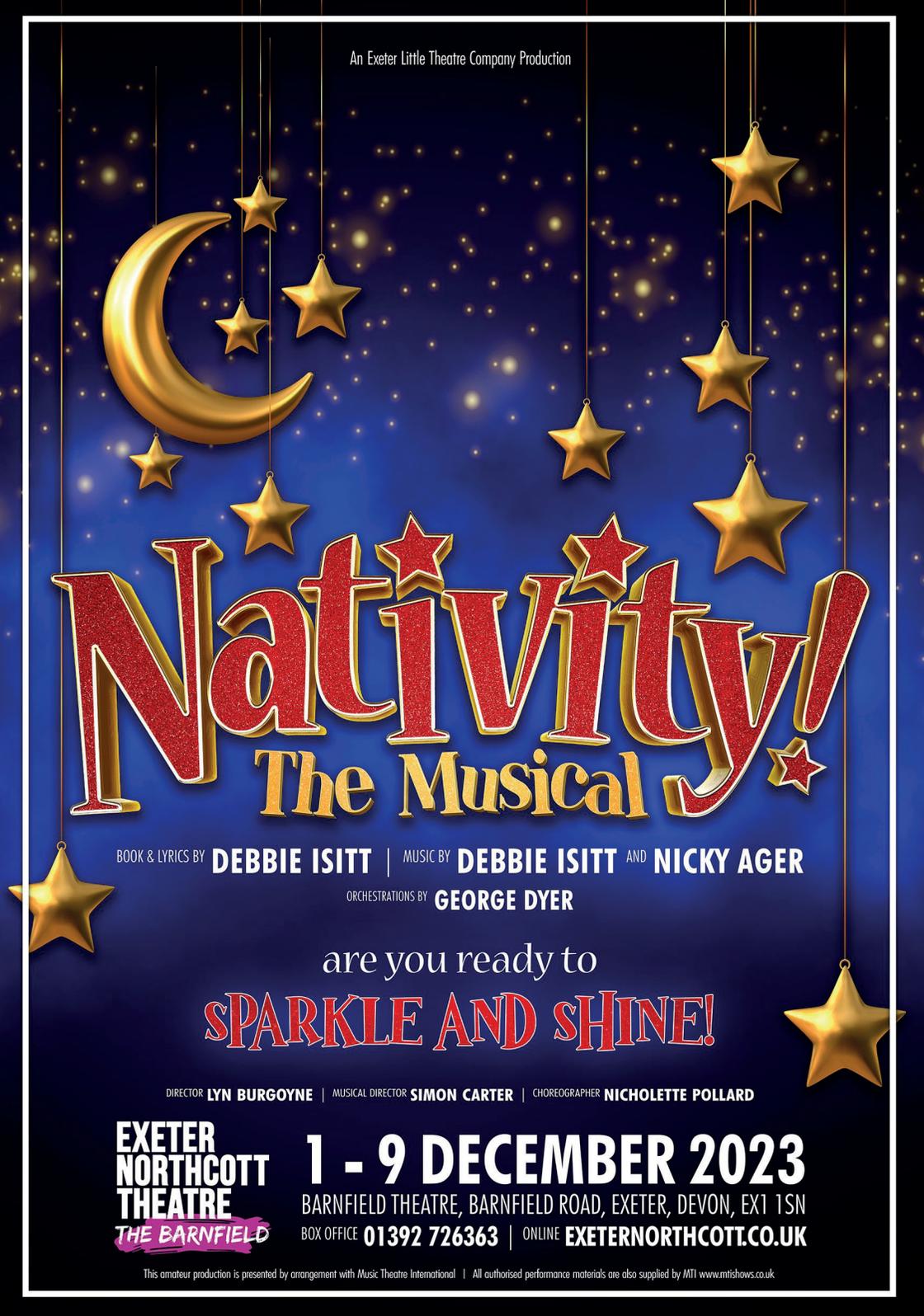
Since joining St James' Church, Andy and Kat have made many new friends and they are glad that their daughter will be a part of this community as she grows up. Molly was recently baptised and the three Corbetts loved introducing their own family to everyone at St James'.

Kat writes: 'St James' is such a wonderfully accepting and friendly Church, with a full span of ages. When Molly was only months old, another member of the congregation was turning 100 and could remember the old church before the current building. If Molly goes on to be 100, they would collectively have amassed two centuries at St James. We are honoured to be part of such a thriving community.'

Looking to the future, the Corbett family hopes to stay in Exeter. Their Church family at St James' was delighted to hear that they are expecting a new addition soon. Congratulations!



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A Victorian-Style Christmas Table Decoration

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- 2 paper plates
- 1 clean, transparent, plastic 2-litre bottle
- 1 sheet of white A4 paper
- PVA glue
- Cotton wool
- Tinsel
- Decorations: glitter, sequins, holly etc.
- LED tea lights

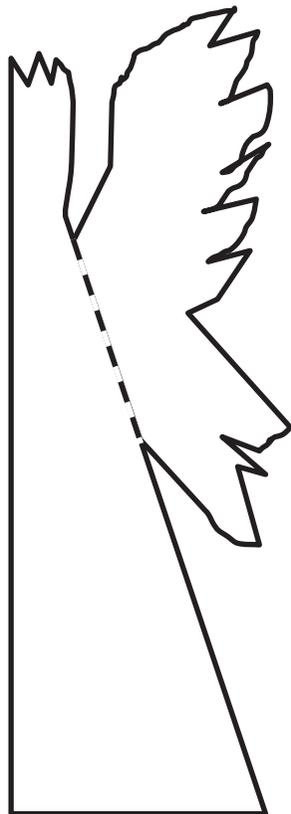


Glue the paper plates together, one inside the other, to make a firm base.

To make a dome with an open base, cut off the bottom of the bottle 22 cm from the top.

Fold the paper in half and then in half again.

With the folded edges at the top and left, draw a vertical line 4.5 cm from the left edge and a horizontal line 4 cm from the bottom. Draw the right-hand side of the angel figure in this area, using the folded, left edge as the edge of the angel, so that the full figure emerges when the paper is unfolded. Use a ruler to ensure that the line from the bottom of the wings to the bottom right-hand corner is absolutely straight.



Keeping the paper folded, cut around the top, right and bottom of the figure you have drawn. When you unfold the paper, you will now have two figures.

With one of the paper angels on a flat surface, paint a thin, straight line of glue along each edge of the figure, from the bottom corner to the top of the edge of the wings. Place the second figure directly on top of the first, so that they are glued together at the edges, but not on the wings or head. Once the glue has dried, fold the wings open. Then accentuate the vertical fold, so that the figure becomes three-dimensional and can stand up.

Now place an LED tea light in the centre of the paper plate and stand the angel over the tea light. Place the dome over the angel. Finally, decorate the top of the dome and the edge of the plate with the tinsel and decorations.



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Christmas Preparations at St James'

Christmas is now firmly on the horizon and there are many activities at St James', so that you can fully experience Advent and focus on the joyous message of Christmas. Do you feel there should be more to the season than mince pies and cinnamon-spiced latte (nice as they are)? Our journey through this special season is marked by the candles of the Advent wreath, symbolising God's never-ending love and the light of Christ coming into our lives.

The Candle of Hope

On Sunday 3rd December, the first Sunday of Advent, we light the first purple candle. This represents hope: hope that the darkness we encounter in our lives and the world can and will be illuminated by the coming of Christ. The light of this candle is like a first beacon in the dark, guiding us on the path towards Christmas.

During this first weekend of Advent, we invite you to our bimonthly craft group on Friday, or to the annual Christmas bazaar on Saturday. At the parish Eucharist on Sunday, we officially begin our Advent journey. Then, on Wednesday, it's time for Messy Church, our monthly event for young families, where there will be Advent and Christmas crafting activities, an interactive Bible display and a communal dinner. On Thursday Fr Brian's house group offers the chance to dig deeper and discuss our faith.

The Candle of Peace

On the second Sunday of Advent we light the candle of peace. Now, more than ever in the recent past, we need to engage and come together to work and pray for peace. As a community, we want to be an instrument for peace and a place that helps to heal the ruptures of an ever more polarised time. We do this in particular at our parish Eucharist, and at the Christingle service. The latter will include a collection for the Children's Society. During the Christingle service, there is an

opportunity to craft a Christingle, which you can take home with you. Later in the week, you are invited to join our 'Friends Who Lunch', a group that enjoys a meal out together each month.

The Candle of Joy

On the third Sunday of Advent we light the candle of joy. To emphasise the mood, this candle stands out with its bright pink colour. It is a reminder to look out for and celebrate the things that bring us joy even in challenging times, to join in with the joy of others, and to bring joy to others around us whenever there is an opportunity. To spread the joy, we invite you to the children's Nativity play after the Parish Eucharist, as well as the usual cuppa. In the evening, do come back for the carol service, when there will be singing with the choir, as well as mulled wine and mince pies afterwards.

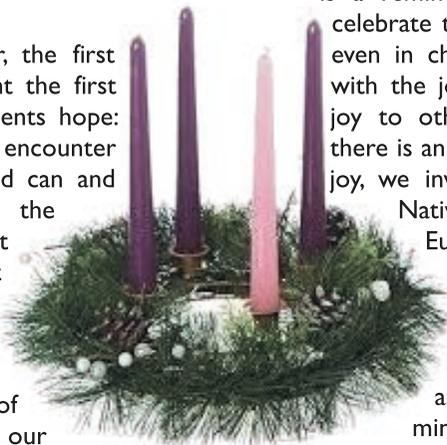
The Candle of Love

This year, the fourth Sunday of Advent is also Christmas Eve. Christ is near. Lighting the candle of love, we reflect on God's infinite love for each one of us and on the love we share. We pray for this love to grow in our community and beyond. At the crib service in the afternoon we celebrate the birth of Christ with our children and young people.

The Candle of Christ

Christ is born. We celebrate the birth of Jesus at Midnight Mass, which begins at 11.00 pm. Come and join us for this very special service, which lifts us out of our daily bustle and offers time to marvel at the miracle of a child's birth. The celebrations continue with the Parish Eucharist on Christmas Day. To end the year, the last of our monthly coffee mornings is on Friday 29th December: all are welcome for a relaxed cuppa, homemade cake and chat.

Veronika Bauer



Dates Ahead

December

Fri 1 st	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Sat 2 nd	2.00 pm	Christmas Bazaar
Wed 6 th	3.30 pm	Messy Church
Thu 7 th	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's House Group
Sun 10 th	4.00 pm	Christingle Service
Wed 13 th	12.15 pm	Friends Who Lunch
Fri 15 th	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Sun 17 th	11.30 am 6.00 pm	JAM and 11-Ups Nativity Carol Service
Sun 24 th	4.00 pm 11.00 pm	Crib Service Midnight Mass
Mon 25 th	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist for Christmas Day
Fri 29 th	10.30 am	Coffee Morning

January

Thu 4 th	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's House Group
Fri 5 th	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Wed 10 th	12.15 pm 3.30 pm	Friends Who Lunch Messy Church
Fri 19 th	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Fri 26 th	10.30 am	Coffee Morning

February

Thu 1 st	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's House Group
Fri 2 nd	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Sun 4 th	4.00 pm	Celebrate Together
Wed 7 th	3.30 pm	Messy Church
Wed 14 th	12.15 pm 7.00 pm	Friends Who Lunch Parish Eucharist for Ash Wednesday

Fri 16 th	2.00 pm	Craft group
Mon 19 th	6.00 pm	Stations of the Cross
Fri 23 rd	10.30 am	Coffee morning
Mon 26 th	6.00 pm	Stations of the Cross

March

Fri 1 st	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Sun 3 rd	4.00 pm	Celebrate Together
Mon 4 th	6.00 pm	Stations of the Cross
Wed 6 th	3.30 pm	Messy Church
Thu 7 th	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's House Group

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