

# Saint Peter's Church, Woodmansterne December/January Monthly Newsletter



Welcome to this month's newsletter! If you have an activity or something uplifting to share please do get in touch: [office@saintpeterschurch.org.uk](mailto:office@saintpeterschurch.org.uk) We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter.

## **A word from Susan Knight**

On November 29th we entered the season of Advent. A season of waiting, watching and preparing. Advent coincides with the days of shortest daylight as we move towards the winter solstice. This year the days we experience may be particularly dark. We are living in the midst of the Covid 19 pandemic, living with restrictions and at the time of writing uncertainty over what the coming weeks will bring. Much of our life has been dislocated.

Earlier in November I noticed a snowdrop flowering in my garden. I wondered whether I should celebrate its delicate beauty or be concerned about its flowering. Nature seemed out of step too. Was the snowdrop prepared for what winter might bring? Margaret Silf, one of my favourite authors, quotes Rabindranath Tagore: 'faith is like the bird that feels the light and sings before the dawn.' The bird greets the light before it actually arrives.

Christians believe Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Perhaps this Advent we too can practice greeting the light. As we observe the lights in our neighbours' windows or admire the Advent windows in the Church Hall let us give thanks for the birth of Jesus (Emmanuel-God with us) Let us also remember that we are waiting and preparing for Christ's return. We do not know the day or the hour of his return but we are called to be awake and prepared. We can do this by dedicating ourselves to serve him in this place, holding on to the light which the darkness cannot overcome.

This Advent and Christmas may you rejoice in the light of Christ and experience comfort and joy.



## **More about the Christmas windows**

This year we will be creating the nativity story in the church hall windows as a way of saying happy Christmas to our community. A new window will be revealed each week of advent. Maybe you would like to join in with your own nativity window at home? This can be as simple as putting a star, toy sheep or a nativity scene you have at home in your window. If you'd like to join in we will be emailing around a 'happy Christmas from St Peter's Woodmansterne' poster you could add to your window.



## Parish Notices

Service sheets and accompanying You Tube messages are being produced and distributed every week. You can catch up with the weekly messages at St Peter's Church, Woodmansterne You Tube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI9hrwcOXgd7g8lg9WVqg7A>

We have one Sunday service - 10.00am via Zoom video conferencing. We hope to resume 11.00am church service as soon as we are able. So please do get in touch with us for details.

If you want to receive more information about any of the above or would like to have a chat with someone please do get in touch with us: [rector@saintpeterschurch.org.uk](mailto:rector@saintpeterschurch.org.uk) or ring 01737 423892.

**Praise and Prayer** - now fortnightly on a Wednesday evening. The December Praise and Prayers will be Wednesday 2nd and 16<sup>th</sup> December. Zoom details to follow nearer the time. If you have trouble accessing Zoom or want to join by phone contact Rachel: [cfm@saintpeterschurch.org.uk](mailto:cfm@saintpeterschurch.org.uk)

**Woodmansterne Charities** - A local charity, which can help people who are struggling to pay fuel bills. To qualify, you must live in the Parish of Woodmansterne. If you would like to be considered for assistance then please contact us: [office@saintpeterschurch.org.uk](mailto:office@saintpeterschurch.org.uk) or 07816293554.

**Foodbank Christmas Appeal** - the foodbank are asking for Christmas treats such as chocolates, biscuits and large bottles of drinks (non-alcoholic). If you'd like to contribute you can drop off your items when the church is open using the foodbank bin (Sundays & Wednesdays 9am-3pm) between now and 6th December. An alternative way to contribute is to donate money via Bank transfer or cheque. You can find the details here: <https://www.redhillfoodbank.org.uk/how-can-i-help>.

**Children's Society morning at Bus Stop Café** - In October a special Bus Stop Cafe was run in aid of Children's Society. Christmas cards were sold, donations made and people bought slices of this gorgeous cake made by Carol Stacey. In total an amazing £416.57 was raised. Thank you to everyone who was involved.



## **A Time to Remember at St Peter's**

For many years St Peter's has held a Living with Loss service. This year it was given a new name 'A Time to Remember' and took place on the afternoon of Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November. The service included placing lighted candles on the cross which you can see in the photo.



## **Remembrance**

For the second year the silent soldier and the lychgate were decorated with knitted poppies. There were some Remembrance themed prayer stations to follow in church and a beautiful poppy wreath created by Hazel Foord.



Banstead District Scouts have been busy painting poppies on pebbles and tiles which were placed by the war graves in the churchyard.



**India** This week, India's government has announced that all online news, social media and video streaming platforms will be state regulated. Please pray for wisdom for the government and for those involved in media and creative industries as they discuss implications of the new legislation.

**Sri Lanka:** Our local partners in Sri Lanka are continuing to face challenging circumstances. Please continue to pray specifically for God's protection for them.

**Greece, Turkey:** Pray for the people of Greece and Turkey as they deal with the aftermath of the earthquake. Pray for the rescue teams and healthcare workers caring for hundreds of injured people, and for comfort and strength for the many who have lost loved ones, homes and their sense of safety.

**Middle East** A mission partner couple report that the COVID situation in their location is not good at all. Pray for peace and against violence as the likelihood of conflict between different groups increases. Praise God that Bible translation continues to move forward.

**Lebanon** Praise God for the good news that funds have been raised and the new school for refugee children is being built to a high standard. Pray for the refugee kids as the weather gets colder; many families are living in tents.

**Central America** Please lift up the people in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico and now Cuba who are dealing with the aftermath of this deadly, erratic, long-lived, and powerful Category 4 hurricane Eta. It has caused widespread devastation through very heavy rains, consequent flooding and mudslides. Across several countries, as many as 100,000 may have been affected. In addition to the tragic loss of life Eta has also brought economic devastation on top of that caused by the Pandemic. Pray for governments and those involved in bringing rescue and relief, as well as those who are mourning the loss of friends and family and having to rebuild their lives and homes.

**Latin America:** Pray for the political situation in a number of countries in the region. Please pray for peace and stability in turbulent times, for God's will to be done, and of course, please pray for all CMS people in mission in these countries.

**South Sudan:** is now on the World Food Programme list of four countries facing potential famine, along with Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Yemen. A result of conflict, economic decline, climate extremes (including flooding) and COVID-19, pray for relief for those in South Sudan and other countries who are suffering and even dying due to a simple lack of food.

**Uganda:** staff working at Kisiizi Hospital in Uganda, report that the terrible impact of lockdown (rather than COVID-19 itself) is becoming more apparent as many families can't earn a living and feed their children, resulting in more malnutrition among children. Pray for hospital staff, as well as malnourished children alongside everything else.



### **THIS MONTHS RECIPE - CHOCOLATE MINCE PIE MUFFINS**

Who knows what Christmas will bring this year? Will we need Christmas puddings and the traditional large Christmas cake if there are only 2 or 3 people celebrating?

Try these mincemeat muffins - delicious served warm and spread with butter

Makes 10

225g plain flour

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon baking powder

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

80g golden caster sugar

1 egg beaten

130ml whole milk

50g Greek style natural yogurt

30g melted butter

$\frac{1}{2}$  lemon and  $\frac{1}{2}$  orange zest

Mincemeat - preferably with brandy or port - about 125g

75g dark chocolate chopped

Preheat the oven to Gas 6, 200°C, 400°F. line a muffin tray with 10 cases.

In a bowl combine the flour, raising agents and sugar. In a jug mix the egg, milk, yogurt, melted butter and zests.

Gently pour the liquid onto the dry ingredients and again, gently mix taking care not to overmix or the muffins will be tough. Don't worry if there are a few lumps in the mix.

Add in the mincemeat about a teaspoon at a time so that it is broken down. Stir in most of the chopped chocolate.

Divide between the muffin cases and sprinkle over the remaining chopped chocolate.

Bake for 15 minutes or until golden and firm to the touch.

Serve warm or cold but definitely with butter - preferably brandy butter,

Happy Christmas! Ann Kayser





## **YOUR GARDEN IN DECEMBER/JANUARY BY A WOODMANSTERNE GARDENER**

Any sunshine in December will be weak, but sunny days can be pleasant and allow us to get out into the garden and fresh air, and do those jobs that maybe have been overlooked or because of heavy rainfall (think parts of October) we have been unable to do.

If we experience any mild days, with all the rain we have experienced recently the lawn may need mowing. It is also a good way to clear up all the leaves which may still be blowing about. If on the other hand, we experience frost, then avoid walking on a frozen lawn as it can leave footprints on the damaged and broken grass.

Please check climbing plants and all tree ties. Cut back any climbing roses and make sure plants are secured to help prevent damage from strong winds. We seem to have experienced more than several gales recently.

Cut back the foliage of hellebores so that the emerging flowers are not obscured and to keep control of leaf spot disease.

If you have a deciduous hedge such as beech or hornbeam they can be cut back and trimmed over the next few months.

If you have left dahlias and cannas in the soil, apply a dry mulch, such as straw or wood chips and/or garden compost to protect them during the winter months.

At this time of year houseplants come into their own. Position all plants in good light - even South facing window sills. Bring them into the room if curtains are shut in the evening and let the compost dry out slightly between watering. Do not feed.

With lockdowns announced up to December will we be able to visit garden centres to buy our usual poinsettias, cyclamen and winter cherry? If we can, wrap them up securely and get them home as soon as possible. They dislike the cold as much as us.

Perhaps at this time of year armchair gardening is preferable. Looking through seed and plant catalogues and on line is a pleasant occupation. Choosing plants for the 2021 garden especially if, who knows, we need to be cheered up next year.

Please, before any garden jobs think of our wildlife. It is so important that we enjoy our birds at this time so put out a varied selection of food, nuts, sunflower seeds, fat balls, decayed apples to help them through the winter months and always keep birdbaths free from frost and snow.

At the mention of frost and snow do bring a stiff broom and the snow scraper out from the depths of the shed or garage and station it by the back door. We might have had several mild winters recently but who knows what 2021 will bring us.

Happy gardening!!

## A Norwegian Christmas

We were looking forward to a real white Christmas. A Norwegian white Christmas

The 25th arrived, dark, cold and grey - where was the anticipated snow? Apart from the distant sound of church bells all was quiet. We looked at each other deflated and disappointed. Our children were impatient to open their stockings, the excitement of building snowmen in the garden was overtaken by the secrets that Santa had left for them.

Later we cooked a modest lunch of roast beef followed by the Christmas pudding brought with us from home. After phoning our families back in England, we decided to go for a short walk before the daylight faded at three o'clock. Apart from meeting up with a few English ex pats, we saw no-one, the locals were sleeping in front of their log fires, recovering from the night before.

By the 27th, snow was falling fast and continued for two days, on the third day we awoke to a magnificent transformation: The sky was a vivid blue and although the temperature was minus ten the sun felt hot! Suddenly everywhere was alive with people, we knew where the Brits were by the hysterical laughter on the ski slopes. The Norwegians took it all so seriously! This was how we imagined Norway. The pine trees were so heavily laden with snow, they appeared as monsters looming out of the forest. The Silver Birch trees glistened like jewels and the blackbirds were in full liquid song. It was perfect.

The Christmas holidays which continued into the New Year is an experience we shall never forget. After the homesickness of Christmas Day to the fun days that followed. Even now, after all those years ago, our children still talk about their year in Norway, the friends they made ,the dark winter nights and the short hot summers, and although we didn't have our white Christmas Day, they remember the closeness and love of our family at Christmas and a white New Year!

Margaret Chorlton

EASY

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

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MEDIUM

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

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## Silent Night

This much-loved carol comes from Austria, where it was first sung as *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht* on Christmas Eve, 1818. It was written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a melody for his carol. Gruber was organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during the midnight mass. The carol went on to become loved world-wide; and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all time.



"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think that the Angel of the Lord Zooming with the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."

## Second article on popular songs with unintended Christian relevance

This one is from the musical Oklahoma.

A character called Will Parker is having a showdown with his girlfriend who he suspects is not being totally loyal to him, and he sings this song to her.

"With me it's all or nothing,  
Is it all or nothing with you.  
It cain't be In between "  
It cain't be " Now or then ".  
No half and half romance will do.

It is not too fanciful to see this as a distillation of God's relationship with the Children of Israel, and of the message that Jesus had for those who wished to be his disciples.

## CALENDAR QUOTES

All work and no play makes you the wealthiest man in the cemetery

Amusement is the happiness of those who cannot think

Past experience should be a guide post, not a hitching post

The duty of the church is to comfort the disturbed, and to disturb the comfortable

[ M. Ramsey ]

We live dangerously when we neglect the Bible.

## SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

### EASY

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

### MEDIUM

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

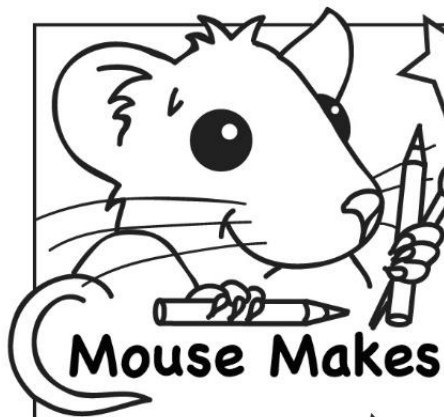
## Thank Dickens for Christmas as you know it!

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount of our modern Christmas celebrations can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens.

When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later.

So, for instance, in A Christmas Carol, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity (!).

And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In 'A Christmas Carol' there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present. Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported 'a pretty German toy' that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society.



"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

HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS!

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



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