

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester

December

January

2023

2024



Parish Grapevine

£1.20

*A monthly round-up of
news, views, events
and services at
St George's, Heaviley,
SK2 6NU,
and St Gabriel's, Adswold
in the
Parish of St George, Stockport.*

www.stgeorgestockport.org.uk



Who's Who in the Parish of St George, Stockport

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 456 9382

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St George's

Deputy Wardens
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 Sue Burt 483 9589

Director of Music
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actingdirectorofmusic@gmail.com

Associate Director of Music
 Roger Briscoe
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Vergers Lee Howarth
 Mary Howarth

Bookings for Parish Rooms
 Parish Office 480 2453
 or Judith Swift 483 8681

St Gabriel's

Contact: Parish Office 480 2453

Bookings Parish Office 480 2453

Children's Activities

St George's

Children's Corner
 Available for children (and parents) during services. Equipped with books, crayons and soft toys.

Sunday Clubs Ask for Louise, Eliza or Andy at the 10:15 Sunday service.

Eliza 07967 798453
 Louise 483 3703

Junior Choir James Hibbert 07365 519207
 Practices: Wednesday and Thursday 6pm–7.30pm in the vestry during term time. Sing for Sunday services at 10.15am and 4pm.

Praise and Play Lois Kelly 439 9458
 For 0–4s and their carers. Meet every Tuesday in term time, 10–11 in the Parish Rooms.

St Gabriel's

Festival services Rev. Canon Elaine Chegwin Hall
 456 9382

Uniformed Groups with connections to St George's

Rainbows Trisha Brown 07403 353 175
 Sue Kirkland 07854 101 918

For girls aged 4–7. Meet Fridays 6.15–7.30pm in the Parish Room.

Brownies Rachel Lockett 07712 302342
 Lianne Warburton 07815 482603

For girls aged 7–10. Meet Thursdays 6.30–8pm in the Parish Room.

To sign up to Brownies or Rainbows please visit www.girlguiding.org.uk and click on "Join us"

4th Stockport Scout Group

Sarah Johnson 07930 243 159

Meet at:
 Bridgehall Community Centre
 Siddington Avenue
 SK3 8NR

Squirrels For boys and girls aged 4–6
 Saturdays 9–10

Beavers For boys and girls aged 6 and 7
 Wednesdays 5.30–6.30

Cubs For boys and girls aged 8–10½
 Wednesdays 6.30–8.00

Scouts For boys and girls aged 10½–14
 Wednesdays 6.30–8.00

Other Groups and Activities

St George's

Bell ringers Anne Mayes 485 6477
 Practise Mondays 7.45–9pm.
 Ring on Sundays 9.45–10.15am.
 Meet in the tower.

Bible Reading Fellowship Notes
 Janet Neilson 483 9025
 Notes are ordered on request.

Bible Study Groups *contact the clergy*
 Study groups and courses are arranged from time to time.

Choir James Hibbert 07365 519207
actingdirectorofmusic@gmail.com

Practice: Thursday 7.30pm–9pm in the vestry during term time. Sing for Sunday services at 10.15am and 4pm.

Church Flowers Jean Hayden (*donations*)
 483 2367

Church Gardeners
 Walter Stead 430 2449
 Meet on Tuesdays 9.30–12.30.

Coffee Mornings
 Olwen Smith 483 6548
 after the 10am service on Wednesdays, in church.

Cursillo Usually meet on last Wednesday of the month. 7.30pm at different venues.

Handbells Andy Clark 483 3703
 Play for All-Age and Taizé services, plus other special events. Ringers of all ages (with or without experience) always welcome. Rehearsals in church arranged around the ringers' availability.

Linen Guild Pat Rigley 487 1999
 Maintain the church's linen.

Magazine Editorial Group
 Meet monthly to plan future issues.
magazine@stgeorgestockport.org.uk

Mothers' Union Pat Durnall 483 4837
 Meet on 2nd Monday of the month in church at 2.15pm.

Front cover photo:

St George's Christmas Tree
 Festival 2022

(photo by Louise Clark)

**Services and events for
 Advent and Christmas:**

see page 7

Regular services: see page 7



Elaine writes:

A man walks into a hardware shop and asks for four candles. The shopkeeper says "four candles" and the customer confirms, "four candles".

The shopkeeper goes over to the shelf, reaches inside a box, pulls out four candles and places them

on the counter.

The customer says, "NO! Four candles".

The shopkeeper looks confused and says, "there you are, FOUR candles." And the customer replies, "No, not four candles. Fork 'andles. 'Andles for forks."

This fabulous slapstick play on words has got to be up there with the best of the TV sketches from the Two Ronnies and certainly one of their most memorable.

Our own "fork 'andles" will be seen over the next few weeks as part of our Advent wreath. The first Sunday, one of the purple candles is lit, the next Sunday, two purples are lit, then three and then the pink candle until we arrive on Christmas Day and light the fifth white candle to celebrate the light of Christ coming into the world.

The symbolism and the story of the four candles can vary, with some believing they simply symbolise hope, peace, joy and love, representing the virtues that Jesus brought to us.

Others take that further, viewing hope as the prophecy candle, peace, the Bethlehem candle, joy, the shepherds' candle and love, the angels' candle.

In our church we read special prayers as we light each candle with the first representing the Patriarchs such as Abraham.

The second candle represents the Prophets who reflect on the way the birth of the Messiah was foretold.

The third represents John the Baptist who pointed away from himself and proclaimed the Saviour.

The fourth, pink candle, represents Mary, who carried the Saviour of the World, Jesus, in her womb.

Advent marks the beginning of our Church year. It's a special time of reflection, expectation and readiness. It gives us the space and opportunity to consider our own faith journey so far, to focus on the things that might need to be laid down and to have a renewed hope in the possibilities that might present themselves in this new Church year.

We are urged, through many of the Scripture readings in Advent, to be alert and ready for action, so we wait in readiness to respond to God's call at this time, and I pray that you will be richly blessed as we move together towards the light and joy of Christmas.

Elaine



photo: Louise Clark

What's Where...

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Christmas Shoe Box Appeal

THESE ARE SOME of the 61 shoe boxes which were collected from St George's on Saturday 18th November, plus 40 from Davenport Methodist Church. It is hoped their final destination will be Ukraine. Thank you to all who contributed.

Rosie Stead



October Baptism

ON THE 22ND OCTOBER, we had an extra special set of baptisms. It was a real pleasure to baptise little Zack Michael Banfield and also his mother, Jessica, and godmother, Joanne. In the photo we have from left to right, Zack's father, Michael, Rev Dr Jenny, Jessica, Joanne and godparents James and Daniel.



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Thoughts on Meditation

MEDITATION IS essentially simple – but not easy. To meditate we sit quietly, with relaxed, focused attention, staying in the present moment. What makes it challenging is that there is a part of us that doesn't want to do that.

That part of us is always looking out for us in its own way, protecting us, checking that we are safe and thus distracting us from being in the moment. It's curious about this and that. It asks questions about "What if...?" It reminds us of things we have to do and of anxieties lurking in the background. It keeps us on the move when we want to be still.

If we meditate regularly, we often talk about having a meditation practice. It's a good word, because that is what we do, practise. Some days we will be less distracted and others more distracted, but always we can practise coming back to the practice.

To meditate we need be somewhere quiet and to adopt a comfortably upright sitting position. Sitting upright helps us to remain sufficiently alert. Then, closing our eyes gently, we may like to soften our eyelids, relax our jaw and allow any excess tension to drain from us.

Next we place our attention on our breath, noticing each breath in and out. Our breath is our anchor, gently helping us to keep our focus. We can stay with the breath, or we can add a mantra, a single word like the Aramaic word maranatha, "Come, Lord", especially suitable from a Christian perspective. Like our breath, maranatha acts as an anchor. We say it silently and simply, as four stressed

syllables – ma-ra-na-tha – fairly slowly, fairly rhythmically, in time with our breath.

Do try this for yourself. See how you get on. Our next group meditation is on Sunday 10th December for half an hour after the morning service. We begin at 12 noon in the chapel. Everyone welcome.

Chris Dawson



(photo: Andy Clark)

Recycling for Good Causes

I HAVE CONFIRMATION that the recycling sack, which I sent off recently, has been received and sorted. All but three of the items donated were accepted for recycling and the church recently received a cheque for £112.20. Thank you to everyone who donated items, helping both the church and the environment.

Unfortunately, there were three items which are currently not acceptable: a personal cassette player; a voice recorder and a VHS tape. Everything else was fine. Please check carefully that the items you are depositing are on the acceptable list, not on the 'No thank you' list.

When the current sack reaches 10 kg or more, the minimum weight for free collection, I will send it off to the warehouse and dismantle the recycling box, as I think it has served its purpose, for the time being.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed and who, I hope, will continue to do so. Every little helps.

Rosie

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Holy Baptism

26th Nov Levi Magee

Holy Matrimony

None last month

Funerals

10th Nov David Gordon Mitchell at the Rowan Chapel

23rd Nov Josephine (José) Westwood. Service in Church and committal at the Rowan Chapel

Burial of Ashes

22nd Nov Kevin Hammond

26th Nov Peter Pilbeam

Communion Flowers were sponsored as follows:

5th Nov from Marjorie and Neville, in loving memory of Geoffrey and Cynthia

5th Nov from Wendy Simpson, in loving memory of Cyril and James Hindley

Parish News Roundup

12th Nov from Janet Neilson, in loving memory of the Oldham and Gosling families.

19th Nov from the Choir, for St Cecilia's Day

26th Nov Christmas Tree Festival

Floodlighting was sponsored as follows:

1st Nov from Gill Hudson, remembering my friend, Peter Pilbeam on his birthday.

Mothers' Union

The next meeting will be held on **Monday 11th December 2023** at 2.15pm in the Lady Chapel. We are holding a service of Lessons and Carols, vicar Elaine and Rev Jenny will be leading us and everyone is welcome to come along and listen to the wonderful story. Tea and coffee along

Parish News Roundup

with mince pies will be served. The north avenue and porch will open for ease of parking and access.

Confirmation Service at St George's

There will be a service of confirmation, led by the Bishop of Stockport, at St George's Church at **4pm on Sunday 14th January**. Please see Elaine for more information.

Baptisms, Banns and Marriage bookings:

Please contact the vicar:

Telephone: 0161 456 9382

or email:

vicar@stgeorgestockport.org.uk

February 2024

Grapevine magazine dates:

Deadline copy date: **Fri 19th Jan.**

Committee meeting: Tue 23rd Jan.

José Westwood

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of José Westwood. The funeral was held on 23rd November. A full obituary will appear in the next issue of this magazine.

José's granddaughter, Darcy Westwood, composed and read this poem at the funeral.

My Busy Bee

I often missed my busy bee
I wished she could be busy on over me
But I lived so far away
My texts and calls they made her day.
The letterbox was always full of cards, gifts and cut-outs
I've kept it all and every one has its special place in the house
Every word you said it's glued in my head.
I remember it all, every time a bird sings or I see a ladybird's zip of red.
You buzz round the kitchen and buzz around town.
Always helping us turn our frowns upside down.
You'd never sit still when it came time for tea.
You'd always be there for Dad, Mum and me.
The sweetest of souls and the kindest of hearts
Your warm hugs and words were my favourite parts.
I never believed I'd be here, and I can't believe we have to say goodbye
But I'll never, no never, let your love and spirit die.

Advent and Christmas Services and Events 2023

Peach: in church. Light blue: see location. Lemon: events in parish rooms.

| Date | Time | Event |
|----------------------|---------------|---|
| Sun 3rd Dec | 8am and 10.15 | Advent Sunday Communion Service |
| | 6.30pm | Advent Carol Service |
| Tue 5th Dec | 2pm | Carols at Davenport Methodist Church |
| Sat 9th Dec | 1pm – 3pm | Messy Church for families. Parish room |
| Sun 10th Dec | 8am | Holy Communion |
| | 10.15am | Toy Service (Please bring new toys to support those at the Refuge) |
| Sun 10th Dec | 4pm | Community Carols at St Gabriel's (Churches Together) |
| Fri 15th Dec | 7pm – 9pm | Messy Church for adults parish room/church |
| Sat 16th Dec | 10am | Carols around the tree near Davenport Station (Churches Together) |
| | 1pm | Interactive Nativity beginning at St Mary's in the Marketplace |
| Sun 17th Dec | 8am and 10.15 | Communion Service |
| | 6.30pm | Service of Nine Lessons and Carols |
| Wed 20th Dec | 6pm | Carol singing beginning at Davenport Manor, moving to Reinbeck, Oakleigh and onwards so join us as you can. Raising money for the Children's Society. |
| Sat 24th Dec | 8am | No Holy Communion |
| Christmas Eve | 10.15am | Parish Communion |
| | 1.30pm | Christingle |
| | 3.30pm | Christingle |
| | 5.30pm | Christingle – streamed |
| | 11.30pm | Midnight Communion |
| Christmas Day | 8am | Holy Communion |
| | 10.15am | Parish Communion |
| Wed 27th Dec | 10:00 | No midweek Communion this week |
| Sun 31st Dec | 8am and 10.15 | Holy Communion (Jenny) |

Regular Services at St George's

| Services in church, with congregation: | Services which are live streamed only: |
|---|--|
| <p>Sundays: 8am Holy Communion (BCP) 10.15am Parish Communion (also live streamed) 4pm Choral Evensong (last Sunday of the month, also live streamed)</p> <p>Wednesdays: 9.30am Morning Prayer (also live streamed) 10am Holy Communion (BCP)</p> | <p>Mondays to Fridays: 9.30am Morning Prayer (also in church on Wednesdays)</p> <p>The church will also be open for individual private prayer in the chapel on Wednesdays and Sundays from 11am to 12 noon</p> |

What's in a Word?

WE ARE NOW into December and when it comes to preparing for Christmas, I expect that for most of us there will still be plenty to do.

Sooner or later, our thoughts turn to the task of finding suitable presents to give. The well-prepared, forward thinking of you may have already done the bulk of your shopping, especially if you are a teacher; the recent school half-term break may have been a good opportunity to get ahead in this respect.

But, if you are like me, October seemed to be a bit too early to try to enter into the festive spirit. Then all of a sudden the days are passing at an ever increasing rate and time is running out. Perhaps this year will be different – but somehow I doubt it.

The word 'present' is quite an interesting one. At this time of year, not surprisingly, we automatically interpret it as meaning a gift.

Of course, words are an essential part of our everyday lives. They are the basis of our communication with each other, as well as a source of enjoyment – be it prose, poetry, or for fun – crosswords, scrabble, word searches, to mention just a few.

But the definition of the word 'present' takes up nearly a full column in the New Oxford Dictionary of English, with differing meanings, depending on whether it is a noun, adjective or verb, and the context in which it is being used.

As well as meaning 'gift', present can also mean a point in time, 'the present' for example, the time in which we are living, or being in a place at a certain time – as a response to a roll call or school morning register – 'Present Miss'. And then it can be used to indicate giving something formally, "I present you with this well-earned certificate", for example.

I sometimes think foreign students of English must despair of the ambiguities of our language. I'm certainly glad it is my native tongue and I don't have to learn it from scratch!

It struck me that 'multi-meanings' could be the basis of a new party game at Christmas – drawing up a list of English words which can have three or more meanings – but making sure you have a dictionary to hand to resolve disputes!

Returning to my opening comments, if we are getting involved in the practical and commercial aspects of the run-up to Christmas, we should also be mindful that we are now in the Church's season of Advent. It's a time when, as in Lent, we are called to think about the reason for the coming time of rejoicing.

Going back to the dictionary, the word 'advent' is defined as 'the arrival of a notable

person or event'. In the Christian church it is used with reference, of course, to the birth of Jesus, the ultimate 'notable' event for all mankind.

The adjective derivative of 'advent' is 'adventitious' which in some ways is more appropriate. It has the sense of an event coming from 'outside', rather than arising by human design or inherent nature. For, in Christian terms, the birth of Jesus is an event ordained by God, beyond our earthly world.

Our Lord's birth, and his life amongst our human race, is God's great gift, his 'present' to each and every one of us, in this, our 'present' time.

In the account of the Nativity, he is 'presenting' his son to all people on an occasion announced by angels, enacted by means of Mary and Joseph (soon to become refugees in a foreign land), witnessed by humble workers from the fields and worshipped by wise men, foreigners from distant lands.

A series of events very different from how the religious and secular authorities would have envisaged the coming of the Messiah in those days. An amazing happening, with underlying messages for a fallen world; as it was two thousand years ago, and still is in our present turbulent times.

With this in mind, in the coming days, as we busy ourselves with our preparations for the Christmas festivities, let's also make some time to think about the importance of God's blessed gift of Jesus, to us, His people. This present is given to all, regardless of our levels in society, nationality, colour or any other characteristic that distinguishes us from one another.

Remembering that the coming of Jesus, our Lord, is for each of us the way to God's eternal kingdom. And, with that in mind, may you and your families, and all who are close to you, have a happy and fulfilling Christmas time.

Walter Stead



Photo by [Walter Chávez](#) on [Unsplash](#)

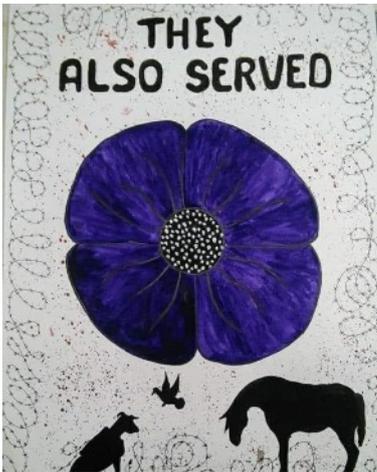
Lest We Forget

NOVEMBER'S REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY was especially poignant, as we of course are still seeing other wars continuing to this day, especially in Israel and Palestine.

We also had a couple of dogs in our morning congregation, which reminded me that the loss of animals in war is a poignant and often overlooked aspect of the conflicts that have plagued human history. Animals have been used in various capacities during warfare, from horses and elephants as mounts and pack animals to dogs and pigeons as messengers. Their bravery, loyalty, and sacrifice often go unnoticed or underappreciated.

These animals, like their human counterparts, have been thrust into the chaos and violence of war without a choice. They endure harsh conditions, face the same dangers, and suffer the same consequences. Their lives are intertwined with those of the soldiers they serve, forming deep bonds of trust and reliance.

It is heart-wrenching to consider the sheer number of animals that have lost their lives in war. Their sacrifice



should not be in vain: we should remember and honour them, recognising their contribution and the impact they have had on military operations throughout history.

The loss of animals in war also serves as a reminder of the profound interconnectedness of all living beings. It prompts us to reflect on the ethics

of using animals in conflict and to question whether there are alternative methods that can achieve the same objectives without causing harm to innocent creatures.

Ultimately, contemplating the animals killed in war encourages us to strive for a world where conflicts can be resolved through peaceful means. It reminds us of the importance of empathy, compassion, and respect for all forms of life, reinforcing the belief that violence should never be the default solution.

May their sacrifice also inspire us to pursue peace and work towards a future where animals are protected from the horrors of war.

Revd Dr Jenny McKay



O Come All Ye Faithful

ALONG WITH OUR town-wide Interactive Nativity on page 21, you can also share your vocal talents with others as we sing in the community to give people the opportunity to hear about the real meaning of Christmas.

The first event is at 10am on Saturday 16th December, when the local Churches Together plus others gather around the big tree on the green at Davenport station for one hour. There is a fabulous "Coffee to the Core" van very close by so you can grab a hot chocolate, coffee and pastries before, during or after our singing.

The second is to raise money for the Children's Society. We are meeting at Davenport Manor on Bramhall Lane at 6pm on Wednesday 20th December and will move onto Reinbeck just over the road after about 20 minutes and then onto Oakleigh after about another 20 minutes so you should be able to catch us up. From there people will be dropping by the vicarage, some family residences and the Jolly Sailor and onwards until we get to the home of Hazel and Dave Jenkins for some refreshments. We are bound to get mince pies and liquid refreshment en route so no one should be in a state of starvation.

Both these are fabulous events and it's a great way to get to know people and to raise some money on the way. Wrap up for the weather and bring a precautionary brolly or wet weather gear just in case.

Elaine

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Spring Bulb Appeal

THE GARDEN GNOMES would like to thank those people who have kindly donated spring-flowering bulbs. Despite too many wet Tuesdays we have finally managed to plant them all up. We hope for a lovely display of colour in the spring, especially between the stones in the grass of the North Avenue.

Update on the '125' bed

WE HAVE HAD a lovely display of begonias during the summer months, which is now just about coming to an end. After much discussion, it has been decided to make the space into a rose bed. Thanks to a very generous donation from the Mothers' Union, we have been able to purchase six bare-root rose bushes in memory of members who have recently died. These, along with another memorial rose, have already been planted.

Kate Stephenson





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 Hazel Grove, Stockport, SK7 5DL.

0161 439 5182

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS AT ST GEORGE'S AN



Mothers' Union cracker making. Vicar's first attempt – really good



Recycling, reuse. Putting jam jars to imaginative use



James Hibbert, Director of Music, with 14 junior choristers



Congratulations to Joan and Jim Izard on the celebration of their Diamond Wedding



Jenny McKay officiating at the Café Church Animal Blessing Service



Afternoon tea to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III

ST GABRIEL'S OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS



Look what Angela made at Messy Church held in Holy Week



Total immersion baptism of Nazarin. Of the 24 baptisms held this year, three were total immersions



The poppy fall on the way up



Celebration at St Gabriel's for the life of Frances Farrar. The bunting was her hat collection!



St George's is hoping to achieve Eco church status. This recycling scheme benefits the church financially too



The wedding of Lauren and David Bird, with a large augmented choir. One of two weddings held at St George's this year

Recipe of the month: Christmas Morning Muffins

My daughter makes muffins on Christmas morning, having done as much preparation as possible the night before so that there is very little left to do on the day.

250g plain flour
2 1/2 teasp baking powder
1/2 teasp bicarbonate of soda
100g caster sugar
1 teasp ground cinnamon
Good grating fresh nutmeg
2 clementines/satsumas
Approx 125ml full fat milk
75ml vegetable oil, or melted butter left to cool slightly
1 lg egg
175g dried cranberries
3 teasp Demerara sugar for topping

Preheat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas mark 6/400F. Line a muffin tin with paper cases.

Measure flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, caster sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg into a large bowl. Grate the zest of the clementines/satsumas over and

combine. If you are doing this in advance, leave the zesting until Christmas morning.

Squeeze the juice of the clementines/satsumas into a measuring jug, pour in the milk to make 200ml liquid. Add the oil or melted butter and egg, lightly beat until just combined. Pour this liquid mixture into the dry ingredients and stir until everything is more or less combined, remembering that a well-beaten mixture makes for heavy muffins; in other words a lumpy mixture is a good thing here.

Fold in the cranberries, then spoon the batter into the muffin cases and sprinkle with the Demerara sugar. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, by which time they should be golden brown. Eat while warm, either plain or spread with butter and/or marmalade.

These can be made up to three days ahead, packed in an airtight container with layers of baking parchment in between. Pop into a warm oven for 5 minutes before serving.

Pamela Ferguson

When the Sun Went Down

ON THE EVENING of Friday 10th November the church welcomed stall holders and visitors to the annual Moonlight Craft Fair. The church had a vibrant atmosphere with a range of stalls including jewellery, chocolate, and arts and crafts goods. Members of the church ran the café, raffle, and a craft stall, all contributing funds towards the church.



(photo: Jill Green from JillyGdesign)

The Maia Singers
Conductor **John Pomphrey**
Ian Tate Piano **James Hibbert** Organ

*Christmas Music
by Candlelight*

Including
*Sans Day Carol, A child is born, What sweeter music,
Hodie Christus natus est*

**St George's Church,
Buxton Road, Stockport SK2 6NW
Saturday 16th December 2023
5pm**

Adults **£12.50**, Under 18s **£5**
Mince pies, wine / fruit juice included

Tickets at the door and from choir members
www.themaisingers.co.uk

making music

Garden Gnomes December 2023

IN EARLY SEPTEMBER I planted a few narcissus bulbs and three weeks later they were showing through the compost; now last year I planted daffodils, crocus and bluebells in December and none of them produced flowers. I have always understood that spring-flowering bulbs can be planted out from August through to December but I think that December is a bit too late in the year. Maybe the weather had something to do with my bulbs not flowering last spring.

Each year at Christmas time many families visit the graves of family and friends and leave holly wreaths, flowers and plants including small Christmas trees as tributes to their departed friends. As I live near the cemetery I take walks around and pass many graves, including four of my own family graves, and have noticed that, around six weeks after Christmas, the cemetery staff tidy up all the dead flowers and wreaths and dispose of them. But for the last couple of years they have kept many of the potted Christmas trees and planted them in two rows at the back of the cemetery. Some do not survive but many do and one or two seem to double in height, but most do not appear to grow any taller. Potted small Christmas trees are grown in a number of ways: some are dug up and transferred to pots; others are grown in pots from cuttings or from seeds. The ones which have been grown in pots have a better chance of surviving if planted out in the garden, as the ones which have been transferred to pots may have damage to the roots. This could account for the ones which do not survive in the cemetery. Most of the Christmas trees left in the cemetery are about 30 cm high (one year old) with a few 60 cm high (two years old).

In the UK the most popular potted Christmas trees are the Nordmann fir, which is also the most popular Christmas tree on the continent. They originate from the Caucasus mountains in Georgia, southern Russia, and have soft glossy dark green needles which do not easily drop off. Other Christmas trees which are sold with roots in pots are Norway spruce, blue spruce, Serbian spruce, Scots pine and Fraser fir plus other less common varieties. Nordmann fir trees can grow up to 60 feet in height with a spread up to 30 feet. If you intend to plant your Christmas tree out in your garden it's worth finding out how big it will be when fully grown. Potted Christmas trees will only grow as big as the root system will allow, but if transferred to larger pots they are likely to grow taller. Like all potted plants they will need watering correctly.

Earlier this year, around March time, Stockport Council planted thousands of new trees around the town. About a dozen were planted in Hallam Garden on Bramhall Lane, 25% of which died, Bells Paddock got several new trees, St Thomas' churchyard got nine new trees, all survived, Stockport Cemetery got 43 new trees, three of which died, one was the only oak tree. The trees are mostly flowering cherry or apple, rowan also known as mountain ash and hawthorn. Within four weeks of being planted the flowering cherry and apple were all in flower, soon after we had a couple of very hot weeks and many of the new trees suffered through lack of water, but later after rain most recovered. Later, one more tree was planted in the cemetery, a pear tree. It was donated by the cemetery staff in recognition of the coronation of King Charles III on Saturday 6th May 2023, and a plaque is situated near the tree.

Gnome Ian

Learning new skills

Change of Colour

YOU MIGHT HAVE noticed, that throughout the Church's year we have different colours for the drapes, front pieces for the communion tables and a few other bits and pieces.

We would dearly love some help from people who would be prepared to help change these seasonal colours.

Don't worry, as full training will be given. It would be useful to work in pairs so if you could bring a buddy then we'd love to see you. Be in touch with Elaine, the churchwardens or James, the Director of Music.

Washing up

What would be hugely helpful is if we had a team of people prepared to wash up the lovely silver communion vessels after the services. Again, full training can be provided. Speak to Elaine or Jenny.



Sudoku puzzle: easy

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

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Sudoku puzzle: intermediate

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

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(Answers to all puzzles are on p. 21)



Sara preferred to let people work out the hymns for themselves

Crossword

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|--|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|---|----|
| 1 | | 2 | | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | 8 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 9 | | | 10 | | 11 | | 12 | | 13 | | 14 |
| 15 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | 18 | | | 19 | 20 | | 21 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | | | | | | | | | | | | 23 |
| 24 | | | | | | | | | | 25 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | | | | | | | | 27 | | | | |

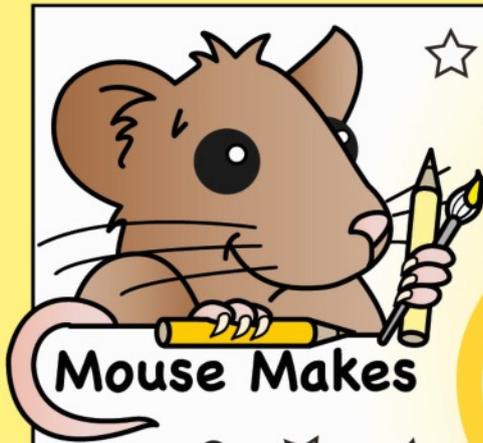
Across

- 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)



Mouse Makes



GOD'S PROMISE

Isaiah 9:6-7

CHILD • BORN • SON
GIVEN • WONDERFUL
COUNCELLOR
MIGHTY • GOD
EVERLASTING
FATHER • PRINCE
PEACE • LORD



AN ANGEL MESSENGER

Luke 1:26-38

ANGEL • GABRIEL
JOSEPH • MARY
FAVOUR • SON
JESUS • GREAT
THRONE • REIGN
FOREVER • HOLY
SERVANT • WORD

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

ADVENT
comes from
the Latin
'AD VENTO'
which means
ARRIVAL

In Advent we
celebrate Jesus' birth
and look forward to
the time when Jesus
will come again.



A LONG JOURNEY

Luke 2:1-20

BETHLEHEM
REGISTER • BIRTH
MANGER • INN
SHEPHERDS • FLOCK
ANGELS • JOY
GOOD NEWS • PRAISE
SAVIOUR • CHRIST



THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

John 3:16

GOD • SO • LOVED
WORLD • HE • GAVE
ONLY • SON
WHOEVER • BELIEVES
ETERNAL • LIFE

Sunday Clubs – God’s Creation Christmas Tree Preparations

OVER THE LAST few weeks St George’s Sunday Clubs have been making tree decorations for the Christmas Tree Festival. As soon as the trees are disassembled the decorations will be moving on to Lyme Park estate where they will feature as part of their Christmas tree display in the timber yard. We chose the theme of God’s Creation, building on work that we have been doing with the children on biodiversity in our local environment, including butterflies, fungi, moss, and lichens.

Andy Clark



Mothers' Union News

THE NOVEMBER MEETING saw the MU start to think about the meaning of Christmas. We welcomed Catherine Brown, one of St George's bell ringers, who came to present Christmas flowers. We were not only given a wonderful demonstration of flowers but were provided with the meanings and symbols of the flowers used.

For most of us preparations start with Advent, the opening of the Advent calendar, the lighting of the first Advent candle and the Advent carol service, but that is not so in many other countries. Many use saints' days, December 6th, St Nicholas' day for Belgium and the Netherlands; Sweden and Finland start on December 13th, St Lucia's Day, whilst December 21st, St Thomas's Day, is the start for many countries. Many years ago poor people in Britain would go 'Thomasing' or begging for food for Christmas.

Flowers, trees and shrubs all have their meanings: pine cones indicate immortality and eternal life; honesty indicates wealth; lavender means virtue; thyme is the manger and bay leaves indicate eternal life and glory. Rosemary represents the Virgin Mary, and sweet myrtle is the Messiah's promise. Christhorn is the name for holly in Denmark and illustrates the burning bush and crown of thorns. Prickly holly is known as 'he', smooth as 'she', and the decorations could indicate who 'ruled' by the amount of each holly used! Holly protects us from witches

and ivy from drunkenness. Mistletoe protects homes and banishes evil spirits as well as being known as all-healer and plant of peace. When kissing under the mistletoe one is expected to remove a berry for each kiss, but many people leave the berries on to get more kisses!

By the end Catherine had produced two beautiful arrangements which two lucky people were able to take home and enjoy. Thank you, Catherine, for a super afternoon.

Our next meeting is on Monday 11th December at 2.15pm in the Lady Chapel when we will have Lessons and Carols. The north avenue and porch will be open for access and parking.

Pat Rigley



P.A.U.S.E.

and check before you click

The following was issued to Lloyds Bank employers on recognising scam emails

- P Personal:** Does the email greet you personally? Is it relevant to you?
- A Accurate:** Are there spelling mistakes? Do any images or logos look different or odd?
- U Urgent:** Are you being asked to respond quickly by clicking on a link?
Are you being made to feel worried?
- S Sender:** Do you recognise the sender's email address?
Does it look right based on the content?
- E Expected:** Are you expecting this email?

Following on from this advice, there was an article in the Sunday Times about a man who lost a great deal of money because he was duped by a very convincing scammer. The scammer knew details of all his bank transactions, to the last penny, and the fact he'd recently visited China – a fact known only to his family and the bank.

A cybersecurity company said that it was likely that the man had clicked on a malicious advert or link that had downloaded software onto his phone. This would explain how the scammer knew specific sensitive information and how he could see what the man was doing on his phone.

The bank in question is a specialised business bank, but, regardless of your bank, the moral of this event is: be very wary of anyone claiming to be from your bank, advising you to move your savings to another secure account, because banks would never phone you and ask you to transfer money.

When in doubt, end the call and then phone your bank, using the number on the back of your cheque card, to alert them of a possible scam.

Puzzle solutions

Easy Sudoku solution:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 |

Intermediate Sudoku solution:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 |

Crossword solution:

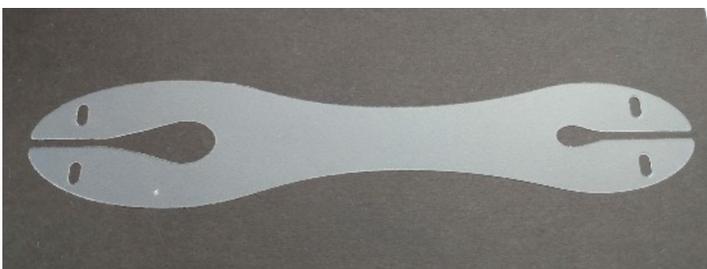
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D | E | P | E | N | D | C | A | N | O | P | Y | |
| E | E | R | U | U | U | | | | | | | |
| B | E | A | K | I | R | R | I | T | A | T | E | |
| T | C | N | I | S | I | | | | | | | |
| Z | E | D | E | K | I | A | H | A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

What am I?

The picture shows the purpose of last month's What am I? They protect hands when dealing with hot-handled pans or casserole dishes.



This is this month's What am I? It is thin plastic and therefore pliable. I find it really useful!
Rosie



Starring Tonight!

DID YOU EVER feel that you had missed out on your calling at the school Nativity play?

Did you feel that your talents had been glossed over and that **someone else** got the key role as Joseph or Mary?

Did you feel sidelined when you were the fourth sheep from the left instead of the one holding the shepherd's crook?

We know that life can be full of those kinds of disappointments, but this is your chance to shine as we join together with church communities from all over Stockport to retell this most important story, and you can choose to be who you like.

You can dress up as Mary, Joseph or an angel. We can loan you a tea towel if being a shepherd is your thing, or we can find a surplice if you want to be part of the choirs of angels.

We are looking for singers too who can help to lead us in our carols and descant music can be provided. Just ask.

Hope to see as many people as possible to join this interactive Nativity play at the heart of our town of Stockport.

St. Mary's in the Marketplace AND STOCKPORT MARKET 

PROUDLY PRESENT STOCKPORT'S INAUGURAL

INTERACTIVE NATIVITY PLAY

1pm on SAT 16/12/23 @ St. Mary's Church



JOIN US FOR A NATIVITY WITH A DIFFERENCE
Dress as the nativity character you always wanted to play
(or come as you are)

Starting at St Mary's Church we'll travel to Bethlehem (Sport's Direct) as Rev Chris Blunt presents...
The Greatest Christmas Story of All!
With carol singing along the way, it's a nativity where everyone gets to play a part.

www.stmarysinthemarketplace.com
MARKET OPENING HOURS 9am-4.30pm tue, thu, fri, sat
f: TheStockportMarket t: @theSKmarket i: @thestockportmarket



Music Scheme – December 2023

| Sunday 3rd December – Advent Sunday | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 10:15am | Parish Communion | 6:30pm | The Advent Carol Service |
| Setting: | The Addington Service – Shephard | See Order of Service for details | |
| Hymns: | 24 Come, thou long-expected Jesus, 26 Hark, a thrilling voice is sounding; 32 O come, O come, Emmanuel, 27 Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes, | | |
| Anthem: | Sleepers, wake! – Mendelssohn | | |

| Sunday 10th December – The Second Sunday of Advent | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| 10:15am | The Toy Service | 4:00pm | Adswood Community Carol Service |
| Setting: | A Mass for Worth Abbey – Greening | St. Gabriel's Adswood | |
| Hymns: | 35 People, look East. The time is near 34 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry... SP13 Longing for light, we wait in darkness, 513 Lord, the light of your love is shining, | See Order of Service for details | |
| Anthem: | From the squalor of a borrowed stable – Townend | | |

| Sunday 17th December – The Third Sunday of Advent | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 10:15am | Parish Communion | 6:30pm | Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols |
| Setting: | The Addington Service – Shephard | See Order of Service for details | |
| Hymns: | 35 The advent of our King 607 Thy kingdom come, O God, 37 The Lord will come and not be slow, 29 Hills of the North, rejoice! | | |
| Anthem: | Never weather-beaten sail – Campion | | |

| Sunday 24th December – The Fourth Sunday of Advent / Christmas Eve | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|--|
| 10:15am | Parish Communion | 11:30pm | Midnight Communion |
| Setting: | The Addington Service – Shephard | Setting: | The Canterbury Service – Barker |
| Hymns: | 243 The God whom earth and sea and sky... 362 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord! 58 Long ago, prophets knew 31 Lo, he comes with clouds descending, | Hymns: | 56 It came upon the midnight clear, 76 While shepherds watched their flocks... 63 O little town of Bethlehem, 62 O come, all ye faithful, |
| Anthem: | The Angel Gabriel – Trad Basque Carol | Anthem: | Nativity Carol – Rutter |

| Monday 25th December – Christmas Day | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|--|
| 10:15am | Parish Communion | No Evening Service | |
| Setting: | Mass of St. Thomas – Thorne | | |
| Hymns: | 66 Once in royal David's city 62 O come, all ye faithful, 67 See amid the winter's snow, 53 Hark! the herald angels sing | | |
| Anthem: | In the bleak mid-winter – Darke | | |

| Sunday 31st December – The First Sunday of Christmas | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|
| 10:15am | Parish Communion | No Evening Service | |
| Setting: | Mass of St. Thomas – Thorne | | |
| Hymns: | 73 Unto us a boy is born! The first Nowell the angel did say... 74 What child is this, who, laid to rest 81 Lord, for the years your love has kept and... | | |



Music Scheme – January 2024

| Sunday 7th January – The Baptism of Christ / The First Sunday of Epiphany | | | |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| 10:15am | Parish Communion | 6:30pm | The Epiphany Carol Service |
| Setting: | Mass of St. Thomas – Thorne | See Order of Service for details | |
| Hymns: | 334 Awake, awake: fling off the night! 93 When Jesus came to Jordan 564 Restore in us, O God, 89 O worship the Lord in the beauty of... | | |
| Anthem: | A New Year Carol – Britten | | |

| Sunday 14th January – The Second Sunday of Epiphany | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|--|
| 10:15am | Parish Communion | 4:00pm | Confirmation Service |
| Setting: | Mass of St. Thomas – Thorne | Setting: | The Canterbury Service – Barker |
| | 84 Brightest and best of the sons of the... 622 Will you come and follow me? SP301 O God, you search me and you know me, 548 One more step along the world I go, | Hymns: | 87 Hail to the Lord's Anointed, 183 Holy Spirit, come, confirm us, In Christ alone my hope is found, 513 Lord, the light of your love is shining, |
| Anthem: | From the rising of the sun – Ouseley | Anthem: | If ye love me – Wilby |

| Sunday 21st January – The Third Sunday of Epiphany | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 10:15am | Parish Communion | 4:00pm | Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service |
| Setting: | Mass of St. Thomas – Thorne | Davenport Methodist Church | |
| Hymns: | 85 Earth has many a noble city, SP131 As man and woman we were made 281 Author of life divine 90 Songs of thankfulness and praise, | See Order of Service for details | |
| Anthem: | Draw us in the Spirit's tether – Friedell | | |

| Sunday 28th January – The Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas) | | | |
|---|--|-------------------|---|
| 10:15am | Parish Communion | 4:00pm | Choral Evensong |
| Setting: | Mass of St. Thomas – Thorne | Introit: | O gladsome light, O grace – Bourgeois |
| Hymns: | 94 Hail to the Lord who comes, 360 Faithful vigil ended, 383 Be still, for the presence of the Lord, 513 Lord, the light of your love is shining, | Hymns: | 476 In a world where people walk in darkness, 516 Love divine, all loves excelling, SP4 Light of gladness, Lord of glory, |
| | | Responses: | Rose Psalm: 122 |
| Anthem: | O nata lux – Tallis | Canticles: | Evening Service in A – Sumsion |
| Anthem: | Nunc Dimmitis in A – Sumsion | Anthem: | When to the temple Mary went – Eccard |

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