

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

St John's – Focused on Christ, united in faith, serving our community
and a place of worship where all are welcome

Church Services in December

7th December:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Toy Service (CW)
6.30pm Evensong (BCP)

14th December:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)
4.00pm Christingle Service

21st December:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)
6.30pm 9 Lessons and Carols

24th December: Christmas Eve

4.00pm Children's Carol Service

25th December: Christmas Day

10.00am All-Age Communion (CW)

28th December:

9.00am No Service
10.30am Holy Communion (CW)

A short service of **Morning Prayer** is held in church **every Wednesday morning at 9.00am**

BCP - Book of Common Prayer

CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

Contacts

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Contact Us

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News

Church Heating — Regular church users will be aware that we have been having some problems communicating between the heating controller and the boiler. By the time you read this we hope those issues will have been fixed and normal service restored.

View from the Vicarage

I can speak one language well (English!) and another only partially. I know enough French to buy a drink, order a meal and ask directions, but little more! But God speaks two languages with perfect fluency. As the founder of modern science, Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), once said: "God has written two books, Scripture and creation - we would do well to listen to both." God speaks in both his 'works' and his 'words'. He communicates through the physical world he has made – he reveals something about himself in the sun and the stars above us and in the wonders of the natural world here below. But he speaks too in rational human language, in comprehensible words first heard by the Old Testament prophets and preserved for us in the Bible.

At Christmas we celebrate that unique moment in history when God spoke in both his native tongues simultaneously! The rational Word of God also became a physical reality, as a baby born in Bethlehem: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14). In Jesus Christ, God spoke in stereo! God's voice in creation can sometimes be hard to discern, especially when we're confronted by death, disease or natural disaster. And some Bible verses can be tough to interpret. But in Jesus, God spoke crystal-clearly. The words and actions of Jesus vividly displayed the character and qualities of God. In the life of Jesus, God's love, compassion, power and goodness were unmistakable.

Languages are, of course, designed for communication. They facilitate dialogue and make personal relationships possible. And God spoke to us via Mary's child so that we might enter into a relationship with him. Confronted by God's self-communication in Christ, we're invited this festive season to receive the gracious forgiveness and everlasting life that he offers us - and to respond with worship, trust and joy.

Happy Christmas!

Phil Weston



Christmas Craft Fair — The Craft Fair at the end of November was not just a place to buy early Christmas presents, it also raised a massive £1500 towards our church running costs. Thank you to everyone who organised, had stalls and came along to the event.

Toy Service — If you are not bringing your Christmas gifts for *Save the Family* to church for our morning service on 7th December would you please drop them off at the Community Shop by Thursday 4th December. We will then ensure they

Christmas at St John's

Sunday 7th December

10.30am Toy Service

Sunday 14th December

4.00pm Messy Church with Christingles

Sunday 21st December

6.30pm 9 Lessons & Carols

Christmas Eve

4.00pm Children's Carol Service

Christmas Day

10.00am All-Age Communion

are delivered to *Save the Family* in plenty of time for Christmas.

Pause for Thought

by Alan Downen



After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'

Matthew 2:1-2

The story of the Magi — those foreign scholars who travelled vast distances following a star — speaks to something deeply human: our willingness to pursue what we believe matters, even when the path is uncertain and our destination is unclear. The Magi weren't religious insiders, they were outsiders, immigrants really, crossing borders with expensive gifts for a child they'd never met. They relied on imperfect knowledge — astronomical observations, ancient texts and intuition — but still they went on, and when they arrived, they didn't find power in a palace, but rather, it was found in a place of vulnerability and poverty.

Today, we face our own uncertain journeys. Refugees traverse continents seeking safety, risking everything for their children's futures. People leave everything behind in the pursuit of education, opportunity, or simply survival. Like the Magi, they follow their own guiding lights — hope, desperation, love — often with imperfect information and with no guarantee of what they'll find.

But the Magi's story also reminds us that wisdom can come from unexpected places, that outsiders often see what insiders miss, and that the most profound truths are frequently found at the margins and in manglers rather than in centres of power. The Magi's choice to defy Herod's request that they should return to Jerusalem also suggests something radical: even after investing heavily in a long journey, we too can recognise injustice and choose a better way forward.



Tickets available from the Community Shop or

Yvonne Downen (01829 751174)

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Don't forget to come along to our Messy Church and Christingle Craft Session on Sunday 14th December at 4.00pm.



Opening Hours
Monday - Saturday
10am - 5pm
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