

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

John 3:16 (NRS)



# The Messenger



- ◆ God is with us and the light of Christ shines still  
– see page 3

## Christ Church Barnstaple

Methodist + United Reformed Church  
[www.christ-church-barnstaple.org.uk](http://www.christ-church-barnstaple.org.uk)

**December 2020**

**January 2021**

- ◆ How much does God love us?  
– see page 5

- ◆ Volunteering in a pandemic  
– see page 6



- ◆ Marmalade, Chutney and Pickled Onions  
– see page 7
- ◆ St Nicholas- see page 16

### December 2020

All activities are cancelled or postponed until further notice.

As the church magazine is printed once a month you may find more up to date information on the church website. I strongly recommend that, if you are able to, you have a look there for updates.

### Our family matters

#### Christ Church Family News

Sadly we report the deaths of George Radley and Audrey Denning since the last Messenger.

Both had been members of the church for a long time and will be well known to most of you. George served as an elder and circuit steward, then latterly as a regular reader on Sundays. Audrey will always be remembered for her wonderful supply of hats and ability to chat to everyone.

While we are not meeting together please look out for each other and let our Church Friends coordinator know of any concerns.

### A lot of work continues behind the scenes.

Our risk assessment moves on to the next stage, in preparation for reopening the building when it is appropriate to do so.

Listed building permissions are now in place for the maintenance work that needs to be done on the building and so grant applications can now be sent off. This will be a slow process as some grant funding bodies only meet twice a year!

Our grateful thanks to those who have spent many, many hours on our behalf, to achieve progress during stressful times.



**Thank you again** to everyone who sent in pictures, written pieces, poems etc. Email photos from your phone to [david.devon@mac.com](mailto:david.devon@mac.com) No correct answers so far from last month, but another photograph sent in to identify. Can you guess who sent us these photos of themselves as a child? Do you have a photo of yourself at a young age that you would like to challenge our readers to recognise?



## Message

My dear friends,

This edition of the Messenger covers two whole months.

As I sit in my study writing that sentence we are just over half way through November, Advent is on the horizon but not yet here, we are back in lock-down with a couple of weeks to go and my heart aches.

Truthfully I ask myself, am I looking forward to Advent and Christmas this year?

I am certainly looking forward to seeing the back of 2020 and beginning a new year with the hope that in so many ways the world will become a more normal, stable, happy and social place in 2021.

Undoubtedly 2020 has been one of the toughest years in all our lives, and for many *the* toughest, especially for all those in our church family and beyond who have lost loved ones.

I am praying for healing and for peace of heart and mind for us all.

Advent is a time of preparation looking forward to Christmas, a time to celebrate and look back to the birth of Jesus. Normally we would do this together, hearing prophetic readings and singing thoughtful Advent Carols looking forward to Christ's birth and the Christmas story and the wholehearted singing of Christmas Carols when the great day arrives.

It will be painful if we are not to be able to be together expressing our faith and our thanks for God's greatest gift. The gift of the Son of God born to reveal to the world through his life, death and resurrection the unlimited nature of God's love for each one of us.

These are difficult times we are living through but as we journey through Advent, Christmas and into the New Year perhaps there are lessons to be learnt and blessings to discover.

As I think about the isolation so many are feeling, the exhausting journey of Mary and Joseph comes to mind. Here were two young people, isolated, separated from family and friends and facing an unknown future. I think of Mary giving birth to her first child in a rough building, alone apart from a young Joseph with no idea of what he should do to help.

And I think about Jesus, small, vulnerable, relying on the love and care of Mary and Joseph, themselves probably feeling small and vulnerable and alone. And yet, in this family, in this child, is the promise of God's presence and activity in a truly amazing, powerful, world changing way.

God with us.

Please accept my love and prayers for you and those you love this Advent, Christmas and New Year.

Despite all we have been through, despite the loneliness, the painful journey, the confusion and fear we followers of Christ recognise the greatest gift of all. That in all of life, and especially in what threatens to be the darkest times, God is with us and the light of Christ shines still and will shine ever brighter in the days ahead.

Peace be with you.

With every blessing,  
your friend,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Don" with a stylized flourish at the end.

## Prayers for December

### 6<sup>th</sup> December

God of timelessness, you speak of eternity and the things that do not fade. In all the busyness of my week, the importance of small things, may I find time for the things that will last for ever, especially loving-kindness. Call me deeper into small moments where I can find the light of love in unexpected places. Because you are always to be found in unexpected places. Amen.

### 13<sup>th</sup> December

In my moments of weariness, or meekness, or pressure,  
I know God is here.

In my moments of pride, I know God is here.

In my moments of demand, I know God is here.

God is here, always, already, at once. Holding, sustaining and creating a new creation, in me, in us, in all. Amen.

### 20<sup>th</sup> December

Today, days before we celebrate your self-giving in life, in conversation, in generosity and in courage, we turn to you knowing how often we fall short in life, in conversation, in generosity and in courage.

Forgive us, and make us more like you, not because it will make you love us more, but because it is for our sake, and for the sake of the people you love so much, that you came among us. Amen.

### 27<sup>th</sup> December

Bringing all that I bring to you today, my thoughts, my feelings, my hopes, the things that have worked out, and the things that haven't, the joys and sadnesses:

I offer them to you, knowing that you will accept everything I bring, because I bring it and offer it to you. Amen.

## Prayers for January

### 3<sup>rd</sup> January

A new year has begun. Let us leave behind all that is past, and walk together into the future. Let us trust in the God of new beginnings, and worship the God of fresh hopes. Amen.

### 10<sup>th</sup> January

Loving God, you have given us a world to care for and people to love. Keep us mindful of what you call us to do and not to neglect your creation or our fellow human beings.

Help us to make new beginnings for ourselves and for others – in Jesus' name. Amen.

### 17<sup>th</sup> January

We thank you, God, for those times when we have sensed your presence, heard your voice, seen new insights – particularly when we have needed those things. Yet some of us, Lord, can't remember ever hearing your voice.

Teach us how to make space, how to hear you and to recognise your presence with us, and how not to get in the way of others finding you. We ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

### 24<sup>th</sup> January

Loving Lord, thank you that you meet us where we are,

in the middle and muddle of our daily lives.  
Help us to hear your call, to recognise your voice,  
and to respond to your invitation  
to follow you whatever we might be doing. Amen.

### **31<sup>st</sup> January**

Almighty God, be with us this week. Meet with us each morning, and in every situation throughout the day, whoever we are with, help us to draw on your strength and wisdom, that we may be faithful and true in following the example and pattern given to us by Jesus. Amen.

## **How much does God love us?**

Just over 20 years ago John and I, Shirley, fostered three children from the same family. The children had been badly neglected by their mother who would leave them sometimes for two or three days at a time whilst she went out drinking and clubbing etc.

The children were aged between six and nine. The youngest, James, was a real boy. Nothing scared him, indeed he did not even feel pain when he was first with us. The children came in March, so by Christmas we knew each other quite well.

On Christmas morning the children opened their presents from Father Christmas.

After lunch they opened the presents sent by our friends, neighbours and relatives. The children were given variety boxes of chocolates and sweets, colouring books, crayons, small toys and puzzle books etc.

So around 2:30 on that Christmas afternoon our front room was awash with discarded wrapping paper. There was a pause.

I said to all three children. "Well, what do you think to this Christmas?"

The reply when it came was both surprising and unexpected, it came from James, now don't forget he was only six, he said -

**"I didn't know how much I am loved!"**

For over 2,000 years, theologians and scholars have tried their very best to identify what Christmas is about. Yet, this young lad summed up in just a few words the real meaning of Christmas.

For all of us when we turn to God, whatever the season, comes that same realization ...

**"I didn't know how much I am loved!"**

Jesus said - ... God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. *John 3:16 - NIV.*

I pray that we will all know God's love, peace and blessings not only this Christmas but into the New Year too.

Shirley B.

## Volunteering through a pandemic

As you may be aware I am a hospital volunteer and I have managed, apart from a few weeks, to continue to do this through lockdown and beyond.

When I returned to the hospital a few weeks into lockdown, things were very different and if I'm honest I was a bit scared. The main change was having to wear a mask when I went onto the wards, and making sure that I put it on and took it off correctly.

It seems part of daily life now but in March it was very new. I spent most of my shifts delivering and reading letters that had been sent in by patients' relatives and just generally having a chat with people as they couldn't have visitors. The volunteers became everyone's visitor and I often found myself setting up Wi-Fi on people's phones and helping them to keep in touch with loved ones.

We were also very lucky to be able to be looked after by 'Project Wingman', who were Air Crew that had been furloughed. They set up a small café in the Over and Above Fern Centre, and thanks to donations they were able to provide hospital staff with free drinks, food, snacks and other great things. At this time it was really important to have a space to go that wasn't in the hospital itself. I definitely missed them when they went.

This all changed in June when it was made compulsory to wear a mask in the whole hospital as I found myself stationed at the main entrance handing out masks, helping people to put them on and handing out hand sanitiser. I also had to get used to wearing a mask for 5 hours and learning ways to stop my glasses steaming up. Washing up liquid on my glasses works best for me. Although at this time there weren't very many people coming to the hospital I still found it very busy, and for lots of people it was a very frightening time. For me it was really important to keep smiling and always greet people in a friendly way as this helps to put people at ease. Children especially found it difficult, and in certain circumstances I choose to remove my mask just so they can see a smile. However, there were times when people made this role unpleasant by being rude, but I just remind myself that what I'm doing is so important for the hospital. There were many more people that made my day enjoyable and I love being able to have a chat with so many different and interesting people. I even baked some cakes for some of the staff that I have become friends with while standing at the door.

As masks became compulsory in shops etc I found that I was able to move back on to helping on the wards and in other areas of the hospital. I currently help the ward clerk on Glossop ward on a Tuesday by answering the phone or collecting items for patients and doing some admin for the volunteer coordinator.

Things are so different from when I first started volunteering. Every day brings a new challenge and worry about Covid. However, for me being on my own with Serena during lockdown was very tough as I also lost my father in law to cancer in March. Being at the hospital gives me a break from all of that and I get to be useful, chat to adults and, although it's not good that people need to come to the hospital, it has been nice to see some familiar faces from Christ Church.

So, still every Friday morning, I can be found at the front of the hospital handing out masks and helping people to find where they need to go. I'm often told by hospital visitors and staff that the volunteers are crucial to keeping the hospital safe and I am very proud to be one of those volunteers.

Sue McMenemy

*NB. This was written before the present more recent lockdown.*

## Marmalade, Chutney and Pickled Onions



If you would like some home made marmalade, chutney or pickled onions, please get in touch with Carol (343075)



Christmas cakes, made to order, need to be booked in advance.

### Anno Domini

P.M.A. Penney – written in 1980 secretly when working in a retirement home

She sits alone and waits for a familiar face, a fond embrace.  
She sits and dreams, remembering a time that was sublime.  
She sits and wonders 'Where's the family? Forgotten me?'  
She sits and hopes perhaps they'll come today, they said they may.  
She sits and thinks, she often wonders why she can't just die.  
She sits alone; sometimes nods and sleeps and sometimes weeps.  
I wish that I could show the tearful truth to thoughtless youth.

### Immanuel – from despair to hope

Having the opportunity to read Anno Domini by Pat Penney, took me straight back four decades to the time when I was working in Primary Health Care. Pat paints a moving picture of human hope when residents of retirement homes and similar experienced the daily fear that their family had put them away "out of sight and out of mind".

Now we are at the beginning of the third decade of the twenty-first century with the oft-repeated phrase "an unprecedented global situation". The most vulnerable in our society find themselves in their care settings, cut off from human contact with their families who are desperate to be able to visit once more. Many of these vulnerable people have no concept of the reason why they can not have family visits which adds to their distress.

The topic for the Circuit Zoom Worship on 19 November introduced the participants to the Christmas 2020 Christian Aid Appeal. Resources included a new hymn for this appeal with words by Kathy Galloway - "When Out of Poverty is Born". The fifth to eighth lines of the first verse gave me a personal message of hope, especially in consideration of plans that would enable the vulnerable to have safe family visits in their care setting once more.

" it's then we learn from those who wait  
to greet the promised day;

'The Lord is coming; don't lose heart

Be blest: prepare the way! "

I now have these words for my private Advent prayer.

A personal reflection from Maureen (Thomas)





My granddaughters had an outdoor Rainbow meeting in which they made poppies from waterproof paper and put them near the church where they normally meet.

Eff



Photos by  
Jack Levick Photography  
[www.levickphotography.com](http://www.levickphotography.com)

Serena was extremely happy to be asked to model for Origin Africa whilst they were running their shop in Branton. Origin Africa make contemporary ethical and sustainable clothing and use the profits to fund sustainable community projects in **Africa**. It is a not-for-profit organisation which is creating a way of alleviating poverty.

More details of their eye-catching fashions and where to order, can be found on Facebook or on their website <https://www.originafrica.co.uk/pages/about-us>

## We need your help with the Messenger!!!!



We are looking for willing volunteers to pick up the batten from the Magazine Editors as we come to the start of the 14<sup>th</sup> year that we have been putting the magazine together using your wonderful contributions.

Surely there are some out there who would like to have a go and do your bit for Christ Church? Kathy or David would be happy to discuss what is involved- or maybe you are bursting with ideas as to how it could be done differently



## **Christina Rossetti 5<sup>th</sup> December 1830- 29 December 1894,**

My Advent book this year is 'In the bleak mid-winter' by Rachel Mann taking a poem a day allowing the reader to be pulled, during the waiting period of Advent, into the joy of Christmas.

Two carols we sing over the Christmas period 'In the bleak mid-winter' and 'Love came down at Christmas' were originally poems written by Christina Rossetti and then were set to music after her death. Christina Rossetti was serious about her faith as a Christian. She started out as a member of Christ Church, Albany Street London and then later converted to Roman Catholicism. She wrote huge numbers of poems both religious and secular. She was given to a practical faith and worked alongside those on the margins of a very unequal society in London.

At the turn of the year here is one poem to set out a plan for the year ahead.

Sue Macbeth



### **January Cold Desolate**

January cold desolate;  
February all dripping wet;  
March wind ranges;  
April changes;  
Birds sing in tune  
To flowers of May,  
And sunny June  
Brings longest day;  
In scorched July  
The storm-clouds fly  
Lightning torn;  
August bears corn,  
September fruit;  
In rough October  
Earth must disrobe her;  
Stars fall and shoot  
In keen November;  
And night is long  
And cold is strong  
In bleak December.

### **Greetings cards**

Anne has been busy producing Christmas Cards for the approaching Advent season. They would 'normally' be available at Hobnob but obviously that will not be possible this year. She is very happy to accept phone orders and make individual arrangements to get the cards to you - just get in touch. If you don't have her contact details, get in touch with me please - see page 19.

Kathy

## Good News from Amigos and Kira Farm

**God says, 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know' Jeremiah 33:3**

*Joshua (who runs Kira Farm) and Yule (who oversees Amigos' Child Sponsorship Programme) have now returned from their annual trip round Uganda visiting the Kira Farm graduates of 2019 as well as the trainees of 2020 who are at present still back home in their communities due to the pandemic. They brought back the most amazing stories of happiness and hope and faith, despite the pandemic. These include news from Francisco who we sponsored in 2019 and Scovia who we sponsored for 2020 and who will return to Kira Farm in 2021 when Kira Farm will reopen.*

*It was a real joy – and I have to say a wonderful surprise - to get a letter from Scovia when Josh returned. He had kindly delivered the last one that we wrote to her by hand when he visited her, as it had arrived at Kira Farm after she had left at the beginning of the pandemic. She of course has no access to a computer at her home. However, she straight away wrote back so that Josh could send it on to us when he returned to Kira Farm.*

Dear friends in Christ Church,

What a great joy to hear from you. I am so happy! Uncle Josh came to visit us and showed me the letter, I am so pleased you still remember me! I do miss Kira but I know we are going back next year in January, which isn't very far away.

I am happy that you have stayed safe. God has a hand on his people, or better things are ahead!

I have been doing farming but as well as learning from a former trainee at Kira who is doing hairdressing near our village. Now that we are able to move, I went to see some friends from Kira and learn what they are doing. It is good that we became friends in a short time.

I pray for you to stay safe.

I will hear from you soon

Scovia

*Then even more delight came with hearing how Francisco is doing. The following report further emphasises the wonderful work that Amigos is doing...*

Francisco Olanya says: ***I am so grateful to Amigos, everyone at Kira farm and friends at Christ Church for supporting me through this life changing experience. I can now honestly say that I'm really enjoying my life!***

**A painful start:** My father was a good man and well loved by the whole village, but when I was just six years old our village was raided by the Lord's Resistance Army. The rebels took captive many from our village including children. Unfortunately, dad was one of the people they abducted to further their cause of overthrowing the Ugandan government. We later learnt of his fate when one of the men they abducted escaped and found his way home. He relayed the story of how dad was ordered to kill an old woman who had refused to give the rebels her goats. Bravely he refused, which led the rebels to kill him as well as the old lady.

**Huge responsibility:** With dad no longer with us, the responsibility of taking care of the whole family fell on my shoulders as the first-born. I was just 10 years old.

It was my responsibility to protect our family land, my mother, sister and two brothers. Although I have a great relationship with my family, I would have done anything not to have been the first-born and have the responsibility that came with it. It meant missing out on playing with children my own age, so I barely had any friends because I would need to be in our garden cultivating crops to survive. We grew up wearing rags and went to bed soon after 7pm as we couldn't afford any paraffin for light at night. (It gets dark at 7pm every day on the equator).

Any money we would make from our garden would go towards paying school fees. I managed to complete two years of secondary school but couldn't keep up the payments. Leaving school really worried me because I was hoping to be able to make something of my life like becoming a doctor. But I'm so happy that God still had a great plan for my life and that's why I ended up at Kira Farm Development Centre.

**Amazing experience:** Kira Farm was the most amazing experience. Living in a place where I didn't have the responsibility of taking care of everyone, but instead was being cared for, was like nothing I had ever experienced before. Living at Kira was like being on an educational vacation. I really appreciated the peace and love I was shown by everyone. I am so grateful for the discipleship training; it gave me hope that life could get even better. I am so grateful that on Kira I learned how to make friends, something I am finding useful even back at home.

**No longer worried:** The transformation I went through at Kira Farm has simplified my life. With my new conservation farming techniques, I can cultivate less land, but harvest a greater yield. It's very different to the days when I had to spend all my time in the garden. As I speak, everyone in my family is now practicing Farming God's Way.

My faith in God is growing, and I'm no longer worried about how I'm going to look after my family. As I share my faith with them I can tell there's a lot of hope in everyone's eyes. I never liked going to bed early like a chicken, but through my carpentry business I have been able to buy solar lights for my family. We can now enjoy some quality family time at night.

Learning how to relate and work with different people was a huge blessing. I'm now part of a youth development group in my village, where I am sharing all my knowledge especially the restorative approaches that we learnt at Kira. I belong to a savings group and have saved £133 to date that I'm going to reinvest in my carpentry workshop. I plan to use some of my future earnings to send two of my siblings to school when the coronavirus lockdown is over.

I am so grateful for Amigos, everyone at Kira Farm and friends at Christ Church Barnstaple for supporting me through this life changing experience. I can now honestly say that I'm really enjoying my life!

## **Further good news from Uganda:**

### **Improving health and school attendance with fresh water**

Schools have partially opened, with phase one allowing all children in examination years to return to school as the Ugandan lockdown slowly eases. One of the things that improves school attendance – and of course the general health of the families – is access to fresh water which is denied to many people. As we know, water means everything. It is something very close to our hearts at the moment during this Covid crisis knowing the extreme importance of washing hands. But this year, Amigos has been able to oversee the installation of seven new boreholes to hand over to seven Water Management Committees. These elected committees come from all walks of life and represent all sections of the community. It is their job to

collect subscription money of around 1,000 shillings (30p) a month from each family, and ensure the upkeep of the borehole in the longer term.

## MHM training

The Menstrual Health Management programme funded by Guernsey Overseas Aid has been mentioned in previous news from Uganda as Kira Farm trainees were learning the skills to make it happen. It was of course delayed slightly by the restriction on movement through the country as well as sizes of social gatherings. However, once restrictions were lifted slightly, Josh and his team decided that if the communities couldn't come to Kira Farm, the training would go to them! Kira trainees, pastors, youth leaders, community leaders and health officials took part in training held in Amigos' offices in Gulu. They learnt about menstrual hygiene, liquid soap making and how to use reusable sanitary pads. 200 packs were left with the churches, who will conduct training in menstrual hygiene before selling the affordable, reusable packs to girls in the community.

-----

As this challenging year draws to a close Amigos would like to thank everyone for the care and support they have received, very much appreciating the difficulties and uncertainties that we have all had to face. Now, as Christmas approaches, if you feel able, they would be grateful if you would join with them in celebrating Christmas – 'Donate to Celebrate'. Whatever they receive will help make up for their lost time and funds, and will help kick-start Kira Farm and the Sustainable Community Farming Groups back into action. Thanks to Corton Hill Trust, St James Place and dedicated supporters, all donations will be match funded, up to the grand sum of £20,000 – the target being £40,000. There are more details on the website: [www. Amigos.org.uk](http://www.Amigos.org.uk) Also on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook or Twitter

Many thanks to you all

*Report from Anthea*

Following the article about '**Toilet Twinning**' in last month's Messenger, two of the church's toilets have been twinned with a toilet in Uganda. Six more to go! Each one costs £60 but I'm happy to collect and put together smaller amounts for a team effort. If anyone would like to do this, please contact Kathy Jeacock (see inside back cover).

For more information see [\*\*www.toilettwinning.org\*\*](http://www.toilettwinning.org)



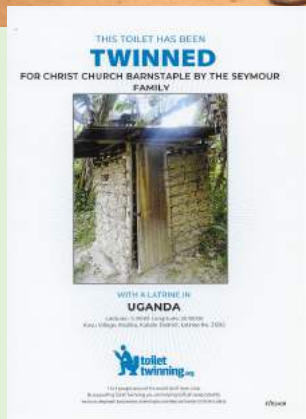
In the absence of any collections for Christian Aid over Christmas, Margaret Robinson has set up a page on 'Just Giving' for anyone wishing to make a donation - or you can donate over the phone.

Christian Aid website:- [christianaid.org.uk](http://christianaid.org.uk)

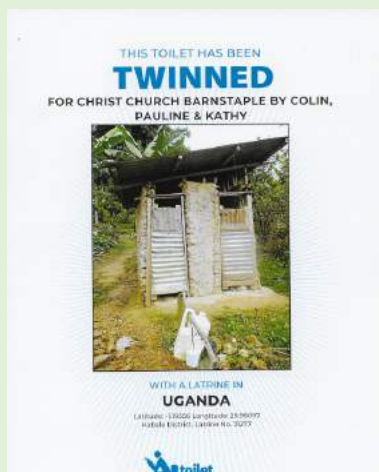
Telephone number of Head Office:- 020 7620 4444

For the 'Just Giving' page set up by Margaret Robinson of the Branton Christian Aid group:- <http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/christianaidor36125>

Alternatively go on to the 'Just Giving' page and search for Margaret Robinson Ifracombe and Barnstaple Circuit of Churches.



Twinned toilets



## **Eco Church**

Recently, there have been some great moves by some of the big shops and supermarkets towards making their products more sustainable. So it seems the perfect time to think about a few ways we can have a Christmas which does less damage to God's precious earth which was a gift to us - we need to look after it better. So here are some ideas to think about and maybe try a few. It's going to be a very different Christmas in many ways this year, and this could be a real talking point!

**Advent calendars** – make or buy a re-usable one. (Remember the days when we didn't need a chocolate reward?)

**Decorations** – most of us already re-use the same ones for years and they become much loved family favourites. If you need new ones try making them, especially lovely if you use fresh foliage or biscuits!

**Lights** – if possible use solar powered lights and/or have them on a timer. LED lights use 80% less energy – if every household in the UK swapped a string of incandescent lights for its LED equivalent for the 12 days of Christmas we could save more than 29,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

**Christmas Tree** – if you already have a plastic one then keep using it for as long as possible. If you buy a real one, make sure it is locally grown and has the FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) mark. After Christmas it can be planted if it has roots, recycled at the local recycling centre or chopped up to make a log pile in your garden as a wildlife habitat. Did you know you can rent a Christmas Tree? They are dug up and delivered, then collected in January and replanted!

**Candles** – choose eco-friendly soy or beeswax rather than paraffin.

**Cards** – sadly we can't do our communal card at Church this year. If you have a computer you can send e-cards for free. If you buy cards, look for forest-friendly or plantable cards impregnated with seeds. Afterwards, recycle your cards in your kerbside collection or in a local shop (if they are allowed to this year) or turn them into tags or decorations for next year. Avoid anything with glitter or sequins as these are not biodegradable.

**Wrapping paper** – we used to laugh at my Mum for ironing the used paper so it could be re-used, now I know she was ahead of her time! Look for recycled paper, and avoid foil or glitter types. How about using ribbon or twine instead of sticky-tape which isn't biodegradable and also makes the paper less recyclable? Gift bags can be re-used for many years with just a new tag. The latest idea is fabric wrap tied with ribbon – really pretty and very re-usable.

**Gifts** – homemade gifts are really special and personal. If you're buying gifts, look for Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, FSC or Palm Oil Free. Maybe give a membership, subscription or experience instead? Or perhaps offer a promise of help or a treat for later. You can print "Christmas Cheques" to fill in with your idea: [www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/xmas-gift-cheques](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/xmas-gift-cheques)



**Crackers** – there are lots of kits available now to make your own which is great fun and you can personalise the gifts (no plastic) and jokes. Afterwards, recycle the card and reuse the ribbon. If you buy crackers look for reusable or linen ones.

**Electricity Usage** – this increases hugely over the festive period. If every household in the UK got a Smart Meter now, 11% of the governments net-zero carbon emissions target by 2050 would be satisfied in one fell swoop.

**Food** – David Attenborough and others have raised our awareness of the devastating link between meat production and climate change. If you can't give up your Christmas dinner, at least free range, organic and locally produced is kinder in every sense. Buying less will reduce waste, and of course we all love left-overs!

Britons bin 108 million rolls of wrapping paper, throw away 54 million platefuls of food, and fill almost 100 million black bags with packaging from toys and gifts. Let's hope this year we can all make a difference.

Happy Christmas,

Liz Seymour

## **Vegetarian 'Sausage Rolls'**

This has become a family favourite - even the meat-eaters request these every Christmas!

Buy ready-made flaky pastry and make the filling with:

10oz fresh breadcrumbs

8oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated

1 large onion, grated

3 tablespoons thick double cream

1 tablespoon of chopped fresh herbs

1.5 teaspoons mustard powder

pinch of cayenne pepper

salt and ground black pepper

Just mix all the ingredients really well, fill the pastry and cut to size. Use beaten egg to seal the edges and glaze the tops. Cook at Gas 7/220°C for 20 -25 mins.

The really great thing is that these can be prepared in advance and frozen uncooked and unglazed, then cooked from frozen for 30 -35 minutes. We have them for a really easy but delicious Christmas Day supper!

Liz

## ST NICHOLAS OF MYRA

One of the best known saints is St Nicholas. His feast day is 6<sup>th</sup> December, he is patron saint of sailors, perfumers, pawnbrokers, apothecaries, children, unmarried girls, prisoners and merchants. He is perhaps better known as Santa Claus, bringer of gifts and comestibles to children.

We may wonder how St Nicholas, apparently a thin, wiry, feisty defender of the faith became a figure beloved by children the world over.

Nicholas was born in the third century, around 280 AD. He became Bishop of Myra, a small Roman town in modern Turkey. He was a defiant defender of church doctrine during the great persecution of 303, when Bibles were burned and priests made to denounce Christianity or face execution.

Nicholas was imprisoned for ten years until emperor Constantine ended Christian persecution.

We best know Nicholas for his connection with Christmas, but during his lifetime he performed many miracles of healing and generosity. Nicholas was born of wealthy parents and on their death sold their assets to help the poor. Perhaps one of the best known legends is that he 'saved' three poor girls from being sold into slavery. For three consecutive nights he secretly dropped a bag of gold into their bedroom window. This enabled their father to arrange a good marriage for them, as they now each had a sizeable dowry. Legend has it that the gold fell into their shoes or stockings, thus the tradition of hanging a stocking was started.

The legends were written many centuries after his death. The figure of three seems to have prominence, he is said to have saved three innocent soldiers from execution, and to have raised three boys from the dead. Legend also has it that he calmed a storm at sea and saved three sailors, as well as chopping down a tree that was possessed by a demon. It is not surprising that he was known as Nicholas the wonder worker.

His relics, originally buried in a sarcophagus at St Nicholas church at Myra where he had served as Bishop were removed to the Italian city of Bari, where they are enshrined in the Basilica di San Nicola. His relics are said to exude a miraculous watery substance known as 'manna' or 'myrrh', a sweet smelling substance which some believe possesses supernatural powers.

It is also said that on the night of December 6<sup>th</sup>, nuns took the opportunity of depositing food and clothing on the doorsteps of the poor. Perhaps his most popular legacy is the institution of Santa Claus. This is based primarily on Nicholas' patronage of children with its attendant custom of giving children toys or sweet treats. This custom evolved from immigrants to North America from the low countries where the Dutch Protestants of New Amsterdam united with Nordic folklore of a magician who punished naughty children and rewarded good ones with gifts.

St Nicholas cookies are very popular in the Netherlands and Belgium. On the Eve of December 6<sup>th</sup>, children leave their shoes out for Sinterklaas (St Nicholas) who will reward good children with cookies, oranges and gifts.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and hope you are rewarded with St Nicholas cookies.

Music to listen to: Benjamin Britten - St Nicholas Mass

## ST NICHOLAS CHEWY GINGER COOKIES

### INGREDIENTS

10 ounces (280gms) plain flour  
4 ounces (100gms) soft brown sugar  
4.5 ounces (125gms) golden syrup  
4 ounces (100gms) butter or vegan margarine  
1tsp bicarbonate of soda  
1 very heaped tsp ground ginger  
½ tsp cinnamon  
pinch of salt



### METHOD

- 1 Heat oven to 180°, 170° fan or gas mark 5
- 2 Sieve the dry ingredients
- 3 In a separate bowl, beat the fat, sugar and syrup
- 4 Add the dry ingredients and mix together
- 5 Roll out on a lightly floured surface to about 1 cm thick and cut into desired shapes
- 6 Arrange on baking trays to allow room to expand.
- 7 Cook for around 10 – 15 minutes. Cook for the shorter time if you like a chewy cookie

In the Netherlands it is usual to have a St Nicholas shaped cookie cutter, I did not have one so used a fairly large round cutter, they still tasted delicious.

Jennifer

### **A NEW BEGINNING**

When you're held in winter's frosty hand  
Just turn to God and ask what He has planned  
For sometimes our lives will be cold and bleak  
Each day some comfort and warmth we seek  
Just try and hold on with faith and hope  
God's love and grace will help you cope  
Until the brightness of spring appears  
A new beginning to dry your tears

Written by Carolyn Provan

## Weekly Meetings

<b>Monday</b>	7.30pm	<b>Friendship group</b>	(2nd & 4th Mondays of each month) contact Rose de la Cour tel 830824
<b>Tuesday</b>	9.30am - 12.00 noon	<b>Coffee morning</b>	
	9.30am	<b>Prayer meeting ...</b>	except the last Tuesday of each month
	10.30am	<b>Holy Communion ...</b>	(last Tuesday of each month)
	5.30pm - 7.00pm	<b>Brownies ...</b>	contact Heather Collins 07803841000
	5.30pm - 6.30pm	<b>Rainbows ...</b>	contact Nicola Wilkins
	7.00pm - 8.30pm	<b>Guides</b>	tel 07813620615 or 01271377154
<b>Wednesday</b>	1.30pm - 3.00pm	<b>Parents &amp; Toddlers</b>	contact Jo Grant 07450582414
<b>Thursday</b>	2.30pm	<b>Ladies Fellowship ...</b>	
	7.30pm	<b>Bible Study...</b>	contact Shirley Baxter tel 375560
<b>Friday</b>	10.00am - 12.00 noon	<b>Hobnob coffee morning</b>	
	10.30am	<b>Bible Study...</b>	contact Shirley Baxter tel 375560
<b>Saturday</b>	8.30am	<b>2nd Saturday of each month - circuit event</b>	
		<b>Men's Breakfast</b>	contact Mike Smith tel 345019

### All at Christ Church Barnstaple are committed to the following Safeguarding Principles:

- \* the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and all adults.
- \* the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable.
- \* the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.  
(Methodist Safeguarding Guidelines, online: [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk))

#### Sunday Offertory for September 2020

		<b>Cash</b>	<b>Envelopes</b>
<b>September</b>	6th	£0.00	£0.00
	13th	£0.00	£0.00
	20th	£0.00	£0.00
	27th	£0.00	£0.00

An increasing number of people are donating money direct to the Church account by standing order. Currently this offertory is £1945.00 per month. While we are not meeting together for Sunday worship in Bear Street, some of you are also sending in donations by cheque. Over the last four months this has amounted to over £3500. Many thanks to all of you. If you have given me an envelope number your gift will be included in the offertory in the accounts, otherwise it has been recorded as a donation. *If you are a tax payer* and would like the church to claim back the tax on your giving or if you change your address or other details, please contact Judith Smith on 01271 345019 or speak to a serving elder - Thank you.



*If you are visiting Christ Church today we extend a warm welcome.  
Please take a Messenger home with our good wishes.*

Christ Church Minister  
Rev Don Macalister  
8 Kestrel Way,  
Westacott  
Barnstaple EX32 8QN

tel. 01271 345313  
dasmacalister@icloud.com

Young families worker  
Jo Grant

jogrant-christchurch@outlook.com  
tel 07450 582414

#### Elders

Shirley Baxter	Kathy Jeacock (treas)	Jenny Newman
Alison Cairns	Chris Marshall	Eff Poole
Anthea Coates	Janet Marshall	Liz Seymour
Staveley Dawson	Jack Neville (sec)	Elaine Stevens

#### Telephone Directory (01271)

Church Secretary	
Church Treasurer	373555
Room Bookings	374085
Circuit Administrators	379116

#### Editors:

David Wilson	374020	david.devon@mac.com
Kathy Jeacock	373555	kjeacock@hotmail.com
Website		www.christ-church-barnstaple.org.uk

# Christ Church Weekly Act of Worship



Thank you to Don and Eddy for the work that goes in to sending out 70 hard copies of the Act of worship – that's a lot of envelopes to stuff!

Thank you too Don for the emailed files that we can listen to – it is really important that in these difficult times our church keeps in touch with each other.

## A small Zoom Get – Together – there are always new things to learn!



A small zoom get - together - Eff practicing her newly acquired zoom hosting skills with a few people happy to experiment

We were able to see what happens when you press the different buttons!