

# Parish News

 St John's  
Church  
SPALDING

December 2025



50p

[www.stjohnsspalding.org](http://www.stjohnsspalding.org)



# THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, SPALDING



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<b>Hon Assistant Priest</b>	<b>Rev Pat Willson</b>	07976 986 694
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<b>Church Administrator</b>	<b>Allison Willson</b>	
<b>Parish Office</b>	email: parishoffice@stjohnsspalding.org	07831 489545 01775 718237 (with answer machine)

*If you need a wedding, baptism or funeral, please contact the Parish Office*

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## REV GREG WRITES

**C**hristmas Marmite? (Other brands of yeast extract are available!)

They say Christmas starts earlier and earlier – and we’ve set our own record at St John’s by having our ‘Christmas Fayre’ in mid-November!

I’ve called this column Christmas Marmite because, frankly, Christmas can be a bit Marmite-y, or at least the expectations and anticipation around Christmas can be Marmite-y.

For some, it’s all about a childlike joy: there’s Elf-On-The-Shelf; the chocolate Advent Calendar; tinsel; fairy lights; and the rest of it. Some folks absolutely LOVE Christmas and the build up to it. But for others, perhaps sometimes but not always, the expectations of happiness are something to dread because those expectations of happiness just don’t fit where they are at.

Perhaps it’s a first Christmas without a loved one; perhaps it’s the difficulty of the darkness of the winter months and SAD (Seasonal-Affective Disorder); perhaps this Christmas will be spent alone or apart from certain loved ones; perhaps it’s a Christmas where money is tight and you fear what presents you have managed will be a let-down.

Christmas really can be a love it or loathe it time of year, but those

who find it challenging can find themselves biting their tongues for the sake of everyone else.

Our experiences of Christmas and the build up to Christmas can be different because of what is going on inside us, but also they can be different because of the Christmas that we’re engaging with. There are two different Christmases out there.



*Rev Greg*

We all engage with one and, to a greater or lesser extent, some people choose to engage with the other.

Far and away the most dominant Christmas and the one that we can’t avoid is the consumer-driven, commercialised advert-driven and (let’s be honest) Santa-centred/present-centred Christmas that fills up so much of our popular culture. And, predictably enough from a vicar, I am going to say that the other Christmas is the one centred upon the birth of Jesus – the Son of God coming into our world as Saviour and Messiah.

Perhaps I’m over-simplifying things but isn’t it the first version of Christmas that people who find Christmas difficult struggle with? It’s commercial Christmas that pushes images of sparkling Christmas trees, where presents piled high are to be found, or supermarket adverts



feature picture-perfect, idealised family Christmas dinners.

I'm not saying don't enjoy that side of Christmas where we can. If we can enjoy it, let's do so! However, whether we can or not, whoever we are, can I encourage us all: let's not forget the other, original side of Christmas.

A *Christ*-mas offering not the fleeting warm fuzzies, but a Christmas offering joy in a relationship and a rescue by a God who sees us and loves us, whatever our feelings, circumstances, and mood.

The thing about happiness is that it's a vague feeling that comes and goes. The thing about joy is that it's always joy in something and it's not exclusive of other feelings.

I can find joy in watching that child enjoying playing with a new toy while still missing someone else at the dinner table.

I can find joy in a pretty little robin sitting in a tree while also wishing things in other areas of my life were different.

The gift of Jesus is a gift of joy and peace and hope because it is a gift of God's love.

When we accept God's gift Jesus brings us lasting peace through his death and resurrection: he forgives our sins and opens the door

to acceptance by God and through that deeper self-acceptance, too.

When we accept God's gift of Jesus we have something we can always choose to find joy in: the unconditional love of God as our Father.

When we accept God's gift of Jesus we receive hope: not simply because we know we will go to heaven when we die, but also because when God is with us, we can pray for his help and have hope that he will strengthen us in our present challenges.

**“Can I encourage us all: let's not forget the original side of Christmas”**

Where we can, may we all enjoy the gifts and fun and trimmings of commercial Christmas. But also, may we not put all our proverbial eggs in that ephemeral basket.

Whether we're in a position this Christmas to emotionally engage with the commercial season that way or not, can I invite us all to receive in Christ a priceless gift of God's love available to us all – whatever our bank balance – and an eternal gift that only gets better the more we make the most of it: a relationship with God through Jesus.

Why not come and explore that Christmas at one of our special services? Details can be found on page 8.

I look forward to seeing you.

# DROP IN

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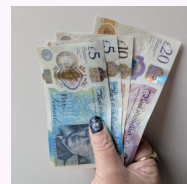


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Material for the January magazine should be with  
Heather Brookes

email: [heather.brookes@stjohnsspalding.org](mailto:heather.brookes@stjohnsspalding.org)

by the **10<sup>th</sup>** of December



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## DECEMBER SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

### **Tuesday 2nd**

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning

8.45am Little Seeds

7.30pm Alpha

7.30pm Fellowship Group

### **Wednesday 3rd**

7.30pm Revelation Course

### **Thursday 4th**

10am Communion in the lounge

11am Bible Study

7.30pm Fellowship Group

### **Friday 5th**

5.30pm TREK

### **Saturday 6th**

2-4pm Nativity Escape Room

### **Sunday 7th**

9.15am Informal Service

10.40am Book of Remembrance

10.45am Choral Communion

### **Tuesday 9th**

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning

8.45am Little Seeds

7.30pm Alpha

7.30pm Fellowship Group

### **Wednesday 10th**

7.30pm Revelation Course

### **Thursday 11th**

10am Communion in the lounge

7.30pm Fellowship Group

### **Saturday 13th**

7.30pm Spalding Community Choir Concert

### **Sunday 14th**

8am Said Communion

10.45am Choral Communion

3pm Christingle

### **Tuesday 16th**

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning

8.45am Little Seeds

7.30pm Fellowship Group

### **Thursday 18th**

10am Communion in the lounge

11am Bible Study

7.30pm Fellowship Group

### **Friday 19th**

5.30pm TREK

### **Sunday 21st**

9.15am Informal Service

10.45am Choral Communion

6.30pm Carol Service

### **Wednesday 24th**

3pm Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Communion

### **Thursday 25th**

10am Christmas Day Service

### **Sunday 28th**

10am Joint Service

**Parish News** is available to read online at  
[www.stjohnsspalding.org](http://www.stjohnsspalding.org)

*“O Come Let Us  
Adore Him”*

**All-Age Nativity Escape Room Sat 6th December 2-4pm**

**Christingle service Sun 14th December 3pm**

**Carol service Sun 21st December 6.30pm**

**Crib service Christmas Eve 3pm**


**Christmas Eve Midnight Communion 11.30pm**

**Christmas Day All age Communion 10am**



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## ARCHBISHOP DESIGNATE'S HOPES FOR THE CHURCH

 Shortly after the announcement of her nomination as the next Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Sarah Mullally delivered an address at Canterbury Cathedral, reflecting on her calling, the challenges facing the Church, and her hopes for its future.


Rooted in her early vocation as a nurse and shaped by her ministry in London, she spoke of “washing feet” as a guiding image of Christian service, and of finding hope in the quiet faithfulness of churches, chaplaincies, and communities across the Anglican Communion.

She addressed the Church’s responsibility in safeguarding, the need to confront power dynamics, and the importance of standing against hatred and antisemitism.

She said she would seek to be “a shepherd who enables everyone’s ministry and vocation to flourish,” and expressed her desire to nurture confidence in the Gospel.

“Held fast by the Lord’s hand,” she concluded, “please pray for me as I will pray for you.”

## HOW MUCH TO SPEND ON CHRISTMAS GIFTS?

 As you wait to buy your Christmas presents this month, do you ever wonder how much the other shoppers in the queue are spending?

According to various retail polls, we tend to spend according to the depth of our relationship with the person, and it is estimated that we spend on average:

- ✂ £10-20 per person for our friends and colleagues
- ~ ✂ £25-50 per person for our extended family
- ~ ✂ £50-100 per person for our immediate family
- ~ ✂ and, for our children, a whopping £400-plus

The crucial thing is to set a budget ahead of time and to stick to it. Christmas is NOT worth crippling your finances for months to come. A rough rule of thumb is to spend no more than one-to-two per cent of your annual income on Christmas. So, for example, if you earn £25,000, keep it to between £250 and £500.

So, shop around, compare prices, and look out for discounts. Limit your ‘gift-giving circles’ – you don’t have to give everyone you know a present!

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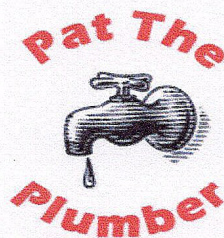
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# THE CHRISTMAS STORY

 All of us have received unwanted gifts at Christmas. For Joseph the gift of a child, as recorded in Matthew chapter 1, was not something he really wanted. Although he was engaged to Mary, her pregnancy would be grounds for divorce.

Not surprisingly, with the associated social disgrace, Joseph wanted to divorce Mary quietly (Matthew 1:19). However, God intervened in a dream: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means, God with us.” (1:23).

In a scary and uncertain world, what does the message of *Immanuel* say to us today?

## ***God is present with us***

God assured Joseph that He was working in all that Joseph was going through. The eternal and creator God entered time and space as a baby. This baby is both uniquely divine but also fully human. This means that we can know God personally, not just know about Him.

The Holy Spirit is committed to making Jesus’s life and character real in us, and bringing meaning to our circumstances, just as He worked in Mary’s life.

## ***God is on our side***

Christmas touches some raw nerves in our lives, including stress, family rows, loneliness and financial pressures. However, God does not remain aloof from our experiences. In Jesus He enters our world of hopes and fears, joys and disappointments.

He understands what we are going through, as He is alongside us. By the cross and resurrection, He gave His life that we might know His love, joy, peace and forgiveness.

For Joseph, as well as us, the Christmas message is one of hope in an uncertain world. It is a time to re-consider the claims of *Immanuel* (*‘God with us’*) as we entrust ourselves to Him for the coming year.

*By Canon Paul Hardingham*



# REFLECTING FAITH: LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

One of the highlights of the Christmas services is the reading of the opening passage from John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word..."

I love the poetry of the words and sentences, as well as their very meaning. In most churches, everyone will stand for that reading, which emphasises its importance. But what makes it important?

Most gospel passages that are read in church include the words of Jesus Himself, handed down to us over the centuries, but here there are none. Rather, this is the defining statement of who Jesus is and where He came from.

The way that the gospel readings are valued by the Church can be seen in our church buildings over the years. In older churches, you will find two lecterns, one either side of the central altar. The right-hand side is for the Old Testament and epistle readings, and the left-hand side lectern (as the congregation faces the altar) is for the gospel reading.

On the altar, the holder for the priest's book was physically moved to that side, so that as he read out the gospel he would be facing the northern side of the church. Traditionally that was the colder, darker side, thought to be 'least' holy and, therefore, in need of the gospel most.



Nowadays, all readings may be given from the same place at the front of church, though in some churches the gospel book will be processed with or without candles, into the centre of the congregation, to bring us all gathering around Christ's words.

It is because of this absolute importance of the gospels that people face the gospel, so as it is processed, they move their body and heads towards it. This will leave some people with their backs to the altar for that time, but it is the 'Word made flesh' that we honour.

*By Rev Dr Jo White*





## AND THERE WERE SHEPHERDS...

**I**n his gospel, Luke tells how the shepherds in the fields were keeping watch over their flocks when they were terrified by the sudden arrival of heavenly angels, surrounded by the glory of the Lord.

The message of the angel that night has rung down the centuries:

“I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:10,11)

And so, the first people to greet the Saviour were not rich VIPS, but humble shepherds.

In turn, it was the shepherds who became the first evangelists: for they would have gone home to their families and neighbours that night with the amazing news of what they had seen.

Meanwhile, for Mary there followed a time of reflection.



She gathered up in her mind all her impressions, and all that the shepherds had shared about the angelic visit. She knew it was treasure, and not to be squandered.

Then she quietly pondered in her heart the meaning and

significance of all that had happened, so that she would never forget.

Exuberant witness and quiet contemplation are not opposites. They are, in fact, good companions in the spiritual life!

So, this Christmas, let's be filled with the joy that the Saviour has also been born 'to us'. May our lives reflect the glory of His coming, even in a small way.

May our interactions with friends, colleagues and families during this Advent season reflect the great joy that the angels brought that night, so long ago.

*By Tony Horsfall, a Bible teacher and conference speaker*





# 2025 QUIZ OF THE YEAR

Solicitor David Pickup has set us multiple choice questions to celebrate 2025. No need to phone a friend, or ask the audience, and no prizes for pointless answers or beating the chaser. Answers are on page 31

1 Ashley, Bert and Conall were:

*Names of storms*

*Names of Eurovision entrants*

*Names of footballers*

*Young*

*Regal*

*Beautiful*

2 There was a rewilding lynx project this year. Was it:

*A new golf course*

*Releasing cats in the wild*

*Releasing aftershave*

7 Restaurants in Pozzuoli, Italy, cooked up a plan to attract customers who are put off by 1,800 land tremors per month. How long did they have to stay?

*Until bill paid*

*Until dessert served*

*Until coffee served*

3 Palmerston, the former resident cat at the Foreign Office, was brought out of retirement for a 'purrfect' diplomatic posting to where?

*Belfast*

*Bermuda*

*Birmingham*

8 Birmingham experienced 'Binmageddon'. Was it:

*Shortage of bin bags*

*Too many bin bags*

*Bin collector strike*

4 What is President Trump's favourite word?

*Tariffs*

*Musk*

*Sorry*

9 Singer Katy Perry was joined by Bezos's fiancée Lauren Sánchez; CBS presenter Gayle King; former Nasa rocket scientist Aisha Bowe; civil rights activist Amanda Nguyen; and film producer Kerianne Flynn for a space trip. The flight lasted around 11 minutes and took the six women more than 100km (62 miles) above Earth, crossing the internationally-recognised boundary of space, and giving them a few moments of weightlessness. What music accompanied them?

*What a Wonderful World*

*Fly Me to the Moon*

*Up, Up and Away*

5 We celebrated the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of modern railways. The East-West Rail Link is due to be opened next between Oxford, Milton Keynes and, eventually, Cambridge. What was the nickname of the original line?

*The Varsity Line*

*The Farcical Line*

*The Gravy Train*

7 Donald Trump called King Charles "a \_ man"

10 The film *Conclave* was a big hit in cinemas. What colour is the smoke used to signify the election of a new Pope?



White  
Black  
Grey

*The Shipping forecast prom*  
*The Traitors prom*  
*The Grand Prix prom*

**11** What was DOGE that Elon Musk was associated with and then left?

*Department of Government Elasticity*  
*Department of Government Efficiency*  
*Department of Government Energy*

**17** Skibidi, delulu and tradwife were among words added to the *Cambridge Dictionary*. What does delulu mean?

*French*  
*Delusional*  
*Incontinent*

**12** Loretta Swit passed away this year. What long-running sitcom is she best known for?

*Friends*  
*MASH*  
*Frasier*

**18** Heartthrob Terence Stamp passed away this year. Which part did he play in the 1960s film of *Far from the Madding Crowd*?

*Sgt Troy*  
*Farmer Boldwood*  
*Gabriel Oak*

**13** The UK proposed a wider ban on destructive bottom trawling. Is it:

*Antisocial behaviour*  
*Long trousers*  
*A type of fishing*

**19** In what month does the October beer festival, *Oktoberfest*, in Germany start?

*October*  
*September*  
*November*

**14** Which composer, whose centenary was marked this year, invented ‘furniture music’? He always kept a hammer in his pocket for fear of muggers and even founded his own church

*Frank Sinatra*  
*Jean Sibelius*  
*Erik Satie*

**20** In October, a lady in Kew was given a fine of £150 for pouring what down a drain on a road? The council later withdrew the penalty notice

*Beer*  
*Oil*  
*Coffee*

**15** What were the ‘mushroom murders’ in Australia?

*Killing by adding fungi to dinner guests’ meals*  
*Illegally picking mushrooms from fields*  
*Killing someone in the vegetable aisle at a supermarket*

**Bonus question**

Our own St John’s Church is how old?

*50 years*  
*150 years*  
*250 years*

**16** Which of the following were not Proms this year?

We hope you have a:  
*Happy Christmas*  
*Merry Christmas*  
*Peaceful Christmas!*



# PRAYERS FOR DECEMBER

## **THIS MONTH'S THEME: ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS**

If you are unable to use all the prayers every day, then it is suggested that you use a prayer for that season and the Parish prayer, if possible. In this way we shall all be praying together to bring about God's kingdom.

### **A Prayer for Our Parish**

**Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God,  
Teach us to walk in your way more trustfully,  
To accept your truth more faithfully  
And to share your life more lovingly.  
By the power of the Holy Spirit  
Guide us in our work for our church  
That we may come, as a family  
To the Kingdom of the Father  
Where you live for ever  
Amen**

## **ADVENT**

### *An advent prayer*

Father, through John the Baptist, you tried to prepare your people for the coming of Jesus. Will you try to prepare us, too? Prepare our hearts and minds that we may know what to look for in the coming of Jesus Christ into our world. May we show the joy of the advent message in our lives day by day. Through him who came at Christmas time.

*By Maren C. Tirabassi*

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, O Promised One: Once again we come to this time of Advent and await your presence. Give us patience to seek the meaning of these busy days.





Give us courage to wait in times of pain and trouble.

Give us compassion to wait for one another.

Give us the faith to wait for the Messiah when we are threatened by the Herods of this world.

Give us the hope to wait for the Saviour even when we cannot hear the angels singing.

Give us the love that does not wait when it meets Christ in our neighbour.

*By Margaret G M Godfrey*

Eternal Creator, with you each moment of life is full of wonder and surprise. We pray for you to make us watchful as we await the coming of Christ. Grant that we may not be found sleeping in sin, but awake and rejoicing in your newness of life. Through the same Jesus Christ our Saviour.



*From A Catholic Prayer Book*

O God our Father, we are preparing to celebrate the birthday of your Son Jesus Christ. While we recall his coming as a tiny baby in weakness and humility, may we be reminded that one day he will come in power and glory. We make this prayer to you through the same Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.

## CHRISTMAS

*The Promise of His Glory*

May the humility of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the joy of the angels and the peace of the Christ Child, be God's gift to us and all people everywhere, this Christmas and always.

*Worship Now*

O God, we thank you for the message of peace that Christmas brings to this distracted world. Give peace among the nations; peace in our land; peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts, as we remember the birth at Bethlehem of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord.





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## MICAH'S MESSAGE

**W**hy is the news so full of depressing stories? Why can't they report some good news for a change? Indeed, our world is always full of troubles, and we may wonder if better times will ever come.

Similar comments might have been directed at many of the Old Testament prophets who nearly always said negative and gloomy things. The people of Micah's day had many problems. They were surrounded by warring nations and peace in their time was unlikely.

It was Micah's task, as God's messenger, to tell the people how it was and how it was going to be, no matter how painful the facts. Micah was deeply concerned with the social ills of his day and spoke out against false prophets who were leading the people into errors and contrived hopes.

Micah was quite forthright. He announced that God would punish the people for their sinfulness and their enemies would overcome them. Micah came with bad news and there seemed no end to his reprimands and denouncements.

But in the desert was an oasis. Amidst his descriptions of imminent pain and suffering, Micah looked forward to a time of peace with freedom from injustice, fear and war. Micah delivered God's promise that from Bethlehem there would come a ruler to free them from their oppression. Their Saviour would come. (Micah 5:2)

Of course, Micah's hearers did not understand about the Babe at Bethlehem, but they were told to stand firm in their faith no matter what troubles or disasters would befall them. They were to look forward to their deliverance, whenever that would be.

Amidst Micah's attack on the deplorable actions of leaders and the nation's wrong values and behaviour, he gave hope that God was with them in the failures and difficulties. Only God could take them through their troubles to a place of peace.

Micah's message still stands for us today. God wants us to mend our wilful ways; to correct bad attitudes and behaviour; and to strive for heaven's values of justice, peace, equality, love and harmony.

As we approach a New Year, we would do well to respond to Micah's words: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

*By Lester Amann*



# Little Seeds

Baby & Toddler Group

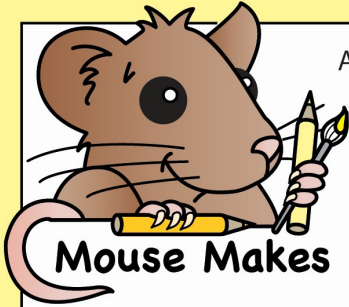
Tuesdays 8:45 - 10:30

**Come and play!**

Join Anthony (former EYFS Teacher) for:

- Number and Letter of the Week
- Small World & Role-Play
- Imagination Station & Moving + Grooving
- Reading Nook & Active Area
- Designated Bouncing Babies space
- Bible Stories & Refreshments.





## Mouse Makes

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, God's Son and our Saviour coming into the world as a baby, and we look forward to the time when Jesus will come again, not as a baby but as the King of kings and Lord of lords!

**read**  
John 14:3

A baby needs clothes to keep warm like a snuggly sleep suit or a vest and nappy.

*What were you dressed in?*

Jesus was wrapped in

.....  
.....

**read** Luke 2:7

A baby needs somewhere to be born like at home or in a hospital.

*Where were you born?*

Jesus was born in a stable in

.....  
**read** Luke 2:1-6

A baby needs somewhere to sleep like a crib or a cot.  
*What did you sleep in?*

Jesus slept in a

.....  
**read** Luke 2:7

A baby needs a name.

*What name were you called?*

Jesus was given a special name that had a special meaning.

**read**  
Matthew 1:21-23



# HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ☆ NOLLAIG CHRIDHEIL ☆ NOLLAG SHONA  
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN



# HIGH DAYS AND HOLY DAYS IN DECEMBER

## **25<sup>th</sup> December: Did the Old Testament expect Jesus to come?**

Yes, indeed! The Old Testament contains many prophecies about a coming Messiah that were fulfilled by Jesus. Here are some examples:

### **He would be born of a virgin**

Isaiah foresaw: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

### **He would be born in Bethlehem**

Micah wrote: “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” (Micah 5:2)

### **His lineage would be of the line of David**

Jeremiah prophesied: “‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour.’” (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

### **He would bring healing**

Isaiah looks forward: “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.” (Isaiah 35:5-6)

The Psalms add that He will be the one who “forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases”. (Psalm 103:3)

### **He would be betrayed**

The Psalms prophesy: “Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.” (Psalm 41:9)

Zechariah even prophesies the price of that betrayal: “So they paid me 30 pieces of silver.” (Zechariah 11:12)

### **He would be crucified**

Psalm 22 foresees the horror of His crucifixion: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?... All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. ‘He trusts in the Lord,’ they say, ‘let the Lord rescue him. Let him



deliver him, since he delights in him.’...I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death ...Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.”

Isaiah explains this suffering: “Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53: 4-5)

**He would rise from the dead**

Malachi declares: “But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays.”

The Psalms put it this way: “Therefore my heart is glad ...because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. ...You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” (Psalm 16: 8-11)

**In Acts, Peter uses the Old Testament to explain Jesus to the crowd at Pentecost:**

“Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

“Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that He was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did His body see



decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ...Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” (Acts 2: 29-36)

# Deeper

6:30pm 18<sup>th</sup> January

An informal gathering of sung worship, youth-accessible Bible teaching, and a chance to respond in prayer.  
A space for those who've served on Sunday mornings in their home churches to come and find some input, encouragement and refreshment.

Everyone is welcome

Please note: there is no Deeper service in December

## spalding Macular Society Support Group

Second Tuesday of the month  
(except January)  
1.30pm - 3.30pm

United Reform Church  
Pinchbeck Road  
Spalding PE11 1QF

Meetings open to anyone affected by  
Central vision loss.  
Family. Friends and carers welcome  
Contact Paul  
017769 494 078

## YOUR AD COULD RUN HERE!

For information, email  
the Parish Office at  
[parishoffice@  
stjohnsspalding.org](mailto:parishoffice@stjohnsspalding.org)  
or call  
**01775 718237**  
(out of hours answer machine)



## HONOURING LIVES LOST ON SNOWDONIA'S MOUNTAINS



A new memorial event has taken place in Snowdonia to remember those who have died on *Yr Wyddfa* (Snowdon) and the surrounding peaks.

The gathering, titled *Cysgod yr Wyddfa* (In *Yr Wyddfa*'s Shadow), was held at Nant Peris Church. It was organised by Rev Naomi Starkey, Ministry area leader for Bro Eryri, following a series of recent mountain fatalities.

"Having lived in Bro Eryri for more than a year, I've come to realise the dangers as well as the beauty of the amazing landscape," said Rev Naomi. "It's so poignant to hear of people coming for an adventure in the mountains and how that adventure sometimes ends in serious injury or death."

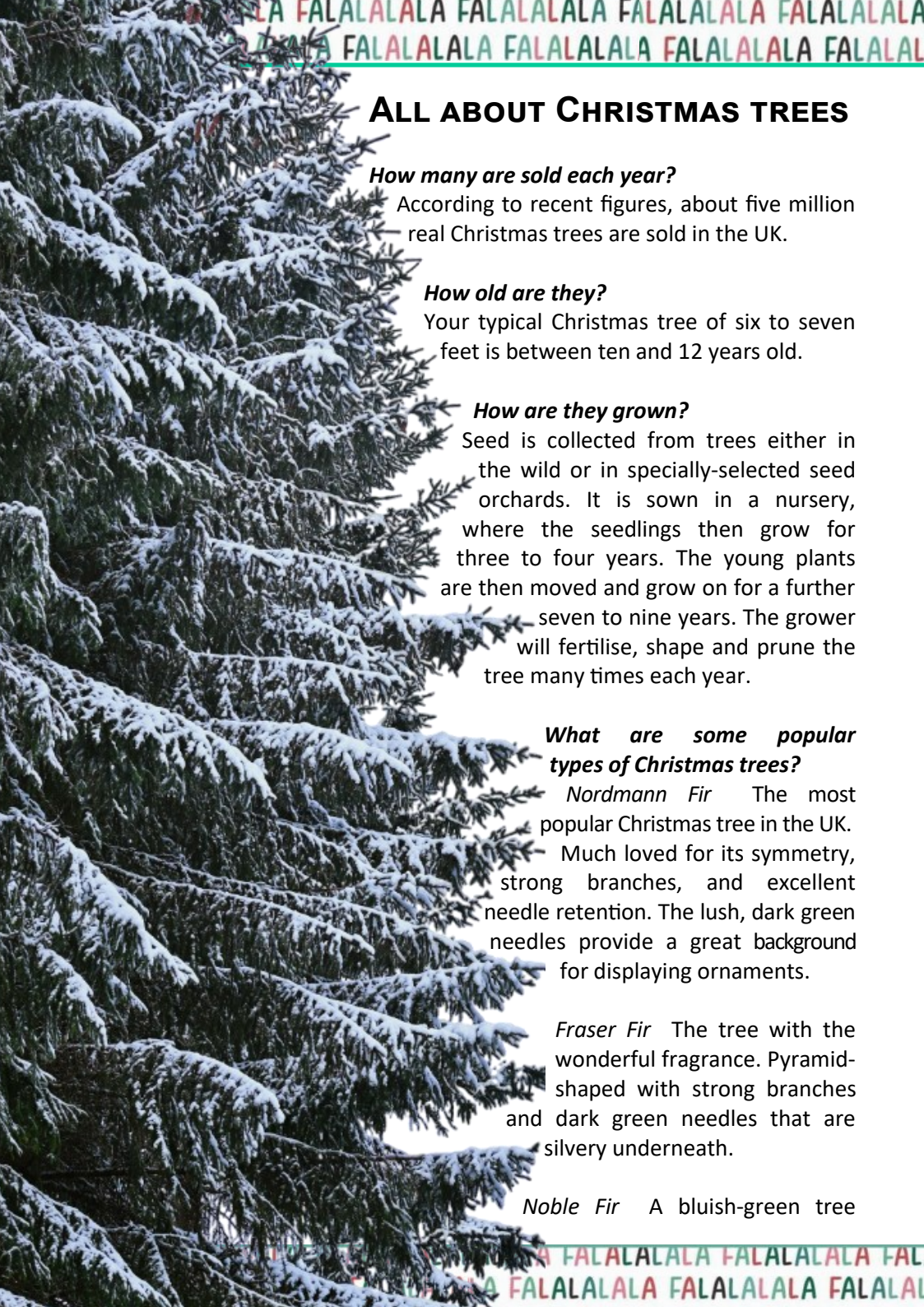
Recent months have seen several fatalities on *Yr Wyddfa* and nearby routes, including incidents on Crib Goch, which is above Nant Peris Church, and in the foothills and rivers around the mountain.

The bilingual gathering was an open space for quiet reflection rather than a formal church service. It included gentle music, readings, and the opportunity to light a candle.

Those attending included families of those who have died and members of the mountain rescue community. A collection was taken for Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team, the UK's busiest rescue team, which has responded to more than 300 call-outs so far this year.

This is the first time such a memorial has been held, and it may become an annual event.





# ALL ABOUT CHRISTMAS TREES

## ***How many are sold each year?***

According to recent figures, about five million real Christmas trees are sold in the UK.

## ***How old are they?***

Your typical Christmas tree of six to seven feet is between ten and 12 years old.

## ***How are they grown?***

Seed is collected from trees either in the wild or in specially-selected seed orchards. It is sown in a nursery, where the seedlings then grow for three to four years. The young plants are then moved and grow on for a further seven to nine years. The grower will fertilise, shape and prune the tree many times each year.

## ***What are some popular types of Christmas trees?***

***Nordmann Fir*** The most popular Christmas tree in the UK.

Much loved for its symmetry, strong branches, and excellent needle retention. The lush, dark green needles provide a great background for displaying ornaments.

***Fraser Fir*** The tree with the wonderful fragrance. Pyramid-shaped with strong branches and dark green needles that are silvery underneath.

***Noble Fir*** A bluish-green tree



with short, stiff branches, ideal for heavier ornaments. It has a fresh fragrance and great needle retention.

*Douglas Fir* Popular in the USA, with a great shape, and probably the strongest scent of all Christmas trees. It's only downside is it's hard to decorate due to dense branches.

*Norway Spruce* A dark green, conical-shaped tree, with a strong fragrance. Needs to be well-watered for good needle retention.

*Blue Spruce* This is ideal for your small or second tree. Its beautiful, unique blue colouring and good, stiff branches are great for showing off heavy decorations. Needs watering well.

*Lodgepole Pine* Beautiful tapered branches with green/yellow needles. A tree loved by traditionalists.

### **IT'S A FACT!**

- Even before the time of Christ, evergreen trees were seen in winter as a symbol of fertility
- The 16<sup>th</sup> century monk, Martin Luther, is credited with the idea of having lights on Christmas trees. He added candles to his tree to look like stars in a forest
- Windsor Castle got its first Christmas tree in 1800, brought by Charlotte, wife of George III
- It was in 1835 that the term 'Christmas tree' was first used in English
- It was in the 1840s, when Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, began bringing trees inside, that led to their popularity throughout the UK
- Woolworths first sold manufactured Christmas tree ornaments in 1880
- The tree in London's Trafalgar Square has been a gift from the city of Oslo, Norway, since 1947
- The world's tallest Christmas tree, at 221ft high, was erected in a Washington shopping mall in 1950
- In a survey of the nation's favourite smells, real Christmas trees came eighth, just behind the sea, but ahead of perfume
- The British Christmas Tree Grower Association (BCTGA) estimates that approximately 75% of the five million UK trees sold consists of Nordmann Fir, with the remaining portion comprising Norway Spruce, Fraser Fir, and others



# ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL — DECEMBER

*"God gave us our memories so that we might have roses in December"*

J M Barrie

*"The colour of springtime is in the flowers; the colour of winter  
is in the imagination"*

Terri Guillemets

December is a quiet month in the garden, but there are still jobs to be done in the garden. As we approach the shortest day of the year in December you will need work to keep you warm outside, such as digging and tree pruning.

**FLOWERS** Clear up weedy beds ready for spring mulching. Use bulky organic matter, eg well-rotted farmyard manure or mushroom compost, for use as a soil improver or mulch.

Check on tender plants outdoors to ensure winter protection is still in place, especially after storms. Raise patio containers onto feet or bricks to avoid them sitting in the winter wet.

Continue to cut back faded herbaceous perennials and add them to the compost heap or, alternatively, leave these until spring so that they can be used as winter homes for insects.

Move containers of shrubs or bedding planters to sheltered spots; clustering them together helps protect the root systems from frost damage.

Finish the autumn tidy-up of leaves from beds and borders if you have not already done so. It is especially important to clear leaves and debris from alpinists, as they will die off if covered in damp for any length of time.

Spread fresh gravel or grit around alpine and rockery plants.



**TREES and SHRUBS** Protect newly planted trees, hedges and shrubs from cold winds and frosts, which can loosen and lift the roots. Gently re-firm them in if you notice this problem and erect a temporary netting windbreak if there is no natural shelter.

Move established deciduous trees and shrubs, provided the ground is not frozen, or soggy.



Start to winter-prune wisteria, cutting back whippy summer side shoots to two or three buds.

Prune climbing roses now, removing diseased or damaged growth, and tying in any new shoots to their support. Prune older flowered side shoots back by two-thirds of their length.

Plant deciduous, climbing honeysuckle now, but make sure to avoid any frozen or waterlogged ground.

Check tree ties and stakes. Replace, tighten, slacken or remove as necessary. Remove weeds from around the bases of young trees.

**FRUIT and VEGETABLES** Now is the perfect time to prune fruit trees to maintain an open, balanced structure, and encourage quality fruit production.

If your strawberry plants are more than three years old, order new varieties to replace them. Old strawberries can harbour diseases and lose vigour and productivity.

Lift your last leeks and parsnips before the soil becomes frozen.

Remove yellowing leaves from your winter brassicas — they're no use to the plant and may harbour pests and diseases.



Dig a trench for next year's beans, fill it with compostable kitchen waste (not cooked food) and recover with soil. This will rot down and dramatically improve the growing conditions.

Dig over empty borders and pile well rotted manure on top — let the worms and frosts break up the clods of soil.

**GREENHOUSE** If you haven't already done so, clean out the greenhouse thoroughly.

Wash the glass, the floor and the staging with horticultural disinfectant to kill any overwintering pests and diseases.

Propagate perennials from root cuttings including phlox, oriental poppies and mint.

Water plants sparingly to maintain as dry an atmosphere as possible.

**LAWN** Avoid walking on your lawn when it's blanketed by heavy frost or snow as this damages the grass.

If it's a mild winter, continue to cut the lawn as it grows, but raise the height of the mower blades.

Spike lawns with a garden fork to improve drainage and aeration.

Keep clearing leaves off the lawn to let the light in and prevent dead patches appearing.



## TIPS

Wash down all of your garden tools and give them a wipe of linseed oil on the wooden and metal areas to help prevent rusting.

Choose a dry day to clear out the garden shed in preparation for the spring.

Get rid of slimy patches on the patio and paving by scrubbing with a broom or blasting with a pressure washer. For an easy alternative try a liquid patio cleaner.

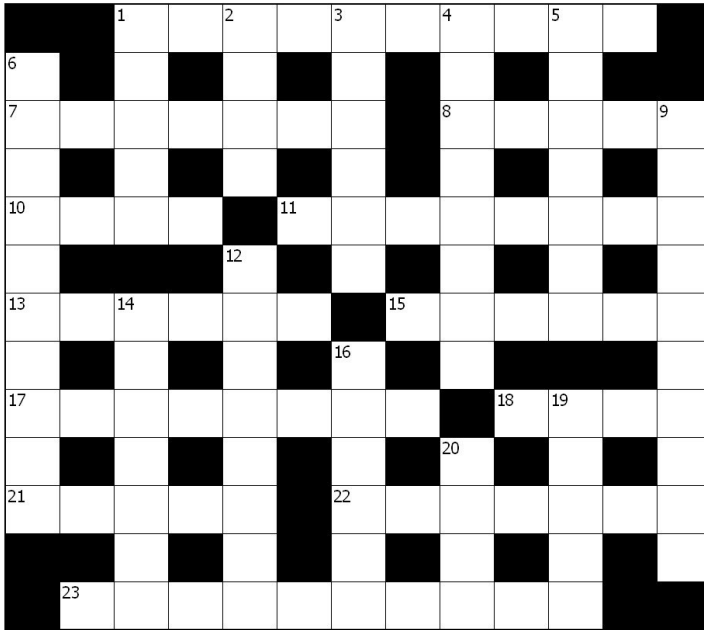


*"May you have the gladness of Christmas which is hope;  
The spirit of Christmas which is peace;  
The heart of Christmas which is love"*

Ada V. Hendricks

Happy Christmas **Petunia Flowers**

# DECEMBER CROSSWORD



## Across

- 1 Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)
- 7 David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14,15) (7)
- 8 They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (5)
- 10 Small deer of European and Asian extraction (4)
- 11 Seized control of (Numbers 21:25) (8)
- 13 Terror (Luke 24:5) (6)
- 15 First World War heroine shot by the Germans in Brussels:  
Nurse Edith – (6)
- 17 Stormy (8)
- 18 A bitter variety of this, together with lamb and unleavened bread, was the Passover menu for anyone unclean (Numbers 9:11) (4)
- 21 Arson (anag) (5)
- 22 How John Newton described God's grace in his well-known hymn (7)
- 23 Habitation (Isaiah 27:10) (10)

## Down

- 1 “– and see that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8) (5)
- 2 “The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as – as a lion” (Proverbs 28:1) (4)
- 3 One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)
- 4 He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19,20) (8)
- 5 City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)
- 6 Offer your bodies as living –, holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1) (10)
- 9 Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)
- 12 One who accepts government by God (8)
- 14 Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual (Exodus 30:1)(7)
- 16 He asked Jesus: “What is truth?” (John 18:38) (6)
- 19 Are (Romans 13:1) (5)
- 20 You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will – his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21) (4)

## NOVEMBER CROSSWORD ANSWERS

- ACROSS** 1 Bartholomew 9 Evil one 10 Adore 11 Ran 13 Oreb 16 Zinc  
17 Entail 18 Hung 20 Lehi 21 Joshua 22 Pity 23 Wide 25 Age 28 Alarm  
29 Partake 30 Sennacherib
- DOWN** 2 Alive 3 Took 4 Over 5 Onan 6 Emotive 7 Jehoshaphat  
8 Melchizedek 12 A light 14 Beg 15 Strong 19 Not have 20 Law 24 Iraqi  
25 Amen 26 Epic 27 Free

## 2025 QUIZ ANSWERS FROM PAGES 14-15

- 1 Names of storms 2 Releasing cats in the wild 3 Bermuda 4 Tariffs 5 Varsity Line, as it linked the two universities. It was a favourite journey of CS Lewis  
6 Beautiful 7 Until dessert served 8 Bin collector strike 9 Louis Armstrong's *What a Wonderful World* 10 White 11 Department of Government Efficiency  
12 MASH. The television series went on for much longer than the Korean War, which it was based on 13 A type of deep sea fishing 14 Erik Satie 15 Killing by adding fungi to dinner guests' meals 16 The Grand Prix was not a prom  
17 Delulu means delusional 18 Sgt Troy 19 September 20 Coffee
- Bonus question** Our beautiful church was consecrated on St John's Day, June 24, 1875, making it 150 years young

