

PARISH NEWS

† St John's Parish Church: Faith, Fellowship, and Friendship †

JANUARY 2026 £1



~~2025~~

2026

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AS OLD AS THE HILLS... AND YET NEW FOR THIS YEAR


I don't know about you but sometimes I amaze myself at how slow I am to learn something. There's a part of my brain that's convinced that once we get past Christmas, then that will be the end of winter, and spring should really start in about mid-January.

I forget that just because it's beginning to get a little bit lighter, the full warmth and light and joy of spring is actually still some way off, ie, the month of March. My instincts around the times and seasons sometimes need a bit more patience and perspective. It's not that my instincts are completely wrong, but they're not spot on, because some things just take a bit longer than we expect to come around.

As we start the new year of 2026 or, if you are inspired by this month's cover, as we leap into 2026, then perhaps there is an instinct we can all tap into a little bit more. If we do so we might well find it benefits us

and/or we might find it benefits someone else who really needs it. But, like the season of spring and my impatient inner calendar, it may take more time to see that benefit than we initially think.

Our instinct for friendship is not a new one but it's one that it seems people in the 21st century are increasingly less good at capitalising on.

Admittedly America is not Britain but no one would deny that there is a degree of cultural overlap between the UK and the USA. According to survey results* the number of Americans who reported having zero close friends rose from three per cent in 1990 to 12 per cent in 2021. By contrast the number of Americans who reported having ten or more close friends fell from 33 per cent in 1990 to 13 per cent in 2021. A fairly consistent statistic over time has been that women are better at finding emotional support in their friends than men. 



This month's magazine is sponsored by
MICHAEL AND HILARY MORIATY
In memory of
FAMILY AND FRIENDS NO LONGER WITH US

The 2025 data from the UK Office of National Statistics (ONS) found that:

Younger adults reported higher levels of loneliness often, always, or some of the time (31 per cent among adults aged 16 to 29 years compared with 25 per cent among adults aged 30 to 49 years; 21 per

cent among adults aged 50 to 69 years; and 16 per cent among adults aged 70 years and above).**

The same survey from the ONS explored what people thought were the top ten important issues facing the UK in 2025. What do you make of the table of results below?

Issue	Percentage of people who said it was an important issue facing the UK in 2025
Cost of living	88
NHS	85
The economy	74
Crime	63
Housing	55
Immigration	54
International conflict	50
Climate change and the environment	49
Education	46
Employment	44

I don't know about you, but as I read the news headlines, it strikes me that we are living in challenging times. These survey results suggest that I'm not alone in those thoughts.

The Bible encourages us that, in addition to trusting in God, what we could do with when times are tough is friends, family, and other people who are committed to us and love us and will walk with us (and us

with them) along the hard paths we all go through in life.

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity” (Proverbs 17:17)

Perhaps some readers of this column are struggling and alone... why not reach out to someone? There's an open and welcoming community at St John's and lots of

ways to forge a connection to us, whether that's attending a service, or our Tuesday morning coffee morning. Or else contact the church office to arrange for one of the clergy to come and pay you a visit at home.

Perhaps you are blessed with an abundance of friends and family, but there is someone you know who does not have anyone close to them.

A gentle offer of friendship could make a huge difference and over time (remember Spring isn't until March) become a source of mutual blessing and kindness.

We all need good friends. We can all choose to be good friends in our own friendships, whether they are brand new, or long-established.

Christians have for centuries recognised that Jesus is the ultimate,

eternal, all-weather, ever-faithful friend *par excellence*.

“One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother”
(Proverbs 18:24)

“A gentle offer of friendship could make a huge difference”

As well as human friendships, God invites us to a friendship with Him through the Christ who will always stick closer than a brother.

After all, despite knowing all our failings, He loves us enough to go to the cross so He could offer us free forgiveness. And, as one who personally experienced great adversity, He understands the challenges we face. He daily offers us His grace, peace, and wisdom.

How different could December 2026 be for us and for others if we all make a new friend this year?

*No survey is perfectly representative but I'd suggest there is no smoke without fire here – I got these results from:

www.americansurveycenter.org/research/the-state-of-american-friendship-change-challenges-and-loss

**www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/publicopinionsandsocialtrends/greatbritain/april2025



Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of friendship, for the laughter, support, and shared journeys. Help me be a truly good friend – patient, kind, and listening – and bless my friends with Your peace, joy, and strength, reminding us all that we are loved and never alone in You. Amen



BE IN IT TO WIN IT!

It's Lottery time again! The cost is still only £30 and there are four monthly prizes:
1 x **£20**; 1 x **£10**; and 2 x **£5**.

If you would like to join again, or for the first time, please pay £30 for the year (or £15 for six months) in one of the following ways:

† **Bank transfer** (Preferred)

Please pay your money to the account below, making sure you put in the reference:
'Lottery and your name'

Account: St John's Church

Account Number: 00409297

Sort Code: 30-97-95

† **Cash** Please give to Elizabeth Roberts

† **Cheque** Made payable to St John's Church

Please pay by mid-January 2026 at the latest.

Good luck!

NOVEMBER LOTTERY WINNERS

£20	38	Pat and Irene Blackman
£10	3	Mary Wood
£5	22	Cherryl Evans
£5	7	Trish Lunn

DROP IN

FOR COFFEE AND CAKE

In St. John's Church lounge

Every Tuesday, from 8.30 to 11.30am



All welcome

Come to meet new friends and have a chat

JANUARY SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Sunday 4th

9.15am Informal Service
10.40am Book of Remembrance
10.45am Choral Communion

Tuesday 6th

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning
8.45am Little Seeds

Thursday 8th

10am Communion in the lounge

Sunday 11th

8am Holy Communion
9.15am Informal Service
10.45am Choral Communion

Tuesday 13th

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning
8.45am Little Seeds
7.30pm The Bible Course

Thursday 15th

10am Communion in the lounge

Friday 16th

5.30pm TREK

Sunday 18th

9.15am Informal Service
10.45am Choral Communion

6.30pm Deeper – Worship evening

Monday 19th

7.30pm PCC Meeting

Tuesday 20th

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning
8.45am Little Seeds
7.30pm The Bible Course

Wednesday 21st

7.30pm Alpha

Thursday 22nd

10am Communion in the lounge

Sunday 25th

8am Holy Communion
9.15am Informal Service
10.45am Choral Communion

Tuesday 27th

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning
8.45am Little Seeds
7.30pm The Bible Course

Wednesday 28th

7.30pm Alpha

Thursday 29th

10am Communion in the lounge

Friday 30th

5.30pm TREK



Material for the February magazine should be with
Heather Brookes
email: heather.brookes@stjohnsspalding.org
by the 12th of January

Philosophy and religion may reform, but only the Bible can transform
B Edwards

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Contact Paul
017769 494 078



Deeper

Sunday 15th February
6:30-7:30pm


An informal gathering of sung worship, youth-accessible
Bible teaching, and a chance to respond in prayer.

Also a space for those who've served on Sunday
mornings in their home churches to come and find some
input, encouragement and refreshment.

Every 3rd Sunday - Everyone is welcome

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THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS: **PRIDE**

ur new series looks at the seven Deadly Sins, a list compiled by Pope Gregory 1 in AD 590, to describe the nature of sin. This month we consider pride: “The beginning of all sin” (Augustine).

Pride is preoccupied with self and denies the need for others or God. We see it present in the first sin, when Adam and Eve wanted to become like God (Genesis 3:5).

What does pride look like? Jesus told the story of two men, a Pharisee and a tax collector, who went to pray in the Temple (Luke 18: 9-14).

The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: “God, I thank you that I am not like other people, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.” (11,12).

He illustrates how pride is essentially putting ourselves in God’s place and believing we can run our

own lives. It’s subtle and self-deceptive and eats away our lives: “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18).

So how do we deal with pride? The answer is humility. The tax collector stood at a distance: “he would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’” (Luke 18: 13-14).

This man was right with God because he acknowledged his sin and his need for forgiveness.

Humility is being realistic about ourselves and acknowledging our total dependence on God.

We develop it by giving ourselves wholeheartedly to God and repenting of our desire to do things our way: “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up.” (1 Peter 5:6).



The original sin: Adam and Eve

“Humility is not in thinking less of yourself, but in thinking of yourself less”

Rick Warren

By Canon Paul Hardingham

“A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you”

C S Lewis from Mere Christianity

A Tudor Christmas

November 29, 2025: it's a damp, dreary and dismal afternoon, but St John's Church shines with the mellifluous and polyphonic voices of the Bruegel Consort quintet.

Bruegel (Broo-guhl) Consort – a small group of musicians, typically performing music of the late-medieval and Renaissance periods – comprises founder and soprano Lilly Vadaneaux; alto Doraly Gill; bass Harry Elliot; and tenors Angus Champion and Nick Walters. They met while singing in college choirs

at Cambridge and specialise in a complex and intricate form of polyphony that sounds as magical as it's labyrinthine.

The performance begins with the pre-Reformation piece, *Nesciens mater*, written by Walter Lambe. It's one of the shortest songs found in the *Eton Choirbook* – a rare example of an illuminated manuscript that survived the plunder of monasteries.

In England, the Reformation led to King Henry VIII breaking away from Rome to establish the Church of England due to his desire for a marriage annulment, which the Pope refused to grant.

Nowadays, Mariah Carey is renowned for her melisma – the technique of singing a single syllable over multiple notes in succession – but she has nothing on this Consort! Even with knowledge of Latin and the words printed out, it's difficult to follow along. This, however, doesn't detract from the beautiful sounds produced by these artists, who seemingly use their entire bodies as instruments.

Both Harry and Lilly perform alone



From a Latin poem celebrating the House of Tudor

with Sarum plainsongs – Harry’s *Tecum principium* and Lilly’s *Alleluia*. A Sarum plainsong is a monophonic liturgical chant that was developed for use at Salisbury Cathedral.

Missa Tecum principium: Credo takes us to the interval, intoned by Angus. This creed was written by Robert Fayrfax (1464-1521) who was born locally in Deeping Gate; his baptism took place in the church of St James, Deeping St James, both about 12 miles from our church.

It’s not known exactly when Fayrfax wrote this piece, but one theory is that it was commissioned in 1509 for Henry VIII’s first Christmas on the throne, as he spent staggering amounts of money in order to make his first year as King a most memorable one.

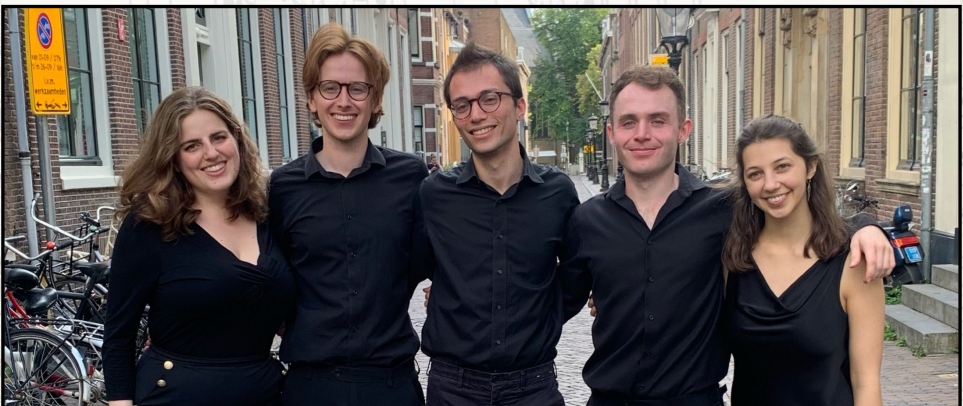
Post-interval and we’re musically heading post-Reformation. Doraly takes the lead with the plainsong *Ecce virgo concipiet*, before sharing

the stage with Angus and Nick to perform as a trio.

It’s refreshing how every member of the Consort take their turn to both sing alone and to introduce a section of the performance. They work as a unit and not as a gathering of solo performers.

Finally, for this Christmas music and set programme, all return to Fayrfax’s Mass, *Tecum principium* for its final movement and its words of the *Agnus Dei*, literally ‘Lamb of God’. Its final words: “*Dona nobis pacem*” – grant us peace – make for a fitting end of a marvellous performance.

There was a wonderful surprise afterwards, when Bruegel Consort sang a bonus piece, *The Silver Swan*, which is a madrigal by Orlando Gibbons, first published in 1612. This a favourite of Joe and Julie Millington, who were responsible for bringing Bruegel Consort to us at St John’s. We hope they’ll be back!



Bruegel Consort, from left: Doraly Gill, Angus Champion, Harry Elliot, Nick Walters and Lilly Vadaneaux

THE LEGAL HAZARDS OF LIFE IN WINTER

*"Lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding..."
(Psalm 148:8)*

We are promised a hard winter this year: the abundance of nuts and berries is supposed to be a sign of bad weather. Whether that is true or not is another question. Let's suppose that we do get ice, snow, and more frost. Early one cold morning you get up to go outside to clear a path of snow on your driveway and salt the doorstep. You playfully pick up a handful of snow and throw it carelessly. The car is covered in ice so you start the engine and leave it running to defrost. You then go inside to warm up.



On your return outside the mail deliverer has fallen over. The car is missing because you left the keys inside. The snowball you threw broke a neighbour's window because it had a stone inside. The front door slams shut and you are outside in your pyjamas, then fall over on the ice, which had thawed in the road and then refrozen. It's a winter nightmare!

What are legal issues?

The Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 requires occupiers to take reasonable care to ensure visitors are reasonably safe. 'Reasonable' is the important word. You are unlikely to be sued if you clear a pathway through the snow. Visitors and pedestrians are expected to look where they are going, to dress appropriately, and be careful.

If you melted snow and it froze again causing a patch of ice, there might be blame, but even then it is doubtful. If a householder knew about a problem and did nothing, again, that might lead to a claim. For example, if the postie complained to you the day before that your path is treacherous and you did not do anything then, possibly, you're to blame, but the post person would know to take care.

It is different on public roads, as under the Highways Act 1980, the council must ensure that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. Councils are required to ensure the public can have safe passage "so far as is reasonably practicable" on roads and pavements.

In addition to using gritting vehicles and snow-ploughs to keep roads and pavements free of ice and snow, most councils also provide grit bins, usually located on steep gradients or near sharp bends, so that members of the public can spread grit to reduce the slipping hazard. Not all roads are salted or gritted and sometimes the weather takes an unexpected turn.

Taking the blame

Court cases involving snowball fights are rare. You must not deliberately add rocks or stones to snowballs carelessly or deliberately. Do not throw snowballs randomly. If you take part in a snowball fight, you are consenting, and would expect to be hit and wet with snow.



There was a case in America (*ed: isn't it always?*) that involved a snowball. After the New York Jets football game on Seattle Seahawks' home ground in December of 2008, as the Jets left the field, they were pelted by snowballs from the stands. One fan waved a sign at the departing players. A player, Shaun Ellis, picked up some snow and threw it at the fan, apparently hitting him in the head or body. Two years later the fan sued the player. You can watch the video on the internet. Ellis was fined \$10,000 by the NFL for the incident.



*New York Jets player
Shaun Ellis*

What about your car? Arguably an insurance company could refuse a claim on basis the insurer did not take reasonable care to protect their property. And a neighbour could complain if you are outdoors in your nightwear, depending on whether it is decent, or not.

This is a light-hearted look at the perils of winter. Always take care and get proper advice if needed.

By David Pickup, solicitor



psychiatrist was training some young clergy who were interested in doing counselling. Deciding to test them, she asked: "How would you diagnose someone who visits your church, walks back and forth, screaming at the top of his lungs one minute, and then collapsing in a pew to weep uncontrollably the next?"

A man at the back of the room raised his hand and ventured: "A football coach?"



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PRAYERS IN AFTERMATH OF DEADLY FIRE

“ray with us,” the Archbishop of Hong Kong, the Most Revd Andrew Chan, has asked, following a horrific fire in seven residential tower blocks in Wang Fuk Court, in Tai Po. At least 146 people were killed. The complex was home to about 4,600 people and, in addition to those killed, dozens have been critically injured; others are still missing.




Before and during the fire in Tai Po

Community organisations – including the Hong Kong Anglican Church, known as the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (HKSKH) – have rallied to support those displaced by the fire. The HKSKH’s Welfare Council has launched a disaster support fund and an HKSKH church centre in Tai Po has been opened to provide shelter for people now made homeless by the fire.

“As fellow children of God, even though we are separated by geographical distances, I ask of you to pray with us in Hong Kong for the mercy and love of our Lord,” said Archbishop Chan .

UNBEARABLE SUFFERING IN SUDAN

he situation in Sudan is “so dire that ‘urgent’ does not do justice to the need for action,” the Bishop of Leeds, Nick Baines, has warned in his final speech in the House of Lords. He’s retiring after more than a decade in the House.

He highlighted mass killings, sexual violence, starvation, and the displacement of millions, with non-Arab Africans among the primary targets.

Bishop Nick also emphasised the lack of attention to Sudan in western media and called for stronger UK leadership in diplomatic, economic, and military efforts to end the conflict, protect civilians, and ensure accountability for atrocities.

He said: “The suffering in Sudan is almost unbearable, the worst humanitarian catastrophe on the planet, and it is neither new nor simply a phenomenon of only the last three years. Whatever the causes of and motivations behind the current conflict, it is civilians – women, children, young men and vulnerable ethnic groups – who are being targeted and abused in the most inhumane ways.”

Warning that inaction will exacerbate refugee migration, generational trauma and cycles of violence, he stressed that Sudan’s plight demands immediate and coordinated global intervention



PRAYERS FOR THE NEW YEAR

If you are unable to use all the prayers every day, then it is suggested that you use a prayer for that day 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**

A prayer for Sunday by Lawrence Tuttiett

Father, let me dedicate
All this year to thee,
In whatever worldly state
Thou wilt have me be:
Not from sorrow, pain or care.
Freedom dare I claim;
This alone shall be my prayer
Glorify thy name



A prayer for Monday

by Brother John Charles SSF

For all the possibilities ahead in this new year, make us thankful, O Lord. Give us wisdom, courage and discernment in the face of so much chaos, despair and fear. Help us to see how, in our circumstances, we can contribute towards peace, faith and love; and give us the will to translate our desires into action.

A prayer for Tuesday

We thank you, Father, Lord of all time, for the gifts of food, warmth and company, for your love and the protection of our homes, and in all that this year may hold.

A prayer for Wednesday by Frank Colquhoun

Heavenly Father, whose mercy is everlasting, accept our thanksgiving for all the blessing of the year that is past; take our lives afresh into your keeping as we face the unknown future; and fit us by your grace for whatever lies before us in the days to come; for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

A prayer for Thursday

God of all grace, call to the nations of the earth to cease from strife, and that all may join to fight not one another but their common foes of want and ignorance, disease and sin. Lead back mankind out of the way of death into the way of life; and from destruction to the building up of a new world of righteousness, and peace of liberty and joy. End the dark night of lies and cruelty; bring in the dawn of mercy and truth.

A prayer for Friday by Susan Williams

Lord of time and new beginnings, give us good judgement to know what new things to do for you this year, and grant us the inner strength to finish each job we begin; so may we fully know the joy of doing your will so may your kingdom come on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A prayer for Saturday by David Adam

You are the Maker of earth and sky,
You are the Maker of heaven on high.
You are the Maker of oceans deep,
You are the Maker of mountains steep.
You are the Maker of sun and rain,
You are the Maker of hill and plain.
You are the Maker of such as me.
Keep me, O Lord, Eternally.

Teach me to see you, Lord, in all things seen and heard,
In beauty of the heather moors, In the singing of a bird.





Want to explore how you
can apply the Bible
to your daily life?

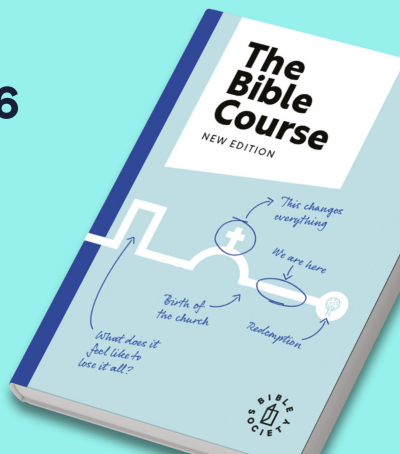


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13th January 2026
7:30pm

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THE GREAT ESCAPE

When your only knowledge of escape rooms comes from the *Escape Room* film franchise, directed by Adam Robitel, you approach the concept with trepidation! In the films, strangers are lured into deadly, elaborate rooms, where they must solve puzzles and overcome terrifying challenges in order to survive. How on earth would this work in a church setting?

Luckily, our mastermind – children and families worker Anthony Horton – was nowhere near as evil, although (spoiler alert) he was responsible for a dastardly deed!

Anthony designed a series of puzzles for the children – and their accompanying grown-ups – to work through. The church hall soon filled with the cacophony of excited children's voices. Isabelle and her six-year-old son, Malcolm, very kindly allowed *PARISH NEWS* to join them as they worked through all the clues to discover who had created utter chaos in the Crib Service.

Some questions – especially naming the 'suspects' (digitally-created images of 'famous' people) – had us stumped! The highlight for Malcolm, however, was grabbing the pages (often before they were filled in!) and exuberantly running to Anthony to have them checked. His creativity in joining the dots, in particular, had us in stitches.

It was such a rewarding experience

to witness this charismatic young man fighting his urge for freedom – his answers brief and rushed – a mere formality before the serious business of play could resume.

In the end, all clues led to the chaos-creator being none other than Anthony himself! He might be the naughty perpetrator but, "God will forgive me", he chuckled.

First to escape won a gift full of sweets and chocolates. There was also a prize for the team who named the most suspects.

Treats were available for all after everyone 'escaped', including scrumptious hot chocolate with cream and marshmallows, lovingly made by Sally Knowles.

Everyone had a marvellous time. Congratulations to Anthony for creating such a wonderful event – and thank you to Isabelle and Malcolm for their kindness and camaraderie.



The church lounge bustled with activity



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THE DICTATORS WHO WANT TO LIVE FOREVER

 As you read this, Christians worldwide will either be preparing to celebrate, or have just celebrated, the Baby whose life, death and resurrection bring us eternal life. Meanwhile, it seems that Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping are wondering if they might achieve immortality, without divine help.

In a recent meeting to attend the Beijing military parade, the dictators of Russia and China were caught on a hot mic, discussing how it might be possible to live to be 150. Xi, 72, told Putin: “These days, at 70 years, you are still a child.”

Putin, also 72, answered: “With biotechnology, human organs can be continuously transplanted; now people can live younger and younger, and even achieve immortality.”




Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping ©www.kremlin.ru

Last year, Putin reportedly ordered scientists to look into 3D bioprinting, to use lab-grown cells to print replacement organs.

Putin later confirmed the conversation, when questioned by reporters. “Yes, yes. Modern means of healing and medicine - even all kinds of surgery related to organ replacement - allow humanity to hope that active life will continue differently than it does today.”

A hope that ‘active life will continue differently than it does today’. Do you think this sounds a bit like the Christian hope of eternity?

BISHOP MARTYN WELCOMES END OF TWO-CHILD LIMIT

 After the recent announcement in the Budget, the Bishop of Leicester, Martyn Snow, the Church of England’s lead bishop for child poverty issues, said: “I warmly welcome the Government’s decision to remove the two-child limit from next April. This will make a profoundly positive difference to hundreds of thousands of children and their families.

“The Church of England has long called for this day as we believe in the equal and unsurpassable worth of every single child.

“As we celebrate the end of the two-child limit and commend the Government for taking action, we will continue to draw attention to the barriers – such as the household benefit cap – which still prevent many families from accessing vital support for their children.”



2nd January: Gregory of Nazianzus



Next time you think about the Holy Spirit, breathe a short prayer of thanks for Gregory of Nazianzus.

This fourth century bishop of Constantinople made such an impact on the Early Church, with his understanding of how the Holy Spirit relates to the Father and the Son, that he became known as the 'Trinitarian Theologian'.

The young Gregory had never intended to be a theologian: far from it. Born in 329, into a wealthy Greek family in southwest Cappadocia, he excelled in rhetoric and philosophy in Caesarea, Alexandria and Athens, becoming a gifted scholar and orator.

Then disaster struck: while Gregory was on his way to Athens, a severe storm nearly engulfed his ship. Amid the terror of the wind and waves, Gregory promised God that if his life was spared, he would dedicate the rest of his life to the service of Jesus Christ.

It was not an easy promise to keep as, by nature, Gregory preferred a life of study and reflection. Instead, as a priest and then Bishop of Sasima in 372, and Bishop of Constantinople in 380, he was plunged into the tumultuous church politics of the time. His crowning moment came in 381 when he presided

at the opening of the Council of Constantinople.

However, it was in his quiet times of study and writing that Gregory made his biggest contribution to the early Church. He expanded the idea that our salvation is a progressive journey into the Godhead and he stressed that the One who enables us to take this journey is the Holy Spirit.

Gregory proposed the term 'procession', saying that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, and that the Spirit should be given full worship and equal honour.

Gregory is greatly honoured in both Eastern and Western Christianity. He was one of the three Cappadocian Fathers who, along with Gregory of Nyssa and Basil of Caesarea, developed the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity.

13th January: Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers

Heroes are not always men or women of action. Sometimes the fight for right over wrong can be even more powerful when done through words and argument. Hilary was such a champion of the Christian faith.

Born into a wealthy pagan family in Poitiers in 315, he first became an orator of Neo-Platonism. Here he learnt how to think and argue, but soon he lost confidence in paganism. By 350, Hilary converted to Christianity.

Already well-known and -loved in Poitiers, Hilary was made bishop only three years later. His oratorial skills in defence of Christianity were badly needed: it was a time when the Western Church was under severe attack. The heresy of Arianism, which denied that Jesus was divine, was spreading everywhere.

Hilary became the outspoken champion of biblical orthodoxy, defending it at both the Synod of Bitterae in 356, and the Council of Seleucia in 359. Although briefly exiled to Phrygia in Asia Minor by the Emperor for his stand, Hilary continued to defend Jesus's divinity, and was praised by both Augustine and Jerome as 'the illustrious teacher of the churches'.

There was great rejoicing when Hilary returned from exile to Gaul. He continued to write many doctrinal and historical works. He also became the first known writer of hymns in the Western Church, stressing Trinitarian themes, and the unique relationship of Christ to the Father.

There are three churches dedicated to Hilary in England: one lies east of Penzance in Cornwall; another in Spridlington, Lincolnshire; and a further example in Wallasey, Merseyside.

His feast day begins the Hilary Term at the Law Courts and at the universities of Oxford and Dublin.



The Ordination of Saint Hilary, from a 14th-century manuscript

First visit
FREE!

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.



HOW TO KEEP THOSE NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

C We are full of good intentions at the start of each year. How come we usually fizzle out by February? Here are some tips to keep you going:

Be realistic If you have several goals, don't attempt them all at once. Research has found that if you stagger your goals, you will have more success. So, for example, if this year you want to spend less money or do more exercise, start one change this month and another in February.

Be specific For example, don't tell yourself: lose weight. Decide exactly how much you want to lose. When do you want to lose it by? How will you do it? The more exact you can be, the more likely you are to succeed.

Write it down There's something about committing thoughts to paper that helps to cement your resolve. Why not start some sort of journal this year, to track your thoughts, your hopes, your goals – and your successes!



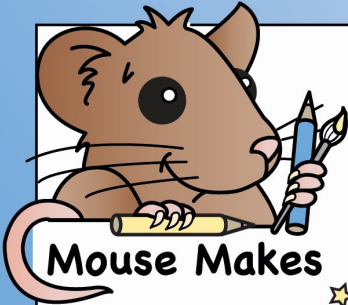
Tell other people If you intend to do something, tell someone and, therefore, you will feel more obliged to get going with it. Your pride may keep you going when all else fails!

Focus on GAIN, not loss Ever notice how many resolutions are about giving something up? Why not put it the other way round – instead of saying you will eat less, tell yourself you are headed for those skinny jeans....

Give yourself rewards If you're quitting smoking, or sweets, for example, put the money you would have spent in a jam jar, and treat yourself to something nice (and healthy) with it.

Break your resolution into steps Some goals will take months to achieve. So, break each one down into tiny steps, and simply head for each step. Build in some time frames to prevent you procrastinating.

Finally, don't let failure defeat you You *will* make mistakes – but the secret is to simply get up again and to keep going. Only if you stop are you *really* defeated. None of us are perfect – and, remember, the Bible encourages us to always start again.



Mouse Makes

DID YOU KNOW ?

Stars shine different colours, the colour we see depends on the temperature of the star. The hottest stars shine blueish-white, then yellowish-white, yellow, orange and the coolest stars shine red.

WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

The Wise Men came from a land far away, they had seen a star that shone brighter than day.

The star was a sign of the birth of a king, so they followed that star to pay homage to him.

They found him in Bethlehem as the prophets foretold, they gave him three gifts: myrrh, frankincense and gold.

The star led to Jesus our saviour and king, let us join with the Wise Men and go worship Him!



Read the story of the Wise Men in *Matthew 2:1-12*

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

Can you find these words in the word search?

- WISE MEN • MAGI
- STAR • SIGN
- JOURNEY • BETHLEHEM
- VISIT • JESUS • MESSIAH
- CHRIST • KING
- GIFTS • GOLD • MYRRH
- FRANKINCENSE
- WORSHIP • JOY
- EPIPHANY

ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

BY PETUNIA FLOWERS

JANUARY

"Anyone who thinks that gardening begins in the Spring and ends in the Fall is missing the best part of the whole year; for gardening begins in January with the dream"

Josephine Nuese.

*"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle...
a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light,
a bud straining to unfurl.*

And the anticipation nurtures our dream"


Barbara Winkler

In January, the jobs in the garden are mostly about keeping things trim and tidy, and getting ready for the year to come.

If you're itching to get growing, you can begin chitting first early potatoes and starting off your sweet pea seeds.



A GARDENER'S PRAYER FOR JANUARY

ord of the seasons, as our gardens rest under the winter cloak, we thank you for this time of stillness and anticipation.

Bless the soil, the dormant seeds, and our waiting hearts.

Grant us patience as we dream of the spring to come, and the wisdom to prepare for new growth, trusting that your promise of life is always at work, even where we cannot see it. Amen

FLOWERS

Remove any faded flowers from your winter pansies to stop them setting seed.

In mild areas, and during dry spells, you can still lift and divide herbaceous perennials. This will increase stocks and revive tired or poorly flowering clumps.



Cut off old leaves from hellebores that produce flowers from ground level to expose the flowers.

Plant lily bulbs in pots and in borders during mild spells.

Sow seeds of Begonia, Lobelia, Salvia and Pelargonium in a heated greenhouse or propagator to provide early plants.

Tidy up perennials. Cut down the old stems of perennials like sedum – be careful of any new growth.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Plant roses, but avoid areas where roses were previously grown as this can lead to problems with replant diseases.



Prune rose bushes this month while they're dormant. Cut branches back to just above a bud, making sure to remove any crossing or dead branches.

Move established deciduous trees and shrubs – provided the ground is not frozen or waterlogged.

Prune wisteria by cutting back whippy summer growth, leaving two or three buds.

January is the month to start pruning rhododendrons.

If your honeysuckle is very overgrown, now is the best time to prune and cut back hard, to encourage healthy new growth this spring.

Remove weeds from around the bases of young trees.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Prune apple and pear trees if you haven't done so already. It's best done during the winter while the plants are still dormant. Aim to create an open frame of branches in a goblet shape.

Prune your gooseberries now to maintain a productive framework of healthy branches.

.....Protect potato grow bags with frost protection fleece on cold nights if your greenhouse is unheated.

Force rhubarb plants by placing an upturned bucket or bin over the crown. The tender pink stems will be ready in about eight weeks time.



Keep harvesting your parsnips and leeks as you need them.

Remove yellowing leaves from winter brassicas – they don't help the plant and can even harbour pests and diseases.

Prepare the ground for early peas. Place a cloche over the soil this month, to warm up the ground, a few weeks before sowing.

GREENHOUSE

Clear leaves and twigs from guttering on greenhouses and sheds. Ventilating the greenhouse on mild, sunny days will help to reduce fungal infections.

LAWN

Repair bare patches, especially around lawn edges, using turf cut from other areas of the garden if available.

Re-lay the turf, push the cut edges together, and firm it into place.

Re-cut lawn edges with a half-moon edging iron or flat-bladed spade to give a neat finish.

Avoid walking on a frosty lawn, as this can damage the blades of grass, which go brittle in the cold. It may even leave brown footprints that can take a few weeks to disappear.

Worm casts are a sign of healthy soil but if you don't like them on your lawn, brush them off with a hard broom, once they dry out.



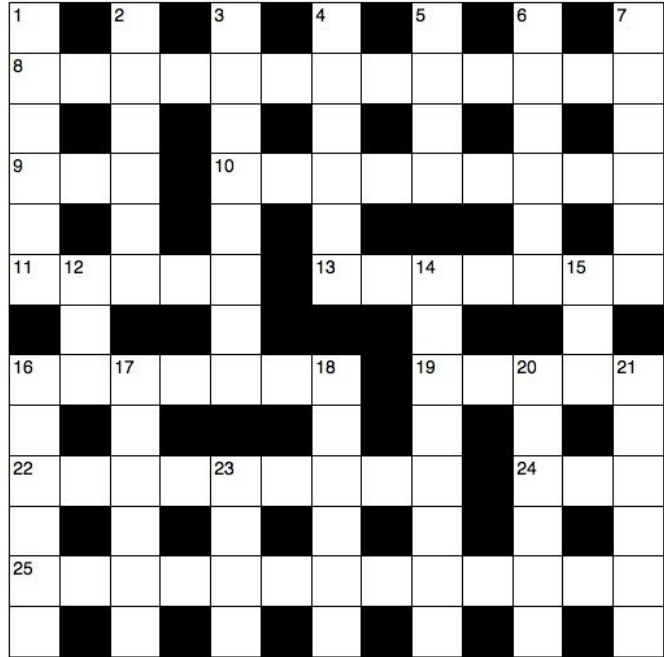
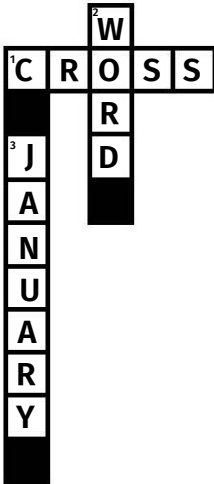
TIPS

Put your new-year enthusiasm to good use by cleaning pots, tools, water butts and greenhouses in preparation for spring. It's not the most glamorous of tasks, but it will set you up for a great growing season.

Continue looking after wildlife – put out wild bird food for hungry birds and continue to leave some areas of your garden uncut for shelter until the spring.

May your year be filled with joy, peace, and abundant blessings.

Happy New Year **Petunia Flowers**



Across

- 8 How the Abyss (NIV) is described in the Authorized Version (Revelation 9:1) (10,3)
- 9 Frozen water (Ezekiel 1:22) (3)
- 10 The Ten Commandments (9)
- 11 In Roman Catholic theology, neither heaven nor hell (5)
- 13 Des cons (anag.) (7)
- 16 “Though [your sins] are red as — , they shall be like wool” (Isaiah 1:18) (7)
- 19 Keen (Romans 1:15) (5)
- 22 Repugnant, loathsome (Jeremiah 24:9) (9)
- 24 Drink like an animal (Judges 7:5) (3)
- 25 First and last (Revelation 22:13) (5,3,5)

Down

- 1 Father of Ahi, a Gadite (1 Chronicles 5:15) (6)
- 2 Where David found the stone with which he killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (6)
- 3 “Hour by hour fresh lips are making thy — doings heard on high” (8)
- 4 “And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their — at night” (Luke 2:8) (6)
- 5 United Society for Christian Literature (1,1,1,1)

- 6** “If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would — or a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17) (1,5)
- 7** Where Paul was taken when things became difficult for him in Berea (Acts 17:15) (6)
- 12** Istituto per le Opere di Religione (Vatican Bank) (1,1,1)
- 14** “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new — ; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17) (8)
- 15** Used to colour ram skins red for use in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:5) (3)
- 16** Vat car (anagram) (6)
- 17** “Be joyful — — , patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” (Romans 12:12) (6)
- 18** “The parts that are unrepresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts — — special treatment” (1 Corinthians 12:23) (4,2)
- 20** Ancient rowing boat (Isaiah 33:21) (6)
- 21** Say again (2 Corinthians 11:16) (6)
- 23** What Jesus did in the synagogue in Nazareth after he stood up (Luke 4:16) (4)

DECEMBER CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS **1** Tabernacle **7** Absalom **8** Incas **10** Roes **11** Captured **13** Fright
15 Cavell **17** Cyclonic **18** Herb **21** Sonar **22** Amazing **23** Settlement

DOWN **1** Taste **2** Bold **3** Ramiah **4** Abiathar **5** Lucerne **6** Sacrifices
9 Saddlebags **12** Theocrat **14** Incense **16** Pilate **19** Exist **20** Save

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www.stjohnsspalding.org

THE PUPPY



clergyman was walking down the street when he came upon a group of about a dozen boys, surrounding a small puppy. Concerned lest the boys were hurting it, he went to investigate.

One boy explained: "We just found this puppy and we all want him. So we've decided that whichever one of us can tell the biggest lie will get to take him home."

The minister was taken aback. "Don't you boys know it's a sin to lie? Why, when I was your age, I never told a lie."

There was dead silence for a moment. The minister thought he'd got through to them. Then the smallest boy gave a deep sigh and said: "All right, give him the dog."



