

Arle Valley Voice

**December
2025**

£1.60

Church & Community Magazine





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Editorial

Today the snow is falling though it isn't lying. This made me think that in this country we seldom have the sort of weather shown on Christmas cards with snow and snowmen.

And for many the happy cosy greeting card view of Christmas is not true. Relationships may be difficult, food may be scarce and presents don't happen. So we need to remember them and do what we can to make things better.

It is also true that maybe with all the advertising we expect too much. If we can have a nice meal, see some friends and family and of course take part in church services and sing the carols.

Actually thinking about snow when I was once in Bethlehem in February it was snowing and bitter cold so we sang 'In the Bleak Midwinter'.

Snow or not I do hope that everyone finds some joy this Christmas and remember the Joy incarnate was born on Christmas Day

Charlotte Ryton

This magazine only keeps going with the quality it has because people subscribe each year so please do consider that. Contact Caroline Hawkins chawkins826@sky.com
Each issue costs £1.60 but a year's subscription is an economic option at £15.00.

Please email contributions and comments to cstryton@gmail.com. The preferred format at the moment is Microsoft Publisher or Word otherwise a pdf. Please as plain as possible as formats do not transfer from one programme to another. Please copy in events@stjohnsalresford.org.uk for additional publicity on our Facebook page and inclusion in St John's online Events Diary. The deadline for each month is the 10th of the month before. And if you use some of the businesses advertising do tell them you saw them in this magazine. Please note that we do not endorse any advert

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Apologies for any mistakes. However we are all volunteers and not professional so, sorry, errors will happen.

December Church Services for the Arle Valley Benefice

NEW ALRESFORD St John the Baptist

Sunday 7 December: Second Sunday of Advent

09.30 Parish Communion

16.00 Families@4 & Christingle

Sunday 14 December : Third Sunday of Advent

09.30 Breakfast Church

18.00 Sunday @ 6

Sunday 21 December: Fourth Sunday of Advent

09.30 Parish Communion

18.00 Carol Service

Wednesday 24 December: Christmas Eve

16.00 Crib Service

23.30 Midnight Mass

Thursday 25 December: Christmas Day

08.00 Parish Communion

09.30 Christmas Family Communion

Sunday 28 December: First Sunday of Christmas

09.30 Benefice Service

Every Tuesday 0.900 Morning Prayer

Every Wednesday

10.00 Midweek Holy Communion (no service on 24th and 31st)

OLD ALRESFORD

St Mary the Virgin

Sunday 7 December: Second Sunday of Advent

11.00 Village Family Praise

Sunday 14 December: Third Sunday of Advent

09.30 Morning Praise

Sunday 21 December: Fourth Sunday of Advent

17.00 Carol Service

Wednesday 24 December: Christmas Eve

Thursday 25 December: Christmas Day

10.00 Christmas Family Communion

Sunday 28 December: First Sunday of Christmas

09.30 Benefice Service at St John's

Every Wednesday

09.00 Morning Prayer



**Arle Valley
Benefice**



OVINGTON St Peter's

Sunday 7 December: Second Sunday of Advent

11.00 *No service*

Sunday 14 December : Third Sunday of Advent

16.00 Carol Service

Sunday 21 December: Fourth Sunday of Advent

10.00 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 24 December: Christmas Eve

Thursday 25 December: Christmas Day

11.00 Christmas Family Communion

Sunday 28 December: First Sunday of Christmas

09.30 Benefice Service at St John's

Every Thursday

09.00 Morning Prayer - paused until March



BIGHTON All Saints

Sunday 7 December: Second Sunday of Advent

11.00 Morning Prayer

Sunday 14 December : Third Sunday of Advent

16.00 Carol Service

Sunday 21 December: Fourth Sunday of Advent

11.00 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 24 December: Christmas Eve

23.30 First Communion of Christmas

Thursday 25 December: Christmas Day

11.00 *No service*

Sunday 28 December: First Sunday of Christmas

09.30 Benefice Service at St John's

The Arle Valley Benefice

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2025

St. John's, New Alresford

Sunday, 7th Dec	4pm Christingle
Sunday, 21st Dec	6pm Carol Service
Christmas Eve	4pm Crib Service 11.30pm First Communion of Christmas
Christmas Day	8am Holy Communion (BCP) 9.30am Christmas Day Family Communion



St. Mary's, Old Alresford

Sunday, 21st Dec	5pm Carol Service
Christmas Day	10am Christmas Day Family Communion

All Saints, Bighton

Sunday, 14th Dec	4pm Carol Service
Christmas Eve	11.30pm First Communion of Christmas

St. Peter's, Ovington

Sunday, 14th Dec	4pm Carol Service
Christmas Day	11am Christmas Day Family Communion

A Christmas Poem From John Bell (1745-1831)

Light looked down and saw the darkness.
I will go there', said light.
Peace looked down and saw war.
'I will go there', said peace.
Love looked down and saw hatred.
'I will go there', said love.
So he,
the Lord of Light,
the Prince of Peace
the King of Love
came down and crept in beside us.



Calendar

- ♦ Nov 26th 7.30pm Flower Club
- ♦ Nov 27th 7.30pm Art Club
- ♦ Nov 28th Tree of Remembrance in place
- ♦ Nov 29th 10am to 4pm Gift from St John's
- ♦ Nov 30th 6pm 'Quiet' Night of Worship
- ♦ Dec 2nd 7.00pm Community Cinema Preacher's Wife
- ♦ Dec 3rd 7.30pm WI meeting on Champagne
- ♦ Dec 5th & 6th 6.00pm Tinsel and Tea
- ♦ Dec 6th 8.00am Rotary Christmas Tree Sale
- ♦ Dec 7th 4.00pm Christingle
- ♦ Dec 7th to 13th Toads Pantomime
- ♦ Dec 10th 5.00pm Father Christmas comes to Alresford
- ♦ Dec 11th 7.30pm Winter Gospel Choir Concert
- ♦ Dec 12th 7.30 Hampshire Medical Fund Christmas Celebration
- ♦ Dec 13th 7.30 Deck the Halls ACC Carol Concert
- ♦ Dec 14th 9.30 Breakfast Church
- ♦ Dec 14th 4.00pm All Saints Carol Service
- ♦ Dec 14th 4.00pm St Peter's Carol Service
- ♦ Dec 17th 2pm St John's Book Group
- ♦ Dec 19th 12 noon Table Talk
- ♦ Dec 20th 12 noon Tree of Remembrance Prayers
- ♦ Dec 21st 2.30pm Solos Sunday Tea
- ♦ Dec 21st Christmas Farmer's Market
- ♦ Dec 21st 5.00pm St Mary's Carol Service
- ♦ Dec 21st 6.00pm St John's Carol Service
- ♦ Dec 24th 4.00pm Crib Service
- ♦ Dec 24th 11.30pm Midnight Mass
- ♦ Jan 8th Old Alresford Christmas Quiz end
- ♦ Jan 15th 7.00pm System Update Film Documentary
- ♦ Jan 22nd Van Gogh Alive begins at Science Centre



Leader

Waiting by Susan Roberts

Are you ready? Ready for what, I hear you ask. Ready for Jesus to come into your life and possibly cause chaos? The good news is that Jesus is coming. Christmas is on its way once again.

In the Christian year Advent, is a time of preparation and I'm not referring to the Christmas shopping or cooking, although that has its place! Years ago, Advent was a time of great solemnity, when Christians reflected on things such as life, death and judgement, but also of joy, because Jesus is not only our judge, but also our saviour, who brings us the gift of eternal life and the Kingdom of God.

Advent carol services use the imagery of darkness into light by starting with the church in darkness and gradually adding more light until the building is fully illuminated to represent Christ as the light of the world coming to banish sin and darkness.

Although people may choose to ignore him, God has always been part of the world and he has always loved his creation and that means us.

If we believe Jesus' teaching, then we need to wait actively for his return and Advent is the time of year when we consider how actively we are waiting for Jesus' arrival. We are also waiting in hopeful expectation because we know that God will keep his promises.

I'm not good at waiting. My partner says that I always want everything done yesterday. Henri Nouwen wrote something about waiting that I find very helpful. He says that if you are waiting for something, you are on a road from somewhere and to somewhere, so no time spent waiting is ever wasted. I often have to remind myself of this.

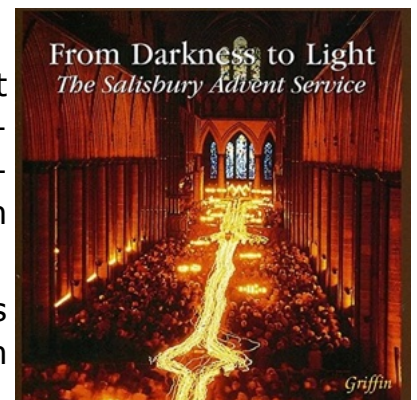


I'm inclined to wait with eager, if slightly impatient expectation. Imagine a small child waiting at a station for a train. The child can't sit still and constantly goes to the station door and looks for the train. They talk excitedly to the other people waiting for the train. I hope I'm not that irritating, but the child's waiting is full of excitement and expectation. They are actively waiting.

Children wait for Father Christmas or Santa Claus to come. Santa Claus was originally St Nicholas, a Christian bishop who lived four hundred years after Jesus and used to give money to poor people to save them from slavery or starvation. On one occasion he is supposed to have secretly filled some girls' stockings with gold so they would have a dowry and could be married.

Most of us will put up and decorate our Christmas trees and might find some cheerful lights to hang outside our homes to give a warm glow when we return to them.

We all wait for Jesus to be born again.



By the time you read this, we will have put out our crib. We have collected the figures over many years and even have two cats and a spaniel dog that join the animals in the stable!! On Christmas morning we will put the baby Jesus into his crib in the stable.



In spite of the challenges many people will have faced this year, Advent is a time to be filled with hope as we begin our journey towards the birth of our saviour at Christmas, and as we reflect on God's love for us as part of his creation, I think we need to remember that we have choices to make about Jesus, and about how we live our lives. The question for us is: are we willing to be and become new creations in Christ? Let us try to be ready spiritually for the greatest gift of all, so that Jesus can have a straight road to our hearts when he is born again at Christmas.

May you all find some joy this Christmas.



Betjeman Advent 1955

The Advent wind begins to stir
With sea-like sounds in our Scotch fir...
The world seems travelling into space,
And travelling at a faster pace...
For now we feel the world spin round
On some momentous journey bound –
Journey to what? to whom? to where?
The Advent bells call out 'Prepare,
Your world is journeying to the birth
Of God made Man for us on earth.'...
And how, in fact, do we prepare
The great day that waits us there –
For the twenty-fifth day of December,
The birth of Christ?

Church Notices

Benefice Vacancy Update -

The Benefice Profile is nearly finished being compiled and by the time you read this item it will have been sent as a first complete draft to the diocese for their comments. Once it is fully completed, the Profile will be approved at a Section 11 meeting in January 2026 attended by all PCC members. The plan is for the advert to go out at the beginning of February with short-listing at the beginning of March and interviews at the end of March. Please continue to pray regularly for the process to be in line with God's plan and pray for all involved to be given wisdom and discernment. We will keep you updated if anything changes.

Arle Valley Benefice Churchwardens.

CAN YOU HELP US SUPPORT A CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WORKER?

The churches of St. John's, New Alresford, St. Mary's, Old Alresford, St. Peter's, Ovington and All Saints, Bighton are seeking to appoint a Children and Families Worker to help them realise a vision of seeing their existing ministries grow and flourish in the midst of their local communities.

Our Benefice has to pay for this. Of course we have applied for various grants and charitable funding but need YOU to help as well. Can you either make a one-off donation or give a regular monthly amount. If everyone in the Benefice gave a little we would soon raise the money and it wouldn't cost any individual that much. To find out more contact Penny on arlevalley-churches@gmail.com. Thank you.

The Arle Valley Benefice takes its duty and obligation to protect everyone, extremely seriously. If you have any safeguarding concerns or issues of a safeguarding nature our Safeguarding Officers are: Sarah Wilding (St. John's) or Alison Mayne (St. Mary's/All Saints/St. Peter's) e-mail: arlevalleysafeguarding@gmail.com

Church Events and Activities

11:00am - 12:00pm,
2nd November
St Mary's Church, S024 9DX



A service of Morning Praise for
the whole family.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
NEW ALRESFORD

IT'S TIME FOR
BREAKFAST
CHURCH

14th
December

2ND
SUNDAYS
@ 9.30AM

FAMILY FRIENDLY
WORSHIP + FUN

AGES 0 - 100!

St. John's Church
Alresford

Celtic Service of the Word

This quiet, reflective service contains music, hymns, bible readings and periods of silence in the Celtic tradition.

You don't have to be "religious" to attend. Those with faith, those without faith and those who are searching, are all very welcome.

Fourth Sundays at 9.30am

Please join us for refreshments afterwards.

+

WEDNESDAY
MIDWEEK
HOLY COMMUNION

10am
St. John's, Alresford

*An oasis of calm
during the busy week.*

Coffee, cake and
fellowship following
the service.

Church Events and Activities



Prayer requests:

If you would like the Prayer team to pray for you, your family, friends or any other situation, please contact:

Rosie Waring Green
rosie@22rwg.co.uk
t. 01962 733237

We, of course, always respect the confidentiality of your requests

Prayer Meeting for the parish and our community - **every Friday at 10-11am** in church - feel free to drop in. And if you can't get down to the church then do join us in prayer wherever you are.



St John's Porch Prayer Tree and Prayer Cards

Please do spend some time praying the prayer requests on the Prayer tree as you go in or out of church or as you walk by. It is a privilege to support all those who have written these

Also there are prayer cards available in a display case which you are most welcome to take and use for yourself or friends and family.

Some of the titles are: Being Accepted, Looking for God, Worried about Someone, Finding Peace, Feeling alone, Grieving, Being thankful



QUIET NIGHT OF WORSHIP WITH TIM UFFINDELL SUNDAY, 30TH NOV AT 6PM

Join us for a moment of stillness before the busyness of Christmas.
Singing + Worship + Refreshments.





Bible Study

If you are interested in exploring the Bible and having some help reading and understanding it do consider getting Bible notes. You can order notes from Pearl Page—her email is pearlpage@aol.com

There will be an Alpha and a Youth Alpha course running in the Autumn. There courses are designed to help you grow in your Christian faith, to give you an opportunity to ask any questions you have and to enjoy friendship and good food!! For more information and discussion about dates please contact Rosie Waring Green rosie@22rwg.co.uk or 07891120662



St John's Book Group

Our next meeting is on **Wednesday 17th December 2pm** at 7 Down Gate, Alresford.

We will be discussing **The Future by Naomi Alderman**

Please contact Hilary Carr hilarycarr1@gmail.com 735279 for more information



Flower Club

Last Wednesday in the month @7.30

Next meeting

26th November

St Gregory's Church Hall

**Contact Maureen on
gskayman@gmail.com**



MEN'S SUPPER CLUB

FOR WIDOWERS

**WE MEET ON THE LAST THURSDAY
OF THE MONTH AT 7PM**

**IF INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT
ROGER WHIFFEN ON 01962 734045**





TINSEL AND TEA TOWELS

written by Out Of The Ark

A FUNNY, MUSICAL TAKE ON THE NATIVITY STORY WITH A BACKSTAGE INSIGHT INTO PUTTING ON A PERFORMANCE. CHILDREN FROM ACTS & SUNSHINE SINGERS.

DECEMBER 5TH & DECEMBER 6TH

ADULTS £5/ OVER 5'S £3/ UNDER 5'S FREE 6PM

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ALRESFORD
BAR & CAKES WILL BE AVAILABLE BEFORE AND AFTER




Fun for the whole community

YOU'RE INVITED TO:

A Gift from St. John's

SATURDAY
29TH NOVEMBER
10AM - 4PM

You are invited to join us
at St. John's Church, Alresford
to share in FREE festive nibbles and
FREE Christmas themed activities and crafts.

CAFE - JUST DROP IN!

FESTIVE ACTIVITIES



COME AND CELEBRATE
CHRISTINGLE AT ST. JOHN'S

ST. JOHN'S CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

Join us at our Christingle
to celebrate Jesus,
the Light of the World

**SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER
AT 4PM**



OLD ALRESFORD'S ANNUAL FESTIVE CHRISTMAS QUIZ

PRIZES - CASH, HAMPER & BOOK TOKEN

ON SALE (£2.50 A COPY) AT
SIX WEST, OXLEY'S BOOKSHOP,
WALKERS HAIRDRESSERS, THE SURGERY
AND ST. MARY'S & ST. JOHN'S CHURCHES

**CLOSING DATE:
THURSDAY, 8TH JANUARY 2026**

WE ARE RAISING FUNDS TO CREATE
A MUCH NEEDED DISABLED TOILET AND
KITCHEN SERVERY IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH

Church Events and Activities

Table Talk

A chance to meet, eat and discuss issues of the day in an open, friendly and non-judgemental atmosphere.

12pm in the John Pearson Hall

Bring and Share lunch

Every third Friday

Friday 19th December

All Welcome



Coffee, Cake & Chat @ St. John's

**Come and join us on the second Tuesday
of every month (10am—11.30am)**

in the John Pearson Hall

for tea coffee and delicious homemade cakes!

This is for everyone across the local community

We'd love to see you

Feel free to invite family, friends and neighbours as well

The more the merrier!



For more information please contact

Angela Peel 01962 734 814

Solos Sunday Tea

A warm welcome.
sandwiches
homemade cakes and
conversation for those who
live alone.

Come and
join us

Every Third Sunday 2.30pm—4.30pm

Next meeting:

Sunday 21st December

John Pearson Hall St John's Church

We do hope to see you there.

Info: Marian 01962 733921

Margaret 01962 735185

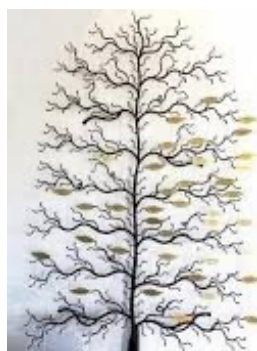
Roger 01962 734045

Gluten free
available



St John's Tree of Remembrance

You are warmly invited to come and place a star on this tree in memory of someone who will be in your thoughts this Christmas time. There will be stars available in church, next to the tree, and you simply need to write the name of the person you are remembering on one of them. The tree will be in place from Friday 28th November until the new year. St John's is open daily until dusk. You are also very welcome to join us for a short service of Prayers around the Tree of Remembrance at 12:00 on Saturday 20th December.



Community Events



Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union is a worldwide Christian organisation dedicated to promoting marriage and family life. It has 3.6 million members in 76 countries.



The Mothers' Union was started in 1876 by Mary Sumner, the wife of an Anglican vicar. It is open to all baptised men and women and encourages all members to attend church and to read the Bible regularly.

Joining the Mothers' Union

If you are interested in joining the Mothers' Union, please contact Stephanie Durrant, t. 01962 732318 or email stephanie.durrant@hotmail.com

New Members are always welcome.

We look forward to welcoming you to be a part

Senior Citizens' Lunch Club

The Lunch Club meet in the Methodist Church Hall every Thursday from 12.00 to 2.00pm.

New members are warmly welcomed so do come and enjoy a main course and dessert, followed by tea or coffee for just £10.

Social events are organised from time to time and transport is available.

Pre-booking is essential.

For more details contact: **01962 736810.**



Royal Air Forces Association

Alresford & District Branch



We are the local branch of the RAFA and we are looking for new members to join our team.

Whether you are an ex serving member of the RAF or not you are welcome to join us. We are an active team of people holding many social events and we meet in Alresford each month.

For more information or details of how

to join please call Mike Trevelyan on

07920772781 email yann_221@yahoo.co.uk

Registered Charity 1071073 (England & Wales)



WINTER GOSPEL CONCERT

GOSPEL COLLECTIVE ALRESFORD



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR A TICKET
OR VISIT
[EVENTS.GOSPELCOLLECTIVE.CO.UK](https://events.gospelcollective.co.uk)



11TH DECEMBER

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, ALRESFORD
7:30 PM

CONCERT FOLLOWED
BY REFRESHMENTS



Community Events

THE OLD ALRESFORD DRAMATIC SOCIETY (TOADS) presents

PINOCCHIO

written by Tom Whalley

TICKETS ONLY £12

He nose, but wood you believe it!

Join us for a fantastical family panto bursting with magic, mischief and mayhem.

SHOW WEEK

Monday 8th – Friday 12th December at 7.30pm
Saturday 13th December at 1.30pm and 5.30pm

PLEASE NOTE: There will not be a show on Wednesday 10th December

CHRISTY HALL, OLD ALRESFORD

BUY TICKETS

NO BOOKING FEE

ticketsource.co.uk/toads or email boxoffice@oa-toads.org.uk

The Old Alresford Dramatic Society @toads.aa www.oa-toads.org.uk

ALRESFORD ART SOCIETY



Thursday 27th November

7.30pm

Bishop Sutton's Village Hall
Alresford Road SO24 0AH

Nigel Halliday: Christmas in Art



Non-members welcome –
admission £3 and a small donation requested for refreshments.

For further information: 01962 732043 or visit

www.artsociety.alresford.org

Chatty Cafe Scheme



At a loose end?
Fancy a cuppa?

The 'Chatter & Natter table' is a wonderful way of encouraging people of all ages to talk to others. During the day and time below, the table will be hosted by a friendly volunteer. Do come along and sit for a chat.

Where: The Arlebury Cafe
Arlebury Park, The Avenue,
New Alresford,
Alresford, SO24 9EP

When: Every Monday
1:30pm - 3pm

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

NEW ALRESFORD
WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Next Meeting
Wednesday 3rd December
"The making of champagne"
Speaker Sarah Flook
Followed by festive cheer



Meeting starts at 7.30pm
At St Gregory's Church Hall,
1 Grange Road
SO24 9HD

Visitors very welcome- please come and join us
For further information contact
Sue Dinnis 01962 732309
Jude Cowen 01962 738755



**A world-first immersive experience.
Only in Winchester**

The world's most visited immersive exhibition, **Van Gogh Alive**, is presented exclusively at Winchester Science Centre. From **Thursday 22 January to Sunday 22 March 2026**, step into Vincent's vivid world as his masterpieces come to life all around you. Be part of a world first as **Van Gogh Alive** is reimagined for a planetarium for the very first time. Powerful projections and an evocative classical score will surround you with colour, light and emotion, while Van Gogh's own words reveal the man behind the art. Wander through sunflowers, immerse yourself in his most famous painting, and make an evening of it with drinks and snacks available



**Celebration of Christmas in aid of
the Hampshire Medical Fund
12th December – 7.30pm
Winchester Cathedral**

The 'Celebration of Christmas' concert is taking place at Winchester Cathedral on Friday 12th December. It is a magical evening of readings, carols and beautiful music raising money for local charity, the Hampshire Medical Fund, which funds cutting-edge medical equipment at our local NHS hospitals.

Tickets cost from £20.

Alresford Community Cinema

Tuesday 2nd December

7pm start

Community Centre

Licensed bar



Bookings
01962 736282
or 07780 703543

Please note: Booked seats will
be reserved until 6.45pm but
then released for general sale

**The
Preacher's
Wife**

Tickets £10

Card or cash on the door

Brought to you by the Friends of St John's

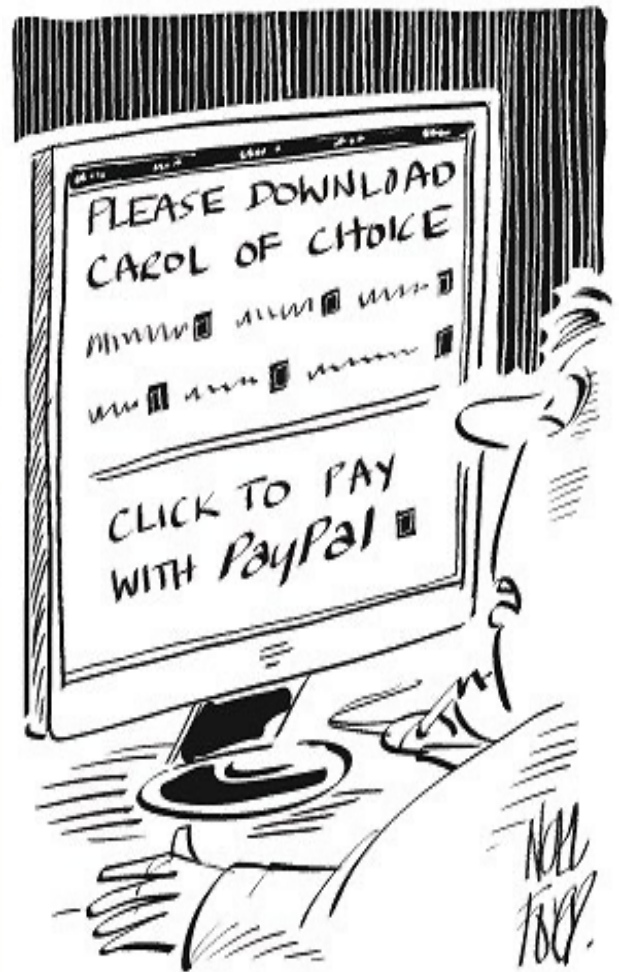
Sold Out. Waiting List



ALRESFORD ROTARY CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

6th December Broad Street Alresford

from 8 am until all are sold



We've got online carol-singers again!

Community Lunch on Christmas Day at Makins Court 2025

Those living in or around Alresford who would otherwise be on their own
are invited to a Traditional Christmas Day lunch at Makins Court

Please book your place by phoning **Patricia Walker on 01962 732629**

Lifts will be available to and from Makins Court if required

A contribution of £5 per person is requested

We also need Volunteers to help

preparing vegetables on Christmas Eve, help with setting
up the table, taking guests to their seats, serving lunch,
washing up, putting away, leaving
Makins Court clean and tidy.

Please telephone or message Patricia on 07704 723 888.





Screening of new British documentary *System Update – Rebooting Our Future*

In collaboration with Perins School, New Leaf Alresford are hosting a screening of the film '*System Update – Rebooting Our Future*' on Thursday 15th January. Join them to watch a bold new feature length documentary about climate change, exploring how we can transform our politics, economics and society to meet the climate crisis.

In an era of accelerating climate change and cascading impacts, *System Update* offers a vital look at how transformative shifts in politics, economics, and society, can protect people from climate catastrophe. This film calls for a reboot of outdated systems that have failed to respond to the climate crisis.

World-leading experts and change-makers explain why these systemic changes are critical, and how they can be achieved. The film is more than an informative documentary; it is a rallying cry for a better future - one in which the majority of people are united in calling for the changes needed to avert disaster.

"We are on course for utterly catastrophic climate disaster within the lifetimes of younger generations," warns Professor Jason Hickel, who argues for a radical departure from current economic thinking in the film. This is contrasted with political leaders betting on untested technologies to reverse carbon emissions at some point in the future. *System Update* presents the reality: the time for action is now.

The film will be followed by a question and answer session with a panel, who will offer their perspectives on the challenges we face, as well as potential solutions. The panel will include the film's director **Paul Maple**, local MP **Danny Chambers**, and **Denise Baden**, **Professor of Sustainable Practice at the University of Southampton**.

The film will be shown using the new state of the art projection equipment in the Perins' Main Hall. Doors open at 6.30pm, the screening will start at 7pm, and the panel discussion will continue until 9pm.

Tickets are just £5 for adults and FREE for under 18s.

Please reserve your place here:

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/newleafalresford/1945543>

Please note: This film is a documentary and suitable for older children, teenagers and adults



Thank you



Alresford Community Choir's Remembrance Concert raised £109.88 for the Royal British Legion (RBL) through the sale of poppies the choir members.

Also the retiring collection at the Concert raised £727.32 in total which, split equally, means that £363.66 was passed on to the RBL and £363.66 was passed to SSAFA The Armed Forces Charity).

Thank you all for helping to raise so much money for these two very worthwhile charities which help serving men and women and veterans, and their families.



Thank you to everybody who supported the Michael Project coffee morning either by attending and enjoying the company or to the very many who have given generous donations. It was such a special morning enjoyed by all and raised the amazing amount of £1235.80p to help pay for the care and education of the children The Michael Project look after.

There are 6 unclaimed raffle prizes in St Johns Office if your number is one of them they can be collected between 9am and 11am Monday to Friday. 79. 92. 356 . 171 377. 159

And Greetings from sunny Zimababwe: wishing everyone at St John's a wonderful Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour..

Thank you for the incredible support for our children at the Michael Project

With love from

Helen, David, Emily and Jessica.

And thanks to all who do so much to help our four churches flourish.

Children's Activities

Monday Meet + Eat

Join Us

Mondays @ 3.30pm
Everyone Welcome

Organised by
CTIA

Families with primary school children
and under are invited to join
the fun in the John Pearson Hall.

3.30pm | A drink and a snack to start.

Followed by Board Games, Puzzles,
Word Searches and lots more fun!

4.45pm | Dinner - we share a **FREE** hot meal.



Please inform
us of any
dietary
requirements

Please book a place at:
e. rosie@22rwg.co.uk
or t. 07891 120662

Families at 4pm

Everyone welcome

1st Sunday of
the month

St. John's Church
Alresford

Story, craft, song,
drinks and snacks

No more than an
hour, very informal

CHILL, CHAT & CHOMP

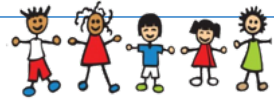
Youth Group Y7 upwards

St John's Church

Contact Rosie on 07891 120662



Chatterbox



is our parent/carer & baby/toddler group that
meets every Thursday
(10am - 11am) in the John Pearson Hall.

Do come along and enjoy new friends
(with refreshments) and fun activities
for your little ones.

Please book a place with Vicki,
t. 07907 035998.





10AM - 12PM
1ST MONDAY OF THE MONTH
CHRISTY HALL, OLD ALRESFORD

Old Alresford Family Mondays

TOYS FOR TODDLERS AND A CHANCE TO
MEET AND CHAT TO OTHER FAMILIES.

REFRESHMENTS TOO!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME FROM 10AM - 12PM
ON THE 1ST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH

ORGANISED BY ST. MARY'S CHURCH,
OLD ALRESFORD



CONTACTS:
SUE ARMSTRONG
TEL. 734542
ERICA SISK
TEL. 732735



We run full day activity camps during the school holidays for children aged 5-12. Children can sign up for one day or multiple days, the woods offer something different every day!

<https://hampshirebushcraft.com>

Join the Adventure



soul  children

Youth Gospel Choir
in Alresford

Thursdays

4.00pm to 6.00pm

St John's Church Alresford

For young people aged 10-18

hello@timuffindell.co.uk

soulchildrenuk.com

The history of Christmas

The Bible does not give a date for the birth of Jesus. At first it was thought he was born around the same time of year as his death so they celebrated both events together and some modern research does suggest that it was in the Spring.

In the third century, however, it was suggested that Jesus was conceived at the Spring equinox, 25th March, popularising the belief that He was born nine months later on 25th December. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, encouraged Christians worldwide to make Christmas a holy day in about 400.

In the early Middle Ages, Christians celebrated a series of midwinter holy days. Epiphany (which recalls the visit to the infant Jesus of the wise men bearing gifts) was the climax of 12 days of Christmas, beginning on 25th December, but the Christmas season continued until Candlemas on 2nd February. The Emperor Charlemagne chose 25th December for his coronation in 800, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose. In England, William the Conqueror also chose 25th December for his coronation in 1066, and the date became a fixture both for religious observance and feasting.



Cooking a boar was a common feature of mediaeval Christmas feasts, and singing carols accompanied it e.g. *The Boar's Head in Hand* bear 1. Writers of the time lament the fact that the true significance of Christmas was being lost because of partying. (Sounds familiar today!) They condemn the rise of 'misrule' – drunken dancing and promiscuity. The day was a public holiday, and traditions of bringing evergreen foliage into the house and the exchange of gifts (usually on Epiphany) date from this time.

In the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity. Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England's Puritan rulers made the celebration of Christmas illegal for 14 years. The restoration of Charles II ended the ban, but religious leaders continued to discourage excess, especially in Scotland. In Western Europe (but not worldwide) the day for exchanging gifts changed from Epiphany (6th January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, there was a sense that the significance of Christmas was declining. Charles Dickens was one of several writers who sought to restore it. His novel *A Christmas Carol* was significant in reviving merriment during the festival. He emphasised charity and family reunions, alongside religious observance. Christmas trees, paper chains, cards and many well-known carols date from this time. So did the tradition of Boxing Day, on 26th December, when tradesmen who had given reliable service during the year would collect 'boxes' of money or gifts from their customers.



In Europe Santa Claus is the figure associated with the bringing of gifts. Santa Claus is a shortening of the name of Saint Nicholas, who was a Christian bishop in the fourth century in present-day Turkey. He was particularly noted for his care for children and for his generosity to the poor. By the Middle Ages his appearance, in red bishop's robes and a mitre, was adored in the Netherlands and familiar across Europe.

Father Christmas dates from 17th century England, where he was a secular figure of good cheer (more associated with drunkenness than gifts). The transformation of Santa Claus into today's Father Christmas started in New York in the 1880s, where his red robes and white beard became potent advertising symbols. In some countries (such as Latin America and Eastern Europe) the tradition attempts to combine the secular and religious elements by holding that Santa Claus makes children's presents and then gives them to the baby Jesus to distribute.

Not every country believes that it's Father Christmas/Santa Claus who brings the presents. Other countries have other traditions. In Austria it is the Christ Child who fills children's shoes with good things and in Italy children eagerly await the arrival of the Three Kings with their presents as two thousand plus years ago they brought presents to Jesus.



Altar Supplies statistics

David Griffiths has been ordering Altar supplies for ten years. (Thank you David!)

In that time he has ordered

- ♦ **228 bottles of Communion wine—approximately 0.4 of a bottle per week.**
- ♦ **700 Priest's wafers—approximately 1.3 wafers a week**
- ♦ **48,000 Communion wafers— 92 wafers a week**
- ♦ **650 gluten free wafers—1.25 wafers a week.**

When Twelfth night falls in February

It was Sunday January 19th and we found ourselves in Salisbury on the Sunday morning. As we walked up the south aisle of the church we could hardly miss the Christmas Tree, beautifully decorated and making a very clear statement about the season. Yes, it was Christmas even on January 19.

Where we live most outside Christmas decorations don't even make it to Twelfth Night, the Feast of the Epiphany when traditionally most people took down their Christmas decorations. "Christmas" runs from mid December to the end of the New Year in many households. So it is refreshing to find churches where Christmas lasts much longer.



The Christian Year is orientated around the great major Festivals. A period of preparation, Advent, leads to the Christmas Festival which lasts throughout the season of Epiphany as well and comes to a dramatic end at Candlemas on February 2nd. That is the time when the Christmas trees should get put away and the crib sets is put away for another year.

Not long afterwards the second period starts with Ash Wednesday and Lent as we prepare to keep the great season of Easter – the 50 days that take us from Easter right through to Pentecost (what used to be called WhitSunday). Pentecost and the Sunday after (Trinity) start a new season which lasts for much of the rest of the year.

What is the point of all of this? This structure encourages us to explore a balanced picture of the Christian faith, giving weight to the coming among us of God as a human being, the suffering and resurrection of Jesus, and then the ordinary daily life of the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Balance is an important issue – history is full of calamities caused by people of faith who got things "out of balance".

It's good that some give Christmas good measure. A good way to approach the "dark days of January"

Ceolfrid

Prayers

As we approach the birth of the Prince of Peace we pray for an end to war and conflict throughout the world especially in Gaza, Ukraine and the Sudan. We pray that the fear, hatred, greed, and pride that cause so much conflict may be erased from our hearts. Give us peace in our world, in our country, in our church, in our homes and in our hearts.



The King of Kings is born so may the leaders of the world follow his example of humility, compassion, courage and wisdom. May they rule with equity and work for justice for all.



Healing God we pray for all who suffer in whatever way. You knew what it was to feel pain, to be homeless, to be rejected be with all those who suffer, give them courage, hope and relief in their troubles. And we give thanks for all who follow in your footsteps of healing and helping those in need. Strengthen their hands and hearts in their work.

Lord of the Church we pray for all believers across the world especially those who are persecuted. We pray for those who are looking for meaning in their lives. At this time we pray for our benefice as we prepare to advertise for a new priest and we pray for the churchwardens and other who work to keep this benefice going.

Lord of Life we pray for all who mourn that they may be comforted knowing death is not the end but a change and we give thanks for all who have gone before us and pray that they may rest in peace and rising in glory.

Amen



Christmas Story in pictures



Fra Filippo Lippi, 'The Annunciation', about 1450-3



Philippe de Champaigne, 'The Dream of Saint Joseph', 1642-3



Gerard Van Hornhurst 1622 Birth of Jesus

Adoration of the Shepherds,
Bartolome Morillo 1650



St John's



On Saturday 1st November a very successful **Light Party** was held at St John's with crafts, games, food including sausages, marshmallows and donuts. Around forty children attended. And it was blessed by a double rainbow!



Church Notices

Children are welcome at all services here.

A hearing aid 'loop' system operates at St John's, St Peter's & St Mary's.

If moving is difficult and you wish to have communion brought to you, please ask the Churchwarden on duty.

If you require a gluten-free wafer, please inform us before the service begins.

Know of anyone who'd appreciate reading this notice sheet? Please feel free to forward it to them.

The Arle Valley Benefice takes its duty and obligation to protect everyone, extremely seriously. If you have any safeguarding concerns or issues of a safeguarding nature our Safeguarding Officers are:
Sarah Wilding (St. John's) or
Alison Mayne (St. Mary's/All Saints/St. Peter's)
e-mail: arlevalleysafeguarding@gmail.com

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY - COULD IT BE YOU? **HEALTH & SAFETY VOLUNTEER - ST. JOHN'S**

St. John's Churchwardens are looking for someone who can look after our maintenance programme for our church. The role would involve booking regular outside agencies and overseeing risk assessments. If you could you help, it would be **VERY** much appreciated. Please contact Rosie: 07891 120662 or rosie@22rwg.co.uk.

We have been so grateful to Paul Whiffen who has done an outstanding job over the last few years.

Thank you, Paul.



**NEW BENEFICE
OFFICE HOURS!!**

The church office will
now be open
Monday to Friday
from **9am - 11am.**

News from Old Alresford

SHOE BOXES Many thanks to everyone who provided gifts for the Rotary shoe box appeal. We enjoyed packing and decorating 35 boxes after the service

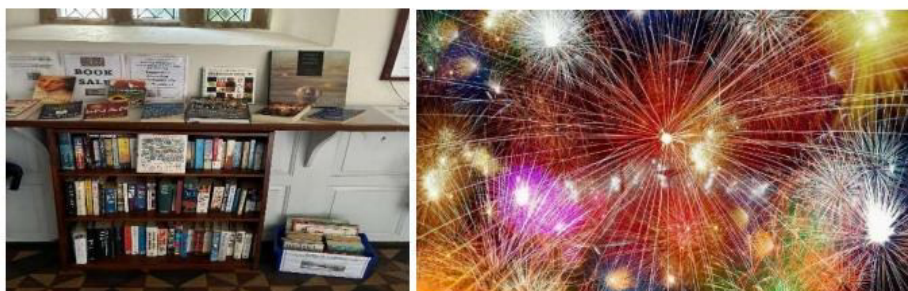


Our November **Family Service** was all about **REMEMBERING**, people, places and events. November is the month of remembering with All Soul's Sunday, Guy Fawkes Night and Remembrance Day. Our service was sandwiched between those special events, so we took time to explore the memorials in St Mary's and the kneelers which are a great reminder of people, places and events in the village.



Our **next Family Service will be on Sunday 7th** and theme will be Christmas Carols

BOOK STALL The book stall has a very good selection of fiction and non-fiction books at a modest price. All donations are gratefully received, and the proceeds go towards our target to create a much-needed disabled toilet and kitchen servery. Thank you !



VILLAGE BONFIRE NIGHT 8.11.25 On the Village Green. The fireworks and bonfire were spectacular and enjoyed by a large crowd of families. Thank you to Peter Stokes and his team for the display and to TOADS and helpers for the great refreshments.

MONDAYS @ 10 Toys for toddlers and coffee and chat for everyone. Mondays@10 is a very popular gathering in the Bernard Clarke room of the village hall on the first Monday of each month. Do Pop in between 10 and 12 and say 'Hello'. You will be most welcome. **Mince pies and coffee on Monday 1st December.**

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY St Mary's was ready to mark the annual service of Remembrance with 'Tommy' outside by day and night, a lovely display of poppies by the lectern and the Union flag flying from the tower. Collection for the Royal British Legion



ADVENT CALENDARS The PCC distributes Advent calendars to the children of Old Alresford, using funds from the Education Fund set up when the village school closed. The lovely calendars come from the Meaningful Chocolate Company and are Fair Trade chocolate. We aim to reach all the children but please let us know if there is anyone we miss. We also give wooden decorations, this year bells and angels, for the children to decorate and bring to decorate the Christmas tree outside the church.



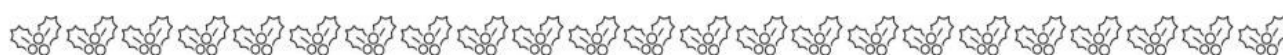
ALUMINIUM CANS Please support the Air Ambulance and place your cans in the special bin in the village hall car park. We have already filled the bin six times so many thanks to all you can savers.

TOADS PANTOMIME Monday 7th- Friday 12th 7.30 and Saturday 13th @ 1.30 and 5.30 Tickets are available for Pinocchio from email boxoffice@oa-toads.org.uk £12 each.

The OLD ALRESFORD CHRISTMAS QUIZ (started in 1992) is on sale now with a new team setting the questions and some new sections as well as some old favourites. At only £2.50 a copy. It is a lot of fun for all the family. We have some great prizes including £20 cash, a hamper, a book token and a bottle of Hattingley English sparkline wine. Quizzes on sale at Six West, The Surgery, Laurence Oxleys, Walker's hairdressers and St Mary's and St John's churches. Closing date January 8th 2026. All proceeds to support our project to create a much-needed toilet with disabled access and a small kitchen servery.

Spot the Secret Santa.....Coded Christmas Prose..... Christmas Dingbats.....Christmas Music

Cryptic challenges.. British Isles.. Twentieth Century History ... Christmas TV specials



WISHING YOU PEACE, JOY AND

Zena Cass

Alresford Bell Ringers

Nancy

Rex, Robin, Hamish, Helena and George

June Ower

David Vellacott

Roger and Jane P

Irene Parker

Chris Lanfear

Lesley Tombs

Peter and Janet

Stuart and Diana Robbins

Joan, Sue, Paul and Carmen

Peter Colquhoun

Angela Peel

Irene Hudman

Miranda Pinch

Patricia

Jilly and Gareth Cowling

Pelham and Janet

Rory Gamin de Pycombe & Ruth Page x

Jennifer Miller

Beryl Yeldham

Keith and Theresa

James, Sue, Tom and Rosie Lees

Det Cave

Vicky Mackintosh

Maureen and George Skayman

Jackie x

Rob and Maddie Attenborough

Keith, Caroline and Dennis

EVERY BLESSING AT CHRISTMAS

Charlotte and Susan Margaret Stewart

Maureen and John Mackrell

Maureen and John Mackrell

Val Bond

Olive and Paul

Kathie, Chris and Margaret

Moyra MacRae

Liz Petheram

Joy Fox and family Audrey Bales

Hilary Carr

Paul and Sue Dix

James and Clare

Keith and Glenys Brundish

Diann and Dave Adam

Audrey Chalk

David and Barbara Griffiths

Hefin and Peter Tudor

Roger and Kathryn Lockyer

Pearl Page

Pat Ure

With best wishes for Christmas

Simon and Erica

& the New Year from

Jane Bellamy

Derek & Jean Sweetenham

Di Binfield

St John's Church Clock

St John's church tower clock mechanism has been completely removed for refurbishment by Smith of Derby, a well-known clock maker and repairer, at a cost of £5,895 + VAT.

Pic 1 shows the space on right side, from where the clock mechanism was removed from the frame. The mechanism on the left is for the hour chimes, which was refurbished several years ago.

The original gravity powered clock was installed in 1811. The clock face is original, but was refurbished over three years ago.

Pic 2 clock face after refurbishment, with me making the final inspection.

Originally, the clock was gravity powered by a heavy weight (often a large stone) suspended by a rope. When the stone reached the full extent of its downward travel it would be wound back up by a designated person, called "the clock winder". Pic 3.

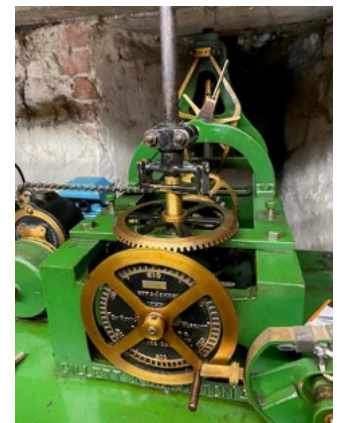
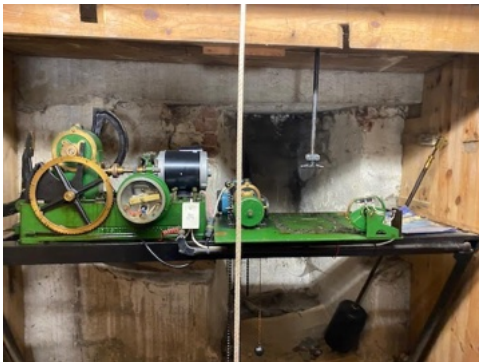
In 1949 the church mechanism was electrified. The long rope and stone were replaced by a metal weight and bicycle type chain with a much shorter fall of about 12 inches. At the bottom of its travel the weight is wound back by an electric motor, thus dispensing with the clock winder. The installation was paid for by Elizabeth Frances Culley in memory of her two sons.

Pic 4 memorial plaque.

Pics 5 and 6 show the front and rear of the removed clock mechanism.

Unfortunately, the clock will be stopped for up to three months.

Tony Stirling Church clock man.



Christmas Fun Facts

Christmas trees



- Even before the time of Christ, evergreen trees were seen in winter as a symbol of fertility.
- It was the 16th century monk, Martin Luther, who 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.
- It was Woolworths who first sold manufactured Christmas tree ornaments – back 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 Xmas 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.



Mistletoe's smelly history

Did you know that the word 'mistletoe' means dung on a tree? The Anglo-Saxons thought that mistletoe grew in trees where birds had left their droppings. Mistel means dung, and tan means twig.

The story of mince pies

Did you know that mince pies have been traditional English Christmas fare since the Middle Ages, when meat was a key ingredient? The addition of spices, suet and alcohol to meat came about because it was an alternative to salting and smoking in order to preserve the food. Mince pies used to be a different shape - cradle-shaped with a pastry baby Jesus on top. You are supposed to eat one mince pie on each of the twelve days of Christmas to ensure the next twelve months are happy.



Robins and Christmas



Long ago in Palestine a little brown bird flew into a dark, cold, smelly stable to find a place to rest. Outside on the high mountain there was a snow storm with a fierce bitter wind. The bird was tired with battling the wind so he flew in and settled on a rafter.

In the stable he found a young couple trying to keep a new born baby warm. He was lying in the hay and they had covered him with a cloak but still the infant cried as he wasn't warm enough.

The innkeeper stood nearby. "We have no more blankets," she said, "our inn is so full."

The bird knew how hard it was to raise youngsters. He had struggled to keep his own hatchlings safe last spring. He flew down from the rafter and settled his warm body on the baby fluffing out his feathers as he had for his own babies.

The baby stopped crying, sighed, closed his eyes and went to sleep. All that night the bird warmed the child.

The parents were thankful and blessed the loving bird who blushed from their praise.

In between sitting and warming the babe he flew round the meagre fire flapping his wings to make it glow hotter and bringing twigs he found to feed it even though sparks burnt his breast.

All night he flew from warming the baby to feeding the fire.

At last morning came—the sun rose and the wind dropped so the stable was a bit warmer and the bird could rest. As he settled on his rafter to sleep he was no longer just brown as his breast and face were colour of the fire he had tended—a reminder of the warmth he had given the Christ child to help him survive his first night.



Robins are often seen on Christmas cards partly because of the legend above but also because postmen and postwomen wear red jackets and so were often called 'Robin Redbreasts'. Left is one early Christmas card showing a robin delivering a card.



Robins: Facts and Figures

- Robins are the UK's favourite bird. Thanks to its bright red breast, it's familiar throughout the year and especially at Christmas. Males and females look identical, young birds have no red breast and are spotted with golden brown. Robins sing nearly all year round and despite their cute appearance, they are aggressively territorial and are quick to drive away other robins that intrude on their territory. They will sing at night next to street lights.



- Robins are one of the very few birds that sing throughout the year though rather less in July and August when they are moulting (shedding old feathers to make way for new ones to grow). Robins like to sing from a perch, whether that be a fence post, a tree branch or the handle of your garden spade. They can be seen almost anywhere around the UK, in gardens, parks and cities. Unlike most other birds both male and female robins sing.
- Robins often follow gardeners so that they can grab any bugs or worms dug up. They can become quite friendly.
- Robins' nests have been found in plant pots, car bonnets, in a plane engine and apparently even in a (deceased) human skull! Despite their placid behaviour around people, male Robins are extremely territorial, defending their patch sometimes until death. They'll lay around four or five eggs and have two or three clutches throughout the spring and summer months.
- Robins eat a wide variety of food : seeds, fruit, worms, insects and other bugs.
- The robins in the UK are a European bird and is a kind of flycatcher. The American robin is a different species and is a kind of thrush





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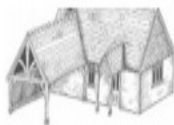
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A

Ecology

Buying personal care gifts for Christmas - think eco friendly! Better for the recipient & better for the planet!



Buying a natural tree from Rotary - be sure to put it out on the right bin day for collection after Christmas



GOOD NEWS FOR OUR ALUMINIUM COLLECTION

This is now going to be collected to raise money for The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance.

This is a very worthy cause, so please keep saving your tin foil and bringing it to St John's.

This can include:

- aluminium wine bottle tops (no need to remove the small inside disc)
- aluminium tea-light holders (with wax removed)
- aluminium trays (folded small)
- aluminium squeezable drink cans (squashed as flat as possible – maybe stamp on them).

BUT remember - **all that's silver is not foil** – please make sure it tears and stays scrunched when screwed up in the hand! Also definitely **no pill blister packs** – they look like foil but won't tear as they have a thin layer of plastic over the foil - these can be recycled at large Boots stores.

Across Hampshire there are over 650 collectors and since 2019 over £35,000 has been raised for The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance. Currently this is co-ordinated by a couple who live in Kings Worthy.

Just to remind you the collection bin at St John's is outside the Parish Office.



Ecological Shopping

CHRISTMAS IS COMING



Be sure to buy recyclable paper and cards, ie those without glitter, gold or silver.



Beware retailers selling wrapping paper which claims to be recyclable when it isn't. Last year a well known high street store was selling some which didn't look recyclable, but stated on the label that it was – when I enquired more about it, I was told it couldn't be recycled at home, but they could recycle any which were left over.... mmm!!

If you get any cards or gifts wrapped in paper with glitter, gold or silver, don't put them in your recycle bin as they will contaminate everything else. Tear the offending bits off the cards to put in your general waste bin and recycle the rest. Alternatively, upcycle into gift tags or cards for next year.



Thinking about wrapping parcels, did you know that you can now buy Sellotape Zero plastic from Sainsburys (reviews are mixed).

MAKE-UP

Ladies do you wear foundation? Have you ever thought to try Eco-friendly!

I decided to have a go, but then hit the first dilemma – how to order the right shade on line?

Then I found PHB Ethical Beauty who send out sample pots - £1.00 each, which with postage came to £6.95 – quite a lot for 3 little pots! However, that was the end of June and, although I don't wear foundation every day, I was (with a little added moisturiser) still using them into early September!

They didn't flow onto the skin as well as I would have liked, but I wanted to persevere so added a little moisturiser and that did the trick.

Then came the unexpected added bonus for me. I suffer from Rosacea, but since using this foundation I haven't had one flare up!

Needless to say I'm a convert! I ordered my make up from Love Ethical Beauty (which appears to be the main company) as PHB didn't have the shade I wanted in stock. PHB is cheaper though, as sample pots from Love Ethical Beauty are £1.50!

Kathryn



Rory Investigates St. Nicholas



Every year since I have come to live in Alresford, I have woken up on Christmas morning with a little present in a stocking at the end of my basket. I know I didn't put them there – so who did? My clever friend (Carrot the ginger cat) says it was Santa Paws, but I think he meant Santa *Claus* (I'm not too sure – I only bark a smattering of cat). I wanted to find out some more about this mysterious, benevolent gentleman, so I have tried to sniff out some facts.

Santa Claus seems to be the modern incarnation of a person called St. Nicholas, who was probably alive sometime between 270 – 343 AD and from Turkey (the country, not the obese chicken). He was a bishop, a good man who was credited with many miracles as well as for helping people. He seems to be the patron saint (bit like a spokesman in Heaven) for all these things: sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, children, brewers, pawnbrokers, toymakers, unmarried people, and students. He also had a reputation for secret gift-giving.

Some of the good things he is said to have done are:

- rescuing 3 girls from being forced into misery by dropping a sack of gold coins through the window of their house each night for 3 nights, so their father could pay a dowry for each of them;
- calming a storm at sea;
- saving 3 innocent soldiers from wrongful execution;
- chopping down a tree possessed by a demon;
- resurrecting 3 children, who had been murdered and pickled by a butcher planning to sell them as sausages.

So, generally a nice fellow, who tends to rescue groups of 3. It looks like he began his regeneration into our Santa Claus via Dutch traditions, where "St Nicholas" is known as "Sinterklaas", from where the legend spread into North America when Dutch settlers took up residence in New York. The 1823 American poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" (author uncertain), describes St. Nick arriving at the author's home on Christmas Eve in a sleigh pulled by flying reindeer. The poem laid the foundation for modern depictions of Santa Claus and the association between Santa Claus and Christmas. Interestingly, Rudolph and his odd nasal affliction don't get a mention – the antlered lads accompanying our hero are named as Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen. Rudolph first made his appearance in 1939 in the story "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" by Robert L. May, followed 10 years later by the jaunty song of the same name.

Father Christmas as we tend to know him today dates to 16th-century England during the reign of Henry VIII (a less-jolly bearded fat man), when he was pictured as a large man in green or scarlet robes lined with fur. He stood for the spirit of good cheer at Christmas, bringing peace, joy, good food and wine and revelry. When England no longer kept the feast day of Saint Nicholas on 6 December (although his day is still celebrated in other countries), the Father Christmas celebration was moved to 25 December to coincide with Christmas Day. The Victorians' comprehensive revival of Christmas included Father Christmas as the emblem of good cheer.

Along with his tireless and dedicated staff of elves, magically-flying reindeer, and buoyed-up by the many mince pies and warming drinks left for him by fireplaces the world over (which, frankly, won't help his expanding waistline - no wonder they needed to draft in Rudolph for additional support), St. Nick in whichever form he takes continues to spread festive joy, cheer and sparkle to all who welcome him in. Including me.



One of my late predecessors, in his "Around the World with Jasper" series on his dog-blog, once visited Santa when he stopped off in Rovaniemi, in Finnish Lapland. There, he discovered that it was not magic that flew the reindeer through the skies, but propulsion by gaseous emissions after an especially enthusiastic sprout-supper, prepared for the purpose by the elves.

With love at Christmas and always, **RORY GAMIN de PYCOMBE**

Don't forget St Joseph!

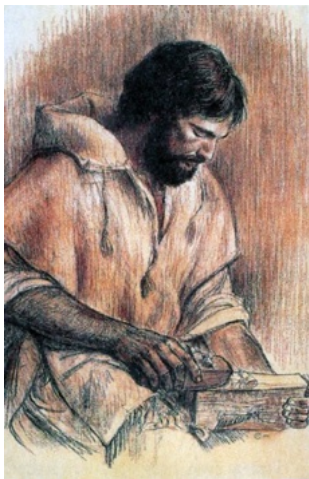
The traditional Nativity scene on our Christmas cards has Mary with the Holy Babe. Around her are the shepherds and Magi. We may also see stable animals, angels and a star! While Joseph is often included, his presence seems to be of minor importance.

After all, we praise God for Jesus with our familiar Christmas carols, mentioning angels, shepherds, Wise Men and Mary but the name of Joseph is absent! Why is Joseph given a low profile? For he is a man to be remembered.



Joseph was a resident of Nazareth. He worked as a carpenter/builder and his skills would have included making furniture, repairing buildings and crafting agricultural tools. Although Joseph had an honourable profession, he would not have been a man of great wealth.

The gospel writers Matthew and Luke give Joseph a few brief mentions. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary go to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate the Baby to God. Afterwards, they flee into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod and much later return to Nazareth—probably joining their relatives who lived and worked there. Twelve years later, Mary and Joseph go with Jesus to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Here they lose Jesus, only to find Him in the Temple talking with religious leaders!



Apart from these verses, the New Testament is silent about the rest of Joseph's life. However, we do know that Joseph was father to other children by Mary. His four sons are named, and they had at least two daughters. (See Matthew 13:55)

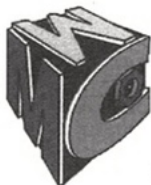
And we also know that Joseph was someone who quietly and humbly took on the awesome role in caring for the early life of the Son of God. Joseph would have taught Jesus many things – not just the skills of a labourer, but the lore of the countryside which was evident in our Lord's teaching. Jesus grew up within a loving family and described God as 'Father', knowing also the good fatherly qualities of Joseph.

In the Christmas story, Joseph is placed into a situation that brought him misunderstanding and suspicion. But Joseph remained faithful in the knowledge that as long as God had spoken, the opinion of others mattered little.

Before Jesus began His ministry, it is believed that Joseph died. It is likely Jesus took on many of His father's responsibilities before He left home which is why he did not begin his ministry until he was thirty—he had to see his younger brothers apprenticed and his younger sisters married. It also explains why Jesus almost certainly did not marry as he could not take on more responsibilities.

In the eyes of the world, Joseph was a nobody. He was not a man of valour, fame and fortune. But he was the one who had parental responsibility for the greatest person who has ever lived!

It is sad that we often equate ordinariness with ineffectiveness. Down the ages, God has used many ordinary people to accomplish great things. God continues to use ordinary people. Like Joseph, we need to know that doing God's will is the most important thing in life. May we, this Christmas, respond to God's call to us and please Him in all that we do.



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The Incarnation 1

A reflection Jesus's humanity

*My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*

*Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be. Psalm 139:15-16*

You began life as a single cell. For a few hours you were a miniscule but highly complex blob of jelly, until it began to divide: two cells, four, eight, sixteen, a ball, a hollow ball, and then something more recognisably like a living organism. You were still tiny, but developing a nervous system, a head, a body, arms and legs. A typical embryo as seen on the right.



Until recently I hadn't thought much about Jesus being an embryo. Somehow, I find that thought even more shocking than His birth. How could God, who made the universe, have become something so completely and utterly vulnerable? Maybe in the past, when the development of a child happened in 'secret', it was possible just to let that part of the Christmas story go untold.

Today, when we see images of a developing child, or even embryos outside the womb, it is harder to ignore the process of Jesus developing into a baby. The incarnation meant that God's Son went through all the stages in the diagram in my developmental biology textbook. If he was (and is) fully human that meant he had all the normal processes of human life: birth, growth, hunger, sweat, shivering, got tired and so on. And being human he made mistakes and his knowledge was limited for example he did not know where Lazarus's tomb was and he explicitly stated he did not know when the second coming would happen. To deny Jesus's humanity is one of the heresies as much as to deny his divinity. Both were heresies that the early church battled against

Jesus was there in the beginning, and all life owes its existence to Him. But instead of remaining aloof, He chose to become one of us. The Son of God shared the same kind of DNA as every other organism on the planet. He knows what it feels like to have a body, to feel hungry and thirsty, pain and pleasure, dark and light. As St Paul states he set aside his divinity in order to be one of us. He set it aside but it was still there.



In Psalm 139, the writer is meditating on God's intimate knowledge of him, which began when he was an embryo. There is nothing God doesn't know about him, and even darkness cannot obscure him from God's sight. The incarnation means that God's intimacy with us now extends even further. He became one of us, lived alongside us, and shared our very fragile material nature.

The transcendent God is also immanent, longing for us to relate to Him as Father. He became as fragile as we are so He could rescue us from the messes we so often find ourselves in. With His help, we can remember what it means to be fearfully and wonderfully made.

The Incarnation 2

A reflection on Jesus's divinity.

He looked to all who knew him like an ordinary man. He was born a baby—beginning as one cell. He grew, he ate, he felt pain and yet he was not only human but divine. He was God in human form and He never stopped being God. As stated on the previous page Jesus was fully human (and still is—he did not set aside his humanity when he ascended into heaven).

And yet every so often in his earthly life some of his divinity showed through. Of course we think of the miracles—the healing, the calming of the storm, the water into wine and so on. But also consider the sort of person he was: yes he got angry, he got tired but again and again he showed love, compassion and forgiveness when most people would have shown rage or hatred. Very few people enduring what he endured could say, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”



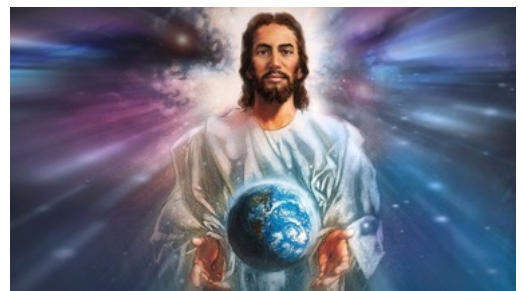
I think his divinity also shines through in his understanding of people and how they are driven to behave, and the acceptance that that understanding led to.

He spoke with authority and had a close relationship with the Father. He came from a Jewish background and had had the sort of training that any perceptive Jewish boy had—possibly even full rabbinical training as some of his enemies call him rabbi. Yet he is different in his approach to God—blasphemously so in Jewish eyes. He reads and understands scriptures in new and to his audience amazing ways. The verses in Isaiah that we call the Servant Songs had always been seen as about Israel but Jesus speaks of them as about the Messiah—about himself.

And he knew he was different. He speaks of himself as divine. An even greater blasphemy to his contemporaries. Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. They picked up stone because by that statement he had said he was God. For the phrase ‘I am’ is how God answered Moses when the latter asked whom he was speaking to. The punishment for blasphemy was stoning.

In saying this Jesus has to be one of three things; a liar or fantasist, a madman or God. There is no evidence he was mad and he certainly didn’t lie so that means he is God.

To deny Jesus’s divinity is another heresy that the early church battled against and it is still a problem today. It stretches our reason and imagination to think of him as God. We do not, cannot, understand it. Nor can we understand how one person can be both human and divine—those two states are contradictory. God is eternal, infinite, omniscient, omnipotent. Humans are bound by time, finite, limited and weak.



In the end it is a teaching we just have to accept. We will never fully understand it at least not in this life—maybe in the life to come perhaps.

The Real Wenceslas



The real Wenceslas — known as Václav the Good — lived from about A.D. 907 to 929, and the story of his brief 22 years on this earth featured family treachery rather than love.

His father, Vratislaus I, was the Duke of Bohemia and a Christian. His mother, Drahomíra, though baptized before the marriage, was aligned with Bohemia's pagans. As a child, Václav was raised largely by his Christian paternal grandmother, Ludmila — who was later

canonized as a saint in her own right.

When Václav was about 13, his father died in battle and Ludmila became regent. But the regency did not last long. His mother had Ludmila killed — resenting her mother-in-law's influence on the government and her soon-to-be duke son. Newly empowered, Drahomíra also sought to suppress Bohemia's Christians.

When Václav became Duke of Bohemia himself at age 18, he instead sought to spread Christianity. He banished his mother because she was pagan (there is also some evidence that she was rather unkind to him) He commissioned the building of several churches including part of what is now St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague. He also developed a reputation as a wise and compassionate ruler, known for his deeds of mercy.

Legend has it that he paid particular attention to caring for the poor, widows, orphans and even prisoners. He opposed the slave market and would buy slaves in order to set them free. He also is known for successfully negotiating peace with the Bavarians, who had been traditional enemies of Bohemians.

But his jealous younger brother, Boleslav, wanted to become duke himself and had the backing of their mother. Boleslav also was willing to exploit his brother's faith to seize power. He invited Václav to a church dedication on Sept. 27, 929. The next day, while Václav was on his way to prayer, Boleslav and his henchman attacked — killing the young duke on Sept. 28.

Soon after his death, Václav's tomb at St. Vitus became a popular site for pilgrimage, and through many shifts in what powers ruled the region, he remained a hero to the Czech people. To this day, he is still a familiar sight to many Czechs.

For nearly 100 years, a large statue of him as an armed knight on horseback has stood proudly in Prague's Wenceslas Square. Václav's feast day of Sept. 28 is also a national holiday that celebrates Czech statehood.

The carol we sing today was written nearly a thousand years after his death and is supposed to be based on a legend..



Alresford Methodist Church



December 6th - Bacon Butties

Come and join us for Bacon Butties (also hot croissants and fresh coffee) and good conversation. No payment is asked for, but donations are accepted for the work of the church.

Breakfast is served from 9.30-11.00am.



December 1st – Memory Lane Café

The Monday Memory Café was initially set up with the specific purpose of supporting those suffering memory loss and their carers. However, we also welcome anyone who finds life a little lonely and would therefore welcome an additional social opportunity in their diary. If you would like to join us, you will find a warm welcome awaiting you. We offer an afternoon of fun, activities, fellowship, homemade cake and lots of tea – all for a cost of £2!

If you would like more information, or would like to attend, please contact us on: 07711066116.

December 12th - Women's Fellowship

The 'Women's Fellowship' group will meet in the Methodist church hall at 2.30pm.

This meeting will be followed with tea and cake. A warm welcome is extended to everyone.

December 20th – Church Prayers

The church is open on the third Saturday of each month from 10–11am. All are welcome to join us in a time of reflective prayer, as we share concerns both local and worldwide. At the close of prayer time, we invite everyone to stay and chat over a coffee and biscuits in the coffee lounge.



Singapore-Style Egg Noodles

Is your palate feeling a bit jaded by all the Christmas fare and leftovers? Here's something quick, tasty and easy to try that is a refreshing distance from sprouts and turkey. The recipe below should take around 25 minutes to prepare and cook and should serve 4.

Ingredients

200g dried medium egg noodles
4 eggs
1 tbsp dark soy sauce, plus extra to serve
Vegetable oil or cooking spray
700g ready-prepared stir-fry vegetables
1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
1 small red onion, cut into thin wedges
2 tsp medium curry powder
215g cooked peeled prawns, defrosted if frozen



Method

Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions. Rinse in a sieve under cold running water, then set aside.

Crack the eggs into a bowl and beat with the soy sauce until smooth. Coat a non-stick frying pan with vegetable oil or cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Pour in the eggs and cook for 2 minutes without stirring, then set aside to cool slightly. Remove from the pan and cut into long, thin strips.

Spray a large non-stick frying pan or wok with cooking spray (or coat thinly with vegetable oil) and place over a medium-high heat. Add the stir-fry vegetables, garlic and onion and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Spray with a little more low-calorie cooking spray (or add more vegetable oil if needed), sprinkle with the curry powder and stir-fry for 2-3 minutes.

Add the prawns, omelette strips and noodles to the pan and toss with the veg until the prawns are heated through. Divide between bowls and serve with extra soy sauce to taste for seasoning.

For a sprinkle of fairy-dust try:

This is equally delicious if cooked with tofu, Quorn or chicken pieces instead of the prawns. Do make sure that they are thoroughly cooked through before serving though!



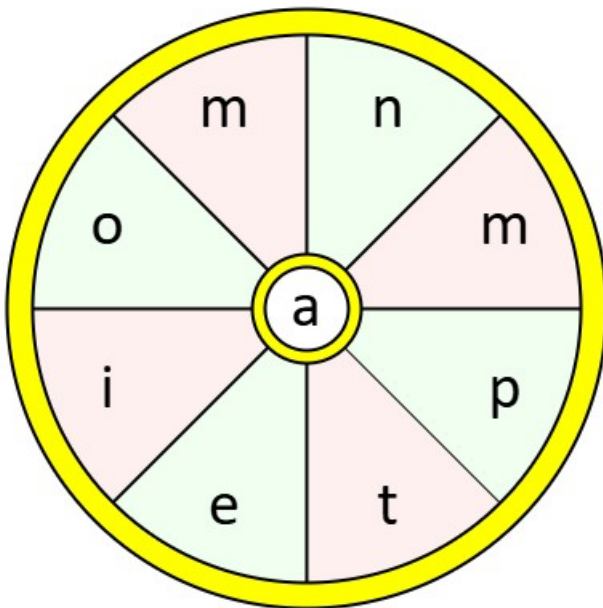
Time to fly! Fairy Cake

Puzzles

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Words of four letters or more including the letter a and
with no repeated letters (unless repeated in the wheel)
& no plurals

50 words excellent

40 words good

30 words fair

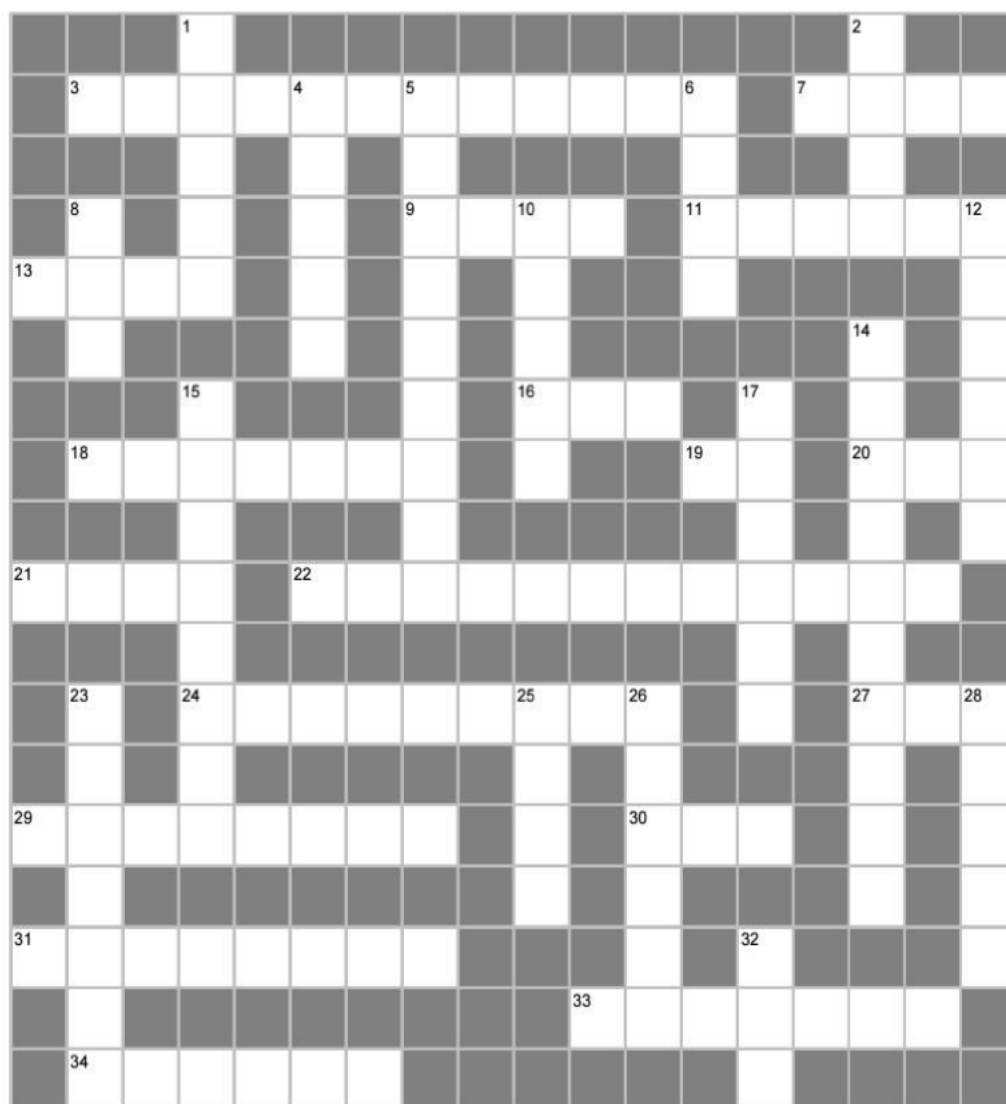


*Sara preferred to let people work
out the hymns for themselves*

A Christmas Quiz

1. Who told the shepherds in the fields about Jesus?
2. The Trafalgar Square Christmas Tree is a gift from which city to London, a longstanding tradition since 1947?
3. If you're born on Christmas day, what's your star sign?
4. Which country is Europe's largest exporter of natural Christmas trees? Denmark
5. What do elves typically have on their shoes?
6. What colour suit did Santa Claus originally wear before the iconic red suit?
7. What type of bird usually appears on Christmas cards?
8. What gifts did the magi give Jesus?
9. What are small, inexpensive gifts usually called?
10. In which modern-day country was Saint Nicholas born?
11. What's the main colour of the berries of the mistletoe plant?
12. What is the last day of Advent?
13. In Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", how many ghosts visit Scrooge?
14. In "A Christmas Carol", what does Scrooge have for his Christmas dinner?
15. Which saint's day is celebrated on 26th December?
16. In which ocean can you find Christmas Island?
17. What time is the King's speech usually broadcast on Christmas Day?
18. How many Scrabble points for the word 'Christmas'?
19. Where do they have the tradition of filling children's clogs with candy?
20. What's the best-selling Christmas song of all time?
21. Which carol was originally named 'One horse open sleigh'?
22. In "The Twelve Days of Christmas", what is given on the 7th day?
23. Which Christmas carol includes the lyrics "Star with royal beauty bright"?
24. Who sings 'Step into Christmas'?
25. What year was 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' written?
26. What carol can you use to demand figgy pudding
27. Traditionally, when should you take your Christmas decorations down?
28. What is the Grinch's dog called?
29. In the animated film "Frosty the Snowman", what makes Frosty come to life?
30. Where does the Grinch live?
31. "We will discuss your affairs, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob!" – is a quote from Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, but what is a Smoking Bishop?
32. What is usually poured over the top of a Christmas pudding to light it on fire?
33. Which country did Stollen originate from?
34. In which country is it traditional to eat a meal of 12 dishes on Christmas Eve?
35. What are candy canes' shape meant to resemble?
36. What should be eaten on each of the 12 days of Christmas to ensure good luck for the year ahead?
37. What are pigs in blankets called in Scotland?
38. Which direction should you stir mince pies for good luck?
39. Who wrote the poem 'The Night Before Christmas when all through the house'?





ACROSS

3. Sad, itchy arms distress Noel (9,3)
7. Letter to Father Christmas results in blisters (4)
9. Celebrity rats return (4)
11. Coming VAT end is absurd (6)
13. Tipsy alcoholic starter is reward for naughty behaviour (4)
16. Flea lost tail and reversed present maker (3)
18. Wrap resentment a little tense (7)
- 19 (*with 25 down*). Three prostitutes laughing! (2,2,2)
20. First lady's last night (3)
- 21 (*with 27 across*). Learner eulogy upsets intended cremation target (4,3)
22. Old lady talks, quenches, pees madly (6,6)
24. City girl by Leicester border (9)
27. *See 21 across*
29. One bird roost is two aloud and most of three (4,4)
- 30 (*with 6 down*). Were any dubious resolutions made? (3,4)
31. I hear the new secret agent is a tasty treat (5,3)
33. Stunning cheese companion (7)
34. First great risotto is no cave (6)

DOWN

1. Sings fa-la-la under bridge? (5)
2. Long for evergreen (4)
4. Insect in South Africa initially eats mince pies (5)
5. Tom's elite parasitic plant (9)
6. *See 30 across*
8. Treat of youth? (3)
10. Endless anger left saint (5)
12. Gobble meat? (6)
14. Highest degree in former temperature scale without you (2,8)
15. Tenth cinder this month (8)
17. Adoptive father in San Jose, Philadelphia (6)
23. Some of the three kings are very smelly (7)
25. *See 19 across*
26. Feed box to eat French (6)
28. Why no energy? Eco! (5)
32. I see, I hear, I slip (3)



Volunteers needed

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES - LOTS OF CHOICES TO SUIT...



A variety of help needed please for St John's - It is the time of year when we are beginning to do rotas for the autumn!!!

If you or anyone you know would be able to help with any of the below it would be VERY much appreciated.

Please contact Rosie 07891 120662 rosie@22rwg.co.uk.

(All below occur approximately once every 6 weeks or so.)

Church Locking - the church needs locking, lights out etc at about 5pm each night for a week at a time.

Monday, Meet and Eat in term time - Either making tea, washing up or playing games with the children or cooking a simple meal for approx 15.

Chatterbox on a Thursday in term time - Time to welcome and chat to families of children under 5.

St John's Tech Team - Help needed to either control the sound or click on the service overheads or set the livestream on the camera. *Full training given.*



Opening shortly in Alresford, retail volunteers are needed and hold a vital role in ensuring the ongoing running of our stores, assisting with tasks including serving customers and sorting donations.

Please contact for further information on **01256 844744** or email **volunteer@stmichaelshospice.org.uk**



Alresford Men's Shed

Volunteers needed

We are open weekdays 10-12.30pm

For those considering joining us as a volunteer, we would warmly invite you to join us as a taster morning. Meet everyone, have a cuppa and a chat about how we can use your help. Bennett House, The Dean, Alresford.

<https://www.alresfordmensshed.org.uk>

--oOo--

Community Growing Allotment

Anyone is welcome to volunteer on the plot located at Spring Gardens. Whether you would like to offer your experience and advice or join in to learn how to grow; whether you can water crops and carry heavy loads or would prefer to start seeds off at home; whether you want to get your hands dirty or just chat about growing veg, you are invited to take part. If you would like to volunteer, please email enquiries@newleafalresford.org



You will be invited to join our WhatsApp group for communication.

<https://newleafalresford.org/community-growing>

--oOo--



Age Uk Charity Shop

Volunteers needed. Please call in to the shop at 21a Broad Street...beside the Italian. or call 01962 735242

--oOo--

Traditional Christmas Day Lunch at Makins Court

For those living in or around Alresford who would otherwise be on their own on Christmas Day

Volunteers are needed to help prepare vegetables on Christmas Eve, set up tables, take guests to seats, serve the lunch, washing up, and putting away afterwards. Please contact: Patricia 07704 723 888



Puzzle and Quiz Answers

1. Angels
2. Oslo, Norway
3. Capricorn
4. Denmark
5. Bells
6. Tan or Green
7. Robins
8. Gold, frankincense and myrrh
9. Stocking fillers
10. Turkey
11. White
12. 24th December
13. 4
14. Gruel
15. St. Stephen
16. Indian Ocean
17. 3pm
18. 16
19. The Netherlands
20. White Christmas
21. Jingle Bells
22. Seven swans a-swimming
23. We Three Kings
24. Elton John
25. 1984
26. We wish you a Merry Christmas
27. January 5th or 6th or February 2nd (Candlemas)
28. Max
29. A magical hat
30. Whoville
31. A type of mulled wine, punch or wassail
32. Brandy
33. Germany
34. Poland
35. Shepherds staff
36. A mince pie
37. Kilted sausages
38. Clockwise



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

Word wheel words

aeon, amen, ament, amine, amino, ammino, ammo, ammonite, amniote, anime, ante, anti, atom, atone, atop, etna, imam, inapt, inmate, iota, maim, main, maintop, mane, mate, matin, mean, meant, meat, mina, moan, moat, momenta, name, nape, neap, neat, nota, oaten, opiate, optima, paeon, pain, paint, pane, pant, pantie, panto, **pantomime**, pate, paten, patio, peat, piano, pieman, pieta, pinta, pitman, potman, ptomain, ptomaine, tame, tamp, tape, team, timpano, topman.

Here are the answers to the cryptic crossword with some explanations of how they are worked out.

ACROSS

- 3. Christmas Day (Definition: Noel. Anagram [distress] of “sad, itchy arms”)
- 7. List (Definition: Letter to Father Christmas. Hidden inside [results in] “blisters”)
- 9. Star (Definition: Celebrity. “Rats” spelt backwards)
- 11. Advent (Definition: Coming. Anagram of “VAT end”)
- 13. Coal (Definition: Reward for naughty behaviour. Anagram of first four letters [starter] of “alcoholic”)
- 16. Elf (Definition: Present maker. First three letters [tail removed] of “flea”, reversed)
- 18. Present (Definition: Tense. Hidden inside [a little] “wrap resentment”)
- 19. Ho Ho Ho (Double definition: “Three prostitutes” and “laughing”)
- 20. Eve (Double definition: “First lady” and “last night” [if it’s Christmas Day!])
- 21. Yule Log (Definition: “Intended cremation target”. Anagram [upsets] of “eulogy” plus “L” [learner])
- 22. Queen’s Speech (Definition: Old lady talks. Anagram [madly] of “quenches, pees”)
- 24. Bethlehem (Definition: City. Charade of “Beth” [girl], “le” [Leicester]. and “hem” [border])
- 29. Pear Tree (Definition: One bird roost. Charade of “pear” [sounds like “pair” from “two”] and “tree” [most of the letters of “three”])
- 30. New Year (Definition: Whole clue. Anagram [dubious] of “were any”)
- 31. Mince Pie (Definition: Tasty treat. Sounds like [I hear] “Mint spy” from “new spy”)
- 33. Cracker (Double definition: “Stunning” and “cheese companion”)
- 34. Grotto (Definition: Cave. First letter of “great” plus “risotto” without the “is”)

DOWN

- 1. Troll (Definition: Whole thing. A troll can be found under bridges and “to troll” is “to sing”)
- 2. Pine (Double definition: “Long for” and “evergreen”)
- 4. Santa (Definition: Eats mince pies. Charade of “ant” [insect] inside the letter S and A [South Africa initially])
- 5. Mistletoe (Definition: plant. Anagram [parasitic] of “Tom’s elite”)
- 8. Toy (Definition: Whole thing. First letter of each word)
- 10. Angel (Definition: Saint. First four letter [endless] of “anger” plus “L” [left])
- 12. Turkey (Definition: Meat. A bad pun on the sound a turkey makes)
- 14. In Excelsis (Definition: Highest degree. Charade of “in” and “celsius” [former temperature scale] with “U” [you])
- 15. December (Definition: This month [if it’s Christmas Day!]. Charade of “Dec” [tenth] and “ember” [cinder])
- 17. Joseph (Definition: Adoptive father. Hidden in “Jose, Philadelphia”)
- 23. Reeking (Definition: very smelly. Hidden in [some of] “three kings”)
- 26. Manger (Double definition: “Feed box” and “to eat” in French)
- 28. Green (Definition: Eco. Anagram of “energy” with no “Y” [why])
- 32. Icy (Definition: I slip. Sounds like [I hear] “I see”)



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

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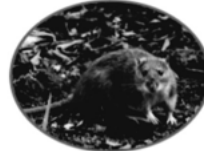
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New Alresford Town Council

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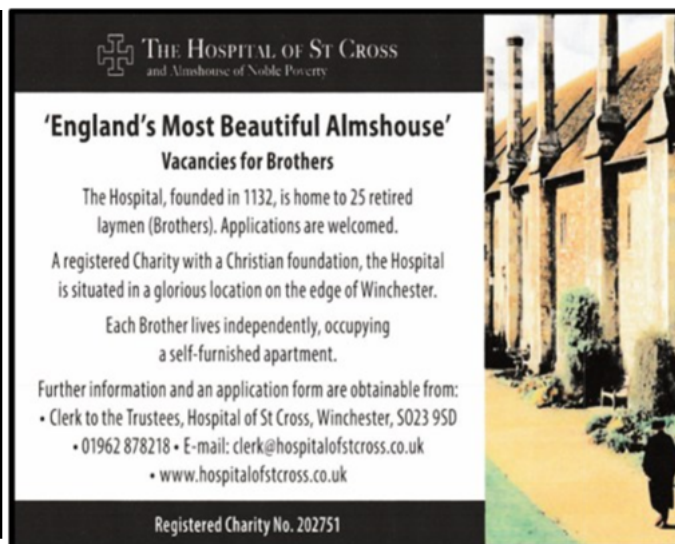


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