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RECTOR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

As I sit down to write this letter, there is a sense of palpable excitement in our home as we await the birth of our second grandchild –



and we know precisely what day she will be born (and yes, she is a she, contrary to earlier reports!!) because she will be delivered via a planned C-section. Of course, her parents are even more excited than we are, though I don't think they know what's going to hit them with a 2½ year old already in the home.

Also as I write, the start of Advent is a week away, and Advent really does begin to mark the build up to Christmas, and the celebrations around the birth of Jesus, even though the Christmas ads have been around for weeks. And while we as a family will be shouting from the rooftops when our new arrival comes, and even though she will bring us great joy, this will be as nothing to the joy our heavenly Father felt at



the birth of Jesus – I think I can safely say He was so excited that he sent a host of angels to rejoice over Jesus' birth. And He was so excited because events in that stable 2000 years ago marked the start of the implementation of His plan, formed before the creation of the world, to restore the broken relationship between Him and humanity – hence the angel said to

the shepherds 'I bring you news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you.'

And if God was so excited about this good news, how much more should we be? There is a lot of bad news around at the moment, such as the climate emergency, the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis, but what the birth of Jesus tells us is that God has a plan, He is in control, He loves us, and we do not need to be afraid.

So perhaps this Advent and Christmas, as we remember Jesus' first coming into the world and as we remind ourselves of our need to be

ready for his second coming, we would do well to use this season as a time to double down on our trust of him and his love for us. The coming of the Christ Child proves to us that this is the wisest thing to do. And perhaps we should also pluck up our courage and invite our families, friends and neighbours along to our Christmas services (details elsewhere in this magazine), because the good news that God has a plan and that He is in charge of events is news that we all need to hear.



The Church of England's Christmas slogan backs all this up - it is 'Follow the Star - the Great Invitation' Follow The Star suggesting to us that like the wise men, we should look for Jesus afresh, and invite others to do the same as they perhaps look for light in the darkness of our present world.

Then, before I close, I just wanted to update you that interviews for our new team vicar are due to take place on 18th January, and to ask you to keep praying for the right appointment to be made.

Have a fabulous Christmas

Blessings

Simon

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the last edition of 2022, with lots of information about events during the Christmas Season, and about what's been happening.

The good news is that next year printed copies will still be at the bargain price of 50p per issue, and the magazine will continue to be available free online.

Would you like to be involved in producing this magazine? We are still looking for someone to share the editing. It's a rewarding and interesting task, involving a few hours each

month, but open to negotiation. Contact the magazine email, or chat with me at church if you are interested.

Happy Christmas!

Jean

QUESTION CORNER

- Q. After the shepherds visited baby Jesus, do you think that others visited too, on seeing the star over the stable, before the wise men arrived?
- A. A Christmas carol says 'The first Nowell the angels did say was to certain poor shepherds They looked up and saw a star ...' But no, there is no mention of a star in Luke 2, 8-16. The star is linked with the wise men, who could have arrived about a



year later. Remember that Herod ordered that all boys of TWO YEARS OLD or younger should be killed (making extra-sure). And in Matthew 2, 9-12, the wise men followed the star and went into a HOUSE, not a stable.

The gospels don't give us a detailed life story of Jesus, so we use our imagination and common sense to fill in some gaps. For example, we don't imagine that Mary and Joseph stayed in the stable a moment longer than necessary, and they certainly would not keep the baby lying in a cattle trough either. Let's face it, the use of a manger was a last desperate measure. Not like some cosy Christmas card pictures! It looks like they stayed for some time in a little house in Bethlehem while Joseph found work locally. (He was not in the house when the wise men came).

So in answer to your question, and leaving out the star, it would be natural for Mary and Joseph to receive visitors and get to know their neighbours before the wise men's visit, whenever that was.

The actual account of Jesus's birth, in Luke 2, 6 and 7, is so simple. There is no mention of an inn-keeper, donkey, ox or ass, cattle etc. These have all been added quite logically. And, of course, it all helps with Nativity plays. (At junior school I was only once given an important part. I was the donkey).

Happy Christmas

David

PROJECTOR FUND

Thank you to **JUDY NOAKES** for recently holding a Christmas craft coffee morning at her house; she raised a fabulous £510 which is being donated to our new projector fund.

EVERY YOUNG PERSON DESERVES A GOOD CHILDHOOD

(says the Children's Society)

That's why we fight for the hope and happiness of young people when it's threatened by abuse, exploitation and neglect. We see the hope and



courage in young people every day, and it inspires us to support them through their most serious life challenges.

Now we're stepping up the fight for hope and happiness at a time when it's under threat like never before. Our goal and vision are built around the hopes of young people, to achieve long-lasting change for this generation and the ones to come.



When young people want to tell their story, we listen. These young people still believe in a better tomorrow. They know they can break free from those who hurt them, have a happy home life, feel better over time.

Often their stories aren't easy to tell, but they tell them. Because they know sharing their story will help them and others like them

You can read some of their stories at

https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/stories

CHRISTINGLE SERVICES

Sunday 11th December

St John's 4pm St Luke's 6pm

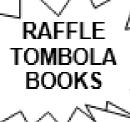
Christingle kits can be collected from both churches.

and from the Coffee Morning at St John's Hall on Saturday 10th December

Supporting The Children's Society

COFFEE MORNING

St John's Church Hall Saturday 10th December 10am – 12noon



Delicious Festive



JAMS etc CAKE STALL CARDS

Admission £1

Includes tea, coffee & biscuits
Collect your Christingle pack

In aid of

The Children's Society

Shining Light into Darkness

A JOYFUL OCCASION

What a joyful baptism and confirmation service we had on Sunday 20th November at St John's. The service, led by Bishop Helen-Ann, saw six candidates being confirmed: Dan, Liz, Roger, Jack, Oli and Max.





We pray for all of them that they will continue to walk closely with God, grow in their faith, and shine as lights in the world.

SOME TIPS FOR A SUSTAINABLE CHRISTMAS

With the current cost-of-living crisis, as well as the on-going climate crisis, it is more important than ever both to save money and the environment. There is no need to spend money unnecessarily on lots of stuff that people do not need or want: instead pick a quality item that will last longer and be more appreciated. You could gift an experience day out, for example, or plan a meal together, so



that the most important thing becomes the time spent with your loved ones instead of piles of unwanted socks/smellies etc. Another good alternative is to

ask for a donation to a charity of your choice instead of getting a present: this way you can spread the love and help some very worthy causes.

Avoid unsustainably made products or single-use plastic, instead making sure that wood or paper gifts are made from recycled or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified materials. Try to avoid plastic ribbon, tape or foil-backed wrapping paper and use Christmas cards that can be recycled (so no foil or glitter). There are also some tape-free wrapping techniques online, such as *furoshiki*, which is a traditional Japanese method of using cloth to wrap gifts.

Reduce your food waste by only buying what you need, using up any leftovers by freezing them, or using beeswax wraps (rather than clingfilm) to keep food fresh. Try to buy local, seasonal food, wherever possible, saving on air miles and helping your local businesses. The Love Food Hate Waste website is a veritable treasure trove of ideas, recipes and tips on how to use up leftovers: www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

Whilst Christmas crackers add fun to the proceedings, many of them are not recyclable and contain plastic toys. You can get reusable DIY crackers and fill them with things like chocolate instead. Use LED lights on your Christmas tree – they use up much less energy and last a lot longer, but don't forget to turn them off overnight.

There are lots of ways to still have an enjoyable Christmas, but it shouldn't cost the earth.

See the below websites for a selection of other ideas and tips:

www.wwf.org.uk/top-tips-sustainable-christmas

www.soilassociation.org/take-action/organic-living/christmas/10-ways-to-have-a-more-sustainable-christmas/

www.concern.org.uk/news/16-top-tips-sustainable-christmas

The loving, sharing, and giving of Christmas should not just be enjoyed for one day, it should never be put away.

CHRISTMAS FAIR

ST LUKE'S CHURCH

Franklin Square

Harrogate HG1 5EL

Saturday 3 December

10.30am - 1.30pm

Tombola

Preserves

Plants

Jigsaws

Jams

Jams

Raffle

Books

Traidcraft

Cakes Light refres

Light refreshments including cakes/biscuits

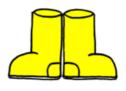
Admission £3.00 which includes coffee and cake (accompanied children free)



SMELLY YELLOW WELLY CLUB



Hello! Another plea from us! Thank you to those who have already offered their help, We appreciate that much has changed in the last



few years (Welly Club included) and Easter probably feels a long way away but it would greatly help us to plan if we know we will have a sufficient number of helpers to go ahead. The dates we are looking at are Wed 5th, Thurs 6th and Fri 7th April which is Good Friday. We are planning for the first Welly Club after covid to have limited numbers. herefore we are looking at fewer teams and tables and less artwork, with a view to increasing year on year as we go forward.

We will still need volunteers for registration, creche and builders as well as table leaders, team leaders year 10 and above (I can personally confirm it is still fun to do in your 20s!) and gophers year 7-9. If you feel you may be able to help and would like to be involved email the office (see page 19) to let us know whatever help you can give. Please don't be put off if you can only do 1 or 2 days - any help is welcome!

Yours in wellies.

Niki and the rest of the team - Helen, Sam and Carol

A WARM WELCOME!



A warm hall, bouncy castle, friendly folk, hot drinks and lots of cake welcomed some of the 'newcomers' to our churches and school. (Some have been with us for almost two years, through Covid! - in fact some of the 'newcomers' were part of the

welcoming team)

Welcomers told us about children's and youth groups, activities for older folk, family events, and caring for each other, and we all enjoyed the chat and of course the cake, meeting each other - and the bouncy castle!



PEOPLE

BAPTISMS / BLESSINGS & THANKSGIVINGS

We welcome into the church family

Theodore Stuart Hudson-Tandv Albert Ian Hudson-Tandv Arabella Frances Meah Lexie Ella Diane Wrightson Roger Bartholomew

Arthur Eric Plumpton Daniel David Worsell





CONFIRMATION

lack Bartholomew Roger Bartholomew

> Max Dabell Oliver Durrant Liz Hickling Dan Worsell

FUNERALS/ MEMORIALS

We extend our sympathy to the families of those who have recently died:

Ian Davidson Susan King **Charles Pullman** James Eaglen **Barbara Tyler**



SUNDAY 11th December

is Copy Date for

JANUARY 2023 FOCUS

Items for inclusion to:

SJSLFocus@gmail.com

or Editor, 6 Old Trough Way, HG1 3DE

or leave them in the drawer at the back of St John's Church

St John's & St Luke's

CHURCH OFFICE OPENING **HOURS**

MONDAY to THURSDAY 9.30am to 1.00pm **FRIDAY CLOSED**

TELEPHONE 565129 (+ Answerphone) email -

church@stjohnsandstlukes.org.uk

A REWARDING MORNING



The **COFFEE MORNING** held on Saturday 12th at St John's Church Hall raised over £600 for **ARTIZAN INTERNATIONAL**, one of our mission partners. The Artizan stall, selling products made by artisans in Ecuador, took £177. Thank you to everyone that contributed in some way.

Don't forget you can buy Artizan's products at their shop on Oxford Street,

and enjoy coffee and delicious cakes at their café on Cambridge Road, next to Macdonalds.

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CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH

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Throughout the Christmas Season from Sunday 4th
December

Over 20 trees sponsored by local and church groups

Church will be open to view them during the coffee morning on Saturday 10th December, 10am-12pm, and also throughout December at all the services and events listed on pages 16-18.

You are also welcome to view when the church is open Monday to Thursday 9am-1pm

SHARE YOUR CHRISTMAS MEAL WITH SOMEONE IN NEED



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Will you join our tradition of
setting a place for an
unexpected guest (who might
be Jesus). Rather than turkey
with all the trimmings, we put
onto the plate what the meal
would have cost, and bring that
to either church. This year our
donations received by the end
of January will go to
Resurrected Bites, see

https://resurrectedbites.co.uk





THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



TRADITIONAL SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday 19th December 7pm

Come and join us as we revisit the first Christmas story told in words and music, some new, some familiar.





Stay afterwards and chat over mulled wine and mince pies.



TOY SERVICE - ST JOHN'S CHURCH SUNDAY 4TH DECEMBER 10.30am

Start Christmas by giving used toys and games in good condition to be sold in their shop to benefit the sick youngsters who spend time in Martin House



Harrogate, Wetherby & North Yorkshire

We are very happy to come out to meet you and your relatives to discuss our services. Please call us at any time for more

information about how we can help you.

01423 608 760

www.radfieldhomecare.co.uk harrogate@radfieldhomecare.co.uk





Outings & activities

- Household tasks
- Medication support
- Wellbeing
- Dementia care

Personal care

We are extremely proud to support older people in our community to live independently in their own homes.

Our team is passionate about delivering the highest standard of care and will always go above and beyond to help our clients.



DECEMBER'S CALENDAR

Thursday 1st	9-9.30am 9.30-11.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ) Little Fishes (Parent & Toddler Group) (SJ)
Friday 2 nd	9.30am	Bilton Grange Nativity Dress Rehearsal (SJ)
	6.30-7.15pm 7-7.45pm	Junior Choir Practice (SJ) Adult Choir Practice (SI)
Saturday 3 rd	10.30am-1.30pm	Christmas Fair (SL)
Sunday 4 th	9.00am 10.30am 10.30am 6-7.45pm	Holy Communion (SJ) Parade/Toy Service (SJ) Holy Communion (SL) Ignite (Year 7+ Youth Group) (SL) Christmas Tree Festival starts (SJ)
Monday 5 th	9-9.30am 10.00am 2.00pm	Morning Prayer (SJ) Bilton Grange School Nativity (SJ) Bilton Grange School Nativity (SJ)
Tuesday 6 th	9-9.30am 10.00am 2.00pm	Morning Prayer (SJ) Bilton Grange School Nativity (SJ) Bilton Grange School Nativity (SJ)
Wednesday 7 th	4-5.30pm 9-9.30am 10.30am 10.30am	Atwelve (Emma's House) Morning Prayer (SJ) Holy Communion (SJ) Thirst - Coffee at Dene Park
Thursday 8 th	9-9.30am 9.30-11.30am	Community Centre Morning Prayer (SJ) Little Fishes (Parent & Toddler Group) (SL)
Friday 9 th	6.30-7.15pm 1-3.00pm 6.30-7.15pm 7-7.45pm	Evening Surgery in Church (SJ) Wellbeing Café (SL) Junior Choir Practice (SJ) Adult Choir Practice (SJ)
Saturday 10 th	10.00am-12noon	Coffee Morning in Church Hall (SJ)
Sunday 11 th	9.00am 10.30am 10.30am 12.30pm 4.00pm 6.00pm 7-8.00pm	Holy Communion (SJ) Holy Communion (SJ) Parade Service (SL) Baptisms (SJ) Christingle (SJ) Christingle (SL) Ignite Christmas Party (Year 7+ Youth Group) (SL)
Monday 12 th	9-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)

Tuesday 1 2th		
Tuesday 13 th	9-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	10.00am	Walking Group (SJ)
	2-3.30pm	Comfort Café (SJ)
	4-5.30pm	4twelve (Emma's House)
	7.00pm	Alpha + (Youth Group) (SJ)
	7.30pm	Time to Pray (SJ)
	7.30pm	PCC Reserve Meeting (SJ)
Wednesday 14th	9-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	10.30am	Holy Communion (SJ)
	10.30am	Thirst - Coffee at Dene Park Community
		Centre
	12.15pm	Christmas Community Lunch at Bilton
	·	Community Centre
	6.00pm	New Park School Nativity (SJ)
Thursday 15th	9-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
,	9.30-11.30am	Little Fishes (Parent & Toddler Group)
	3.30 30	(SL)
	10.00am	Richard Taylor School Carol Service (SJ)
	2.00pm	Coppice Valley School Carol Service (SJ)
Friday 16th	1-3.00pm	Wellbeing Café (SL)
inday io	6.30-7.15pm	Junior Choir Practice (SJ)
	7-7.45pm	Adult Choir Practice (SJ)
Saturday 17 th	7.00pm	Carol-oke starting at Gardeners Arms,
Saturday 17	7.00pm	then onto Bilton Cricket Club (8.00pm)
		and The Knox (9.00pm)
		and the knox (9.00pm)
Sunday 18th	9.00am	Holy Communion (SJ)
Juliuay 10	10.30am	All Age Morning Worship (SJ)
		All Age Morning Worship (SL)
	10.30am	
	6.00pm	Choir Practice (SJ)
Monday 10 th	6.00pm 7.00pm	Choir Practice (SJ) Nine Lessons and Carols (SJ)
Monday 19 th	6.00pm 7.00pm 9-9.30am	Choir Practice (SJ) Nine Lessons and Carols (SJ) Morning Prayer (SJ)
Tuesday 20th	6.00pm 7.00pm 9-9.30am 9-9.30am	Choir Practice (SJ) Nine Lessons and Carols (SJ) Morning Prayer (SJ) Morning Prayer (SJ)
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Wednesday 4th 9-9.30am Morning Prayer (SJ)

10.30am Holy Communion (SJ)

10.30am Thirst - Coffee at Dene Park Community

Centre

Thursday 5th 9-9.30am Morning Prayer (SJ)

9.30-11.30am Little Fishes (Parent & Toddler Group)

(SL)

Friday 6th 1-3.00pm Wellbeing Café (SL)

LOOKING AHEAD

Coffee Morning Saturday 14th January 2023 (SJ hall)

Alpha Course Starting on 18th January 2023 (SJ)

Teddy Bear's Picnic Sunday 22nd January 3.15-5.15pm (SL)

Thank You Event Saturday 28th January 2023

Coffee Morning Saturday 11th February 2023 (SJ hall)

Family Walk

Coffee Morning

Saturday 4th March (tbc)

Saturday 4th March (SJ hall)

Summer Fair

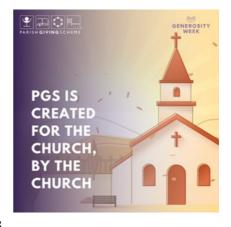
Saturday 24th June (SJ)

CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE

The church office will be closed from 1pm on Wednesday 21^{st,} December, and reopens on Tuesday 3rd January 2023

Have a happy holiday, Gill. Thank you for all you do.





ST JOHN'S AND ST LUKE'S TOGETHER WHO'S WHO

Parish Office Phone No: 01423 565129

Parish Office email: church@stjohnsandstlukes.org.uk
For parish information including services and events
visit Parish Websites: www.stjohnsandstlukes.org.uk
www.stlukesharrogate.org.uk
www.facebook.com/groups/stjohnsandstlukes.harrogate
www.facebook.com/stlukesharrogate

www.facebook.com/stjohnsandstlukes - for livestreaming

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Sandie Fagan 07824 458725 for more information



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Email: info@biltonandwoodfield.org.uk www.biltonandwoodfield.org.uk

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St John's Church Hall and St Luke's Church

can be hired for single occasions or for regular events. Contact Church Office for more information. See page 19 for contact details

EXPERIENCED PIANO TEACHER Jean Clay GTCL LTCL CTABRSM

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