

OUTREACH
DECEMBER 2022



CHRIST CHURCH
CHELTENHAM

Online version no. 31

THE PARISH OFFICE IS OPEN 9AM-2PM ON WEEKDAYS. FOR URGENT MATTERS CONTACT THE VICAR OR CHURCHWARDENS.

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Vicar:	Rev Simon Heron	515983 (Day off 6pm Fri-6pm Sat) vicar@christchurchcheltenham.com
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Weddings Administrator:	Angela Smith	238232
Youth & Children Team:	Vacant	
CHRIST CHURCH C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL (Voluntary Aided):		
Head Teacher:	Kerry Pope	523392
Safeguarding Officer:	Mandy Whitefield	511919
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (Registered Charity No: 1135571)		
Lay Vice-Chair:	Ian Kirkwood	581883
Treasurer & Verger:	Philip Whitefield	511919
Secretary:	Susan West	susan.blackett1@btinternet.com
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WORSHIP AND PASTORAL SUPPORT AT CHRIST CHURCH

The Government announced a removal of Covid-19 legal regulations in England from Thursday 24th February 2022.

Wearing a face mask inside churches is no longer compulsory. If you would rather keep wearing one and wish to sit with others who are also wearing masks, the North Aisle will continue to be reserved for this purpose. These are the pews on the left-hand side as you enter Christ Church.

When sharing 'The Peace' during services it is a matter of personal choice whether you wish to shake hands/bump elbows/hug one another, but please respect the wishes of those who remain in their pews and prefer to use hand signs rather than having physical contact.

We will continue to provide hand sanitiser on our premises. Please use it and also remember to wash your hands frequently.

The Christ Church Covid-19 Support Team has been suspended, but will re-start if further lockdowns become necessary. The Pastoral Team is always available if you or someone you know would like help or support. Tel: 01242 512246, email: tina.benney@btinternet.com

There is still provision to catch up with the main Sunday 10.30am Services via YouTube. You can either access this via our website, or from: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0jBZVeFyeD2YFgumhzvZtQ>



Website: www.christchurchcheltenham.com

FACEBOOK ADDRESSES

Public: <https://www.facebook.com/Christchurchmalvernroad/>

Private: <https://ps-af.facebook.com/groups/123108727771269/>

COVER PHOTO: OUR CHURCH AT NIGHT



The front cover photo shows Christ Church tower lit up at night. Did you know we can do this thanks to a legacy from a lady who used to live nearby and attended some of our services and events?

A plaque on the outside wall by the South Porch explains: “In memory of Doris Milne 1895-1983. The floodlighting installation was the gift of the late Miss Doris Milne and is maintained under the terms of her will by the Doris Milne Trust.”

Photo by David Norman.

VICAR’S WRITES: CHRISTMAS GIFTS



There is a widely held belief that the image of Father Christmas as a bearded, jolly, portly fellow adorned in a red outfit owes more to the Coca-Cola company than it does to any centuries long tradition.

In truth, Santa Claus has been portrayed in all sorts of ways, and wearing all sorts of garb over the years, including red. However in 1931, when the Coca-Cola company commissioned the artist Haddon Sundblom to paint Santa Claus for the company's Christmas adverts – with the striking image of a man with rosy cheeks, a white beard, twinkling eyes, laughter lines and dressed in red – they changed the perception of Father Christmas forever.

Although Father Christmas is well-known in the western world, he’s not the only mythical figure associated with the Christmas season.

In some Eastern European countries Ded Morez – Father Frost – is a tall bearded man dressed in a heel length fur-lined blue coat. Like his western counterpart, he delivers presents to well mannered children. Unlike Father Christmas, he does not work alone. He is often depicted as accompanied by Snegurka, or Snow Maiden. Dressed in silver blue robes, a furry cap and a snowflake-like crown, she is his granddaughter and helper.

There are mythical gift bringing figures who appear in winter in cultures the world over. Although they have often had different roots, native customs have been influenced by those in other countries, and aspects and attributes of one figure have been absorbed into another.

Saint Nicolas, a man whose life straddled the third and fourth centuries, is not the same Saint Nicolas who is now often interchangeable with Santa Claus. Although very little is known of the original St Nicolas' life, his reputation as a secret gift-giver explains the foundation on which the legend of Father Christmas, and the later St Nicolas was built.

For Christians, gift giving at Christmas is more than just tradition. St Paul is recorded as teaching how Jesus had said: *"It is more blessed to give than to receive"* (Acts 20:35), a truth understood by Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill when he said: *"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."*

When it comes our Christmas this year, may it be for each one of us more life giving than any that have come before.

Rev Simon Heron

PARISH OFFICE OPENING TIMES

Please note: the Parish Office will close from 2pm on Friday 23rd December, through to Tuesday morning of 3rd January 2023 at 9am.

MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION

Wednesday morning Holy Communion this month will be at 10.30am on:

December 14th and December 28th.

Venue: The Music Room.



PRAYING FOR THE PARISH

For the 9th month of our year-long prayer journey around the Parish we look at the area approaching Montpellier. Our boundary cuts Bayshill Road in half. We have Cheltenham Ladies' College Parabola Arts Centre and St Helen's House in the Parish, but not their offices or classrooms. This is an interesting patch of Regency housing, with large Georgian style buildings that are nowadays mainly occupied by businesses, plus two large hotels which frequently seem to change their names. Specific streets and establishments for your December prayers can be found on page 14.

GIVING TO CHRIST CHURCH

Over the past months, offerings made at Services have diminished and donations are currently only just covering our Parish Share, with nothing much left over for our regular outlay and expenses.

At this time of what has become a national financial crisis for many people, giving money to Christ Church may not be at the top of your list. However, if each person attending Services could make a monthly gift, or increase existing regular donations by just a few pence, overall it would make a big difference to our income.

Apart from making a gift via the collection plate, or through the *Tap The Screen* device at Christ Church, you have the option to:

- Text CHURCH, plus the amount you would like to donate (up to £20), to 70450. So to give £5, text CHURCH 5 to 70450, or to give £20, text CHURCH 20 to 70450. This service costs your donation plus your standard message rate.
- Post or put a gift by cheque through the Church letterbox (in the wall by the side gate) which is being emptied regularly by staff. Cheques should be made out to 'Christ Church Cheltenham PCC'.
- Visit the Christ Church, Cheltenham Website and follow the Donate link to *Stewardship*.



FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Time to look forward to the Christmas Celebrations at Friendship Club!

TEA PARTY

On Wednesday 7th December at 2.30pm we will be having our Christmas Tea Party with a delicious assortment of party food.

Afterwards we will be welcoming back The Spakeleles – our local ukulele band – who will be playing and singing all our favourite Christmas songs with song sheets!

Please note that there will be NO LUNCH on that day.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

The following week on Wednesday 14th December it is our 3 course festive Christmas Lunch at 12.30pm for 1pm. Booking for this lunch is essential, so please telephone Amanda Whitefield on 078807 15200 in advance to avoid disappointment. The cost will be £8.00 per person.

After lunch entertainment will be provided by the wonderful youth choir of The Beauregard Singers.

CRAFT CLUB

The Craft Club will be meeting on Wednesday 21st December from 10.30am-12.30pm.

Renate Young

SEASONAL WRITINGS

We are fortunate to have a number of talented creative people in our Christ Church family. Among them is Joan Osmond, who would like to share some of her seasonal writings this month – a real treat for us all!



CHRISTMAS EVE CAROL

The stockings hang by the drowsing fire,
The tree is dressed, the holly gleams,
Carollers sound on the frosty air,
Like angel voices raised in prayer
Bringing fulfilment to humble men's dreams
As they did once, long ago.



Across the yard in their silent barn
The animals wait expectantly;
When the Christmas bells ring out with joy
Proclaiming the birth of the heavenly Boy,
They will all kneel down on bended knee –
as they did once, long ago.



Let all mankind, so torn and sad,
Reject all futile wars and strife;
Forget all discord, harsh and wild,
Remember only the Holy child
Who gives us hope of eternal life –
As He did, so long ago.

Joan Osmond

THE COMING

An angel called on Mary,
Who heard with lowly joy,
How, through the Holy Spirit,
She would have a baby boy.
This child would be holy,
And through his life on earth,
Mankind, throughout the ages,
Could have a second birth.

A carpenter named Joseph –
A good man, kind and true –
Was soon to marry Mary,
But he knew not what to do
When he learned she was with child.
He felt he'd been betrayed.
But in a dream, God told him
That he need not be dismayed.

This child, born at God's behest,
With heavenly joy unfurled,
Would later show God's love for man –
His death would change the world.
And so, as Mary's time drew near,
To Bethlehem they went their way,
Where, in a stable Christ was born
And cradled in the hay.

Now as the year draws to a close,
We hear the Advent call,
We light the candles full of hope
And pray for peace to all.
We await God's holy promise –
To hear the church bells ring,
Calling us to celebrate
The birth of Christ our King.



Joan Osmond

A SHEPHERD BOY'S STORY



I have never seen the stars as brilliant as they were last night.

It was bitterly cold and I pulled my cloak closer round me as I huddled by the fire. It was the first time I had joined my father and the other shepherds to guard our master's flock.

It was strange and exciting to be up on the hillside at night in the velvety darkness. And yet it didn't seem to be so dark. I looked up at the sky and that is when I noticed the stars – how bright they were. They shimmered and sparkled so intensely that they seemed almost alive, and huge as they spangled the heavens. I stared in wonder feeling I could almost reach out and touch them.

Suddenly, the stars fused into one dazzling blaze of golden light and we all fell on our knees, shaking with fear. Then a wondrous thing happened. In the midst of the brightness, someone appeared, dressed in glowing white – surely an angel.

“Don't be afraid,” he said. “I have come to tell you some wonderful news. In the little town of Bethlehem a baby boy has just been born, who is Christ the Lord. He will redeem the world and save all people from their sins. Go now and pay Him homage. You will find him with his mother, cradled in a manger, in a stable.” Then the whole sky was filled with light and voices singing with great joy: “Glory to God in heaven and on earth peace and goodwill to all men.”

Leaving the sheep – which we were certain would be safe – we hurried down the hill to Bethlehem and soon found the stable behind an old inn. We went in quietly, and in the straw lay a young woman looking pale and tired, but oh, so happy. Her husband sat beside her and in the manger lay the Baby. I shall never forget that sight. The stable was rough, dirty and cold with mingling smells of donkeys, cattle and poultry, yet round the little family a strange gentle light glowed softly, and there was a deep sense of reverence and peace. It was truly a holy place.

(Cont'd...)

We knelt before the Baby and worshipped Him, then full of wonder and praise for Almighty God, we made our way back to the sheep on the hillside.

I shall never forget my first night as a shepherd boy. Such joy, such glorious joy; yet vague unease, too, as I wondered how life would unfold for this new Infant who was surely born to change the world.

Joan Osmond



IN MEMORY OF WINNIE

On Christmas Eve five years ago Winnie Smith – a faithful Christ Church member, former chorister and Sunday School teacher – passed away. She had been with us since the age of three and left us at the good age of 87.

A memorial circular bench has now been erected in our Garden of Remembrance in her honour. We plan to have a ceremony to officially dedicate this to Winnie: see the Notices for more details.



CAROL SINGING

Everyone is welcome to join others from Christ Church and St Mark's Church at Waitrose on Saturday 17th December, when we will be Carol Singing from 10-11am for Christian Aid.

EDITOR'S ROUND UP: MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR ALL



With the cost of food escalating and the threat of bird 'flu to poultry, many people are planning a different kind of Christmas lunch this year. I am not sure what to opt for just yet, but I do intend to keep my habit of having a meal of fish on 23rd December.

As Cheltenham is inland any fish bought here is likely to have travelled many miles. It is easy to forget so far from the sea how precarious and dangerous the life of a fisherman can be. The reason I choose to remember such people the day before Christmas Eve is because it is celebrated in Cornwall as 'Tom Bawcock's Eve'.

Tom Bawcock may be the contrived name – meaning 'jolly good fellow' – of a heroic fisherman from the village of Mousehole. He is likely to have lived between the 16th-18th centuries, but gained recognition only around 100 years ago when his story was circulated via a folk song.

As Christmas approached one year a terrible storm raged for several weeks. Villagers came close to starvation, as fishing boats could not leave the safety of Mousehole harbour. Tom Bawcock, said to be an old fisherman, bravely went out to sea alone: he had no living relatives to leave behind, if he should not return. Somewhat miraculously he came back, with a hold full of fish: more than enough to feed everyone. A good story to help us remember that God cares for our daily needs in practical ways.

"I have been young and now I am old. And in all my years I have never seen the Lord forsake a man who loves him; nor have I seen the children of the godly go hungry." (Psalm 37:25 Living Bible.)

Shirley Collins

The deadline for January's *Outreach* issue: 17th December. If you have an item for inclusion, please Email: artseccles@googlemail.com or leave your item for the Editor, care of the Parish Office.

DECEMBER DIARY

Thursday	1 st }	Morning Prayer on Zoom 8.45am.
Friday	2 nd }	
Sunday 4 th		Holy Communion BCP 8am. Parish Communion 10.30am. See website or emails for Christ Church Without Walls.
Monday	5 th }	Morning Prayer in Church 8.45am.
Tuesday	6 th }	
Wednesday	7 th }	Friendship Club Tea Party 2.30pm (see p7).
Thursday	8 th }	Morning Prayer on Zoom 8.45am.
Friday	9 th }	
Sunday 11 th		Holy Communion BCP 8am. All Together Service 10.30am. See website or emails for Christ Church Without Walls.
Monday	12 th }	Morning Prayer in Church 8.45am.
Tuesday	13 th }	
Wednesday	14 th }	Holy Communion in the Music Room 10.30am. Friendship Club Christmas Lunch 12.30pm (see p7).
Thursday 15 th		Morning Prayer on Zoom 8.45am. Plan B: Bereavement Group 10-11.30am at Webbs' Garden Centre, Evesham Road, Cheltenham.
Friday 16 th		Morning Prayer on Zoom 8.45am.
Saturday 17 th		Carol Singing at Waitrose 10-11am (see p11).
Sunday 18 th		Holy Communion BCP 8am. Family Carols 10.30am. Carol Service 7.30pm. See website or emails for Christ Church Without Walls.
Monday	19 th }	Morning Prayer in Church 8.45am.
Tuesday	20 th }	Blue Christmas 7.30pm – quiet Service for those who find this time of year difficult to bear.
Wednesday 21 st		Morning Prayer in Church 8.45am. Craft Club meets in the Baptistry 10.30am-12.30pm. Brass By Candlelight Concert 4pm (see back page).

(Cont'd...)

Thursday 22nd} Morning Prayer on Zoom 8.45am.
Friday 23rd}

(Morning Prayer begins again 2nd January.)

Saturday 24th CHRISTMAS EVE
Christingle Service 3pm.
Christingle Service 5pm.
Holy Communion 11.30pm
to take us through Midnight.

Sunday 25th CHRISTMAS DAY
All Age Holy Communion 10.30am.
See website or emails for Christ Church Without Walls.

Wednesday 28th Holy Communion in the Music Room 10.30am.

(Diary items were checked at the time this issue went to press.)

For Zoom links to Thursday and Friday Morning Prayer

Contact Andrew Judge tel: 07813 401685

email: andrew.judge50@gmail.com

PRAYING FOR THE PARISH

Please remember these areas in your December prayers during the weeks commencing on the following Sundays:

- 4th Cheltenham Ladies' College Parabola Arts Centre and St Helen's House.
- 11th Parabola Road and Albany Mews.
- 18th Bayshill Villas Lane and Hotel du Vin.
- 25th Bayshill Lane, Parabola Mews, Bayshill Road and Hotel Malmaison.

ORGANISATIONS AND LEADERS

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:

Playgroup: 9am-3pm Monday–Friday } 243021/
christchurchplaygroup@hotmail.co.uk } 07989 124492

Crèche: Sundays during 10.30am Service in Alstone Porch or Side Chapel

Sunday Morning Children's Groups Vacant

Baby And Toddler Group for those with pre-school children
Mondays 1-3pm Harwood Hall Sarah O'Meara 513067

Lego Club Fridays 3.30-4.30pm in term time, primary age group 578163

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS:

Rainbows: Thursday 5pm Bayshill/Lansdown}
Brownies: Thursday 6pm Harwood Hall }
Guides: Thursday 6.15pm Bayshill/Lansdown} Maureen Jones 517183

FOR ADULTS:

Coffee Morning 2nd & 4th Wednesdays after Holy Communion

Friendship Club Lunch, talks, & afternoon meetings
2nd & 4th Wednesdays Harwood Hall Mandy Whitefield 511919
mandywhitefield2@hotmail.com

Craft Club 1st, 3rd & 5th Wednesdays 10.30am-12.30pm back of Church
Pat Hopkins 07762 770715

Plan B Bereavement Group 3rd Thursdays 10-11.30am Webbs' Garden Centre
Martin Osborne 07979 797967

MUSIC FOR WORSHIP

Director of Music: Tim Ingold 01452 524199

Choir: Friday, Music Room 7.30-9pm

Worship Group: Beck Donaldson 01451 860561

OUR MISSION PARTNERS:

The Matilda Project, Wendy Phillips, matildaproject@gmail.com
Mission Without Borders, Jos Downey, jdowney@mwbuk.org



BRASS BY CANDLELIGHT

WEDNESDAY
21 DECEMBER 2022
4PM

CHRIST CHURCH
MALVERN ROAD CHELTENHAM

SPARKLING SEASONAL
FAVOURITES FROM
COTSWOLD
BRASS QUINTET

TICKETS £10 (STUDENTS £5)
on the door

MULLED WINE & MINCE PIES
