

ST. PHILIP & ST. JAMES PARISH CHURCH WHITTINGTON PARISH NEWS



December
2021



DECEMBER 21 & JANUARY 22

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50p

St Philip and St James' Parish Church, Whittington



A Ninth Century Chapel rebuilt in 1844

In the Worcester South East Team

St Philip & St James Whittington and St Mark in the Cherry Orchard

Vicar

The Rev'd Andy Stand 01905 358150

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Miss Jayne Rayer 01905 351344
Asst. Warden: Mrs Brenda Giles 01905 25709
Organist:
Hon Secretary: Mrs Liz Chestney 01905 359708
Hon Treasurer: Mrs Brenda Giles 01905 25709
Magazine Editor: David Chestney 01905 359708
david.battenhall@waitrose.com

St. Martin with St. Peter

Team Rector: Rev'd Peter Hart 01905 355119
Curate Rev'd Dr Robin Parry 01905 764651

Holy Trinity & St Matthew Ronkswood

Vicar

Rev'd Rob Farmer

Readers in the Team:

Mr Mike Bunclark

Team Administrator:

Rebecca Caskie: Team Office, St Martins Church,
London Road, Worcester WR5 2ED
Tel: 01905 358083
email: worcestersoutheastteam@gmail.com

*For enquiries about Baptisms, Thanksgivings, Marriages and Blessings,
please contact the Team Administrator as above.*

***The Team Office at St Martin's is open again on Mon, Tues, Thurs &
Friday, but visits should continue to be by appointment.
Rebecca can always be reached by phone and email.***

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Split.....

A professor was lecturing his physics class. "If molecules can be split into atoms and the atoms split into electrons, can the electrons be broken down any further?"

"I'm not certain," replied one of his pupils, "But a sure way to find out would be to post some of them in a Christmas package marked 'fragile.'"

Welcome to the Christmas Edition of the Magazine 2021
Wishing you all a very happy Christmas *Ed.*

Letter from the Vicarage

December 2021



Hi Everyone,

How are we all doing? I hope and pray that you are all managing to keep fit and well, and that you are beginning to look forward to Christmas. Are you ready, I wonder.

Have you dug out the tree, and the lights from wherever you keep them? Have you heeded all the warnings about shortages and supply difficulties and got ahead of the game, in terms of buying your presents, or ordering your Christmas groceries?

At the time of writing, at least, one thing I expect you won't have been able to do, is to plan what you are going to watch on the television over the festive period; but it won't be long now before the bumper issues of the TV listings magazines appear in the shops. I remember that my Dad, when he was alive, would pore over the *Radio Times* with a highlighter pen in hand, so as to mark up anything that caught his eye that he might want to watch. I wonder, do you do anything like that?

Of course this being the December/January edition of the Parish magazine, it is our bumper issue, and as such covers the whole of the greater Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent, through the 12 days of Christmas and then the days of Epiphany until we mark and celebrate the feast of Candlemas which in 2022 we will do in our services on the 30th January.

I wonder what highlights might you be looking at, and marking up, for your Christmas worship, this year? What services did you particularly miss when our festivities were curtailed so much last year?

Hopefully, the course of the pandemic, will allow us to go ahead with our usual offerings: hopefully, we can count down the Sundays to Christmas as we light our Advent candles, reminding ourselves how God was a real presence in the lives of the ancient Fathers and Mothers of the faith; in the lives of the Old Testament prophets; in the life, faith and witness of John the Baptist; in the life of the young girl whose life God turned upside down when he asked her to be the God-bearer; and in the life of the Christ child who is present with us always, but whose presence we know more clearly in the Christmas story.

Hopefully, we will be able to tell the story in word and song in our Carol services and our Blessing of the Crib services; in our Christmas Day services; and in our special Christingle services, that hopefully will take place in January, during the Epiphany season.

I realise that is a lot of 'hopefully's!

But Advent, and Christmas are seasons to reflect upon Hope. We remember that 2000 years ago amid the hardships of Roman occupation, God came in the form of the Christ child, as the Messiah, the anointed one, and changed the course of our history. So we can rejoice in the love that God has for us his creation, and place our hopes in His loving for us.

Have a blessed and hope filled Christmas.

Every blessing,

Andy.



Coronavirus - Covid-19

St Philip and St James Whittington
is open for public worship and normal services continue.
For details see "What's on". Arrangements for attending are on page 35

The Worcester South East Team of clergy continue to work on ways of serving the needs of all our parishes.

Some services and other events are still being conducted on-line by the Team (see below)

The Team Office at St Martin's is open once more to visitors, preferably still by appointment, and can be reached by phone and email, see inside cover page.

LIVE ON-LINE VIDEO SERVICES

For all churches in the South East Team

Churches in the Team are progressively opening again for public worship but we are continuing to meet for worship during the week using the zoom app downloadable from the zoom.us website. To join one of the services please email the host who will send you a link:

Morning Prayer: Monday to Friday at 8.30 a.m. *hosted by Mike Bunclark (mbunclark@tiscali.co.uk)*

Compline: Monday to Friday at 8.30 p.m. *hosted by Mike Bunclark*

Monday Prayer Meeting: 4.00 p.m. *hosted by Joan Hazzard (joanhazz@gmail.com)*

Virtual 'Yew Brew' Coffee Morning: Saturday at 11.00 a.m. *hosted by Andy Stand*

Prayers for Peace and Justice: Saturday at 12 noon *hosted by Joan Hazzard*

For enquiries about Whittington please email the Vicar
andy.stand@sky.com

Sunday Services will be streamed from
Whittington on Zoom.

What's on at Whittington December & January

Saturday 4th December

10.00am Forest Church – Whittington Churchyard

Sunday 5th December

11.00am **Advent 2**
Parish Communion CW

Tuesday 7th December

6.30pm PCC meeting

Sunday 12th December

11.00am **Advent 3**
Family Service

Sunday 19th December

11.00am **Advent 4**
Parish Communion CW
4.00pm Carol Service

Friday 24th December

5.00pm **Christmas Eve**
Crib Service

Saturday 25th December **Christmas Day**

10.00am Christmas Communion CW

Sunday 26th December

10.00am **Christmas 1**
Team Communion Service at St Martins

Sunday 2nd January

11.00am **Christmas 2**
Parish Communion CW

Sunday 9th January

11.00am **Baptism of Christ**
Family Service

Sunday 16th January

11.00am **Epiphany 2**
Parish Communion CW

Sunday 23rd January

11.00am **Epiphany 3**
Family Communion CW

Tuesday 25th January

6.30pm

PCC Meeting

Sunday 30th January

11.00am

Candlemas

Christingle Service

Saturday 4th February

10.00am

Forest Church - Whittington Churchyard

Sunday 5th February

11.00am

4 before Lent

Parish Communion

CW

WHITTINGTON NEW BUILDING

The Elizabethan Room

The Elizabethan Room is under construction! Local Contractors,



Merrell and Bibby started work on the 15th November and the portacabin went off site very quickly in preparation for excavation of the foundations. It is hoped to get these in by Christmas to prepare a solid base for the main building.

Grants have already been received or promised from six charities, and more recently the builders of Whittington Walk, Persimmon. Further applications have been made to complete the funding for the scheme.

Further updates on progress will be given during the course of construction. During construction facilities available to the church will be limited, though services will continue as usual. Portable toilets have been provided. Every effort is being made to minimise the effect of the works on the life of the church and the use of the churchyard.



Forest Church at Whittington
every month on the first Saturday
at 10.00 am.
Except January 1st 2022



Christmas at Whittington 2021

Christmas Carol Service 19th December at 4.00 pm
Traditional Readings and Carols



Christmas Eve Crib Service at 5.00 pm
For all the family,
Follow the Christmas Story



Christmas Communion at 10.00 am on
Christmas Day with the Archdeacon

From the Parish Register at Whittington



Baptism
7th November 2021
Josie Catherine Hancock
Daughter of Christopher and
Catherine Hancock

Memorial Service
23rd November 2021
John Lowe

Whittington Parish Council

Whittington Parish Council met on Tuesday the 23rd November. Richard Boase, who lives on Wildmore Estate, was co-opted as Parish Councillor. The Chairman in welcoming Richard spoke of the value and importance in having a representative from the Wildmore area of the parish. There remains a vacancy on the Parish Council and it is hoped that a resident of the new Whittington Walk development will come forward so that area of the Parish also has a representative.

The Parish Council, in being asked by Wychavon to comment on planning applications expressed a view that when deciding on applications consideration should be given to the importance of preserving the rural identity of the Parish of Whittington. This principle is particularly relevant in respect of the proposed South Worcestershire Development Plan for housing development across the parishes of Whittington, Stoulton, Norton and Drakes Broughton.

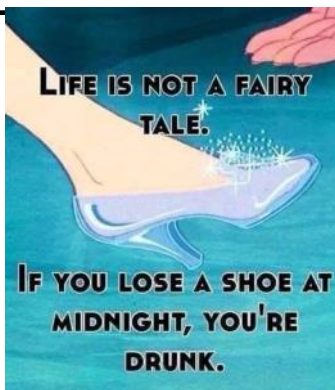
A defibrillator has been donated very kindly to the Parish by Nick and Anita Hodgetts. It is being installed before Christmas on the Community Hall so it is readily available to all.

The next Parish Council meeting is at 7.30pm, 25th January, 2022, at the Community Hall. Parishioners are welcome to attend.

Councillors can be contacted through the Parish Clerk

clerk@whittingtonparishcouncil.co.uk

Website whittingtonparishcouncil.co.uk facebook [com/whittingtonpc](https://www.facebook.com/whittingtonpc)



Camels

In Jane's Christmas drawing, two of the camels were approaching the inn, over which was pictured a large star. The third camel and its rider were going directly away from it. "Why is the third man going in a different direction?" her mother asked. Jane replied: "Oh, he's looking for a place to park."

Whittington Community Hall

The new Hall has now been in use for three months and is already well used with many bookings. Most finishing works are complete, including the landscaping and cycle shelter. The problems with acoustics in the hall are well recognised and are being addressed with solutions expected to be in place early next year. The website **whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk** has full information on the facilities and booking, which can be done online.

The new Hall has been regarded by **Wychavon District Council** as a '**Flagship Project**', and the Council has provided a major grant from Section 106 monies to enable the scheme to go ahead.

Whittington Community Hall Management Committee

whittingtonvhc@gmail.com

Is responsible for managing, maintaining, developing and running the new hall. A new Committee is now in place after the AGM on 24th November, committed to making the most of the excellent facilities





Love, Learn, Achieve

Whittington CE Primary School

From the Head Teacher, Gary Richards

Schools are nearing the end of the autumn term 2021, with many of the usual educational structures being reinstated during this term: Ofsted inspections resumed in September; School Development Plans were drawn up and begun; children gathered together for assemblies. Children, families and staff hoped that the disruption of the previous 18 months was drawing to an end.

Generally this has been the case. Our school has stayed open. However, there have been bumps in the road with Covid19 outbreaks in certain classes seeing over half of the pupils absent from school. We have persevered with ensuring that our teaching and learning offer is as good as it can possibly be, whilst also planning in safeguards to reduce the risk from the virus to our school community. The two principles working hand in hand.

Two questions spring to mind: has the autumn term been a success; and is school life back to normal? In answer to the first, it has been a very successful term. Children are fully engaged with their learning; we are developing teaching and learning; participation in events outside the school have restarted, so the children are receiving an interesting and engaging curriculum. In regard to whether things are 'back to normal', none of us are entirely sure what normal is any more. However, the children are used to the changes we have had to make in order to keep them safe, so life in school does feel (new) normal.

The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child.... The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. - J I Packer

Happy New Year!
Epiphany Coffee Morning

Saturday 8 January

10am - 12noon

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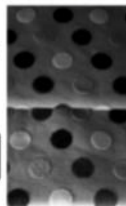
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From the Archdeacon of Worcester, Robert Jones.



Let's hope we can celebrate Christmas more openly and at ease this year than last! Looking back over the past 18 months or so it is hard to believe how much we've had to put up with and how we've changed our behaviour in order to stay safe. I'm amazed how we have adapted our lives. Who would have thought that wearing masks in crowded places would become second nature? That a nationwide vaccination programme would have been so successfully developed? And that we'd all get used to administering lateral flow tests ourselves?

We have learned to manage public worship as safely as possible. We have celebrated funerals, weddings and family events in new and creative ways, though at some cost along the way. We have had to concentrate on the essentials. We have put ourselves out to look after ourselves and others with practical loving-kindness. Although we lost so much, it seems to me we have gained much as well. Perhaps, you could say, we put the heart back into human society.

Do you remember how last year's Christmas celebrations were much more muted than usual? People commented on how much they actually enjoyed the simplicity of pared down celebrations and an albeit enforced break with old routines. We had to re-think. We had to ask what really counted. We had to improvise - because we couldn't sing in church, we went outside to sing our carols. Strangely enough we took Christmas back to where it first began - not shut inside holy places, however beautiful, but outside in the world God so loved.

Mary and Joseph also had to improvise as they found a place for their son to be born. The heart of Christmas was born in the mucky manger of Bethlehem: even there, surely, their hearts sang for joy. The beating heart of Christmas was and is the Babe of Bethlehem, born for us.

*Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, Love Divine;
Love was born at Christmas, stars and angels gave the sign.
(Christina Rossetti)*

I wonder what will make our hearts sing this Christmas.

MP for Mid-Worcestershire,
Nigel Huddleston, visited
Fladbury CE First School last
week to hear a message for the
world about climate change.



The school were flying two naval flags underneath the Union flag outside the school. The top flag represents the letter 'W' as well as meaning 'urgent medical attention needed, and the second flag represents the letter 'E' as well as 'changing course to avoid a collision'. Shown together, the flags spell out the message that 'WE recognise our planet needs urgent attention and WE must change course.'

The event was organised by David Train, former Olympic Canoe coach who uses special 'bell boats' and paddles, alongside the flags, to take his message on climate change to people around the world. He said:

"The bell boats are all about people working together, and every time a 'paddle for life' is created, we plant a new tree. Together with the flags flying under our national flag, we've created a powerful message about both our heritage and our shared future. We have worked with Fladbury First School for over thirty years and it's appropriate that our MP is able to visit to see what we're doing."

Nigel was given miniature versions of the flags to keep on his desk at Westminster. He said: "David is incredibly passionate about the environment and climate change. We all know that everyone needs to work together to ensure that the Earth is in a good state when the children currently at Fladbury school have grown up and for their children. We all have our part to play to protect the planet."

Headteacher, Julie Wilson, said: "the children of Fladbury School are equally passionate about climate change and have a real drive and determination to make change happen. We raise and strike our flags on Fridays as we say this poem, written by David himself:



*WE raise and strike on Fridays, two flags which say it all
How our blue planet's in danger and WE must change our course.
WE need our leaders with us, on board and paddling hard,
If we're to change the climate and save all life from harm.*

*We raise and strike on Fridays so rulers of our land
WILL listen to the children and clap them with their hands
So now on every Friday until our planets safe
WE raise and strike, WE raise and strike
Two flags which say it all*



This Christmas, many parishes will raise money for the Children's Society through their Christingle services.

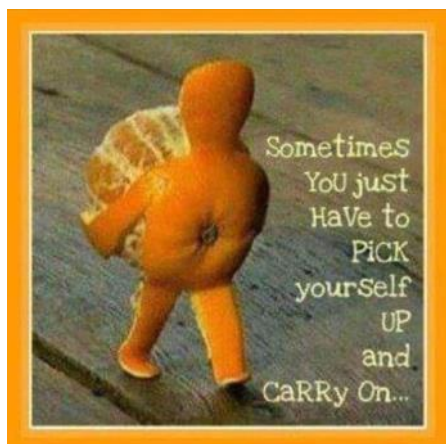
Earlier this year, the charity published it's annual Good Childhood Report.

The Children's Society Good Childhood report for 2021 shows that modern life continues to erode the happiness of young people, with increased numbers dissatisfied with school, their friendships and their appearance.

Although children and young people have been incredibly resilient during the pandemic, approximately a quarter of a million did not cope well with the disruption. It has been reported that many are now plagued by new worries about their future, especially in terms of having enough money, finding a job and getting good grades, as well as the climate emergency. Despite this, seven in ten 10-17 year olds are optimistic about the future regardless of the uncertainties reinforced by the pandemic.

The Children's Society runs services and campaigns to improve children's lives, reignite their hope and change the systems that are placing them in danger.

Please pray for all children and young people who are unhappy or struggling with their mental health, as a result of the pandemic or otherwise. Give thanks for all those who raise money for the Children's Society over the Christmas period



STAR

At a rehearsal for a Sunday school Christmas tableau, the teacher carefully lined up four little 'cherubs'. Each carried a huge cut-out letter. As they stood side by side, the letters would spell out "STAR". A slight mix-up occurred, and those present in the church auditorium nearly fell out of their pews as the four little performers took their places in reverse.



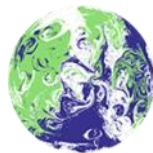
Church launches consultation on plans to get to net zero carbon in just nine years

The Church of England is consulting dioceses, cathedrals, national institutions, parishes, schools, and other interested parties on a proposed route map to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. The draft route map suggests how all parts of the Church of England can make changes together, in order to achieve the ambitious target set by General Synod in 2020: to be net zero carbon 20 years ahead of the Government's targets.

It includes recommendations for building maintenance, heating and the availability of specialist advice for each, setting alongside how the central Church and dioceses can offer support. The draft net zero carbon route map was written by a sub-committee of the Church of England's Environmental Working Group, chaired by the Bishop of Selby, Dr John Thomson.

He said: "God's creation is in crisis, and there is an urgent call to address this at every level of our global community. "Synod has set an ambitious target. We recognise this will be challenging, however many adaptations can also be made simply and quickly, such as switching to a green energy provider, filling gaps in windows, and changing lightbulbs, all of which can help to reduce energy costs. "I encourage individuals and communities to engage with these consultation proposals and to think at every level what can be done to be part of the change. We need to safeguard and care for all of God's creation."

The Government has committed to a target of net zero carbon by 2050, with an interim target of a 78 per cent reduction, set in April 2021. Anyone can respond to the consultation online before the closing date of 28 February 2022, with responses particularly requested from Dioceses and Cathedrals.



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Angel tidings??

The little boy was to be an angel in the Christmas play and his one line was: "Behold, I bring you good tidings." He asked what tidings were and his mother explained that the word meant news. On the night of the play, the youngster had stage fright and, after a long silence, blurted out: "Hey, have I got news for you!"

Christmas Services In the S.E. Team

St Martin's • St Philip & St James • St Mark
London Road Whittington In the Cherry Orchard

SUNDAY 19 DECEMBER

- 4.00pm Carol Service at Whittington -
traditional readings and familiar carols
- 5.00pm Carol Service at St Mark's -
traditional readings and familiar carols
- 6.30pm Nine Lessons & Carols at St Martin's
*traditional service telling the Christmas story
through readings and music*

FRIDAY 24 ~ CHRISTMAS EVE

- 3.00pm Crib Service for all ages at St Martin's
- 4.00pm Crib Service for all ages at St Mark's
- 5.00pm Crib Service for all ages at Whittington
- 11.30pm Midnight Mass at St Martin's -
the first Communion of Christmas

SATURDAY 25 ~ CHRISTMAS DAY

- 10.00am Christmas Morning Eucharist at St Mark's
- 10.00am Christmas Morning Communion Service
at Whittington
- 10.00am Christmas Morning Sung Eucharist at
St Martin's

*For details and up-to-date information please visit our
websites, Facebook or contact The Team Office:*

WorcesterSouthEastTeam@gmail.com • 01905 358083

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News & Views from St Mark in the Cherry Orchard

A Tribute to the Late, and much missed, Audrey Luxton.

Audrey led a full and, for those who knew her in her later years, a surprisingly action-packed life and it was a testament to her popularity that St Mark in the Cherry Orchard Church was packed with nearly 100 people, young and old, to bid her farewell.

Audrey taught at a number of primary schools in Worcester including the original Cherry Orchard in Orchard Street, Gorse Hill and Cranham Drive, usually teaching the reception classes. Her wonderfully neat 'print' handwriting, crafted at teacher training college in Cheltenham, reflected an era before computers. She helped to run Cherry Orchard playgroup and was subsequently involved in leading courses to train others to run playgroups, later going on to work with pre-school children and their families at the Hillborough Family Centre in Stanley Road School where she stayed until her retirement. She often bumped into former pupils, or families she had worked with in and around Worcester, who, even decades later, remembered her kindness.



Guiding played an important role in her life from her own time as a Girl Guide, to assisting with the local Brownie Pack and helping to run St Mark's Guides. The annual summer Guide Camp was the big adventure of her childhood and, as a leader, she rose to the challenge, sleeping under canvas and cooking for the whole week on a wood fire. More recently she was an active member of the local Trefoil Guild, supporting behind the scenes at many guiding events.

Audrey was an intelligent, devoted and selfless mother who always put family needs first and enjoyed an active and community-focussed retirement. As well as the Guide Association, she volunteered for many years with several local organisations including the Tudor House Museum, Talking Newspapers for the Blind, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and the Worcester Green Party. She was an active member of the local WI and Ladies Club and, of course, the congregation at St Mark's Church.

Although a voracious reader, Audrey never got used to the idea of sitting down and reading in the day, whilst not being able to volunteer or help others. She was frustrated by the limitations that arose from the lockdowns and vowed that once her health improved, she would help out at the local toddler group when it restarted in a church very near to her home, just as she'd done at St Marks, but sadly, it was not to be and Audrey passed away on 12 October.

Bless you, Audrey, we all think of you often.

St Marks is delighted to once more be able to offer refreshments to those attending the services in the Church. It is an opportunity to catch up with people who may not have seen each other for some time. Everyone will be made most welcome and, if you prefer, you can receive your tea or coffee in a polystyrene cup. Flyers are now available in Church, for the congregation to take away, advertising the Christmas and Christingle Services, a copy of which is printed in this edition.

Cherry Orchard Ladies Club

Having had to cancel his talk twice, **Jonathan Sutton, CEO of St Paul's Hostel on Tallow Hill**, was finally able to speak to the members at the November meeting. He began by sharing that he had been in the armed forces for 30 years. His last appointment was the Military Assistant Regional Joint Liaison Officer for the West Midlands with responsibilities for Military Aid to the Civil Community such as resilience during 'flu pandemics and other emergencies, something that was to be particularly useful during the Covid situation.

Jonathan is also the Voluntary Services representative on the County Health and Well Being Board and a co-opted member of Healthwatch Worcestershire

St Pauls opened in 1977, but the work began before the charity was founded in partnership with The Salvation Army. At that time, the residents mostly consisted of male occupants affected by alcohol not drugs.

Jonathan joined the staff 8 years' ago and found it disorientating, chaotic and sometimes dangerous and he quickly realised that there was a need to change the culture. He said that one should think of homelessness as an iceberg where you can only see the tip – rough sleeping - whilst under water there is a cohort of hidden homeless and, on a typical night in England, there could be as many as 250,000 of them; sleeping in over crowded buildings, cars, or hostels (the government does not count the hidden homeless but does annually count people rough sleeping).

People who experience homelessness can be perceived as being to blame for the situations that they find themselves in. Jonathan said that this was an unfair myth and gave details of three structural determinants of homelessness, namely:

Poverty is the biggest risk and the largest single contributor. There is not enough social housing; cost and affordability are very different subjects and St Pauls can only help for between 18 and 24 months. The welfare system has little resources which leads to difficult choices; eat or heat.

Begging is on the increase in Worcester so if you want to help someone, give wisely. Never give cash because it is likely to be spent on drugs or alcohol but you could offer food or a hot drink. Lobby your MP; prevention is better than cure. Visit their web site www.stpaulshostel.co.uk for more information.

There will not be a meeting in January and the February meeting is the group's annual games evening (usually Beetle) with fish & chips from the Bath Road Chippy. The subject of the March meeting will be **A Journey in Time with the Severn Valley Railway** with speaker Bob Lane.

Meetings are at 7.30pm on the first Weds of most months: Membership: £9 Annually plus £1.50 Per Meeting / Visitors £3.00 Per Meeting **Gentlemen Welcome**. Further Information from: (Secretary) Jan Vale 01905 351392 / janvale810@gmail.com

Long Term Hall Hiring Groups This month we welcome **Mermaid Yoga in the church hall from 5.45pm until 6.45pm on a Wednesday** and group leader, Lynsey, was thrilled when 21 people attended her first class; watch this space because Lynsey might start a class on a Thursday as well. There have been well attended yoga classes in the past but personal circumstances resulted in their being discontinued so it is great to see this type of keep fit class returning to the hall. Many of the hall hirers would like to recruit new members of all ages to join their groups so please take a look at the varied list to see if there is anything that you might like and give the contact a call because some offer free taster sessions.

Please visit St Mark's website www.stmarksworcester.wordpress.com or get in touch with Jan Vale janvale810@gmail.com telephone 01905 351392 if you would like a full list of hall hirers or require any information about St Marks and I will endeavour to help you.

Finally, and on behalf of St Mark in the Cherry Orchard Church, the PCC sends Christmas & New Year Greetings to you and yours.

Jan

Tearfund campaigns for Covid vaccines

The coronavirus pandemic has pushed an estimated 120 million people into poverty. Most of these will have to wait until at least 2022 to receive their vaccine.

Tearfund says: “The only way out of this pandemic is to recover together – no country is safe until all countries are safe. People who are going hungry now can’t wait; they need urgent practical assistance. As well as providing this, Tearfund is campaigning for everyone in every country to have access to an approved Covid-19 vaccine.

“Our local partners are advocating for governments around the world to include vulnerable groups, such as refugees, in their vaccination programmes. And we are asking the UK government to do even more to support lower-income countries.”

Tearfund is also helping to prepare communities for the rollout of a vaccine, including equipping church leaders to share accurate information about Covid-19 vaccines. If you would like to support this, please go to: <https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/recover-together>.

New Year Concert Worcester Philharmonic Orchestra Pershore Abbey

Saturday, 8th January at 2.30pm

Conductor - Joe Davies

Soprano – Holly Teague

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Schubert Overture : Rosamunde

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Thank Dickens for Christmas as you know it!

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount of our modern Christmas celebrations can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens.

When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later.

So, for instance, in *A Christmas Carol*, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity (!).

And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In 'A Christmas Carol' there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present. Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported 'a pretty German toy' that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society.

26 December Look out for Wenceslas

Most of us probably know that on December 26th (the Feast of Stephen) 'Good king Wenceslas' looked out, *writes David Winter*. We probably also know that the snow lay round about, 'deep and crisp and even'. Beyond that, he's just someone in a carol that's not often sung nowadays.

However, Wenceslas was a real person, a duke, and effectively king of Bohemia in the 10th century. In modern terms, he was Czechoslovakian. He was known as a generous and kind monarch, deeply Christian and given to good works. So the story in the carol by the Victorian hymn-writer J.M. Neale, while possibly fictitious, is at least in line with his recognised character. 'Page and monarch' braved the 'bitter weather' and the 'cruel wind's wild lament' to take food and fuel to a poor man living rough.

Neale's carol was enormously popular in the 19th century, because it perfectly expressed Victorian Christian ideals of benevolence and alms-giving. Christian men of 'wealth and rank' are urged to help the poor, and so 'find blessing'. Ignoring the 'wealth and rank and men' bit, it's still good advice, at Christmas or any other time.



St Philip & St James, Whittington

Sunday Worship Arrangements

Welcome to our Sunday services. Please note the following arrangements for your own safety and that of others. Anyone showing symptoms of coronavirus should not attend church, and those who have been shielding or are clinically vulnerable should take particular care to minimise contact with others.

- ☐ When entering the church by the main (side) door please sanitise your hands, and again on leaving. The West (back) door is the emergency exit and disabled access.
- ☐ Seating in alternate rows of pews or on chairs will be at a social distance of two metres. Please sit where directed.
- ☐ Children are welcome to attend, supervised by parents or guardians.
- ☐ It is requested that the congregation continue to wear a face covering inside the church building unless medically exempt. This may be removed to receive communion.
- ☐ To support the NHS Track and Trace system a record of names and phone numbers of those attending will be collected on entry. This is optional but providing details gives consent to sharing them with NHS Track and Trace if asked. Details will be kept securely for 21 days, after which they will be safely disposed of.
- ☐ Communion will be received standing from a central point, with bread and wine by intinction. Please come forward in a single line when directed and keep socially distanced. Those receiving a blessing instead should carry something as a sign to the vicar. Please speak to a Warden before the service to request a gluten free wafer or to have communion brought to your seat.
- ☐ At the end of the service please remain in your seat until directed to leave.
- ☐ As you leave the church an offertory plate for cash or planned giving envelopes will be at the back. Please gift aid any donations if possible.
- ☐ Please put orders of service in the containers provided as you leave
- ☐ After the service is the opportunity to greet others in a socially distanced manner outside. It is not possible to serve refreshments at present.
- ☐ The toilet will be open. Please observe careful hand washing after use and dispose of the paper towels in the bin provided.

Whittington Parish Magazine

December 21 & January 22 Edition

