

St Anne's,
Sale with
St Francis,
Sale Moor

e-Spire

December
2020

Advent and Christmas Services

We can now again hold services in church, but of course with distancing and other Covid-19 precautions and without singing. We will continue with a mix of services in church and services on Zoom. Once our long-awaited camera is installed and operational we will also be able to stream services.

Our regular pattern:

Wednesdays 10.00 am Holy Communion in church
Sundays 9.00 am Holy Communion in church
10.30 am Morning service on Zoom



Christingle* (see later in this magazine)

Monday 21 December in church at 4.00 pm
Tuesday 22 December in church at 4.00 pm
Wednesday 23 December in church at 4.00 pm

Christmas Services*

Christmas Eve, Thursday 24 December - 11.30 pm - Midnight Mass
Christmas Day, Friday 25 December - 10.00 am - Holy Communion

*Covid-19 rules limit the number of people we can host at each service. You will **need to book tickets** (free of charge) for Christingle Services, Midnight Mass and Christmas Day Holy Communion. Use the tabs on the home page of this website to book tickets. You will need to print a copy of the ticket and bring it with you or load it to a mobile phone. If you can't do this for any reason, please contact Pauline Stacey on 0161 962 3628 or at Pauline@staceyfamily.net

Our cover is one we've used before, used again now in tribute to its artist, Henry Thompson, who died this year.



Developing a strategy for financial recovery

You will be aware that this church has been affected financially by the Coronavirus pandemic. This is largely due to the closure of our halls (St Anne's church hall and the St Francis' Centre) meaning that we have lost thousands of pounds since March in hall hire revenue.

Our income this year is 80% of what it should be but our expenses are running at 92% of normal levels.

But over the last few years, our income has been gradually been going down as our expenses steadily increase. There has been a trend of decline to which we have not given due attention. The Coronavirus has quickly brought our declining financial health into focus. As was said at a recent PCC meeting, we actually need £10,000 more each year just to maintain our normal, regular costs.

For instance, only four years ago in January 2016, the church had a total of £130,000

in funds split between the parish current account (£58,400) and the deposit account (£71,700). Now we have less than half of that amount; in September this year we had a total of £51,000 (current account £17,000 and deposit account £34,000).

You will remember that over the summer, all three of our buildings (the church, the hall, and St Francis Centre) had roof problems. Thankfully, the church hall issue is not expensive but the problems with the roof of St Francis are actually getting worse. The ceiling of the foyer is collapsing so we must urgently fix this. The other work on St Francis' roof will cost £10,000. And the church needs £20,000 of work carried out to the south roof and associated gullies.

As you can see, this means we can no longer dip into our savings to fund normal church running costs. The PCC has just approved the budget for

2021 which is a deficit budget of £3,000. This means we expect to spend £3,000 more than we will receive in income next year. This is not a sustainable situation.

Since alerting the congregation of the seriousness of our financial decline, people have been very generous. Donations have been pouring in, and many people have increased their regular giving. We also hosted a very successful church auction in November which raised a staggering £2,500 for church funds. So the parish account has rallied.

We expect to need this as we go through January and February 2021 when heating costs are at their highest but hall income will still not have returned to pre-Covid levels. So thank you for helping through the current crisis; this has made a difference.

Now, the task is to turn our finance situation around for the long term. As I said earlier,

it is not sustainable to spend more each year than we receive annually income. We must balance the books and build long term financial health.

We have agreed a strategy for this. Here are the main points:

- Tell the congregation actually how much it costs to run St Anne's parish
- Provide regular updates of costs and income flow
- Encourage church congregation to increase regular giving
- Invest in modern ways of giving such as card

- machine and online giving
- Run fund raising events
- Apply for grant funding for building roof works at St Francis and St Anne's church
- Ask for advice from the Diocesan Stewardship adviser

Please ask PCC members or myself if you have questions you want to raise or suggestions for fund raising.

Many thanks for your support.

The Revd Canon Alison Cox



Christingle 2020

So what a year this has been hasn't it! Christmas will be different this year, I fear, for many of us and so will the Christingle service. I would normally be running myself silly sorting out how many collecting candles to give who and when but not this year. Still what's that saying "the show must go on", so on it will go, however somewhat different to usual!

For those of you who do not know The Christingle service is a fundraiser service for the work of The Children's Society. It has been running in our country for over 50 years, and here at St Anne's for nearly the same amount of time. We have, well *you* have, raised thousands of pounds over the years and over all The Children's Society has raised much more than that. All the money raised goes to help the lives of children and young people who are in awful situations, going through such dark times we can barely imagine. Children and young people who are lost, alone, suffering abuse, witness to things they should not see at

such a young age. Children and young people who are old before their years by caring for their families which can place added strain on their school work and confidence. And this year we have all become aware of the mental stress suffered not only by adults but by children and young people too. Your donations will help these children and young people experience the hope and happiness of childhood. It is my belief that no child should ever feel alone.

So, a little bit of history for you! The first Christingle service was held in Lincoln Cathedral in 1968; in 1970 20 churches held their own service. In 1974 The Children's Society worked with 4,500 children and in 1980 a Christingle service was held in Westminster Abbey for the first time. Christingle is in the Oxford English Dictionary, though my computer still doesn't recognise it! By 1990 The Children's Society was working with 11,000 children and 5,400 services were held across the country in 1995. In 2003 one million people

attended Christingle services and in 2010 The Children's Society was working with 48,500 children. You have made all this possible with your donations, you have given many, many children the chance they so need to get out of situations. Thank you so, so much.

I'm hoping that you all know what a Christingle is, but in case you don't, it's an orange, which represents the world; it has sweets and raisins on sticks stuck into it to represent the seasons and the fruits of the world; it has a red ribbon wrapped around it to represent the blood shed by Christ on the cross and the love of God which is wrapped around us and the whole world; and a candle: this represents Jesus, the light of the world, who brings us hope and light in times of darkness and is also there to share in our joys as well.

I would normally welcome you to attend our annual Christingle service on Christmas Eve but this year under the present

circumstances we are not having just one service but three, on three separate nights. Our plan is to have one service each evening on Monday 21, Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23 December at 4pm. Our normal service is usually packed with lots of families enjoying the buzz and expectation of Christmas, but this year we hope all those families will be spread out, appropriately distanced, over the three services.

If you would like to come to one of the services, which I really hope you will, could I please direct you to the church's website where you will find a link for all our Christmas services. There you will be able to click how many seats you want for which service; each Christingle service is being limited to 75 to enable everyone to be seated safely. We are working on a first come first served basis so please, if you want to come, book your place so you won't be disappointed. Each family will sit in their own bubble and all the bubbles will of course be socially distanced. There



will be an opportunity for you to give some money when you come to the service if you are able to.

As some of you will know last year due to personal circumstances I was unable to attend the service. I am so pleased and happy that under these strange times Alison has found a way to hold the services as they have many happy memories for me and hold a special place in my heart. I do so hope that you will join us and come to one of the Christingle services, get on line and book your seat, see you there!

So, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful, healthy and safe Christmas. It may be a different one for many of us but remember if you make room for chocolate, a smile and laughter I'm sure you will always have a great time! Happy Christmas! ☺

Carol Thomas, St Anne's
Children's Society Rep

The Advent Wreath

First flame alight to bring us hope.
Flickering on this advent wreath.
Lighting the dark in which we grope,
Leading us on to new belief.

Faith is the theme of candle two,
Urging us on to Bethlehem!
A child is born; the dawn breaks
through,
While angels sing. Let's join with
them

In ringing out the sound of joy.
This is the theme of advent three,
As shepherd's wonder at this boy;
One born to set the nations free.
We then light candle number four,

This flame our prayer for lasting
peace,
That by the love which this child
brings,
All war and conflict might yet cease.

There is one candle left to light,
As we begin our Christmas Day.
It is that one of dazzling white,
Hope, faith, joy, peace be yours I
pray.

Revd Steve Sheridan, Vicar of Chester
St Oswald & St Thomas of Canterbury



Lockdown Anticipated?

No sun - no moon! No morn - no
noon - no dawn - no dusk - no proper
time of day - no sky - no earthly view
No distance looking blue -
No road - no street - no 't'other side
the way' - no end to any Row -
No indications where the Crescents
go - No top to any steeple -
No recognitions of familiar people -
No courtesies for showing 'em -
No knowing 'em -
No travelling at all - no locomotion,
No inkling of the way - no notion -
'No go' - by land or ocean -

No mail - no post -
No news from any foreign coast -
No Park - no Ring - no afternoon
gentility - No company - no nobility -
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no
healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member -
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no
bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no
birds, -
No-venmer!

Thomas Hood (1799-1845)

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Carol singing over thirty years or so

The St Anne's choir has always been very much involved in the local community during the lead up to Christmas. Over the years it has visited Wythenshawe Hospital, and trekked miles round seemingly endless corridors to visit individual wards. A particular memory of one such occasion was when we were singing Silent Night in a ward of twenty or so people and a gentleman managed to get himself out of bed on his one leg and he sang with us most beautifully - we just hummed our parts to accompany him. It was most moving.

Pre Health and Safety, in the days when we were allowed to visit the baby wards, there were lots of "oohs" and "aahs" from our more junior members as they gazed at tiny little souls who had just been born but still needed a bit of extra care.

Each year, Nursing homes and Residential Homes were visited, and these were very special indeed as the residents joined in with us.

Our colourful red Choir robes were worn for Sainsbury visits. In earlier years we sang outside, but latterly we were spoilt by being allowed inside where it was very much



warmer! Henry Thompson, always so generous with his time, used his artistic skills to support us by preparing a board which advertised who we were, and which charity we were collecting for. Some members of the congregation came as our supporters club, and it was a happy social occasion.

The highlight of the season was of course the Carol Service, when months of preparation at choir practice came to fruition. 2019 was our first such service with Max in charge. Hopefully something will be able to be arranged this year - despite Covid - but it will have to be very different in that we are not allowed to sing! Oh dear!

With best wishes to all for Christmas, and for the New Year to come. May it be a much healthier one, through vaccination protection, than 2020 has been.

Bridget Beggs



Old Songs, New Tunes

Were you looking forward to singing Christmas carols again? Or has *Away in a manger* several times each December for the last umpteen years dulled your interest and swamped the ability to find new gems in the old treasures?

And when did you last learn a new carol? I know that Advent and Christmas carol services at cathedrals and on radio or TV offer new works, but when did *you* last learn a carol that you actually sing yourself? The latest addition to my repertoire was learned in the late lamented Railway pub at Heatley – and that closed in 2007 and burnt down in 2011 so it's a long time ago.

Though little new makes it into the regular listings, fashions in carols do change. "Joy to the world" was

the most frequently heard carol at Australian Christmases but only seems to have come back into fashion here in the last few years. I think congregations could manage "O holy night" though rarely given a chance; do we have "Home Alone" to thank for bringing it to a wider audience such that it was the Classic FM listeners' favourite carol for 2019. In that Classic FM chart "In the bleak midwinter" appeared twice, once to the well known Holst tune that my father mocked for its drawn out "snow-oh-oh on snow" and once more for the increasingly popular setting by Harold Darke. The Coventry Carol seemed to get played a lot last year. Perhaps its sad theme of the massacre of the holy innocents with its minor key suited the mood of the

time: our nation was not at its most cheerful or confident. Perhaps that also accounted for the popularity of the "bleak midwinter".

I try to refresh the well known carols with alternative tunes, if only to sing them while I'm cooking. I spoke of Harold Darke above. While shepherds watched works a treat to Ilkley Moor bar t'at and to O for a thousand tongues to sing. There are some good folk tunes to The Holly and the Ivy. O little town of Bethlehem has a number of options; the USA routinely uses a tune called St Louis which mercifully has generally stayed over there. Walford Davies's lovely tune Wengen deserves to be better known. And doubtless there are many more tunes that work well with our entire range of popular carols.

Continued on next page....

Christmas Miscellany

Christmas Quiz

We will be holding a Christmas (well mostly) themed quiz via Zoom on Thursday 17 December at 7.00pm.

Under normal circumstances we would hold this in the hall and refreshments would be served. Unfortunately, we can't all meet, however, wine and mince pies will be delivered to your door before the 12th so that we can, virtually at least, have a glass of Christmas cheer together.

If you wish to join in, we are asking £8 which you can either pay into the church account or hand to Santa's little helpers when the refreshments are delivered or after church.

The quiz we had in the summer was great fun and hopefully this one will be also.

Please email me (at olwynem@sky.com) if you wish to take part.

Love and prayers,
Olwyn

...continued from previous page

Apparently there is a tradition of local carolling around Sheffield with carols and tunes I don't know. Oh that there were such things this side of the Pennines!

But sadly, this year we're more likely to be listening to carols than singing them. Perhaps next year we will be glad to sing again the old favourites and find freshness in them.

Howard Mason

To be serious

It is no use saying that we are born 2,000 years too late to give room to Christ... Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts.... And giving shelter or food to anyone who asks for it, or needs it, is giving it to Christ. Dorothy Day

Human nature is like a stable inhabited by the ox of passion and the ass of prejudice – animals which take up a lot of room and which I suppose most of us are feeding on the quiet. And it is there between them, pushing them out, that Christ must be born, and in their very manger He must be laid.

Evelyn Underhill

Christmas Reflections

Occasional churchgoers are not always people with little or no faith...people for whom the very different style and ambience of a carol service reaches them in ways that the typical weekly offering would not. I found they were people attracted to the mystery of faith more than its explanation. They were drawn to encounter God and let that fashion and form them as it would, rather than being told

what the Christian life demanded of them.

There are plenty of people in our communities who have a real sense of belonging with God, as part of the Christian faith, but for whom the pattern of weekly public worship drains rather than energises them.

David Walker (Bishop of Manchester) – You Are Mine

Christmas in your small bubble

Built upon a dismal reef of sunken rocks, some league or so from shore, on which the waters chafed and dashed, the wild year through, there stood a solitary lighthouse... But even here, two men who watched the light had made a fire, that through the loophole in the thick stone wall shed out a ray of brightness on the awful sea. Joining their horny hands over the rough table at which they sat, they wished each other Merry Christmas in their can of grog; and one of them – the elder too, with his face all damaged

and scarred with hard weather, as the figure-head of an old ship might be – struck up a sturdy song that was like a gale in itself.

The Spirit (of Christmas Present) stood beside sick-beds and they were cheerful; on foreign lands, and they were close at home; by struggling men, and they were patient in their greater hope; by poverty and it was rich.

From A Christmas Carol
by Charles Dickens

We must never allow anything to blind us to the true significance of what happened at Bethlehem so long ago. Nothing can alter the fact that we live on a visited planet. - J B Phillips

Living In Love And Faith

We'll be hearing a lot about this lengthy Church of England report and library of resources on issues of sexuality and marriage over the coming months. The resources are there for us to use, not to lie on a virtual library shelf. Here are some short extracts to be going on with.

"God's creation is a dazzling explosion of diversity which speaks of the unutterable beauty, unfathomable grandeur, and infinite creativity of the Creator. And so when God made human beings, they

too reflected this dazzling diversity."

"Our processes of listening and shared discernment are deeply affected by questions of power... There are always questions to be faced about who is not in the room."

"Only in looking honestly at the fact that we have sisters and brothers in Christ who have vehemently opposed views to ours, can we come in humility before God and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit."



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Mothers Union

So Christmas is fast approaching and, I think like many other people, I will be glad to see the back of 2020!

Before I go any further I must say the most wonderful news we heard in a long time was that Margaret Ward had returned home after battling COVID in hospital for a week. The prayers of our members and the whole parish worked helping her to recover enough to come home and I know from speaking to her she felt them. I pray that Margaret, and anyone else recovering from COVID, continue to gain in strength day by day and thank God for his healing hand. The power of prayer is a wonderful thing.

We had hoped that by the time December arrived we might, just might, be able to meet together in the hall for our Symposium but it is not to be. Having said that, we are not the sort of people to let a little thing like a pandemic get in our way and Jackie and I want to give massive thanks to Elizabeth. She has worked really hard over the past few weeks putting together a Symposium we can all take part in

at home. I will be sending members an email near our meeting date with the document for you to read. Hopefully we can all sit down in our own homes on the 14th at 8pm and read it knowing we are doing it together.

Christmas is going to be different for us all this year. At the moment I am hoping against all hope that my younger son will be able to come home for Christmas and we can enjoy being together as a family.

We hope that whatever happens you all manage to have a wonderful Christmas and if possible are able to come in person to church to celebrate the birth of Christ.

Have a joyful Christmas, and remember, if in doubt eat chocolate!!

Love

Carol and Jackie

Prayer changes things. It changes things by inviting God into the room.

Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

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While there is a risk of Covid 19, I just ask to deal with one person per job and I attend with mouth cover and gloves, wearing my gas I.D.

Churches Locked Down

Many have been making the point that churches are not like golf clubs or friendly societies. Churches are the bearers of meaning for those who attend, the place where that all-important "horizon of significance" is sustained, nourished, and lived out. And for those of us in the Catholic tradition, this takes place supremely through the Mass, our holy communion. Here is where reality is most fully expressed as pregnant with loving significance. Which is why not being allowed to gather for holy communion is not just some simple privation, but an axe taken to the very root of our being. Our community is formed by communion.

Our present Prime Minister, perhaps

more than any other before him, has a tin ear to the purpose of religious gathering. I don't suppose it has helped that the Bishops have recently used up much of their political capital on things like Brexit. But even so, Johnson just doesn't get religion. He sees it as just another glorified leisure activity, and one that can be turned off and on at will.

It absolutely isn't. It is the basis for everything else that we, as believers, do.

...or to put it briefly...

There are activities that the Government likes churches doing: operating foodbanks, creating credit unions, looking after the homeless. But this good work does not come out of nowhere. It comes bubbling up from the worship that we share together.

Marcus Walker, The Spectator

Not just one thing among others, but the background against which all that we do makes sense. He wants us to continue to serve the community with food banks and the like, which we will. But he refuses to appreciate where the basis for that community solidarity lies and out of which it grows. What is at stake here is a whole infrastructure of meaning and care.

Giles Fraser

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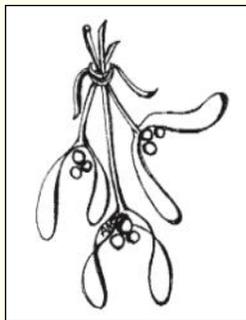
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Mistletoe

This time of year you can see all sorts of traditions played out with regard to Christmas decorations. Strict adherents use holly, ivy and of course, mistletoe. While holly and ivy are to be found in gardens and hedgerows, mistletoe usually only appears in greengrocers' shops, or high in a tree well out of reach.



Mistletoe is hemiparasitic, meaning that although its leaves enable it to feed itself through photosynthesis, its roots invade the host tree or shrub to extract water and other nutrients. Its favourite host trees are apple, lime, hawthorn, poplar or oak and it normally hangs as a large globe, tantalisingly high and totally visible once winter arrives and it is the only green left on the tree. There are some spectacular examples in Windsor Great Park, clearly visible from the path on the opposite side of the River Thames (or try Didsbury Parsonage Gardens - Editor).

We all know about the almost translucent white berries, fleshy

and sticky, which form in the forks of mistletoe's many branches. While they are toxic to humans, they are attractive to birds. When birds have enjoyed the juicy flesh, they wipe the remaining seeds off their beaks onto the nearest branch (somewhat like small children wiping sticky hands on any surface close). With luck the seed remains stuck to the bark and solves

mistletoe's problem of reproduction.

In Greek mythology, mistletoe gave access to the Underworld. Romans thought it represented Peace, Love and Understanding and perhaps that is how it has sidled into our Christmas celebrations. The earliest documentary evidence for kissing under mistletoe dates from the sixteenth century. Some people think a berry should be removed after each kiss. Given the small size of pieces generally available these days, perhaps that is a practice not to be pursued!

Parish Pump

St Anne's as it used to be

Over the years I've looked in vain for an on-line source of old maps. Now I've found one. I was looking in the wrong



country! For some reason the National Library of Scotland offers free access to all sorts of maps, and in particular Ordnance Survey 1 inch, 6 inch, 25 inch, not just for Scotland but for England and Wales too, from various dates through the 19th and 20th centuries. Navigation takes some getting used to and some places have maps from more dates than others but despite this I've had "hours of fun" looking at Sale, Manchester and all sorts of childhood haunts across the years. There's even an 1846 map of Hong Kong for some reason. If you're interested, try <https://maps.nls.uk/os/> and explore.

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Education For Change - a progress report from our Partner In Mission through USPG

We have received this extended progress report from USPG, our partners in Education for Change. It's longer than our usual articles but we hope you find it interesting.

The UK imports tea from many countries, including Sri Lanka; in 2017 \$13.6 million worth of tea was imported from there. It is Sri Lanka's top export, \$1.37 billion to their economy. Despite this, the communities that are responsible for picking tea are poorly compensated and living in poverty. Traditionally confined to the estates that they worked on, generations of plantation workers have been socially and economically isolated, typically earning only £2.70 per day - barely enough to cover basic food and shelter. The estates on which they live have the highest rates of under nutrition and stunting among children under five in Sri Lanka. Families living on the estates also lack access to education and healthcare, and good quality housing.

'Education for Change'

Most children on the plantation estates do not have access to preschool education but spend time in

day care centres where there is no opportunity to develop age appropriate learning skills. So the Diocese of Colombo's 'Education for Change' programme prioritises pre-school education and will continue to support five pre-schools in the areas of Sheen, Passara, Gonakale, Templestowe and Nuwereliya over the next few years.

The pre-schools are run by talented, dedicated teachers who put in a lot of effort to make sure that children are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge for their further education. The children are also provided with a mid-day meal following a nutrition chart, to ensure that they are receiving all the vitamins and minerals they need for their development.

In addition, extra tuition classes on subjects such as Maths and English will be held to help pupils in the areas of Templestowe, Ragala, Kondakala, Gonakale and Beverly. And scholarships will be provided to enable young people to undertake advanced level studies along with career guidance .

New Developments

This year took an unprecedented turn for the Plantation Community



Development Programme with the challenge of Covid-19. However, the Church of Ceylon's Diocese of Colombo has continued to plan for the future and will implement the following :

- Community education on good hygiene practices including hand washing, the importance of wearing a mask and personal hygiene.
- Health Awareness Programme to provide information on breastfeeding to new mothers.
- Income generation activities through the development of farming and cultivation.
- Child protection awareness for children and adults including issues around child labour and drugs.

'Education for Change' with its trained teachers and resources is giving children the best start to their education. The Church supports children like Vardaniya at each stage of education so that they can fulfil career ambitions that previously would not have been possible.

Vardaniya's story

Vardaniya (not her real name) dropped out of school because she failed in grade 8. She was depressed because her family were pushing her to repeat her studies at this level. She told her mother that she couldn't continue her studies and she wanted to go to work instead. Vardaniya's parents were concerned about her. They wanted their daughter to have an education so that she would have

Education For Change - continued



better opportunities in the future. They contacted the Diocese of Colombo's Plantation Community Development Programme to seek advice about the situation. Staff members organised a meeting with the school principal, her class teacher and her parents to discuss the struggles she was having. Afterwards, her class teacher said that she would take responsibility for her and give her individual attention to support her with her studies. From the beginning of this year, Vardaniya has been attending school regularly and is now happy.

Highlights

- ★ Since the arrival of the virus pre-school teachers have gone beyond the call of duty to check that children are safe and following health and hygiene regulations by visiting them at their homes.
- ★ 307 children were directly supported with their education including pre-schools, extra tuition, and higher education.
- ★ The Church celebrated the reopening of the schools and 'Education for Change' in August this year, after having to close because of the pandemic.
- ★ New programme developments will bring even

more support to tea plantation communities through activities such as community education on health and hygiene practices, and an income generation project to support livelihoods.

Covid-19 Response

Along with the rest of our church partners, the Diocese of Colombo in the Church of Ceylon has experienced challenges running programme activities during the pandemic but continue to be active in their communities following the devastating social and economic impact. As well as the 'Education for Change', they have been organising activities to support those in greatest need including the following:

- Educating the Church and communities on Covid-19.
- Food security programme – so far food packages for families of four to manage for two weeks have been delivered to 512 vulnerable families. The Church is now looking to

support 450 more families in the Western Province.

- Church leadership training at different levels to cope with newer trends which emerged from the crisis e.g. digitising of education, mental well-being, child protection and drug issues.

Prayer Points

Please remember the following in your prayers:

- Protection and safety of the tea plantation community from Covid-19 infection.

- Continuation of education for the children of the tea plantation community even in the midst of intermittent lockdowns.
- Pray for the clergy and staff of the Diocese of Colombo as they continue to forge ahead in God's mission in spite of restrictions and lockdowns.

Thank you for your continued prayers for the USPG-supported work of the Church of Ceylon.



Thankfully our Saviour is not Father Christmas. He gave His best to us because we were *not* good.

Moe Bergeron

Overseas Group Update

Over the past few years we have built up good relationships with three specific charities, Bible Society, United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG) and Trafford Youth for Christ. We support them practically, prayerfully (we pray at a Sunday service each month), and financially (from our planned giving).

The Overseas Group have tried to ensure that we worked as partners and mutually supportive. We had no idea how we could strengthen those links with the charities this year given the restrictions of Covid. No face to face meetings or events. But we have found new ways of communicating and more than that we have been resourced and blessed by each of these charities. For example:

Bible Society - We met with Osoba Otaigbe, the new Church Engagement Officer for the North via Zoom in June. In our Bible Sunday service in October we heard Andrew Ollerton preach and provide excellent teaching on responding to crises like the pandemic. In a practical way our financial gift has helped provide more than 4,000 prisoners in the UK with a Bible or Gospel booklet.

USPG - We have had two pre recorded sermons; from Duncan Dormor General Secretary and Richard Bartlett, Director of Mission Engagement. Instead of conferences USPG have brought speakers from across the world to speak on key issues in webinars; 'I can't breathe' (see October eSpire) and 'Human Trafficking in India and Bangladesh'. See these on www.uspg.org.uk/

engage/events/webinars/webinars.php

TYFC – Some of us attended their AGM (virtually of course) during Lockdown 2, and learned that despite the restrictions TYFC have sought creative ways to engage with young people. They have been into less schools this year but have developed on-line pre-recorded lessons. Youth clubs were halted but they undertook detached youth work and then litter picking as a presence on the Sale West estate. They have inspiring plans for 2021 too.

So lockdowns, furloughs, face masks etc have not prevented the charities we link with from 'doing

The Christmas cards

Still it persists, the myth of snow at Christmas,
Unashamedly across all our cards;
Not a few flakes but deep drifts-
Villages cosily half buried in it,
Trees, it would seem, gladly bearing its weight,
Edwardian women wrapped in furs and skating,
Santa Claus showing us the story of the Father
For ever offering the marvellous unattainable gift,
Piercing a way through darkness to the hearth.

The nativity may be ignored but new life is hoped for.

About this the cheap cards are surely right.
For white is everybody's secret emblem:
We half perceive the meaning of the virgin snow.

Sister Mary Laurence

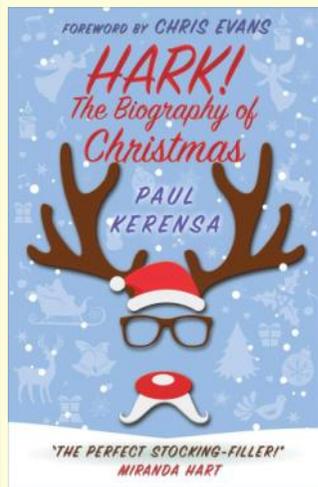
mission' and resourcing us as a church. We have been blessed by them and we thank them. You will be pleased to learn that the PCC have budgeted to continue to give away 10 percent of planned giving to charities in 2021.

Also within this month's eSpire is a substantial report from our Partner in Mission, Education for Change, a USPG programme working with tea plantation workers and their families in Sri Lanka. Please do read it. More about Education for Change in 2021....

Janice Mason
for the Overseas Group



Christmas Crackers

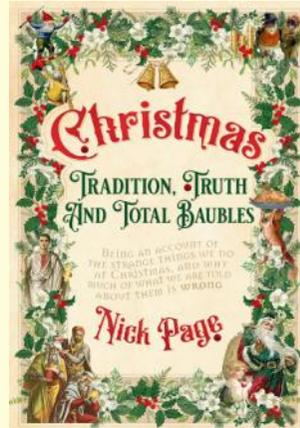


Paul Kerenza is a comedian and his “Hark - the Biography of Christmas”, endorsed by Chris Evans and Miranda Hart, may give an impression that this is a

trivial comic effort but, though often funny, it is a theologically and historically well informed tour of the origins and development of the Christmas story and the traditions it's accumulated. I liked the account of four primary schools, St Matthew's St Marks, St Luke's and, yes, St John's each putting on their annual nativity play but confined to the information in the gospel after which each is named.

Nick Page's “Christmas-Tradition, Truth and Total Baubles” treads similar ground and is favourably reviewed by the Church Times.

With either book, you could both amuse and inform yourself at the same time.



Christmas Carols misheard by children

- ☺ Deck the Halls with Buddy Holly
- ☺ We three kings of porridge and tar
- ☺ On the first day of Christmas my tulip gave to me
- ☺ He's makin a list, chicken and rice.
- ☺ Noel, Noel, Barney's the king of Israel.
- ☺ With the jelly toast proclaim
- ☺ Sleep in heavenly peas.
- ☺ In the meadow we can build a snowman, then pretend that he is sparse and brown

Bad Parrot!

John received a parrot as a gift. The parrot had a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary (not unknown among parrots). Every word out of the bird's mouth was rude, obnoxious and laced with profanity.

John tried and tried to change the bird's attitude by consistently saying only polite words, playing soft music and anything else he could think of to 'clean up' the bird's vocabulary.

Finally, John was fed up and after its latest outburst he yelled at the parrot. The parrot yelled back. John shook the parrot and the parrot got angrier and even ruder. John, in desperation, grabbed the bird and put him in the freezer. For a few minutes the parrot squawked and kicked and screamed.

Then suddenly there was total quiet. Not a peep was heard for over a minute.

Fearing that he'd hurt the parrot, John quickly opened the door to the freezer.. The parrot calmly stepped out onto John's outstretched arms and said "I believe I may have offended you with my rude language and actions. I'm sincerely remorseful for my inappropriate transgressions and I fully intend to do everything I can to correct my rude and unforgivable behaviour."

John was stunned at the change in the bird's attitude.

As he was about to ask the parrot what had made such a dramatic change in his behaviour, the bird spoke-up, very softly, "May I ask what the turkey did to upset you?"

Angels?

Two daughters had been given parts in a Christmas pageant at their Church. At dinner that night, they got into an argument as to who had the most important role. Finally, the 14 year-old said to her 8 year-old younger sister, 'Well, you just ask Mum. She'll tell you it's much harder to be a virgin than it is to be an angel.'

USPG - A Promise Of Hope

A baby born with HIV is unlikely to live to see their fifth birthday. But thanks to the life-saving programme run by the Anglican Church in Tanzania at Mvumi Hospital, all the babies born as part of the programme are born HIV-free. A promise of hope indeed.



We saw something of the work of Mvumi hospital on the video shown by Richard Bartlett when he preached to us on 22 November. But the uncoordinated words and sound failed to tell the whole story. Like that of Baby Daniel...

"When I arrived at Chihembe I was scared to go out and mix with people because of my HIV status and the stigma that comes with it. Sometimes people called you a 'wandering corpse' if you have HIV. When I found this project, I realised I could continue living like other people and even start a

family. The stigma slowly diminished and I started attending the clinic for antiretroviral and counselling. One year after attending the clinic I became pregnant and gave birth to a son who is HIV negative and is now two years old. For me these are the greatest achievements of my life."

If you would like to support a Promise of Hope appeal this Christmas, please visit www.uspg.org.uk/promiseofhope Or call 0207-921-2200 to make a donation. It could be part of your Count Your Blessings response. Thank you.

Remembering Joan Jones

Joan married Ron on Wednesday 21st March 1962 at St Anne's Church, Sale. They had a shop in Sale Moor called Cromer Fabrics. Joan was a regular attender at St Anne's from 1962 until 2002 when she and Ron retired to Llandudno. Ron sadly passed away in 2010 and in 2013 Joan made a bid move to Devon to be closer to family. She passed away on 8 February 2020. Joan was Judy Thom's aunt.

The **e-Spire** is our replacement for a hard-copy parish magazine. It is to supplement what appears on our website and in the weekly pastoral letter and newsheets from our clergy. If you don't receive these by email, please send your email address to Alison: alisoncox19@hotmail.com

For comments on e-Spire and to contribute to a future issue, mail the **editors**, Howard & Janice Mason at howard.mason1@btopenworld.com

Parish Directory

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Website:	www.salestanne.org	
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Curate:	David Murray: d3.murray@hotmail.com	07985 032180
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Churchwardens:	Kerrie Hickman e-mail: k.hickman5@btinternet.com Pauline Stacey, 8 Maple Road West e-mail: Pauline@staceyfamily.net	973 3431 962 3628
PCC Secretary:	Chris Davey e-mail chrisrichards21@gmail.com	07872 935776
PCC Treasurer:	Tim Marlow, 28 Arcadia Avenue	962 9292
Hall Bookings:	Lynda Ronan, 173 Dane Road	900 8259
Hall Management Committee:	Chairman - Tony Sant	973 3894
Sacristan/Head Server:	Sue Heath, 7 The Cloisters	969 3167
Organist & Choir Leader:	Max Puller, e-mail max@maxpuller.com	07590 677101
Choir:	Fridays 6.45pm Juniors, 7.15 Adults, in Church	
St Anne's School:	Headteacher - Polly Goodson	973 7181
Overseas Group:	Chair - Janice Mason	969 8570
Sunday School:	Sundays 10.30 am in the Church Hall	969 2824
1st Sale Moor Rainbows:	Mons 5 - 6 pm in the Church Hall email 1stsalemoorrainbows@gmail.com	
2nd Sale Moor Rainbows:	Weds 5.15 - 6.15 pm in the Church Hall email 2ndsalemoorrainbows@gmail.com	
Brownies:		
1st Sale Moor:	Weds 6.30 - 8 pm, Clarendon Rd Scout Hut	973 3894
2nd Sale Moor:	Weds 6.30 - 8 pm in the Church Hall	976 5972
3rd Sale Moor:	Tues 6pm at Moorlands School	
7th Sale Moor:	Tues 6 pm, Marsland Road Scout Hut	973 2108
2nd Sale Moor Guides:	Mondays 7.30 - 9pm in the Church Hall	286 1623
7th Sale Moor Guides:	Tuesdays 7 pm at St Francis'	
Church Fellowship:	1st Monday of month 2 pm, Church Hall	962 8946
Mothers' Union:	2nd Monday, 8pm, St Anne's Church Hall	283 0563
Mums & Tots:	Fridays 9.15 - 11am, contact Janet Plumb	905 3895
Junior Youth Club	Fridays 6 - 7.30pm in the Church Hall	07925 886458

St Francis's - Budworth Road, off Norris Road. M33 2RP

Hall Booking Vicky Gilbert 374 3991

9th Sale St Anne's Scout Group - HQ - Budworth Road, off Norris Road, M33 2RP

Beavers:	Wednesdays 6.15 - 7.30pm	962 9392
Cubs:	Tuesdays 7 - 8.30pm	969 9352
Scouts:	Wednesdays 7.30 - 9.15pm	969 8558
Hut bookings:	Mrs Maggs	07949 832920