

Parish Life Magazine

**Parish of Cirencester
with
Watermoor and
Chesterton**

**December 2020/January 2021
online**



Parish of Cirencester with Watermoor and St Lawrence (Chesterton)

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Lighten our darkness we beseech thee O Lord...



The days are shortening, the darkness most consuming, especially these last few days. Even as I write this article I need all the lights on in my study as the storm clouds gather once again...

I am reminded of a lovely Advent poem...

‘The Christmas waiting is long
The days drop one by one,
Like the last dead leaves from the trees
And still it is November’.... *L. Scott*

So many challenges have needed to be overcome as we make our journey through this long autumn.

The week before half term the ladies of our flower group dressed the Lady Chapel for Christmas! This was for filming the Cirencester advert for the Town Council. The Advent service of ‘Darkness to Light’ needed to be recorded before Remembrance Sunday because of the lockdown taking us up until Dec 2nd. Then upon leaving church one evening at the beginning of November, the Town’s Christmas Lights had been switched on! My liturgical world has been turned upside down! And still it is November....!

So, I need to reset my liturgical clock. These few weeks leading up to the beginning of Advent are richly drawn together in the church’s year known as the Kingdom season - a time of anticipation as we proclaim ‘Christ the King’, the watershed that catapults us into the season of Advent.

‘The Advent bells call out ‘Prepare,
Your world is journeying to the birth
Of God made Man for us on earth.’ *John Betjeman*

Prepare indeed... despite the lockdown there is still much to do as we prepare our spiritual lives for the 25th December. Though there will be no Advent Fayre as such, and no big switch on of the lights accompanied by fireworks from the church roof, and no Christmas Trees all lit up in the church. We still have our

Sundays either livestreamed or in person we hope (post 2nd December) to reflect upon the greatest journey of all - The Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Forerunner (John Baptist) and Mary, ‘*Theotokos*’, the one who gave birth to the Christ Child. What can this mean for you?

*The people walking in darkness see a bright light;
light shines on those who live in a land of deep darkness. Isaiah 9.2*

This is our hope, and this is our encouragement. Now is the time for us to allow the light to shine in and through our own lives. The darkness typically symbolizes judgement and its effect, the light represents deliverance and its effects brought about by the emergence of a conquering King. Indeed Christ our King symbolises this great hope. Advent provides us with this opportunity to reflect, and prepare, as we get ourselves ready for the yearly reminder of God giving his presence to us, in the birth of the Christ Child.

The challenge for us is not to see this as a ‘nice’ story all cosy and the like, but rather a stirring into the **missional life of the church**. A church that is prepared and ready to reach out into the darkness. During this current time when the pandemic has been so challenging, we have the opportunity to ‘shine as lights’ in what sometimes appears to us as a more darkened world.

Despite all that has been going on around us, and the confusion of the churches seasons this autumn, I am really looking forward to celebrating Christmas, even if that means it comes with certain constraints. The good that comes out of all of this; no longer can we take things for granted. No longer can we simply be passengers. We have to find a way of actively participating in the ongoing life of our church. This requires effort on our part, effort for us to find the light and to walk in its path that can and will lead us ever closer to God.

This wonderful sense of anticipation, lighted candles in the windows of our homes, the Christmas lights that go up inside and outside, I love to walk around the estate and be nosy looking at other people’s decorations. Everywhere I go, the light is there to behold, if I really want to find it.

I see it in and through the very people who befriend and nurture those around them, those who give so much of themselves. All of this and so much more is wrapped up in that gift that Christina Rossetti speaks so powerfully about...

What can I give him poor as I am...?

Let our prayer be that through Advent we allow the light of Christ to shine into and through our lives, that casting out the works of darkness we can empower others to shine as lights.

May God's blessing be with you throughout this Advent journey, and may it burst forth into your world as we together proclaim Christ the King... "*Veni, veni, Emmanuel*"... O Come O Come Emmanuel!

Canon Graham.



Early Advent and Christmas

Advent and Christmas came early to the Parish Church this year. Ladies of the Flower Guild decorated the Lady Chapel with an Advent wreath and Christmas floral arrangements to be filmed before the second lockdown.

Cirencester Town Council is supporting local businesses this year by producing a promotional Christmas video. The shopping guide in printed format will be delivered to 11,000 households in the GL7 area.

The video will be made available through social media and Cirencester Town Council website.



Alan Barnes



The First (*Covid*) Christmas

*(with tongue in cheek,
except for the last two lines)*

The Nativity's been cancelled – the pandemic is to blame.
And Bethlehem's a ghost-town which really is a shame.
The Inn is closed to visitors – no restaurant and no bed,
But to keep afloat the Innkeeper does takeaways instead.
The Census has been mothballed until this time next year,
But that timescale's looking doubtful – put off again I fear?
The Stable too is out of bounds – a 'health hazard' 'tis said,
“The hay and straw a breeding ground which could help the virus spread.”
All donkeys have been commandeered for emergencies alone,
And everyone's instructed to **Stay Safe** and **Stay at Home**.
So Mary and Joseph must remain in Nazareth,
For the failure to comply with rules could lead to Covid death.
The sheep upon the hillsides are quarantined as well,
How long the shepherds furloughed for is difficult to tell.
'Tis sad the famous **Heavenly Host** are not allowed to sing,
So this year, even 'Peace on Earth' will have a silent ring.
Their concerts have been famous across the Universe,
But this year for Carol Singing they could be fined or even worse.
Due to International travel being brought to almost nought;
No flights, coaches or camel trains making journeys really fraught,
So the visit of the Magi cannot go ahead,
But they've made a BACs donation to the local Food Bank instead.
So if I've taken liberties with the 'greatest story ever told',
Let's smile and count our blessings, but most of all be bold.
We can do little better when everything seems odd:
Keep 2 metres from all humans, but stay very close to God.

Pauline Farman November, 2020

Poet, Music-maker, Weaver

O great story-teller inventively writing
your poems of love in the depths of our hearts
creatively finding new themes for our living
unravelling a mystery, each day a new start,
we welcome the call to be born of your giving
O author of faith still at work in our story!

2 O Great music-maker, be strength in our weakness
renew weary lives with the chords of your song
transforming our tired routines with the sweetness
of joy's richest melodies, breathed all day long.
we welcome the call to be part of your greatness
O Great music maker sing through us your glory!

3 O worker of tapestries, constantly weaving
the threads of our prayers into beautiful cloth
reveal to those tangled in dark disbelieving
your glorious kingdom obscured by the knots.
We welcome the call to be part of your living
So, take us and weave us, great God, in your fabric.

4 O mover and shaker of everything living
the start and the end of humanity's race
in Jesus you set out ahead pioneering
a path in the darkness, a light for our faith
We trust in your journey, step out persevering,
So, Jesus, our Way, lead us forward to heaven.

(*RJG* based on some ideas from Richard Bruxvoort)

A Christmas Hymn

Take note, pay heed, lift up your eyes,
What child within that manger cries?
Why should the angels stop and stare?
The Lord of heaven's lying there!

2 O Christ, Creator of all things
for whom the heavenly host now sings,
why have you made yourself so small?
A baby in a cattle stall?

3 Were earth a thousand times more fair
bedecked with gold and jewels rare,
yet would it be a tiny bed
for heaven's Lord to rest his head.

4 Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Lord,
who rules the heavens with a word,
make soft your bed within my heart
for you for ever set apart.

5 And then my heart with joy shall leap,
my lips no more their silence keep,
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue
that sweetest ancient cradle song:

6 Glory to God in highest heaven,
Who, to the world, his Son has given;
the Saviour of the world, to be
our peace through all eternity.

(*RJG* based on 2nd part of Martin Luther, *von Himmel hoch da Komm ich her*, v 3
is by Catherine Winkworth,)

Bob Gardiner

THE DARK IS LIGHT ENOUGH



During the last six months I have frequently been asked, “How can one hang onto one's Christian faith in a world suffering such appalling misery?” The honest answer is, “Only with great difficulty”. Down the centuries many clever men and women have tried to justify belief in a benign Creator in a cruel and dark world. I have to admit I am not really convinced even by the cleverest excuses to exculpate God when he is arraigned in the Cosmic Court of Justice. There is a moving story from the Warsaw Jewish ghetto when the Germans were slaughtering or interning the whole population. Some Jewish Rabbis decided to put God on trial for crimes against humanity. After six hours of heated debate they agreed He was Guilty as Charged. There was a long silence. Then the oldest Rabbi got up and said, “Nevertheless, my brothers, it is time for Evening Prayer.” That “nevertheless” is extraordinary. Why do the Jews go on believing even after the Holocaust. I think this may be the answer.

One of the Jews who was killed in Westerbork transit Camp was Etty Hillesum. Among her papers this prayer was found:

There is a really deep well inside me. And in it dwells God. Sometimes I am there, too ... And that is all we can manage these days and also all that really matters: that we safeguard that little piece of You, God, in ourselves.

Christians go on believing in spite of many centuries of persecution and in the face of appalling natural disasters. The Christian mystics have left dozens of books telling their friends and pupils of their own extraordinary experiences of their encounter with God in contemplative prayer. The Institutional Church was often hostile to these deeply prayerful men and women, because their personal experiences often called into question the formal teachings of the Church. The Inquisition tried to silence St Teresa and St John of the Cross (and many others) but their writings have suddenly become immensely popular in the last century. Julian of Norwich and *The Cloud of Unknowing* are frequently quoted and republished. All over the

world men and women are being caught up in a great tide of God's Spirit. As they persist in a life of prayer, like Etty Hillesum, these writers speak in various ways of the “*deep well*”, or the “*vast sea of silence*” they discover inside themselves and find themselves enfolded in Indwelling Love, even in the most distressing circumstances. If we were to ask a Christian mystic how he or she manages to hang onto their faith in this dark world I think their answer might surprise us. “No. I can't make sense of this world and God's action in it. But I can make sense of God's action in my own inner world. Because I am enfolded in love, I KNOW that God is good”. I know God is good just as I know that a Schubert Quintet is wonderful and a rose is beautiful. On their way to the gas chambers musicians played Beethoven's string quartets. Someone who is deaf won't know what that means. Those who have not yet discovered the “*deep well*” inside them won't get it. Of course there are still times when everything goes dark. But my faith then is to go on trusting that what I have known is still true even when I no longer feel it. Beethoven went totally deaf when he was 29, but went on to compose some of the most profoundly beautiful music our human race has ever heard.

During the Black Death, when a third of the population of Europe died Julian of Norwich had a series of “shewings” or visions of Jesus on the Cross during which he had long conversations with her. She asked why the world was such a painful and cruel place. He reassures her, saying, “All shall be well.” She protests, “But how, Lord? When there is so much wickedness and horror in the world?” He says, “Heaven awaits you. If you wish I can let you go straight to Heaven and all this will be forgotten.” She replies, “But, Lord, You are my Heaven.” It's almost as if He says, “Good, then come with me and be where I am.” That is right in the middle of all the dark and evil places in the world still on his Cross. That is why some Christians call the Cross a throne.

Hugh Dickinson



Advent and Christmas Events and services



Advent... an opportunity meet with each other via Zoom to reflect on the great themes of Advent. Rev Paul Springate is willing to host this again. The last two years we have had the opportunity to meet up in one of our local pubs. Clearly we are unable to do this at the moment so Paul has agreed to host an online discussion via ZOOM. If you would like to be part of this please contact Paul directly and he will give to you the necessary passwords for access to the Zoom facility. Email revpaul@cirenparish.co.uk

Advent Carol Service

Streamed Service from the Parish Church of St John Baptist 29th November 6p.m. www.cirenparish.co.uk

Click on the streamed services link.



Christmas Services.

MU Service Wed 2nd Dec at 2.30 p.m.

Carol Services will have restricted numbers.

This will be determined by 'covid' restrictions in place at the time.

6 p.m. December 13th Holy Trinity Watermoor

7 p.m. December 18th St Lawrence

6 p.m. December 20th Parish Church

Three **Christmas Eve** Broadcasts...

9.30 a.m. Midday 8 p.m.

Christmas Eve. 4 p.m. Christingle for the Parish

Live streamed from the Parish Church

Christmas Eve Midnight Mass Starts at 11.30 a.m.

The Parish Church of St John Baptist

Numbers Restricted



Frederick Jackman – local artist

I have purchased a lovely little painting by an amateur artist from ebay. His name is Frederick George Jackman and the work was originally sold in a mixed lot at Moore Allen in Jan 2020. The seller on ebay purchased it there. The picture is dated 1961. I love the history of the things I own and therefore tried to search for Mr Jackman. He died in 1977 and lived in Cirencester or nearby but came perhaps from Watford, Hertfordshire. He married Mary E or M Stratford (I think) in 1946 and I am not sure if she died before Mr Jackman but I cannot find any trace of her on the free records. Someone must have owned the painting until the auction and I would love to know about the artist and wondered if you had any knowledge of the Jackman's in Cirencester. I would so love to add to the picture's his history for future generations. If anyone has any knowledge please would you contact me. I would love to add his history to the picture for future generations. It is titled 'A winter's tale' and is a picture of three men in a pub by an open fire, smoking and drinking – one obviously telling a 'story' to the others.



Thank you for any information.

Ruth Knapton

01746710512 mob 07875086327 ruth.knapton@yahoo.co.uk



Ride + Stride

You will be pleased to know that the total figure raised by the Ride + Stride event on Saturday 12 September 2020 was **£2,137.50**



What an achievement by our vicar Graham, vergers John and Maggie Chew – **CONGRATULATIONS**

The monies will be split between Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust and our own parish church of St John Baptist, Cirencester

Corinne Lamus

MOTHERS' UNION LETTER



Dear Members and Friends

First of all I'd like to thank you for all your prayers during lockdown while I awaited my hip replacement operation, and for all the cards, flowers and good wishes I've had since the operation in September.

Prayers do make a difference. During this morning's service Canon Graham asked Bernie from the Upper Room, what we could do to help, and she said "Just pray for us".

As has been said before, the Mothers' Union is a powerhouse of prayer - it's what we do. From the most active members to those who are indoor members we can all pray, and those prayers must be continuous around the world in many countries.

We know that there are many situations around the world which are heart-rending and distressing, and we feel helpless - but we can still pray. God is in the midst of all this and he hears our prayers, and we should trust in Him and keep praying.

As I write this we are approaching the season of Advent. It may be a penitential time, but it is also one of anticipation and excitement as we prepare to greet the Light of the World. We who follow Jesus should also bring light to the world.

Wishing you all a peaceful and blessed Christmas and New Year.

With love

Rosemary

DIARY DATES

December

Wednesday 2nd 2.30pm Thanksgiving/Advent service online with Rev Penny Light and Rev Joe Mottram

Thursday 3rd, Friday 4th, Saturday 5th 10am - 12 noon Craft Sale in Parish Church (unless still in lockdown)

Wednesday 16th 8pm Christmas Celebration online

January 2021

Wednesday 6th 2.30pm Epiphany Service online with Canon Graham

February

Monday 1st 2.30pm Candlemas Service, Holy Trinity (or online) with Canon Graham & Rev Alison Love

Wednesday 3rd 2.30pm AGM in Church Hall, Watermoor (or online) with a Posy of Poems by Pauline Farman. Bring & Buy.

Cirencester Mothers' Union have been busy during the pandemic preparing items for their **Christmas Craft Stall**.

However in these uncertain time they would like to offer the opportunity to make purchases now.

Here are a sample of goods on offer – please contact Kathie Cottey (01285 654038 or kcottey@talktalk.net) for more information.



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families
Diocese of Gloucester

Come and get that special handmade gift and support projects worldwide.

Christmas Craft Sale

Thurs 3rd - Sat 5th December 2020

10am to 12noon
(subject to local restrictions)

Parish Church

Market Place, Cirencester
or visit Parish website for more information

Raising funds for our work with families both locally and abroad.

For those
of a certain
age!



Please refer to the October 2020 online
magazine
for the back-story. Thank you.

Horatio's Spot

The archives

Hi Folks,

Do you remember in last month's letter I introduced you to the people and animals who live in the big house at the end of my garden? Well I thought that this month I would tell you how Squeak the dog got her name.

It was one winter's day very early in the morning; I was feeling a bit peckish so, I went outside to find something to eat. I crept out very quietly because I didn't want to disturb the earwigs and woodlice who were snoring away under a brick just outside my door.

Well I looked up at the big house and to my surprise, I saw that all the lights were on and I could hear the children shouting and laughing. Curious thing, I thought and I decided to investigate. I let myself in through the back door. I've got my own key, of course; well you have to keep an eye on folks if they insist on building their house on your land, don't you? I climbed the stairs and went into the bedroom where Mumples and Dumples sleep, and everyone was there, Bubbles, Squeak, Muddles, Poppet, Pebbles, Sun and of course, Mumples and Dumples.

"Happy Christmas Horatio!" they all shouted and then of course I realised why everyone was awake so early, it was Christmas morning. I say they all shouted "Happy Christmas," all except Dumples that is because he was muttering away to himself saying, "What time do you call this? I've only just got to bed, can't a fellow get any sleep around here?" and other things that I can't really mention. Pebbles said he ought to have been called Grumples and not Dumples.

Anyway, to get back to my story; We all had our presents and Squeak had this little white elephant toy with yellow feet, red ears and blue eyes. She was very

excited just to have a present, but every time she touched it, it gave out this squeaking noise. At first she was a bit frightened by it, but it wasn't long before it became a very good friend. She loved the toy elephant so much that the family called her Squeak and that's how she got her name.

Curious thing though, it doesn't matter how much noise is going on in the house, or where Squeak the dog is, or what she is doing, every time she hears the little elephant make its squeaking noise, she drops everything and goes off to find it.

It's a bit like us really. When we ask the Lord Jesus into our lives we are given a new name, 'Christian' and as we get to know God we begin to recognise his voice amidst the hurly burly of everyday life,

1 Kings 19:12 talks about 'A still small voice'. Why not read it or get someone to read it to you?

Happy Christmas!

Bye for now HORATIO.

Q. Why is Peter Pan flying all the time?

A. He Neverlands!

(Jokes – Readers Digest)

Horatio's Spot

The archives

Hi Folks,

I really must tell you about a super Christmas party I went to. It was at the Christchurch Mother and Toddler group and we all had a splendid time. We played lots of games like pass the parcel, musical chairs and ring a ring of roses, they were great fun.

Then we had a really slap up tea of jelly, cakes, crisps, sandwiches, biscuits, orange squash and lots more. I think I may have put a bit of weight on.

After tea all the children and their Mums sat down to watch a bit of entertainment from an international star of stage, screen, radio and church halls. Modesty won't

allow me to tell you who it was, but I will just say that his initials are H.R.H., he lives in Compost Cottage and he's kind of prickly in a cuddly sort of way. Anyway, there I was, Oh Dear! I've given the secret away now; never mind; there I was with my friends Septimus the spider, also Tilly the white mouse who was making her very first appearance before the general public.

We all had a great time and the best bit for me was the letter I had received from Father Christmas asking me to give out the presents to the children, it really was a great honour. I had a present too, it was a special red and white woolly hat with a picture of a hedgehog on it and I wore it to give out the presents.

It was great fun to see the children eagerly opening the presents they had been given and finding out what was inside. I thought afterwards, it would be a bit strange wouldn't it if you were given a present and you put it away without looking at it?

When God sent his Son Jesus to earth as a baby on the very first Christmas day, it was a bit like him giving a present to the whole world. When we ask the Lord Jesus into our lives and start to follow him. it's a bit like opening that present to find out what's inside and we know that God only gives good gifts, so Jesus must be very good news indeed.

But good presents are meant to be used and not just opened and then put away in some corner to be forgotten about. The bible says 'Taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the one who takes refuge in him' (Psalm 34 v 8)

If we follow Jesus we will not be disappointed. He is the best present that God could ever give and definitely one to be opened and enjoyed.

Happy New Year!

See you next time HORATIO.

Q. Why did Mickey Mouse become an astronaut?

A. So he could visit Pluto! (*Jokes – Readers Digest*)

Project Blackjack – latest news

Works starts on the statue of St John

Work has now commenced on the statue of St John the Baptist. The sculptor, Rodney Munday, is working in his barn aka his studio. The dimensions of the statues have been modified following the tower visit, and they are now just slightly under 2.2m. As you can see, still very impressive.



The first step has been to build a lightweight wooden frame. This is then covered in chicken wire which is roughly moulded to the statues outlines. The head and the upper body are exaggerated as they will be foreshortened when viewed from ground level.

The second stage is that slabs of clay are applied to the wire framework, to provide a base coat.



Meg Blumson

Fired Up



Evelyn and George Ramsgate lived at number 3, Havernew Avenue. The name of their street was the developer's idea of a joke and the lack of trees in the avenue was the council's idea of saving money. Each little house looked exactly the same and that is why Evelyn Ramsgate went to extraordinary lengths to ensure her house, number 3, was a bit different.

Evelyn would plant extra begonias in the small patch of front garden. Every plant was positioned exactly around the neatly trimmed square of lawn which George mowed as regularly as he was nagged to do it. The back garden was mainly laid to a patio area but that was only small and easily maintained by George crawling around on his hands and knees, removing any plant or blade of grass that dared to emerge through a crack between the paving slabs.

'You don't need a kneeler, George!' Evelyn would say. 'You're still young enough to bend!'

But at seventy-nine, bordering on eighty, George was not so sure. At least number 3 was a bungalow and he didn't need to climb stairs any more. His replacement knee would protest enough at kneeling on the patio, let alone managing the stairs.

Their home bordered the churchyard and Evelyn would mutter darkly about the length of the grass around the lichen-covered graves and the general unkempt nature of the whole area.

'My mother would have had a fit!' she exclaimed. 'All those hours she gave to that church, cleaning it, polishing the brass, tending those graves. She would turn in hers if she could see what was above her.'

'But at least she loved the place,' George tried to be placating, knowing it would fail, yet again.

'No idea why!' Evelyn snapped. 'When she was ill no one from that church came to see her. Not one! Not even the Vicar!'

'There was a vacancy,' George pointed out, 'so there wasn't one.'

'Excuses! Surely they could have found someone.'

'Did you tell anyone?'

'Of course not. They're supposed to know these things!'

George thought for a moment. 'Well, they've got one now. A nice young woman.'

Evelyn glared at him. There had been a time when she would have been willing

to help at the church, clean the lectern, polish the altar rail or sweep up the confetti. But not now. Not after the perceived slight when her mother had passed away.

‘I was talking with her, yesterday,’ added George,’ and she seemed very nice.’

‘What about? Not about where you are going to be buried, I hope.’

‘Well, as a matter of fact....’ George tailed off. He knew he would not be able to talk Evelyn round.

‘Yes?’ Evelyn’s voice rose into a question.

‘I was telling her how I had loved worshipping here and that I’d made arrangements to have my ashes interred there.’

Evelyn’s eyes flared. ‘Over my dead body!’ she exclaimed.

George smiled gently. ‘Yes,’ he admitted, ‘that was the general idea. Provided you go first.’

Evelyn took a step towards him. ‘Let’s get one thing perfectly clear,’ she hissed, ‘neither of us are going anywhere near that place when we die!’ She held up a dismissive finger as he began to protest.

‘Then, I think I’ll go to bed,’ George said, thoughtfully. ‘I haven’t been feeling very well, actually.’

‘Then bed’s the best place for you. I’m not having you being ill in here. And I don’t want you making a mess in the bedroom either. And if you are ill in the bathroom, then make sure you clear it all up!’

George wished, silently, that he could give as good as he received, to be really fired up and stand his own ground – just for once. But that time never came, for George was far sicker than he had thought or even imagined. He managed to put himself to bed and his last comforting thought was of the lights from inside the church shining through the stained glass windows and bathing the churchyard with rainbow colours. Then, without noise or any disturbance to Evelyn whatsoever, he died.

‘Well, at least he didn’t make a mess,’ Evelyn announced to the few relatives who had dared to accept the grudging invitation to come back to the house after the crematorium service. ‘I didn’t even know he had a weak heart. The doctor never told me he shouldn’t exert himself. Now who am I going to get to trim the lawn and pull the weeds?’

‘We know he loved the church. Are you going to inter the ashes in the church graveyard?’ one relative had the temerity to enquire.

‘Good heavens, no!’ Evelyn answered, ‘but I am going to take him there.’

‘Well, you must do something with his ashes, Evelyn.’

‘Oh, I will,’ responded Evelyn with a smile. ‘It’s November the 5th soon. Come round at seven o’ clock.’

At the appointed time on Guy Fawkes Night, the few gathered again in the churchyard. The sounds of choir practice filtered through the open church door and everyone was intrigued as to what Evelyn wanted them to do.

‘To do? Oh, nothing,’ Evelyn assured them. ‘It’s what I’m going to do with George,’ and at that point she took out of a brightly coloured box a very large firework - a long rocket with an even longer stick.

‘I’ve put George into a couple of toilet rolls,’ she announced.

‘Toilet rolls?’ one of the relations asked slightly aghast, ‘is that fitting?’

‘Oh, he fitted alright,’ replied Evelyn, ‘and it’s very apt. He always got through toilet rolls like there was no tomorrow. No, I’ve wrapped him up and I’m going to tape him to this enormous rocket and fire him into space. As far away from this place as is possible.’

There was a stunned silence except for the staccato sound of duct tape coming off the roll and strapping George to the rocket.

‘George can go as near to heaven as I can manage,’ Evelyn said waving a hand towards Venus which shone brightly, almost expectantly. ‘Stand back everyone!’

And she lit the blue touch paper.

The rocket flared, quivered and suddenly took off. But Evelyn had not really studied rocket aerodynamics and the weight of George, in his toilet roll centre, took the rocket way off course. George shot upwards for a moment, veered suddenly as the end of the long stick caught the edge of one of the gravestones and then, with unerring precision, shot straight through the open church doorway. For a few seconds the church lit up with a flickering glow and then, in a myriad of flashing colours, the rocket exploded.

Inside the church, where he had worshipped for all those years, there was a little bit of George in every corner, on every rafter and in every nook and cranny.

Howard Gray



Dates for December 2020 and January 2021

(Depending on Covid restrictions)

(Dates taken from the Parish calendar)

2 Dec, Wed

9:30 – 10am Midweek broadcast

1:10 – 1:50pm Organ Recital

7 – 8pm Eucharist

Holy Trinity Church

3 Dec, Thu

12 – 1pm Eucharist Nave

4 Dec, Fri

9 – 9:30am BCP Eucharist Lady Chapel

Parish Church

12 – 1pm Eucharist Nave

5 Dec, Sat

12 – 1pm Eucharist Nave

6 Dec, Sun

8 – 9am Holy Comm BCP - Lady Chapel

10 – 11:30am Eucharist - Livestream

Parish Church

10 – 11:30am Holy Trinity Eucharist

10:30 – 11:30am St Lawrence Eucharist

4 – 5pm Choral Evensong

7 Dec, Mon

12 – 1pm Eucharist Nave

8 Dec, Tue

12 – 1pm Eucharist Nave

9 Dec, Wed

9:30 – 10am Midweek broadcast

7 – 8pm Eucharist

Holy Trinity Church

10 Dec, Thu

12 – 1pm Eucharist Nave

11 Dec, Fri

9 – 9:30am BCP Eucharist Lady Chapel

Parish Church

12 – 1pm Eucharist Nave

12 Dec, Sat

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
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13 Dec, Sun

8 – 9am	Holy Comm BCP - Lady Chapel	
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist - Livestream	Parish Church
10 – 11:30am	Holy Trinity Eucharist	
10:30 – 11:30am	St Lawrence Eucharist	
6pm – 7pm	Holy Trinity Carol Service	

14 Dec, Mon

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
7:30 – 9pm	PCC Standing Committee 7.30pm	Vicarage.

15 Dec, Tue

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
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16 Dec, Wed

9:30 – 10am	Midweek broadcast	
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity Church

17 Dec, Thu

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
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18 Dec, Fri

9 – 9:30am	BCP Eucharist Lady Chapel	Parish Church
11am – 12pm	Wedding	Parish Church
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
7pm – 8pm	St Lawrence Carol Service	

19 Dec, Sat

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
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20 Dec, Sun

8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist - Livestream	Parish Church
10 – 11:30am	Holy Trinity Eucharist	
10:30 – 11:30am	St Lawrence Eucharist	
6 – 7pm	Parish Church Carol Service	

21 Dec, Mon

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
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22 Dec, Tue		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
23 Dec, Wed		
9:30 – 10am	Midweek broadcast	
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity Church
24 Dec, Thu		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
4 – 5pm	Christingle live streamed	
11:30pm–12:15pm	Midnight Mass	Parish Church
25 Dec, Fri		
9 – 9:30am	BCP Eucharist Lady Chapel	Parish Church
10 – 11am	Christmas Day Eucharist	Parish Church
10 – 11am	Christmas Day Eucharist	Holy Trinity Watermoor
10 – 11am	Christmas Day Eucharist	St Lawrence Chesterton
26 Dec, Sat		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
27 Dec, Sun		
8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist - Livestream	Parish Church
10 – 11:30am	Holy Trinity Eucharist	
10:30 – 11:30am	St Lawrence Eucharist	
4 – 5pm	Evening Prayer	
28 Dec, Mon		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
29 Dec, Tue		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
30 Dec, Wed		
9:30 – 10am	Midweek broadcast	
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity Church
31 Dec, Thu		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	

1 Jan, Fri

9 – 9:30am	BCP Eucharist Lady Chapel	Parish Church
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	

2 Jan, Sat

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave
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3 Jan, Sun

8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist - Livestream	Parish Church
10 – 11:30am	Holy Trinity Eucharist	
10:30 – 11:30am	St Lawrence Eucharist	
4 – 5pm	Choral Evensong	

4 Jan, Mon

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave
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5 Jan, Tue

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
4 – 5pm	Spend time with Benedict	Parish Church

6 Jan, Wed

9:30 – 10am	Midweek broadcast	
1:10 – 1:50pm	Organ Recital	
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity Church

7 Jan, Thu

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave
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8 Jan, Fri

9 – 9:30am	BCP Eucharist Lady Chapel	Parish Church
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	

9 Jan, Sat

12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave
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10 Jan, Sun

8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist - Livestream	Parish Church
10 – 11:30am	Holy Trinity Eucharist	
10:30 – 11:30am	St Lawrence Eucharist	
4 – 5pm	Evening Prayer	

11 Jan, Mon		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
12 Jan, Tue		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
13 Jan, Wed		
9:30 – 10am	Midweek broadcast	
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity Church
14 Jan, Thu		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
15 Jan, Fri		
9 – 9:30am	BCP Eucharist Lady Chapel	Parish Church
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
16 Jan, Sat		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
17 Jan, Sun		
8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist - Livestream	Parish Church
10 – 11:30am	Holy Trinity Eucharist	
10:30 – 11:30am	St Lawrence Eucharist	
4 – 5pm	Evensong	Parish Church
18 Jan, Mon		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
7:30 – 9pm	Quarter Peal	Parish Church
19 Jan, Tue		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	Holy Trinity Church
20 Jan, Wed		
9:30 – 10am	Midweek broadcast	
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity Church
21 Jan, Thu		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	

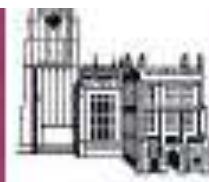
22 Jan, Fri		
9 – 9:30am	BCP Eucharist Lady Chapel	Parish Church
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
23 Jan, Sat		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
24 Jan, Sun		
8 – 9am	Holy Comm BCP - Lady Chapel	
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist - Livestream	Parish Church
10 – 11:30am	Holy Trinity Eucharist	
10:30 – 11:30am	St Lawrence Eucharist	
4 – 5pm	Licensing of Rev'd Alison Love Associate Vicar	
		Holy Trinity Church
25 Jan, Mon		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
26 Jan, Tue		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	
7:30 – 9:30pm	FULL PCC	
27 Jan, Wed		
9:30 – 10am	Midweek broadcast	
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity Church
28 Jan, Thu		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
29 Jan, Fri		
9 – 9:30am	BCP Eucharist Lady Chapel	Parish Church
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
30 Jan, Sat		
12 – 1pm	Eucharist Nave	
31 Jan, Sun		
8 – 9am	Holy Comm BCP - Lady Chapel	
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist - Livestream	Parish Church
10 – 11:30am	Holy Trinity Eucharist	
10:30 – 11:30am	St Lawrence Eucharist	
4 – 5pm	Evensong	Parish Church

Could you be a Home-Start Volunteer?

Do you have parenting experience? Can you give 2-3 hours during the week to help local families with young children? Being a parent is hard, especially if you do not have family and friends nearby to help. We train volunteers to visit families and provide them with non-judgemental, confidential support. Our next **FREE** training course will run in Cirencester (or online if necessary) every Wed morning during term time for 8 weeks, from **27th Jan to 24th Mar 2021**. For further information please call us on 01285 885391, email office@home-start-cotswolds.org.uk or visit our website: www.home-start-cotswolds.org.uk **We'd love to hear from you!**



Happy Christmas!



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