

The Bewsborough Parish Post

**A newsletter for the Churches in Barfrestone, Coldred, Eythorne &
Elvington with Waldershare, Shepherdswell and Whitfield**



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for
December**

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Watchers**

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Christmas Disruption and Disorientation

by Sean Sheffield

One of the things that clergy spend a lot of time doing, as you might expect, is thinking about Christmas! Personally I usually start thinking about it around the middle of January as I cast my thoughts back to the busy, joyful period and reflect on what went well the previous year and what we might need tweaking or changing for the Christmas to come.

It then completely drops off the radar for a few months as preparations begin for Easter, but when things calm down again over the summer we spend our idle moments trying to remember what we had decided back in January and coming up with wildly creative and completely impractical ideas for things we could do in the winter to come.

Generally those wildly creative ideas never make it off the drawing board, and we end up doing more or less the same as usual – even (and I'll let you in on a trade secret here) re-using the odd sermon if we're confident that the congregation had indulged in enough pre-service sherry or mulled wine to have forgotten our deeply profound and meaningful reflections the previous year.

This year, however, has been completely different. Planning ahead for Christmas this year has felt more like a game of Snakes and Ladders where one roll of the dice can send you sliding back down a completely different path and you have to start all over again! So we have made some plans for live streaming some services and making them available online. Also for using Zoom as we have done so successfully through this extended period of lockdown. And, we are excited about what we're hoping to offer to help our communities celebrate Christmas this year. But we also know (and have seen most starkly here in Dover) that a word from the Prime Minister, or a continued increase in local cases, could scupper some of these plans and send us back to the drawing board.

All this uncertainty has given me a new perspective on the Christmas story itself, because the more I reflect on this year of disruption, the more I realise how disrupting the events of the first Christmas were for those involved.

Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married, they no doubt had their plans for what their lives would look like, until the angel Gabriel turned up and sent all their plans out the window. Then, just as they were getting used to the idea that they would have a baby, the emperor ordered a census so they had to set off away from home on the long journey to Bethlehem. Not what they had planned at all.





Or what about the shepherds, sat happily in their fields just doing their job until the angels appeared and sent them running into the village to find the newborn Jesus.

And then there were the wise men, who embarked on a perilous journey to a far off land because of the appearance of a new star in the sky. None of these people could have predicted or planned what would happen to them, but when the disruption came they went with it and in doing so they met God face to face.

We all approach Christmas with our own sets of expectations and hopes, rituals and traditions, and after all we've been through this year it may feel heartbreaking that we won't be able to celebrate in the ways that we usually do.



But perhaps this Christmas, this strange and disrupted Christmas, this Christmas in which we might find ourselves somewhat disorientated, we have an opportunity to learn anew from Mary and Joseph, the wise men and the shepherds, and to allow the strange turn our lives have taken to lead us closer to the God who is always with us.

Yours in Christ

Sean

As I come to the end of my seasonal musings, and I hope have offered some encouragement for this Christmas period, I wanted to let you know about a new feature that is coming from the January issue of the Parish Post:



ASK the VICAR

Perhaps there is a burning theological question that you have always wanted to ask, or maybe just something you want to see whether you can get an answer to?

Well, now is your chance!

Simply send your questions in to:

askthevicar@bewsboroughparish.org

Your question, along with a response will be printed in the subsequent issue of the Parish Post.

If you would like your question to be anonymous, simply put that in the text of your email request.

Watching the Watchers

by Jennie Bradshaw

Dear friends,

It's quite fun now to walk with Pip - my pooch - around the block in the early evening dusk and see the daily additions to the twinkling house decorations. I suspect lockdown and male competitiveness will make this year's display more spectacular than ever!

Speaking of males, I bumped into a large gathering of them on a recent Sunday walk on the marsh. Each dressed in sombre all-weather-gear and laden with complicated binoculars and cameras, either suspended from their necks or stood on tripods. There were some 30+, plus one female similarly well clad. The entire group was staring most earnestly and silently across a partially harvested field of Savoy cabbages. It felt rude to break their concentration, but I did inquire as to the object of their scrutiny. Apparently, an Eastern Yellow Wagtail (very much off-course and so very rare in the UK) had been seen in the vicinity of that cabbage patch the day before.



As Pip and I proceeded-on we encountered other, more relaxed male bird watchers. These were those who'd seen the rare bird the previous morning and were now simply enjoying whatever wildfowl the water-meadows had to show. Evidently they were in touch with the silent watching 30+ and were rather smug in informing me that the Eastern Yellow Wagtail hadn't yet shown up for these latecomers, adding that in all likelihood it had already flown on its way.

The following week walking again the marsh footpaths I met 'G' whom I often encounter there and who feeds me small digestible bits of bird knowledge from his storehouse of experience. "Yes" he'd seen the exotic wagtail but reckoned it a "nondescript little bird" compared with our own yellow wagtail, which comment had apparently so offended a fellow watcher that he turned on his heels in scorn!

Intrigued by the emotions that the little flying migrant had stirred I couldn't resist enquiring again of another familiar bird watcher further along the track. "Yes", he'd seen the wagtail. In fact, he'd been the first to see and identify it. "How wonderful" I said, "your name will be written up in the annals of history". "It already is!" he replied beaming with stirred pride.

All of it , marshes, birds, watchers, and me too, a watcher of watchers, a tiny and fascinating speck in the Creator's quirky and loved creation.

Yours

Jennie B.

The Messiah

by Revd. Philip Buss

For the second Sunday of advent the old Testament lesson is Isaiah 40 versus 1 - 11.

They begin with the words "Comfort, O Comfort my people, says your God ". Now I can never just think of those words without putting music to them. From singing treble in my school choir to going down the register to a sort of baritone, the Messiah has been part of my life. After the quiet introductory pastoral symphony I can still hear that tenor solo "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God ".

George Frederic Handel was the Kapellmeister of the Elector of Hanover who became George I. Handel moved to this country and composed some 40 operas and ventured into a form of religious opera called "oratorio ". The first was a biblical drama, "Esther". About the middle of the 18th century he was given by Charles Jennens the text of the Messiah, which centred on the coming of Christ, his death and resurrection and the ultimate victory of the kingdom of God. In around 24 days Handel had put the whole text to music and it was scheduled for performance in the New Music Hall in Fishamble Street in Dublin. It took place on 13th of April 1742 in aid of charity. A year later it came to London but failed to please. Subsequent performances in aid of the Foundling Hospital in London which still benefits financially from each new production.



The popularity of the Messiah has now been totally assured.

Jennens's libretto only mentions a few verses in today's old Testament lesson but the ones that do occur are memorable because of the music whether it's a solo, or the rousing chorus. "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it", (no prizes for recognising the AV!)

If I was writing a commentary on this chapter I would want to say how hard it would be to find in any language words that more gently woo the brother heart of a people, quoting the Old Testament scholar G.A Smith. I would like to add "my people and your God" to my list. Nothing summarises the covenant relationship better - God says "my people" and "your God".

It is personal, intimate and stable. Israel has served her term of sentence, the 70 years of exile in Babylon. She has shown repentance. Her sins have been forgiven which led to departure from the promised land, and reverse the Exodus. The Return is on.

The voice crying in the wilderness has been fulfilled in the prophetic ministry of John the Baptist. The humble have been elevated, the proud brought down. A direct route to the Messiah has been declared in his witness to the Messiah (John 1). "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world ". "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it", as Handels mighty chorus proclaims it.

In New Testament terms, Restored Jerusalem, Zion of old, will become a missionary people sharing the gospel of redemption with the cities of Judah, Samaria, even to the ends of the Earth. Those who citizenship belongs to "Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God" (Hebrews 12:22), will become heralds of good tidings, lifting up their voices with strength. They will testify to the Lord the King, the judge of all the Earth and the Chief Shepherd who will feed, gather, carry the lambs and gently lead the ewes and disciple his under shepherds.

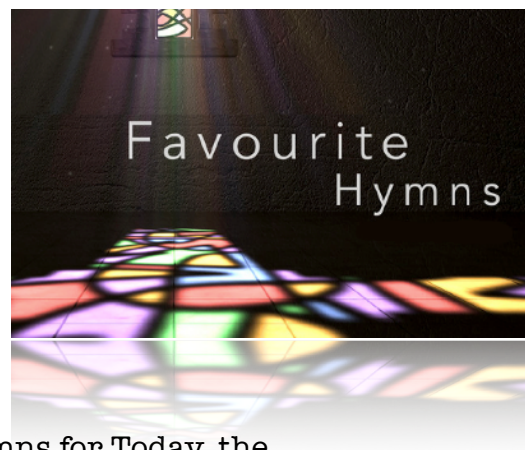
Oh happy day, when we shall sing with the angels the "Hallelujah" chorus without let or hindrance! And Handels mighty conclusion in its celestial finality "Worthy is the Lamb" Amen and Amen we shall add as never before.

My Favourite Hymn/Carol

by Revd. Marguerite Mower

“Long ago, Prophets Knew”

Written by the Methodist minister Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000), who discovered fairly late in life a talent for finding New words to fit well-known tunes. Many 20th century hymn writers did this, notably John Bel of the Iona community. The Church of England recognized Pratt Green’s gift when several were included in *More Hymns for Today*, the follow-up on *A Hundred Hymns for Today*.



Some are in all our hymn books:

The Harvest Hymn - For the Fruits of His Creation

Maundy Thursday - An Upper Room did our Lord Prepare.

I believe he was given that great gift, shared by some of our greatest hymn writers of finding simple, memorable words to express deep truths.

My hymn is in almost all the book we use, but the orange one, *Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New*, for some reason does not have the change in the words of the refrain to the final verse.

1. LONG ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew.
Come to make all things new;
Bear his People's burden,
Freely love and pardon.

Refrain:

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes,
When he comes,
Who will make him welcome?

2. God in time, God in man,
This is God's timeless plan:
He will come, as a man,
Born himself of woman,
God divinely human.

Refrain

3. Mary, hail! Though afraid,
She believed, she obeyed.
In her womb God is laid;
Till the time expected
Nurtured and protected.

Refrain

4. Journey ends! Where afar
Bethlem shines, like a star,
Stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!

Refrain

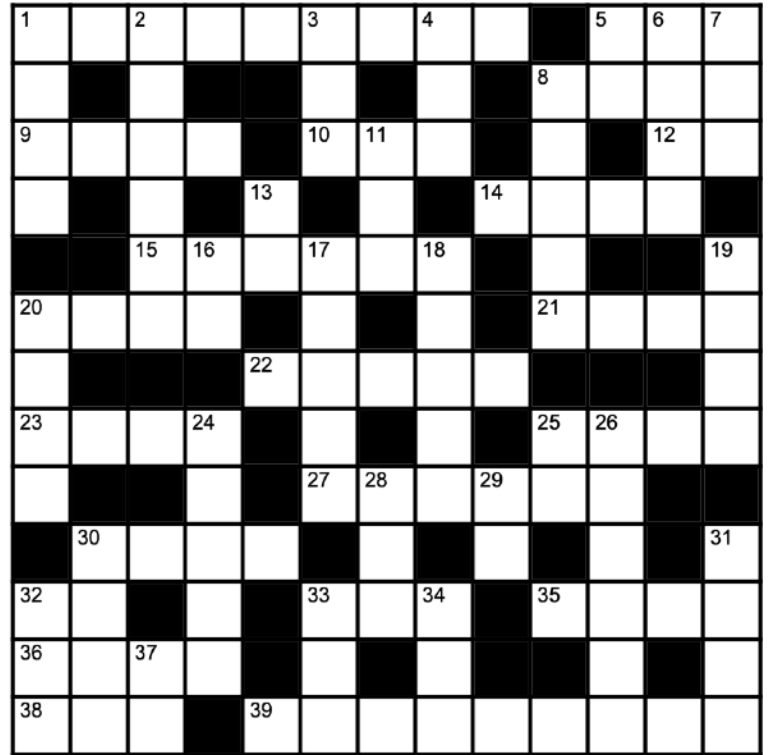
Christmas Crossword

Across

- 1 Jesus' birthplace (9)
 5 Herod slew the children of this age and under (3)
 8 Peter quoted his words on the day of Pentecost (4)
 9 "A ___ shaken with the wind" (4)
 10 "Ye shall find ___ babe wrapped in swaddling clothes" (3)
 12 The year from Jesus' birth (2)
 14 Anna was of this tribe (as recorded in Luke) (4)
 15 "Behold, a ___ shall be with child" (6)
 20 "Fruits ___ for repentance" (4)
 21 The wise men came from here (4)
 22 "He shall reign of the house of ___ for ever" (5)
 23 A female ancestor of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 1 (4)
 25 The amount of manna to be gathered per person (4)
 27 He multiplied the widow's oil (6)
 30 "As soon as the voice of thy salvation sounded in mine ___" (4)
 32 An altar meaning witness (Joshua 22) (2)
 33 To increase (3)
 35 Malarial fever (4)
 36 To guide (4)
 38 There was no room here (3)
 39 These men went to see the baby Jesus (9)

Down

- 1 "Mary, of whom was ___ Jesus" (4)
 2 Jesus' age when he was taken to Jerusalem (6)
 3 Jesus did not do this in the wilderness (3)
 4 Adam's wife (3)
 5 "Mary was espoused ___ Joseph" (2)
 6 "They that ___ soft clothing are in kings' houses" (4)
 7 Zacharias said, "I am an ___ man" (3)
 8 Grandson of 23 (5)
 11 A place near Bethel (3)
 13 "A pair of turtledoves ___ two young pigeons" (2)
 16 "That ___ might be fulfilled" (2)
 17 "The ___ of God was upon him" (5)
 18 Mother-in-law of 23 (5)
 19 This went before the wise men (4)
 20 The mother of Jesus (4)
 24 He was king at the time of Jesus' birth (5)
 25 "___ that one would hear me!" (2)
 26 Jesus was laid in this (6)
 28 The spirit did this to Jesus in the wilderness (3)
 29 Thus (2)
 30 The first garden (4)
 31 "Where is he that is born king of the ___?" (4)
 32 A priest in the time of Samuel (3)
 33 A tree of the olive family (3)
 34 To put into water (3)
 37 "___ angel of the Lord appeareth" (2)



by Colin

© BiblePuzzles.org.uk

Solution from November Issue

Across: 1 Ass, 2 God, 4 Thaddaeus, 8 Sadducees, 12 Adina, 13 Our, 14 Noe, 15 Curse, 16 Pit, 17 Satan, 18 Taste, 19 Eve, 20 Elisabeth, 21 Aaronites, 22 Levi, 23 Despises, 26 Promises, 30 Suffered, 31 Rise, 32 Mediator, 35 Adorning, 39 Ezra, 40 Gog, 42 Ant, 44 Palace, 45 Increase. **Down:** 1 Angel Of The Lord, 3 Dead Sea Scrolls, 4 Trample, 5 Amittai, 6 Dead Sea, 7 Strongholds, 8 Sanctuaries, 9 Unclean, 10 Earnest, 11 Shekels, 24 Ear, 25 Eye, 26 Posts, 27 Offered, 28 Serpent, 29 Sodom, 33 End, 34 Own, 35 Agag, 36 Omega, 37 Isaac, 38 Gift, 41 Open, 43



December and indeed Christmas 2020 may be different to those that we have experienced before, but that doesn't mean that things won't be happening around the Parish, it simply means that the way in which we will be doing and offering things will be different.

So please check out all that is going on, and also the other resources that are being signposted.

Set Bible Readings for Sundays in December

Sunday 6th December	Sunday 13th December	Sunday 20th December	Sunday 27th December
Isaiah 40:1-11	Isaiah 6:1-4,8-end	2 Samuel 1:1-11,16	Exodus 33:7-11a
Psalms 85:1-2,8-13	Psalms 126	Canticle:Magnificat	Psalms 117
2 Peter 3:8-15a	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	Romans 16:25-end	1 John 1
Mark 1:1-8	John 1:6-8, 19-28	Luke 1:26-38	John 21:19b- end

Christmas Night/Day Readings

Set I	Set II	Set II
Isaiah 9:2-7	Isaiah 62:6-end	Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalms 96	Psalms 97	Psalms 98
Titus 2:11-14	Titus 2:4-7	Hebrews 1:1-4[5-12]
Luke 2:1-14[15-20]	Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20	John 1:1-14

Note from the Editor

During this new Liturgical year (B) we meditate on the Gospel of Mark which will be used for many of the Sunday readings, as set by our Lectionary.

As the shortest (and seemingly the earliest) Gospel, why not use the Christmas period to read through the whole Gospel in one sitting (around an hour). Prepare yourself for the journey of this coming year, and perhaps be ready to ask some challenging questions to those preaching in our Churches!

December and Christmas Worship & Services

Given the decision earlier this month which I wrote to you about, our service pattern for December is different and all of our December and Christmas services are now detailed below.

Services that are shown below will all take place on **Zoom** with community events also being made available as videos on YouTube and shared to Facebook pages and groups as appropriate.

Zoom invitations will be sent out each week ahead of services and events, if you would like anyone to be added to the distribution list please let Sean know.

Please note, in line with the guidance from Bishop Rose received earlier this month, and to allow our Clergy team, retired Clergy friends and Ministry leaders to take a break over the Christmas period, there will be no Zoom or live service on Sunday 27th December.

Sunday December 6th		Advent 2	
09:00	BCP Morning Prayer	Zoom online	Rev. Sean Sheffield
10:30	Morning Worship	Zoom online	Rev. Sean Sheffield
Sunday December 13th		Advent 3	
09:00	BCP Morning Prayer	Zoom online	Rev. Sean Sheffield
10:30	Morning Worship	Zoom online with Eucharist	Rev. Stewart Carolan-Evans Rev. Sean Sheffield
Sunday December 20th		Advent 4	
09:00	BCP Morning Prayer	Zoom online	Rev. Sean Sheffield
10:30	Morning Worship	Zoom online	Rev. Stewart Carolan-Evans Rev. Sean Sheffield
18:00	Carols & Lessons Service	Zoom, YouTube and Facebook	Rev. Sean Sheffield
CHRISTMAS EVE			
16:00	Christingle At Home	YouTube and Facebook streams	Rev. Sean Sheffield
21:00	Christmas Eucharist	Live Zoom stream	Rev. Sean Sheffield
23:30	Christmas Eucharist	Live Zoom stream	Rev. Stewart Carolan-Evans Rev. Sean Sheffield
CHRISTMAS DAY			
09:00	Christmas Morning BCP	Live Zoom stream	Rev. Sean Sheffield
10:30	Christmas Morning CW Eucharist	Live Zoom stream	Rev. Sean Sheffield
Sunday December 27th		Christmas 1	NO SERVICE

Parish Christmas Cards - YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!!

Below is an image of the front and the back of the Bewsborough Parish Christmas card for 2020 (with some wonderful images inside of all of our Church buildings in the snow - so look out for these.)

We would like to get one of these cards into every house in our Village communities, BUT WE NEED HELP TO DO THIS. We particularly need help delivering cards to houses in Elvington and Whitfield. If you are able to offer an hour or so, and post a few cards through letterboxes then please give Sean a call and he will drop some off to you. Even if you were to deliver to your own neighbours in your street, that would be a massive help! Thank you!

Christmas this year will be different. Our family gatherings may well be smaller than anticipated or hoped for. Some of us may be joining and singing carols online rather than in one of our Parish churches. But it will still be (as it always is) a time to care for one another and to be together.

It will be a time to look back on a year when so much has changed. But what has not changed is the story and the meaning of Jesus' birth.

Christmas is GOOD NEWS. Christmas offers and brings comfort and joy to us all and to a world that is perhaps weary and hurting from the events of this past year.

The message of the baby, Jesus, born in Bethlehem is that God is with us. With us in the mess as He is with us in the good, in the disappointment and the difficulty, in sorrow and celebration. God does not stand far off, watching us from a distance. God comes to us, walks with us and stands with us.

[words from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York]

Please get in touch with us, to find out what is going on in our Parish churches during the Christmas season, to get further information or if you need support. Let's celebrate this most wonderful time in our communities together.



Rev. Sean with his wife Ruth and their children Noah & Phoebe



New Website

As many of you know our old Bewsborough Parish website had not been updated for some time, and was also quite out of date with regards to Safeguarding information.

During November Sean built and deployed a new website with a new hosting partner, who specialise in Church websites and support. Whilst there are future functions that we will use the new site is live and can be visited on the following web address / link :

www.bewsboroughparish.org

We will ensure that weekly sermons are placed on here along with videos and seasonal content as it becomes available. So do check the site regularly!

This is still being developed so if you spot anything or think of anything that we should put on there then please get in touch with Sean.

FRIENDly Music for Wellbeing –Virtual Sessions available NOW!

by Sarah Hindle

Adrian Bawtree, Friends' Trustee and Cathedral organist, has recorded eight FRIENDly Music sessions for you to enjoy at home and with your loved ones (as long, of course, that you are in your 'bubble' and socially distanced!) You can sing along at any time you chose by copying or typing this link into your internet browser or simply by searching for 'Friends of Canterbury Cathedral singing' on YouTube:



<https://youtu.be/WsfqCojCLg8>

The launch of the Christmas session of FRIENDly Music will be announced later in the year.

A set of lovely little sessions with well known songs, intended for singing along to with older folk probably. The words come up on screen to a piano accompaniment so would need family or friends to be singing alongside, probably. But also note that there will be a Christmas session too – will let you know if I can find it. I find youtube a bit hard to negotiate, and could only find sessions 6,7 and 8 but I expect the whole lot are there if one has the patience to look.

A Prayer from John Reynolds

Dear God

Give us grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
the courage to change things that should be changed,
and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.
Amen.

(Reinhold Niebuhr)

Coming in the January Issue of the Parish Post

“Grill the Vicar”

Children’s activity page

‘What’s in a logo?’ - cafe musings of a Vicar

News of the Bible Course that will be running in January

AND MUCH MUCH MORE!!

CHRISTMAS RECIPES

Christmas Rocky Road

by Jenny Hunt (well perhaps Nigella's recipe!!)

Ingredients:

250g dark chocolate
150g milk chocolate
175g soft butter
4 x 15ml tablesp golden syrup
200g amaretti biscuits (the hard ones)
150g shelled brazil nuts
150g red glace cherries
mini marshmallows
1 x 15ml tablesp icing sugar

A foil tray measuring approximately 236 x 296 mm

Method:

Chop both sorts of chocolate small then put into a heavy based pan to melt with the butter and syrup over a gentle heat.

Put the biscuits into a freezer bag and bash with a rolling pin until you have a mixture of crumbs and bigger pieces.

Put the brazil nuts into another freezer bag and bash these with a rolling pin until you have a mixture of small and larger pieces.

Take the pan off the heat and add the crushed biscuits and nuts, the whole glace cherries and mini marshmallows. Turn everything to coat with the chocolate mixture.

Turn everything into the foil tray smoothing the top as best you can.

Refrigerate until firm enough to cut (approx 1½ - 2 hours)

Sieve the icing sugar over the top.

Cut into 24 squares and serve.

Making ahead:

Don't add the icing sugar until just before serving.

Cut into bars and store in an airtight container in a cool place for up to 1 week.

Freeze ahead:

Cut the Rocky Road into bars.

Freeze for up to a month.



All in One Fruit Cake

by Paula Bilbrough

It's never too late to make one, and our Christmas food offerings are not really complete without a moist and unctuous fruit cake. This one is simple, and could easily be iced to pop on your table!

Ingredients

225g Soft Margarine
225g Soft Brown Sugar
4 Eggs Beaten
45ml Milk
225g Mixed Dried Fruit
25g Walnut roughly chopped
350g SR Flour, sifted
2.8g Ground Cinnamon
2.8g Mixed Spice

Method

Grease a deep 20cm / 8in cake tin
& line with greased greaseproof paper.

Place all the ingredients in a mixing bowl & beat together for 2 – 3 minutes, or until thoroughly mixed.

Turn the mixture into the prepared tin & bake in a moderate oven (180C/350F or Gas Mark 4) for 1¼ hours or until a fine skewer inserted in the cake comes out clean.

Leave in the tin for 5 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool & remove the greaseproof paper.

To freeze: When cold, wrap in foil or place in a polythene bag. Seal & freeze.

To serve: Unwrap & thaw at room temperature for 4 – 5 hours



And finally.....

THE CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

FOR CHURCHES



DIG OUT THE CRIB FIGURES ☐



DECORATE THE TREE AND CHURCH ☐



CHOOSE PEOPLE TO READ THE LESSONS ☐



MAKE SURE THE CHOIR IS READY ☐



DELIVER THE CHRISTMAS PUBLICITY LEAFLETS ☐



CLEAN EVERYWHERE ☐



DECIDE WHICH CLERGY DO WHICH SERVICES ☐



BUY PRESENTS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED HARD ☐



CARRY IN EXTRA CHAIRS ☐



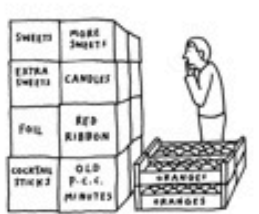
REHEARSE THE NATIVITY PLAY ☐



WRITE ALL OF THE SERMONS ☐



PREPARE THE CANDLES ☐



MAKE THE CHRISTINGLES ☐



COPY THE ORDERS OF SERVICE ☐



ORDER SUPPLIES FOR VICAR'S POST-CHRISTMAS BREAK ☐

CartoonChurch.com

A 2020 Christmas Recipe

By Jan Griffin

In a container, bring together:
 Up to Three households
 A good measure of patience
 Several dashes of fun
 A pinch of perseverance
 A ton of good humour
 Mix well and sprinkle with glitter
 Keep warm and fed
 Allow the Joy to rise up
 Open the windows.

If you need anything at all please do not hesitate to get in touch:

Rev. Sean Sheffield
 07710423432 or 01304 827052
rev.sean.sheffield@gmail.com



Contributors

Jan Griffin

Jenny Hunt

Jennie Bradshaw

Rev. Marguerite Mower

Sarah Hindle

Rev. Philip Buss

John Reynolds

Paula Bilbrough

Rev. Stewart Carolan-Evans

Rev. Sean Sheffield - Editor