

# Rushen Parish Magazine



December 2023

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## *From the Editor*

Christmas is an extraordinary part of the year, especially when the person you loved so much is no longer there to enjoy it with you. I could write so much about the Christmases that we had together; decorating the house both inside and outside; thinking hard and long about the presents we would buy; hiding them from each other before the day, preparing a Christmas meal; and then, on the day itself, going to church to celebrate Jesus' birth and then spending the rest of the day eating and having the odd drink or two. Generally we were so exhausted that the TV programmes in the evening were a blur! Now this is just a memory which I find quite difficult to come to terms with. I came upon a poem the other day which sums up the feeling that all those of us who have lost someone might be experiencing:

*1. Gaze around your dinner table  
As you dine on Christmas Day  
Treasure them while you are able -  
One day they may well go away.*

*2. Love is really hard to measure,  
Love's not easy to define,  
But memory's the only treasure  
That will stand the test of time.*

*3. So, treasure all that Christmas laughter,  
Hold it close – that's my advice.  
For there may come a time soon after  
When memory is worth great price.*

*4. It is sad that life is temporary,  
Happy times will disappear;  
When those you treasure are a memory,  
The memory is a treasure dear.*

I am so grateful that our church family is such that it cares for people like me. I have never been left alone on Christmas Day because I am given the privilege of sharing a Christmas meal with others. They won't hear of me being left alone to sit and reflect on times gone by, even though they will never be forgotten.

The cover of this magazine takes us to the stable in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. The love shown by both Mary and Joseph, and the animals, is palpable. We are privileged to see this picture whenever we want, not just at Christmas, but throughout the year. It is in the stained glass window on the left side of the altar of Kirk Christ. The love shown is much the same as Pauline and I had throughout our life together. I'm sure that many of you who have lost someone dear to them feel much the same. Jesus was born to save us all and thank goodness he did. The world around us all is in so much turmoil at present that it makes us wonder what happened to that love so freely given by Him. Let's hope that this Christmas and the days and years to come will bring everyone back to the love so readily given by our Lord and Saviour.

**David**

## Natalie's Family and Youth Ministry Adventures in Rushen

Hello Rushen Parish,

This month has flown by and I have so much to tell you!

### Faithful futures

I am excited to announce an upcoming event on the 25th January 2024! This special evening is tailored for everyone in the Rushen Parish Churches, and I encourage each one of you to join. The purpose of this gathering is to collaboratively reflect on our family and youth ministry, both current initiative and future aspirations. Your presence and thoughts are invaluable to me, as you possess a wealth of knowledge about the parish that I am eager to learn. Your insights will play a crucial role in shaping and enhancing our family and youth ministry. This event is an opportunity for us to come together, share ideas, and work collectively to strengthen the bonds within our parish community. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and drawing upon the collective wisdom of the parish to create impactful and meaningful initiatives for our families and youth.

### Sunday Mornings

This month at St Mary's, we had a special moment singing together, inspired by one of the children talking about their performance of 'This Little Light of Mine'. The theme of Jesus' light shining in the darkness resonated beautifully. These moments are truly cherished, and we continued with uplifting songs for the rest of the session. St Catherine's is innovating in family work, introducing a Godly Play Room every 3rd Sunday. Families are loving this interactive exploration of the Bible, reflecting positively on their engagement with the Word. It's great to witness both of these churches flourish.

### Youth Residential

One thing I have been working on this month is a joint youth group residential that's happening on the 8th December. This residential will give rich experiences to those who attend, featuring elements such as sung worship, a prayer labyrinth, Godly play teaching, a Task Master showdown, lovely food, an exploration of the Book of Acts and, of course, plenty of fun! As we approach this gathering, please pray for the young people and our dedicated leaders. May this time be transformative as they delve into their faith, engage in meaningful conversations with each other, and spend valuable moments in the presence of God. Your support through prayer is greatly appreciated as we seek to create a positive and spiritually enriching experience for all involved.

**God bless you all**

**Natalie**



## Ladies Working Party – St Mary's



As Christmas celebrations approach at what seems an ever increasing speed, so the Ladies Working Party gear up to them, setting dates for decorating the church, helping produce Christingles, and thinking on mince-pies and other Christmas treats for catering to visitors at the special Christmas services - it's fun and we're all on-board and looking forward to it.

Earlier in the month, we thanked Jude for her 20years of service organizing the flower roster for the church; we felt a beautiful basket of flowers was the most appropriate way of showing our appreciation for a task well and faithfully done. As a primary function, we always spend the first part of our meetings in prayer for people who we know to be sick or in need of prayer for other reasons and praying for any upcoming events in the church.

This month we had an unexpected visit from Rev. Joe which afforded us the opportunity to discuss various concerns and resolve some satisfactorily. Advance information is that we are tentatively planning a March function, in our new 'hospitality' area at the rear of the church, to raise funds for the Leprosy Mission, watch this space.

Thanks to the return of some members after spells of travel or illness, we are back to a healthy attendance, fourteen ladies were present at the first November meeting. In fact, our members are so keen to come to the meetings that most are always here before the 2.15pm start, therefore we are delighted to move our time earlier, we now begin at 2pm in St Mary's Church, and we hope to welcome even more ladies from Rushen Parish into this fellowship group in the coming months.

**Rev Ginny Viner**

### ***Christmas 2023***

*The night before Christmas when all are abed,  
As reindeer and sleigh bells are heard overhead,  
Children still sleeping will early arise,  
With shouts of delights as they open each prize.*

*A doll for Amanda, a toy soldier for Jo?  
Ah, these are toys of long ago!  
Now it's computers, a party dress,  
Gifts so expensive they're meant to impress.*

*But the real joy of Christmas forever will stay,  
As church bells and carols proclaim that glad day,  
As wise man and shepherds recount what they saw,  
Of Mary, her Baby - and a bed full of straw.*



**By Megan Carter**

## St Mary's Sunday School



At the end of October, we had a Sunday School session on the theme of Light. The children enjoyed using torches to find Bible verses about light hidden around the hall, eg "I am the Light of the world" and "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). We lit a candle to remind us

that Jesus is the Light of the world, and that He is always with us, shining His light to guide us and help us through any dark times.

We also focused on the verses "You are the light of the world" and "Let your light shine" (Matthew 5:14-16) and thought about various ways in which we can be a light to others, eg by being kind and caring, by helping elderly neighbours and people in need, by telling others about Jesus, by playing with children who have nobody to play with, or by praying for others. As a practical way of bringing the light of Jesus to those in need, we filled a Christmas shoebox with lots of goodies for a whole family in Eastern Europe, to be sent via the charity 'Link to Hope.'

The following Sunday we had a surprise party, as our theme was the 'Parable of the Great Banquet.' We all enjoyed a game of charades before watching a video of the Bible story. We learnt that Jesus' invitation to follow Him (and one day join Him for the 'big party' in Heaven) is for absolutely everybody: young and old, rich and poor, people of all colours and all backgrounds. The only thing Jesus requires of us is to accept the invitation and say YES to Him. We then thought about who we could invite, eg to Sunday School or Messy Church, or even just to a play date, and we wrote colourful invitation cards. We finished our session by sharing a variety of yummy party food

We are now looking forward to the season of Advent leading up to the celebration of Christmas, with our Parish Christingle service in aid of the Children's Society on the 3rd of December (4pm at St Catherine's), our all-age service on 10th December, our Sunday School Christmas party on 17th December, and our very special Crib Service on Christmas Eve (4pm at St Mary's). All are very welcome!

We wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas,  
full of love, joy, hope and peace.

May the light of Christ shine in your hearts, this Christmas and always.

**With love and blessings, Claudia**





## The Light of the World



During the month of December, people are ‘counting down’ to Christmas Day in an ever-increasing variety of ways.

In my childhood we had a simple card with a traditional picture of a manger scene with doors marked with the countdown numbers and a picture of the different characters behind each. If my parents had extra money to spend, they would buy one with shiny snow made of sparkles!

These days you can pay hundreds to have a gift for each day from toys to jewellery. And don’t fret, your pets can have their own also!

Churches don’t normally count the days, but they do note the four Sundays before Christmas Day. They give each of those four ‘advent’ Sundays a theme and light a candle each time. One for the first week, two for the second and so on.

Unlike the secular world, the church counts up, and not down. It increases the light as we get nearer to Christmas Day and then adds an extra light on that day. So, a total of five candles.

Churches vary in their use of colour in the candles. Some will use all white, whilst many only use white for the Christ-light on Christmas Day and ‘colours’ on the four Sundays.

There again they vary; some use all purple – originally the most expensive colour - as we prepare for The King. In a more modern style, some use blue – perhaps recalling the most associated colour for Jesus’ mother Mary. But perhaps reminding us of creation and that we are surrounded by God’s love as the earth is surrounded by the blue sky.

And again, others will change the colours for each Sunday, often giving the third Sunday to be pink as we are over half-way through Advent and it is known as *Gaudate* – Joyful – Sunday. Or there are those who make the fourth Sunday pink, as that one is often dedicated to Mary and it’s a ‘girly’ colour.

### *This month*

Have a look at the advent candles in your church, or perhaps in your own home, and think about what the colours mean to you. How do they reflect your faith? Whatever the colour – Have a Good Christmas!

**Revd Jo White**



## News from St Catherine's & Kirk Christ



The Royal British Legion service of remembrance was held at Kirk Christ on Remembrance Sunday. This year the Lieutenant Governor Sir John Lorimer, and his wife Lady Lorimer, were present. The service was led by the Rev'd Joe Heaton and the Royal British Legion Chaplain for Port Erin and Port St Mary branches, the Rev'd Chris Bellfield. The church was full. It was good to have pupils from Rushen Primary School, along with representatives from the Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Guides, Brownies and Rainbows joining in the service.

Messy Church was held at St Catherine's and was well attended. The children enjoyed the various craft activities in the hall, the Bible story in church, and the Friendship meal back in the hall.

On 5<sup>th</sup> November an LCC meeting was held at St Catherine's after the morning service. The Rev'd Joe Heaton outlined plans for the re-ordering of the church. These had been discussed previously by the Vision Focus Group. The reaction of those who attended was encouraging with nobody objecting to the preliminary plans.

On 17<sup>th</sup> November another quiz evening was held in St Catherine's Church Hall. There were over fifty people present most of who enjoyed a fish or sausage and chip supper. I would like to thank David Bowman for organising the event and everyone who contributed to it in any way. £336. 95 was raised towards parish funds.

**Gerry Callister**

### ***A Christmas Prayer***

***Almighty Father.*** Thank you for your indescribable gift of Jesus – the Light of the world. Thank you that He brought light and life to all who received Him during His life on earth and that He still brings light and life to all who receive Him. Lord, how this broken world needs your light today. As we rejoice and give thanks for Christmas, we pray that the light of Jesus will pierce the darkness of self-interest and hatred - and change the hearts of those who do not love you or their neighbours. We pray that by the power of your Holy Spirit you will deliver your people from evil, and that Your kingdom will come on earth as in heaven. Thank you, Father, that because of Jesus, light will always shine in the darkness and the darkness will never be able to extinguish it. Glory and thanks and praise to You Father God, this Christmas and always. In Jesus' saving and powerful name.

***Amen.***



**Sudoku December 2023**

6	1			7				
					4	5		2
				8				3
	7		8			9		
		2				6		
		3			2		8	
4				5				
1		6	3					
				4			9	7



***Our Greatest Need***

*If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator;  
 If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist;  
 If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist;  
 If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer;  
 But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Saviour.*

**Sudoku Solution November**

6	9	3	7	1	8	2	5	4
2	4	7	3	5	9	8	6	1
8	1	5	6	4	2	3	9	7
1	6	9	2	3	4	7	8	5
7	3	2	1	8	5	6	4	9
5	8	4	9	7	6	1	3	2
9	7	6	4	2	3	5	1	8
3	5	1	8	9	7	4	2	6
4	2	8	5	6	1	9	7	3

**Crossword Solution November**

T	H	A	N	K	S		B	A	N	N	E	R				
R		S		A					N		E	E				
E	S	H	E	R			A	Z	A	R	I	A	H			
N		A		M			R		N		G	E				
C	O	M	P	A	R	E			I	S	H	M	A			
H							O		A				T			
							D	O	O	R	P	O	S	T	S	
C							B		A				A		G	
O	A	T	H	S					G	A	L	A	T	I	A	
M		A					E		U			O	R		L	
P	A	P	Y	R	U	S					F	R	A	I	L	
E			E			V					Y		P		O	
L	I	S	T	E	N						H	Y	S	S	O	P

## The First-ever Nativity Scene



This Christmas, thousands of Nativity plays will be held around the UK. Ever wonder who staged the very first one?

It was St Francis of Assisi, and it was 800 years ago, in Greccio, Italy, on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1223.

Francis had been born into a wealthy family, but abandoned his noble inheritance when he became a Christian. Instead, he had turned to a life of great simplicity, in service to Christ's church.

Francis spent many hours meditating on the stories of the life of Christ, and even travelled to the Holy Land in 1219 and 1220, to see the various holy sites of Jesus's life. The sites deeply moved him, as they brought the Bible stories to vibrant life.

Back in Italy, in November of 1223, Francis was in Rome, and he had an idea. Why not share something of the inspiration of the Holy Land with his people here in Italy?

Barely 50 miles to the north, in Greccio, he knew many people to whom he had been ministering for years. He could at least show them something of the simplicity of the birth of Jesus. And so it was that two weeks before Christmas, Francis asked his friend, the Lord of Greccio, Giovanni Velita, to prepare a nearby cave with live animals and a hay-filled manger.

That cave, beside some rocky crags, became the venue of the very first ever Nativity scene. On Christmas 1223, when the people of Greccio attended Christmas Mass as usual, they were invited to 'come and see' the simple scene.

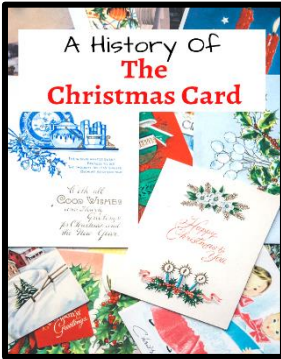
According to his biographer, Brother Thomas of Celano, Francis wanted people to see what Jesus had "suffered for lack of the necessities of a new-born babe, and how He lay in the manger between the ox and ass."

According to eyewitness accounts of the moment, fires lit the dark scene while crowds arrived at the spot carrying candles and torches. There were also accounts of miracles happening that night. Some people had a vision of a real infant in the empty manger, and others reported miraculous healings.

All in all, the Nativity scene was an instant success, and soon other communities were staging their own.

Today, you can still visit the cave and rocks where the first Nativity was staged. It is now a Franciscan hermitage and sanctuary. Every year at Christmas, the people of Greccio stage a live, historical re-enactment of St Francis and the first Nativity scene.

Pope Francis has visited the spot two times: in 2016 and then in 2019, when he signed an apostolic letter on the importance of Nativity scenes.



## Where did Christmas cards come from?

Christmas cards have a history which may surprise you: their origins are not of the Church, but of the Post Office and railways.

Of course, very early 'Christmas cards' had been around for hundreds of years, in the form of a simple exchange of Christmas greetings in private letters. The earliest such letter on record was written in England in 1534.

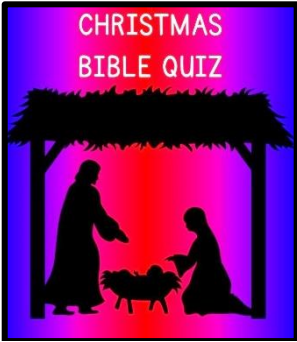
In 1611 a HUGE Christmas card made a one-off appearance. It measured a whopping 33" by 24", and was given to King James I of England (who was also King James VI of Scotland). It featured an illustration of a rose, four poems, a song, and a Christmas message for the king and his son. Then in 1843 came the creation of Christmas cards as we know them today. One enterprising man was responsible for this: Sir Henry Cole, a senior civil servant who had helped launch the 'Public Record Office', now called the Post Office.

Sir Henry Cole helped to introduce the Penny Post, as it was called. Until then, only rich people could afford the Post, but with the building of the railways, which carried far more packages than a horse and cart (and went much faster), suddenly the Penny Post became possible. Sir Henry wanted to encourage 'ordinary' people to use the new service. So he came up with the bright idea of a creating a simple card that people could send each other for Christmas. His friend, John Horsley, was an artist, who designed a three-panel card. Two panels depicted people caring for the poor, and the middle panel showed a family enjoying a large Christmas dinner.

They printed about 1000 cards that first year, and advertised under the slogan: 'Just published, a Christmas Congratulations Card; or picture emblematical of old English festivity to perpetuate kind recollections between dear friends!' The cards sold for one shilling each and could be posted to friends and family for a Penny. There was an immediate, warm response from the public. Printing methods improved, and by 1860 Christmas cards were produced in large quantities. By 1870 the cost of posting one had dropped to half a penny, and the custom was rapidly gaining popularity. By the early 1900s, the custom had spread across Europe.

The first cards usually included a Nativity scene, and in late Victorian times, robins and snow-scenes. Robins were chosen because the postmen in those days were nick-named 'Robin Postmen', because of their red uniforms. Christmas cards appeared in the USA in the late 1840s. They were mass produced from 1875, and in 1915 John C Hall and two of his brothers created Hallmark Cards, which today offers 2,000 different designs of Christmas card.

Charity Christmas cards began in Denmark in the early 1900s. They spread to Sweden and Norway, and then on throughout Europe and America. Last year the Royal Mail estimated that it had delivered 150 million cards during the Christmas period.



**Nativity Quiz**

1. Where did Mary and Joseph live before Jesus was born?  
(a) Nazareth (b) Bethlehem (c) Jerusalem
2. What was the name of the angel who told Mary she would have a child?
3. What did Joseph do for a living?
4. Who was the Roman ruler when Jesus was born?
5. Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?
6. How did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?
7. Why couldn't Mary and Joseph find a place to stay?
8. Where does the Bible say Jesus was born?  
(a) In a stable (b) In hay (c) In a manger
9. According to the Bible, which animals were specifically mentioned as being present in the stable when Jesus was born?  
(a) sheep and a donkey (b) cattle and a donkey (c) donkey, sheep and cattle (d) None
10. What does the angel say to the shepherds when they tell them to go to Bethlehem?
11. The wise men travelled ..... to Jerusalem. (a) northward (b) southward (c) eastward (d) westward
12. What did the Wise Men follow to find Jesus?
13. How many Wise Men visited baby Jesus?
14. What gifts did the wise men bring for Jesus?
15. Who spread the news about baby Jesus throughout Bethlehem?
16. What is the City of David also known as in the bible?
17. Which of the gospels tell the story of the Nativity?
18. What does Jesus' other name, "Immanuel", mean? (a) God with us (b) Son of God (c) He who is God (d) Chosen One
19. How many days after the birth of Christ did Joseph and Mary give him the name Jesus?
20. Jesus was born on the 25th of December. True or false?

**Canon Paul Hardingham**

*Answers in January's Magazine*



## A Season for joyful song

Editor: **Lester Amann** considers the three songs of the nativity story.

Some of us like to sing, no matter what we may sound like to others! And sometimes, something happens that is so special that we can't help but burst into song.

In the Christmas story, singing is featured on *three* occasions.

When Mary visited her elderly relative, Elizabeth, she was so overwhelmed with happiness at the forthcoming miraculous birth of her Son, that she burst into a flow of praise. Her words are known as *The Magnificat*, and they have been set to music by numerous composers down the years. Mary recalled God's promise that He would rescue His people and, through the Messiah, save the world.

The next 'song' came from the angels, on the night of Jesus' birth. They appeared to the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem and were full of the glory of God. 'Peace on earth', 'goodwill toward man'.

The final 'song' in the Nativity story came from the shepherds, who hurried to see the new-born baby. They were so overwhelmed by the implications for Israel, that they sang praises to God as they returned to their sheep.

Mary, the angels and the shepherds could not help but sing for joy at the coming of the Messiah. They were the first, but not the last! Since the day of Pentecost, hundreds of millions of people have raised their voices in gratitude, thanks and wonder at God's love and mercy in sending Jesus.

Down the centuries, countless poets and musicians have composed music to describe a wondrous moment in history. At Christmas, around the world, people come together to sing carols and other songs that express the wonder of God's Gift to us.

Jesus has given *us* hope; forgiven *our* sin; and continues to impart faith and heal *our* spiritual wounds. Now isn't that something to sing about?

### **Father Christmas**

*Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable that my son would begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas. Sure enough, one day near Christmas he suddenly said: "Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy." Taking a deep breath, I asked him what that might be. "Easy," he said, "They are all nocturnal."*

## All in the month of December



**800 years ago, on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1223**, St Francis of Assisi created the first nativity scene, in Greccio, Italy, after visiting Jesus' birthplace in the Holy Land. It proved enormously popular and inspired other communities to stage their own nativity scenes.

**250 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1773**, the Boston Tea Party took place in Massachusetts. American patriots boarded ships and threw chests of tea belonging to the British East India Company into Boston Harbour, as a protest against the British tax on tea.

**200 years ago, on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1823**, the poem *The Night Before Christmas* was first published (anonymously) in the Sentinel newspapers in Troy, New York. It was written by Clement Clarke

**175 years ago on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1848**, Emily Bronte, British novelist and poet, died of tuberculosis, aged 30. Best known for her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*.

**100 years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1923**, Ramsay MacDonald became the first Labour Prime Minister. The General Election had resulted in a hung parliament, and the Labour Party had formed a coalition with the Liberal Party. **Also on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1923** the BBC broadcast the chimes of Big Ben for the first time, to welcome in the New Year. The tradition continues to this day.

**80 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1943**, Beatrix Potter, children's writer and illustrator, died. She created animal characters including Peter Rabbit, Squirrel Nutkin, Mrs Tiggy-Winkle, Jemima Puddle-Duck, and many more.

**75 years ago, on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1948**, the first Midnight Mass to be televised was broadcast from St Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.

**65 years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1958**, Britain's first motorway, the Preston By-pass, was officially opened. (It is now part of the M6 and M55.)

**60 years ago, on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1963**, the Daleks made their first appearance on the British science fiction TV series *Doctor Who*.

**40 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1983**, Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. (It was accepted by his wife, as he feared he might not be allowed back)

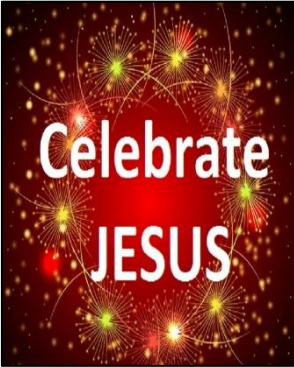
**30 years ago, on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1993**, Israel and the Vatican City agreed to recognise each other and established diplomatic relations.

**25 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1998**, the Palestine Liberation Organisation voted to remove clauses in its charter that called for Israel's destruction.

**20 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003**, using a handheld mobile phone while driving became illegal in the UK. **Also on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2003**, during the Iraq War, former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was captured by US forces, who found him hiding in a hole at a farmhouse in ad-Dawr, near his hometown of Tikrit.

**10 years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013**, Nelson Mandela died. This anti-apartheid revolutionary and politician had become President of South African 1994-99. He served as President of the African National Congress (ANC) 1991-97. Winner of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize.





## Spiritual Disciplines: Celebration

Editor: **Canon Paul Hardingham** continues to his year-long series on the Spiritual Disciplines.

*'But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.' (Luke 2:10).*

As we conclude our series on the spiritual disciplines, this month we look at *Celebration*, which is very appropriate for this Christmas season. We are called to rejoice in God's good

gifts and celebrate His faithfulness.

Jesus modelled celebration in his first miracle at Cana, when He turned water into wine, enabling the party to continue (John 2:1-12). Celebration helps us with the other disciplines, as it enables us to keep going through times of joy and struggle: *'Without a joyful spirit of festivity the Disciplines become dull, death-breathing tools in the hands of modern Pharisees.'* (Richard Foster). We celebrate crucial moments in our lives with unreserved joy and thanksgiving and this shape our lives to be more like Jesus.

Richard Foster offers a few helpful pointers to celebration in his book *Celebration of Discipline*. They may come in handy as you celebrate Christmas this year!

**Singing and dancing:** how can we rediscover what children do brilliantly, in our families or church? Is there room for singing Christmas carols together at home this year?

**Laughter:** just as Jesus brought humour into His teaching, how can we laugh more? What does it mean to take ourselves less seriously and encourage more fun with our friends?

**Imagination and creativity:** how can we invest in our own creativity, as well as other people's? - e.g. in painting, poetry, reading and other leisure activities? God gave us these things to enjoy! As we celebrate our own creativity, we are sharing in God's goodness and joy.

**Family events:** we can use family celebrations and with Christmas approaching, there is the opportunity of putting God at the centre of our celebration.

*'So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God' (1 Cor 10:31).*

### **Mother in a storm**

*One cold winter night, during a violent storm, a mother was tucking her small, frightened little boy into bed. She was about to turn off the light when he said with a tremor in his voice: "Mummy, will you stay with me tonight?" Mummy smiled and gave him a reassuring hug. "I can't, dear," she said, "I have to sleep with Daddy." A long silence – and then came his shaky reply: "The big coward!"*

## From the Registers

### Funerals October 2023:

4 <sup>th</sup> October	Margaret Woolnough	11.am	Service KC	Cremation
6 <sup>th</sup> October	Michael Link	11.30am		Cremation only
9 <sup>th</sup> October	Ewart McArd	12.30am	Service KC	Burial RBG
10 <sup>th</sup> October	Barbara Havser	11.30am		Ashes RBG
12 <sup>th</sup> October	John Corkish	12 noon	Service KC	Cremation
14 <sup>th</sup> October	Peter Thomson	11.30am		Ashes RBG
20 <sup>th</sup> October	Michael Link	10.am		Ashes RBG

## Getting Ready for Christmas

*In this season of endless parties, socialising and constant hospitality, please remember:*

- ~ He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
- ~ Everyone has a photographic memory. But sadly, some don't have film.
- ~ No woman ever yet shot her husband while he was washing the dishes.
- ~ Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves, they will never cease to be amused.
- ~ Light travels faster than sound. That's why some appear bright until you hear them speak.
- ~ Many people's ambition: to be weighed and found wanting.
- ~ Seen it all, done it all, can't remember most of it.

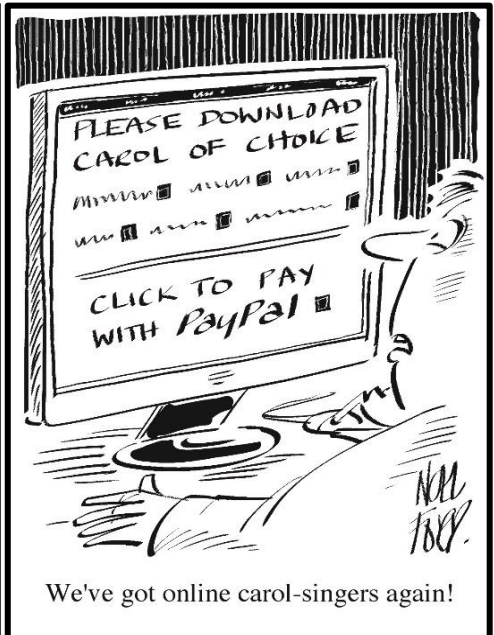
## Safeguarding

The Parish of Rushen is committed to the safeguarding, nurture and care of **everyone** within our church community. If you, or someone you know, are concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk or has been harmed, or are concerned about the behaviour of someone towards children or vulnerable adults, please contact:

**Rushen Parish Safeguarding Officer,**  
**Rhiannon Manning** (Tel. 832275)

The **Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser** has now been appointed. For more details contact the diocese.

A copy of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy is available on the Diocesan website:  
[http://www.sodorandman.im/safeguarding\\_inclusion](http://www.sodorandman.im/safeguarding_inclusion)



We've got online carol-singers again!

## Rushen Mothers' Union



It is a shame that storm Debi interfered with our last meeting.

The conditions were quite dangerous, and it was sensible to stay at home. However, our speaker, Cheryl Cousins, braved the elements and came from Dalby so the meeting went ahead with an audience of eleven. Cheryl heads the We Care' programme and she spoke very passionately about actions that could be taken concerning climate change. She made us realise that small actions, such as switching off lights and recycling when possible. She made us realise that small actions, such as switching off lights and recycling when possible, would all have an impact on the future of our planet. She also encouraged us to write to our MHKs showing support for green initiatives. The session was lively and thought provoking as Cheryl managed to infect us all with her passion for looking after God's Earth.

We might be able to get her back next year so that more members can hear her.

### Dates for your diaries:

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00pm is the Mothers Union Advent Service at St Catherines. There will be an envelope collection for the Mothers Union Charity AFIA (Away From It all). The service will be followed by refreshments in the hall. Donations of cake and biscuits will be welcome. Jane is providing some gluten free cake.

Our next meeting is 11<sup>th</sup> December, our Christmas Party. Please consider a turn at entertaining and please bring a small plate of finger food to share. All are welcome, please come and join us in St Catherine's Hall at 2pm on 11<sup>th</sup> December. Christmas jumpers are optional!

**Lesley Scott**

### ***All faiths are not the same***

*For many religions, God is considered unknowable – just a supreme power or presence 'out there' somewhere. Not so Christianity. The heart of the Christmas message is His coming to us in peace and love – as the Bible says: 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.' (John 1:4 RSV) Jesus was born a baby, grew up amongst us, healed us, did many miracles, taught us, and then went on to die for us. He entered our time and our space, and we could approach Him and talk to Him. Jesus made clear that to see Him was to see the Father. What a wonderful God! He is the Creator of the Universe, but He is also Jesus, who calls us into a daily relationship of love and dependency upon Him.*

## God and the Arts

### 'The Virgin of the Lilies' by Carlos Schwabe



During this year we have been exploring how art can celebrate the wonder of this world. This month with our Lady and Jesus we stand above the world: high on the clouds with a glorious path of tall, elegant lilies that lead like a stairway to the earth beneath. This is 'The Virgin of the Lilies' by Carlos Schwabe. He was born in Germany and then lived in Switzerland and France, painting this canvas in 1899 when he was 33 years old.

It is like a scene caught when we look out of the window in an aeroplane. We can see the earth beneath and spot hills and valleys, roads and settlements, and a river weaving its way through the countryside. Mary and Jesus are haloed in a lunar-like radiance. The lilies are symbols of purity and obedience, the qualities that will

take them to that scene at Bethlehem which we give thanks for at Christmas. The heavenly light shining out in the painting brings hope and joy to the world below, transforming lives with the wonder of the Saviour's birth.

Jesus holds three nails in his hand as a sign that His life will be tempered by rejection, suffering and death. But the lilies growing tall and straight in the skies are signs of new life and resurrection. The light come down to earth at Christmas can never be extinguished. That light and love are expressed in this vivid, moving painting of Carlos Schwabe as they are caught up in the carol of Christina Rossetti we sing at this time:

*Love shall be our token, Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men, Love for plea and gift and sign.*

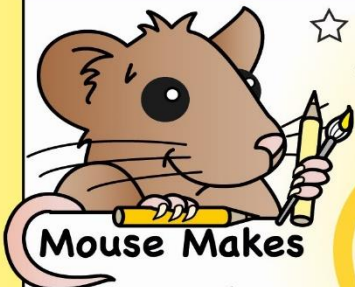
**Michael Burgess**

### **Church rules**

*Six-year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother Joel sat together for the Christmas concert in church. Joel kept giggling and whispering until his big sister had had enough. "Be quiet in church!"*

*"Why?" Joel demanded. "Who is going to make me?" Angie pointed to the back of the church and said: "See those two big men standing at the door? They're hushers."*

Children's Page



Mouse Makes



GOD'S PROMISE

Isaiah 9:6-7

CHILD • BORN • SON  
GIVEN • WONDERFUL  
COUNCELLOR  
MIGHTY • GOD  
EVERLASTING  
FATHER • PRINCE  
PEACE • LORD



AN ANGEL MESSENGER

Luke 1:26-38

ANGEL • GABRIEL  
JOSEPH • MARY  
FAVOUR • SON  
JESUS • GREAT  
THRONE • REIGN  
FOREVER • HOLY  
SERVANT • WORD



ADVENT comes from the Latin 'AD VENTO' which means ARRIVAL

In Advent we celebrate Jesus' birth and look forward to the time when Jesus will come again.



A LONG JOURNEY

Luke 2:1-20

BETHELEHEM  
REGISTER • BIRTH  
MANGER • INN  
SHEPHERDS • FLOCK  
ANGELS • JOY  
GOOD NEWS • PRAISE  
SAVIOUR • CHRIST



THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

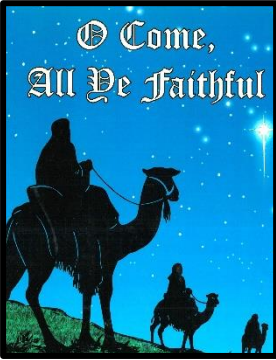
John 3:16

GOD • SO • LOVED  
WORLD • HE • GAVE  
ONLY • SON  
WHOEVER • BELIEVES  
ETERNAL • LIFE

V	R	P	R	I	N	C	E	L	R	O	D
W	O	R	D	C	F	A	T	H	E	R	E
J	A	G	M	A	N	G	E	R	G	E	B
O	W	H	O	E	V	E	R	W	I	I	J
S	J	O	Y	B	O	R	N	O	S	G	E
E	S	L	S	E	R	V	A	N	T	N	S
P	P	Y	J	C	H	I	L	D	E	P	U
H	R	O	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S
F	A	V	O	U	R	E	F	R	W	S	O
B	I	R	T	H	S	W	O	F	O	D	L
I	S	A	V	I	O	U	R	U	R	L	O
F	E	C	O	U	N	C	E	L	L	O	R
A	N	G	E	L	B	J	V	K	D	V	D
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	G	E	S
L	A	N	G	E	L	S	R	G	O	D	V
I	G	A	B	R	I	E	L	T	D	S	M
F	P	G	I	V	E	N	A	H	U	O	A
E	E	H	G	A	V	E	S	R	W	N	R
S	A	E	G	R	E	A	T	O	N	L	Y
O	C	H	R	I	S	T	I	N	N	J	O
N	E	O	G	O	O	D	N	E	W	S	N
F	L	O	C	K	M	I	G	H	T	Y	B



# The Story Behind the Carol



## O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!  
 O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem  
 Come and behold Him  
 Born the King of Angels  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 Christ the Lord!

God of God, Light of Light  
 Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb  
 Very God  
 Begotten, not created  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation  
 Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
 Glory to God  
 All glory in the highest  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy  
 morning  
 Jesus, to Thee be glory given  
 Word of the Father  
 Now in flesh appearing  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 O come, let us adore Him  
 Christ the Lord!

Nobody knows who wrote this well-loved Christmas carol. It was originally a Latin Christmas hymn, 'Adeste Fidelis'. It seems to have first 'surfaced' in English due to a John Francis Wade, who lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and who made his living copying manuscripts and, sometimes, music by hand. Wade was a Roman Catholic, and all services in the church at that time were conducted in Latin, and so he knew the language well.

The story goes that in about 1750 he slipped this hymn into a manuscript he was copying for the English Roman Catholic College in Lisbon, Portugal. 35 years later, in 1785, it turned up in the Portuguese Chapel in London, where it became known as the 'Portuguese Hymn'.

From there, the hymn appears to have 'travelled' across to the Margaret Chapel in London's West End. Young William Ewart Gladstone, who later became British Prime Minister, greatly appreciated the services at this church. He said that the congregation were "the most devout and happy that I have ever seen."

The minister at that time was Frederick Oakley, one of the leaders of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Oxford Movement, who was later to convert to Roman Catholicism. Oakley believed strongly in the power of religious symbols and fine music, and before he bade farewell to the Margaret Chapel, he introduced this hymn to the congregation. Having started as 'Adeste Fidelis', and been for a while 'The Portuguese Hymn', this hymn soon became known – and loved worldwide – as 'O Come, All Ye Faithful'.



## Rushen Parish Prayer Diary



*During this season of Good Will let us pray that we can do our part to bring Peace to the world: God our Father, Creator of the world, please help us to love one another. Make nations friendly with other nations; Make all of us love one another like brothers and sisters. Help us to do our part to bring peace in the world and happiness to all people. Amen*



### December 2023

#### **This is your invitation to pray day by day for:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Shopkeepers during the busy build up towards the Christmas period
- 2<sup>nd</sup> All Christians preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ
- 3<sup>rd</sup> The annual Christingle Service at St Catherine's Church at 4pm on this day
- 4<sup>th</sup> Our fellow neighbours and the love and respect we have for them
- 5<sup>th</sup> Mothers' Union Advent Carol Service today at St Catherine's at 7am
- 6<sup>th</sup> People in care homes preparing for Christmas and all that it means to them
- 7<sup>th</sup> The hope that Christmas will bring families, which have been apart, together again
- 8<sup>th</sup> Nativity plays being performed at our island's primary schools prior to Christmas
- 9<sup>th</sup> Children with disabilities which require them to be cared for by others
- 10<sup>th</sup> The relatives of those who have died throughout the parish during 2023
- 11<sup>th</sup> The vicar, readers and retired clergy and all they do for the parish
- 12<sup>th</sup> Port St Mary Commissioner's Carol Service at 7.30pm on this day
- 13<sup>th</sup> The Carols, Candles and Cake event at St Peter's Church this evening at 7.30pm
- 14<sup>th</sup> Those who have no homes and are wondering what Christmas will bring to them
- 15<sup>th</sup> Rushen Parochial Church Council and the work it does for the parish
- 16<sup>th</sup> All those who do such good work for charities across the island
- 17<sup>th</sup> The Parish Carol Service at Kirk Christ at 6.30pm this evening
- 18<sup>th</sup> All children and their many expectations during this Christmastide
- 19<sup>th</sup> Sportsmen and women providing enjoyment and competitiveness
- 20<sup>th</sup> Gerry Callister, his dedication to the parish, and all he does for everyone
- 21<sup>st</sup> The Port Erin Commissioners' Carol Service at St Catherine's Church at 7pm
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Sidespersons and the important role they play during church services
- 23<sup>rd</sup> People in hospital hoping to be home during the Christmas season
- 24<sup>th</sup> The Crib Service taking place in St Mary's Church at 4pm this afternoon
- 25<sup>th</sup> Peace throughout the world
- 26<sup>th</sup> St Stephen, the first martyr, who is remembered today
- 27<sup>th</sup> Those who have suffered, in one way or another, during the Christmas period
- 28<sup>th</sup> People who have had to work throughout Christmas to maintain vital services
- 29<sup>th</sup> Teachers preparing for a new term at school
- 30<sup>th</sup> Preparations for the New Year and the hope it brings for everyone
- 31<sup>st</sup> New Year celebrations throughout the world and the hope for peace

## Services December/January

3 <sup>rd</sup> December <b>(Advent 1)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW)
	11am	St Mary's Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Morning Prayer CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)
	<b>4pm</b>	<b>St Catherine's Christingle Service</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>7pm</b>	<b>St Catherine's Mothers' Union Carol Service</b>
10 <sup>th</sup> December <b>(Advent 2)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Mary's All-Age Service (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Holy Communion CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)
12 <sup>th</sup> December	7.30pm	St Mary's Port St Mary's Commissioners carols
13 <sup>th</sup> December	7.30pm	<b>St Peter's Carols, Candles and Cake</b>
17 <sup>th</sup> December <b>(Advent 3)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW)
	11am	St Mary's Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's All-Age Service (CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Holy Communion (BCP)
	6.30pm	<b>Kirk Christ Parish Carol Service</b>
21 <sup>st</sup> December	7pm	<b>St Catherine's Commissioner's Carol Service</b>
24 <sup>th</sup> December <b>(Christmas Eve)</b>	4pm	<b>St Mary's Crib Service.</b>
	7.30pm	<b>St Peter's Holy Communion (BCP)</b>
	11.30pm	<b>St Catherine's Midnight Communion (CW)</b>
25 <sup>th</sup> December <b>(Christmas Day)</b>	10am	<b>Kirk Christ Joint Christmas Day Service (CW)</b>
31 <sup>st</sup> December <b>(Christmas 1)</b>	11am	Kirk Christ Joint Service (CW)
7 <sup>th</sup> January <b>(Baptism of Christ)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW)
	11am	St Mary's Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Morning Prayer CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)
14 <sup>th</sup> January <b>(Epiphany 1)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Mary's All-Age Service (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Holy Communion CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)

Dates and times of services/activities subject to alteration/or cancelled  
 (CW) Common Worship      (BCP) Book of Common Prayer

**Contact Details for Rushen Parish cont'd....**

**St Mary's Sunday School Leader:**

Mrs Claudia Koenig, Fois Fraon, Fistard, Port St Mary 832974/495630

**St Mary's Ladies Working Party**

Mrs Lesley Scott, 20 Rhenwyllan Close, Port St Mary 832919  
(Mobile: 07808254356 email: lesley@pharmaconsulting.co.uk)

**St Catherine's Hall Bookings:**

Mr & Mrs G Callister, 60 Ballamaddrell, Port Erin 474924/834627

**Web Site/E-mail:**

www.rushenparish.org.uk rushenparishorg@gmail.com

**Magazine Editor**

Mr David Bowman, The Old Bakery, Qualtroughs Lane, 837117/260539  
Ballafesson, Port Erin

*e-mail: dbow43@manx.net*

***Articles for January's magazine should be submitted to  
the editor no later than 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023***

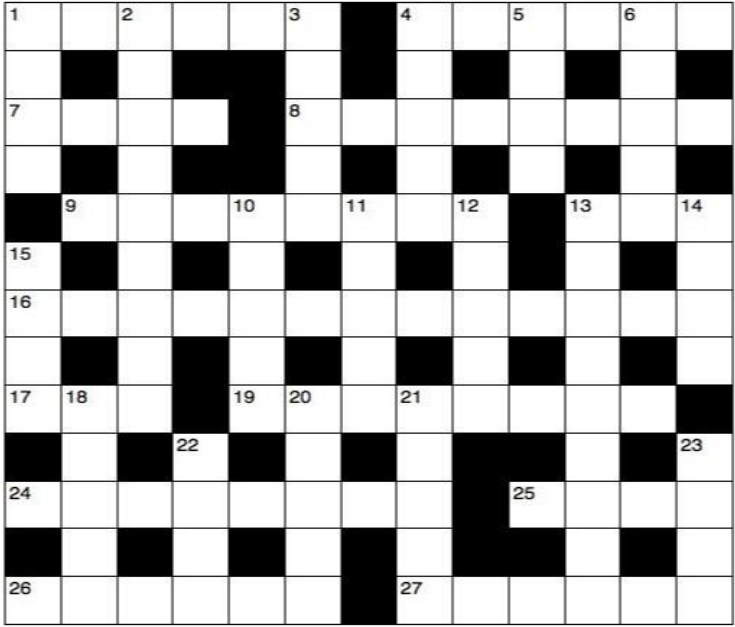
**Parish Director of Music:**

Mr M D Porter, 10 Fairway Drive, Rowany, Port Erin 832143

**Churchyard Enquiries:**

Please contact Mr Harry Dawson: 478050/835770  
or Mr G Callister: 474924/834627

## Crossword December 2023



### Across

- 1** Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
- 4** 'He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
- 7** What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)
- 8** Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)
- 9** Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)
- 13** 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)
- 16** Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)
- 17** National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
- 19** Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)
- 24** Able dock (anag.) (8)
- 25** The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)
- 26** Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)
- 27** Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

### Down

- 1** Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
- 2** Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)

- 3** 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Cor. 11:25)(5)
- 4** A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
- 5** One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
- 6** 'Reach out your hand and — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
- 10** Be outstandingly good (2 Cor 8:7) (5)
- 11** 'What — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
- 12** Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
- 13** Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
- 14** Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)
- 15** One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)
- 18** Narnia's Lion (5)
- 20** One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5)
- 21** Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
- 22** Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
- 23** Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)