

Just to keep in...

Contact

February 2022



Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds,

*so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect.
Romans 12:2*

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Minister

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Rev Andrew Mudharara

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Worship in February

6 th Feb 10.45 am	Rev Andrew Mudharara
13 th Feb 10.45 am	Mr Malcolm Hooke
20 th Feb 10.45 am	Rev George Lea (<i>including Holy Communion & the Dedication of Evelyn Tavonga Mudharara</i>)
27 th Feb 10.45 am	Rev John Hall
6 th Mar 10.45 am	Rev Andrew Mudharara

Audio recordings of the services will be available on the church website by each Sunday evening. If you do not have access to the Internet and would like to listen to the service, we can relay the service 'live' to you by telephone. Please contact your Elder if you wish to take up this option.

Rotas for February (*Please arrange a swap if you are unavailable*)

Date	Door Stewards	Duty Elder	Cashing-up *
6th Feb	Sue Thain Kathy Smith	Christine Thomas	Sally Leggat Malcolm Hooke
13th Feb	Sally Leggat Ann Martin	Sue Saunders	Sally Leggat Tony Thomas
20th Feb	Richard Benham Julie Payne	David Crick	Sally Leggat Christine Thomas
27th Feb	Paul Deeming Sue Saunders	Karen Jones	Sally Leggat David Crick
6th Mar	Sue Thain Kathy Smith	Christine Thomas	Sally Leggat Malcolm Hooke -

If you can help on the Door Steward rota, please contact David Crick

** If Sally is unavailable on a Sunday morning, then the Duty Elder will assist with cashing-up*

From one of our Elders

Previously, Andrew said that there is a treasure (gift) in all of us, what that treasure is only God truly knows, but with prayer we can discern it and use that treasure to further the work of the Church.

The Christian Motorcyclists Association UK. (CMA) was formed in the UK. about 30 years ago. It has for many years held a 'Holy Joes' (an alcohol and drug-free tea and coffee marquee usually about 25ft by 12ft) at many secular motor cycle rallies across the UK. Further activities are 'Helmet Parks' at race meetings etc, 'Breakfast Runs' (very popular) and church visits (you get to see all sorts), the whole purpose is to get alongside secular bikers in a non-threatening way, to start conversations etc.

The most common is by far and away is the Holy Joes, this contains a tea and coffee bar and tables and chairs and since a lot of the activity is at night, it is well lit.

Hot water for the drinks comes from gas urns mounted within a steel frame for safety, drinks are served by CMA volunteers, drink payment usually on a 'donations' basis, this usually decided prior to the event if 'traders' are also present at the rally. In the seating area are usually a further group of CMA volunteers acting as hosts.

As already stated most activity is at night, when the rally bar has finally closed and the bands finished, most of the bikers are still buzzing and descend on Holy Joes for a night cap and a chat, at a very large rally I have seen six urns emptied in a very short period of time there is always a lot of banter between the rally bikers and the CMA and the rally bikers will sit and drink and chat until the late small hours. After all a good motorcycle rally is always about the 'craic'.

Conversations vary, starting with best available new bikes, old classic bikes, previous rallies and trips, accidents, the police etc, as the evening wears on they often turn to more serious matters and more personal and private questions.

It is not unusual for a small number of separate serious conversations to continue until dawn, one urn is left on low ready to be opened up for the breakfast rush much later in the day.

But from these small beginnings many have come to the Lord, and a large number of difficult personal questions been answered, the seeds have been sown.

So, in many ways Holy Joes is just like our church, and like the church, to continue it needs people with a great variety of gifts to keep it successful.

It is not everybody can sit quietly and listen to a hairy old biker opening up about the loss of a life time partner, and trying to translate that 'Scouse' accent at three o'clock in the morning, is just plain hard work.

All this having put in a full day at work, helped unloaded the trailer of a marquee, six gas urns, and twelve gas bottles etc, then had to help erect the marquee in the pouring rain and been told the tap for the water is over two hundred meters down the hill!

But some people do have that gift and can offer solace, to the lost, others are quite happy to spend the whole weekend hauling the water drums up the hill to keep the ever emptying urns topped up, whilst others are quite happy to stand behind the bar serving gallons of tea and coffee to a seemingly endless number of the ebullient rally biker customers who are still buzzing, trying to carry on three conversations at once, and make up their mind on how many cups of coffee they want (and the bar is three deep). Or perhaps you are good at judging how well the gas cylinders are going; you have to get the very last ounce of gas out of each cylinder or if we have enough sugar (bikers have a very sweet tooth) to last the whole weekend.

Most of the volunteers will have arrived on their own motorbikes and pitched their own tents, many will cook their own meals. Some volunteers never even get to the rally, and assist by loading and unloading the trailer where the kit is stored. It's only Friday night, and we have the whole weekend to go. At least we do not have to put the marquee up tomorrow.

Not your usual church duties, but other than that, just like a normal church, perhaps the 'flock' is a bit rougher about the edges but the rally bikers are also our brothers and sisters but 'just do not know it yet'.

So, looking for those gifts within ourselves is very important. There are many ways that the load can be shared, and it does not matter how small the gift is, two or three can gather together and help reduce the load.

Roger Moseley

News of the Family

Please remember our family and friends in your prayers.

Tony W: we continue to pray for Tony, Carole and their family.

Sue D: having spent a night in hospital is recovering from pneumonia.

Doreen D: had a fall and while in hospital contracted Covid. She is now out of the Covid ward of Hinckley Hospital and is recovering slowly.

Jenny: Doreen's daughter has also had Covid but is now out of isolation.

Keith H: who has bone cancer in his spine, is now home from hospital. We think of him, Tineke and their family.

Ruth: is continuing to make slow progress and is now having physiotherapy.

Jackie H: has hurt her shoulder.

We continue to pray for:

Betty H, Brenda O, Beryl (Julie's mum), Dennis, Doreen, Ethel, Jan and Brian, Joan, Joyce, Keith G, Lily, Nanette S, Norrie, Muriel, Paddy, Pat, and Wendy and all of the church family who are receiving medical treatment, have continuing health issues.

Please contact me if you or someone you know is in need of prayer and would like to go on the prayer list, respecting their privacy and seeking permission first.

Contact me by email or telephone 01455 446509.

Sue Saunders

On Saturday 5th or 12th March (date to be confirmed) the Elders are planning a morning session where we can all get together and talk about the future direction of our church, sharing the feedback we have received following the discussions we had during the service on November 7th. Please make every effort to come along to share your thoughts and hear the views of others as we seek, together, to discern God's will for Hinckley URC.

It needs a very pure intention, as well as great spiritual discernment, always to recognise the divine voice.

R H Benson

Thanks

With thanks to so many of you who supported my family and I after losing Dad in November. We received flowers, messages, phone calls and many cards which were a great comfort to us all.

Best wishes, *Heather and Family*

Thank you, Church, for all your prayers, support, help and offers of even more help, I've received over the past 4 months since injuring my back. I'm extremely grateful to you all.

Ruth

Birthdays & Anniversaries

We celebrate with Keith as he celebrates his 90th birthday on 5th February. Congratulations, Keith! And congratulations to Andy H who will be 50 on the 9th.

Other February Birthdays:

George (on the 4th), Wendy (5th), Callum (16th), Robyn & Richard B (both 22nd), Jackie H (23rd), Steve (28th) & Norrie on the 29th
(except this isn't a leap year!)

Wedding anniversaries:

Yabom on the 2nd February.

Apologies to anyone we may have missed. Thanks to Kathy for maintaining these records. If we haven't got your information, please have a word with Kathy.

Wednesday at One

Wednesday at One continues to meet. Why not come along for a short service and time of fellowship? Wednesdays, in the church, at 1.00pm.

2 nd Feb	Fr Andrew Hall	St Catherine, Burbage
9 th Feb	Rev Dawn Matthew	St John, Hinckley
16 th Feb	Mr John Moore	St John, Hinckley
23 rd Feb	Fr Frank Daly	St Peter, Hinckley

What is God asking of **YOU?**



Ministry Enquirers' Event

to help you think about God's call to Worship Leading, Lay Preaching,
Ministry with children and young people, the Ministry of Word and
Sacraments or Church Related Community Work.

Enquirers' Event

Saturday 12th February 2022

10am-3pm online

Register with ministries@urc.org.uk

to receive Zoom details

Church Secretary's review of 2021

I didn't manage to prepare a review of the year for the Dec/Jan issue of 'Contact' so I apologise for the delay. Anyway, here it is now!

We give thanks to God for all that has been positive in our church life during 2021, despite the fact that the Corona virus continues to disrupt our lives. We have looked after each other very well. Thank you to those who have given so much time and love in making others feel supported – it has been very much appreciated. We look forward to facing the challenges and enjoying the blessings that we will face as Christian folk, brothers and sisters in our church family, as we move into the new year in 2022. The church closed for worship at the end of March 2020. It was open again during October and November with videos on the screen instead of a minister 'in person'. However, circumstances forced us to close the building again at the beginning of December and we were not able to meet in person until Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd 2021 – a significant day for returning to God's house for worship. I don't think anyone anticipated that we would still be wearing masks, taking lateral flow tests and keeping our distance from one another in January 2022, almost two years after the first lockdown.

We have been, and continue to be, blessed with a high standard of ministry from Andrew and our worship team and from visiting and 'in house' preachers and we thank all those who have shared their gifts with us. We thank Richard and Malvolia Benham too. They were leading evening worship before the lockdown but have not been able to continue. Andrew and Candid have had a challenging year as they have had to juggle adjusting to being new parents, to work and to child care in a situation which is not ideal, having been complicated by Covid. We are also aware that Andrew is a minister to two churches which are 45 minutes journey time apart and has to give some of his time to the Synod in addition to the 40% for us and for Daventry. Please continue to pray for the family and give thanks for Andrew's leadership and ministry to us. Oh – and I would encourage you all to read, or read again Andrew's message of encouragement for us all in the recent Dec/Jan issue of the 'Contact' magazine.

Probably the greatest challenge that our church fellowship has to face is the question of how we discern God's will as we seek to move our church forward and this has been a high priority on the church meeting agenda and also in our prayer life. We have had several opportunities during the

last year to discuss, share our thoughts and pray about this. Andrew, and others, have also preached on this theme on several occasions. Please continue to pray and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we move into 2022. We have big decisions to make this year and all of us are called to play our part in one way or another whether it is in prayer and encouragement or practical support in commitment of time and talents. We are all part of the body of Christ. Andrew's letter in the June 'Contact' includes the following words: *"My prayers and desires are to be part of a Church that is aware that we have been given the Holy Spirit to empower us to serve God in whatever capacity as opportunities come our way. We should walk and serve in confidence knowing that we have been empowered to do God's work"*. A new prayer group on a Thursday morning at 11am in the church foyer has recently been set up specifically to pray for the future of our church and your support would be welcome.

Sadly, we have lost some of the members of our church family during 2021. Cynthia Bowler, John Mason, Marjorie Newton and Jan Davys were all long standing members of the church. Fortunately, it was possible for three of their funeral services to be held in the church in 2021. Some families were not able to have a service in the church for their loved ones during 2020 and early 2021 so a further service of remembrance for those we have lost during the past two years was held on Remembrance Sunday in November and was much appreciated by those members of the families who took part. Please remember all the families in your prayers. Please remember also our leader of the uniformed organisations, Carol Lynch, whose husband died last year, Zoya and Ferrand who both lost parents during the lockdown and were unable to travel to be with the family, and also Heather Crick who lost her father recently. Several of our members have had health problems during the year and we remember them too.

Give thanks for the work that Rachel does as our youth and family worker. Much of it is behind the scenes so please take time to ask her how she is getting on and give her some encouragement and support when she needs it. The Sunday Sprouts and Wednesday Sparklers groups are now up and running again and the new Bumps and Babies group meet on a Monday. Please pray for her ministry with all these groups and for all the work that Rachel does with schools and in conjunction with the council. The Snapdragon event, the Classic Car Rally and Christmas lights switch-on and Car Trail were events where she/we had an opportunity to reach out to the people of Hinckley. Thank you to all those who serve, and pray for, our church in many different ways. Your ministry is much appreciated.

As 2022 progresses we look forward to a year of fellowship and service in Christian love. Ask God to help us discern his will for our church, to empower us in his Holy Spirit and ask the question *'What can I do to share the love of Jesus with others and play my part in his body, the church?'*

May God bless us all as we seek to grow His church here in Hinckley.

Christine Thomas (Church Secretary)

Commitment for Life Prayer - February 2022



Prayers by Children and Young People for Climate from Christ Church URC, Petts Wood

Ivy 6 yrs old

Why do we love our planet? Because God made us to love our planet and our planet to love us.

Nathanial 8rs old

Dear God,

Thank you for this lovely world. We are very sorry for not taking care of it. We will make it a better place. **Amen**

Jasmine 13 yrs old

Dear God, we are sorry for all the wrong we have done, especially destroying the amazing planet you created for us. You gave us a home and we are mistreating it. Please forgive us. As individuals we will try our hardest to protect and preserve Earth so all generations after us will be able to enjoy all the amazing things you have given us. **Amen**

Anna 14 yrs old

Dear Father God,

We pray that you protect our children and keep them safe so they can grow healthy in mind and body. Please give them strength and wisdom to save our planet.

Please help them to grow in their faith of you and help us to change our ways for a healthier, more considerate and kinder future.

We pray for our world leaders, that you guide them to make good decisions for the future of our children and our planet. **Amen**

Free Church Choirs Festival of Church Music Lichfield Cathedral Saturday 21st May 2022

This event was due to be held last year but was postponed due to Covid. We hope to go ahead this year with a choir of 200 or so singers including members of our own choir. If you would like to take part, please see David Crick, or if you would just like to attend the festival service, it starts at 6.30pm.



The officiating minister is a good friend of Hinckley URC, Rev Dr Janet Wootton and the theme is *Unity*. Lichfield is only just down the road for us, so please support this event if you can, those who have attended previous festivals found them to be very uplifting.

Contact Information

Please take great care when sharing these contact details with other people. This information will not appear in the version of Contact on the church website.

Church Secretary	Christine Thomas	
Treasurer	Sally Leggat	
Premises	Malcolm Hooke	
Children and Youth Work	Chris Sharrock	
Pulpit Supply	David Crick	
Music	David Crick	
Notices	Christine & Tony Thomas	
Flowers	Kathy Smith	
Catering	Ann Martin	
Contact Magazine	David Crick	

What have you learnt?

At times for the first School Assembly back after Christmas I would take a large plastic box and talk about packing away Christmas and putting the box back in the loft. Is that what we should do? Forget about Christmas until December?

Have we learned anything new this past Christmas? Have you been inspired by what you read or heard? Have you been encouraged in your faith by listening to God's voice or reading His word?

Put a tick at the end of this sentence if you can answer YES to any of the questions.

Here are a few ideas that I have found during the past weeks...

The Angel of the Lord visited Zechariah to tell him about the birth of John the Baptist. The Angel said "Do not be Afraid". The angel Gabriel said those words when speaking to tell Mary that she was to be the mother of Jesus. On the Bethlehem hillside the Shepherds were "terrified" at the arrival of the Angel of the Lord. "Do not be afraid" they were told. Now this is much easier to say than do. On all these occasions it was a new experience for the people concerned. As our faith develops God may call us to do new things! He may even say, "Do not be afraid"!

The Shepherds heard the words of the Angel, they responded to the suggestion they go and find the Baby, so they sought Him, found Him and then Praised Him. And that was not the end... they told all they met what they had seen and heard. This was their testimony! We all have a testimony to tell those we meet of what Jesus has done for us. Our Hope tells us what we can expect from Jesus in the future.

In a family discussion we had over Christmas our daughter asked, "What did Mary and Joseph do with the gold the wise men presented to them?" Her answer was that it paid for their journey to Egypt. I asked "how did the gift come? Was it in a block or coins?" They would have been very vulnerable as they journeyed to Egypt, even more so if people realised they were carrying gold! Perhaps the way we live our lives as Christian men and women make us vulnerable at times!

Luke writes (ch2 v21) *On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him(Jesus), he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.* Whilst in the Temple in Jerusalem they met Simeon, he was a Godly man who was filled with the Spirit. Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. Amongst the words he spoke were... *a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."*

There in his arms was the light of the world, the light for the whole world, Jews and Gentles. For me here is confirmation that Jesus had come for me, and for you. For the whole world. Not just for the Jewish people of Jesus day.

Here is my big tick at the end of the line...

Well at this point I stopped typing and thought I would leave this article for the Church "Contact" and then in a few days come back to it before sending it to David, the editor.

During this time I read in my Bible Reading Notes (Encounter with God) for Wednesday 29th December I read the following... *"As we move away from Christmas and prepare to enter another year, what have you learnt that you could take into the new year? Pray that Jesus will accompany you"*

We know about co-incidents, but this is a God-Incident.

These notes had been written by John Grayston some months ago. Here for me was confirmation that I should send this article to David. A copy is also going to Scripture Union, the publisher of the notes, and to John Grayston.

Every Blessing
George

And John Grayston has replied to George...

Dear George,

I do love these 'God-incidences', which speak to us and confirm his direction. I am so glad that my comment gave you the confirmation that you needed.

My favourite goes back many years to the time I was editing the adult reading notes and we had a letter from a missionary in Uganda who had been picked up and held during one of Idi Amin's purges. She had said to the Lord that she really needed something clear from her Daily Bread reading, turned to it and found it was Acts 12, Peter's escape from prison, a passage which would have been chosen years before. She was released in a day or two

The footnote is that some years after receiving the letter I was leading a workshop at LICC and told the story to illustrate a point I was making only to have a lady come up to me at the end and reveal that she was the correspondent!

*With warmest Christian greetings,
John*

News from the Vine

this month we have books for Lent on sale. It's often helpful to have a book to encourage your focus on this time of year - whether it's something to read each week or each day, alone or with a group. We'll also have our new range of Take Note books arrive this month, which will include new lent titles. We'll post our new Lent titles on social media as soon as they arrive, as well as displaying them in store. If you want a particular title for a church group, please order early to avoid disappointment. As the month goes on, we will also have children's Easter books on display and will be selling Easter card packs in aid of both Compassion and The Leprosy Mission.

Fair Trade Fortnight starts on Monday 21st February - we missed being able to celebrate this last year so are looking forward to taking part in person this year. The theme is climate justice and we will have literature for you to take away about how fair-trade links with this. We'll also have a special offer on our lovely fair-trade hessian bags, to encourage you to ditch the plastic! Do drop in during the fortnight to find out more.

God Bless
Jessica Harrison
Manager

Roles of the youth worker – part 1

One of my exciting roles as youth worker is to lead the Christian assembly on a regular basis at Westfield Infant School. At the moment I am working alongside the team at St Johns church and I go in every 2 weeks to talk to the year 1 and 2 children on a Tuesday morning.

We are looking at the life of Jesus at the moment leading up to Easter and we do stories, games, drama some very active singing and dancing to some lovely worship songs – which the children love the jumping around - (not so sure the staff do though !). It is always a wonderful experience to walk in to school and have the children recognise you as the church or the Jesus lady! Or listening to them singing “Our God is a great big God” in the school playground.

I have been involved in the assemblies for nearly 4 years now and even through the lockdown was regularly recording videos for the assemblies that each class watched in their own lesson.

The link with the school has grown and is growing

- My mum worked for the school for 27 years!
- Robyn attended the school.
- I was a bookworm – listening to the children read, I am on the school PTA as well leading assemblies.
- More recently I have found that one of the staff members at the school runs the Baby basics project in Leicester - which is the project we are hopefully starting up in Hinckley – so that has been a new relationship formed.

God is good and is working in many lives – please pray for the children and staff at the school – that they all may hear a message from God to them to help them in their daily lives.

Rachel

A new prayer meeting has been initiated to pray specifically for our church and its future direction.

This meeting is on Thursdays at 11.00 in the Front Foyer.

Please come along if you're available.

Book Review – *David Sheppard Batting for the Poor*

Author: Andrew Bradstock

I was given this book as a Christmas present and found it very interesting. It is the authorized biography of David Sheppard (1929-2005) the Sussex and England cricketer who gave up the game to enter the Anglican priesthood, eventually becoming the Bishop of Liverpool. The author is an emeritus professor of the University of Winchester and has held positions within the URC – and is a cricket fan!

The book tells of Sheppard's privileged upbringing, his father was a solicitor, and his mother came from a wealthy family. Sheppard attended boarding school at Sherborne College and gained an exhibition to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, although this had to wait until he completed his National Service. As a schoolboy Sheppard became a cricket fanatic and would play and watch the game whenever he could, eventually making his first-class debut for Sussex in 1946.

It was at Cambridge University, in 1949, where he underwent a conversion to evangelical Christianity. He became heavily involved in the Christian Union and was always seeking opportunities to talk about his faith and persuade his fellow students to become Christians. The Christian Union dissuaded its members from getting involved in political or social activity seeing it as a distraction from making new converts. The following year Sheppard made his Test debut for England against West Indies. After leaving Cambridge he concentrated on his cricket career before realising that he was being called to the Anglican Ministry. He studied at Ridley Hall, Cambridge and in 1955 began his curacy in Islington. The following year he was ordained priest, at St Paul's Cathedral, and in 1957 he married his wife, Grace. (The book talks in some detail about their marriage and Grace's health issues).

He then became Warden of the Mayflower Family Centre in Canning Town which was an inner-city community project. Here he began to see the needs of the poorer people in society and how the gospel might be relevant to them. He still had time to play first-class cricket and even toured Australia with the MCC. His involvement with cricket carried on beyond his playing days. He was at the centre of the 'Doliveira affair' in 1968 – where because of Basil Doliveira's race, the South African authorities didn't want him to be selected to play for England. Sheppard was wholly opposed to the tour going ahead and campaigned publicly against it. Subsequently, he was a

leading campaigner for the sporting boycott of South Africa while their apartheid policies were in place, earning him both criticism and commendation – with Desmond Tutu becoming a great friend.

In 1969 he became Bishop of Dulwich and in 1975 was installed as Bishop of Liverpool. Here he forged a great ecumenical partnership with the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, Derek Worlock, as well as with the Free Church leaders, especially Dr John Newton, a Methodist. Frequently, the three of them spoke up for Liverpool and highlighted the poverty and deprivation that blighted parts of the city. In 1985 Sheppard was one of the authors of the Church of England Report *Faith in the City* which drew the ire of the Conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher. The report claimed that government policy was responsible, at least in part, for the poverty in the inner-cities and other urban areas and suggested alternative policies which went against government thinking at the time.

The church leaders also had prominent roles responding to the tragedies at Heysel and Hillsborough stadiums involving supporters of Liverpool FC.

David Sheppard retired in 1997 and became a life peer in 1998, sitting on the Labour benches in the House of Lords. He died in 2005 the day before his 76th birthday having suffered from cancer for a number of years.

What was interesting about this book for me, was how Sheppard's faith developed. Although he disliked labels, he was always happy to be associated with the evangelical tradition, but in a letter he wrote in 1990 he said "I would not now be seen as a "true blue" by conservative evangelicals. I still hope that at the heart of my ministry is what the word evangelical should stand for: the Gospel of *Grace*". And to quote the author of the book:

He [Sheppard] always believed that people needed to respond to the love of Christ individually, as he had done as a student, but he came to see salvation having a communal dimension as well.

It is a stimulating book, especially if you like cricket, and have an interest in how Christianity interacts with politics and our mission to the world.

David Crick

Don't raise your voice, improve your argument!

Desmond Tutu, quoting his father.

Recalling the Ministry for November 21-January 22

(As largely seen on the Church Web Site as THE WEDNESDAY WORD)

-----OOO-----

In reflection on the message from Sunday 21st Nov. Answering God's Call.

Extracts from Jeremiah 1, v1-10. **The Call of Jeremiah.**

v4f: **The word of the LORD came to me saying,**

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart;

I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

v6: **“Alas, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”**

v7: **But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young,’ you must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you.**

v8: **Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.**

Extracts from Mark's Gospel 3, v13-19. **Jesus appoints the Twelve.**

v13: **Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted,**

and they came to him.

v14f: **He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.**

(v16f: The twelve Apostles are listed by name.)

Each of us God calls should respond in accordance to our personal gifts.

-----OOO-----

In reflection on the message from First Sunday in Advent, 28th Nov. – Toy Service

God's Love and the Birth of Jesus.

“Glory to God in the Highest”

The first Advent Candle, **For Hope**, was lit.

Extracts from 1 Thessalonians, 3, v 9-13. **Paul Speaks to the People:**

v 9: **How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?**

v12: **May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else just as ours does for you.**

Congregation members brought forward toys for charity. Children celebrated with dancing.

Extracts from Luke's Gospel, 2, v 1 -18. **The Birth of Jesus.**

v1f: **In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken**

of the entire Roman world . . . So Joseph went up ...to Bethlehem the town of David.

v5: **He went there to register with Mary...who was expecting a child...While they were there ...**

she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room.

v8: And there were shepherds...keeping watch over their flock at night.

V13: Suddenly a company of the heavenly host appeared... praising God and saying

“Glory to God in the Highest Heaven”

V16f: (The shepherds) hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger.

When they had seen him they spread the word and all who heard were amazed.

-----ooo-----

In reflection on the message from Second Sunday in Advent, 5th Dec.

Partnering with God The Second Advent Candle, **For Hope**, was lit. Call to Worship from Philippians, 1, v 1-7. **Paul Says to the People:**

v 3: I thank my God every time I remember you.

v 4: In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy

v 5: because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day...

v 7: It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart. Extracts from Jeremiah, 29, v 1 -14. **Jeremiah’s letter to the exiles in Babylon.**

v4: This is what the LORD Almighty says...

v 5f: Build houses and settle down...Marry and have sons and daughters...

and grandchildren and great grandchildren. Increase in number there, do not decrease.

v 7: Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city...Pray to the LORD for it.

v 10: This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed... I will come and fulfil my promise to bring you back to this place (Jerusalem)”

The service was followed by the Church’s AGM.

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In reflection on the message from Third Sunday in Advent, 12th Dec.

The Third Advent Candle, **For Joy**, was lit.

Welcome, John 1: The Word Became Flesh

Extracts from Luke 1 v 39-56. **Mary Visits Elizabeth.**

v39: At that time Mary got ready and hurried to...Judea,

v40: where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth.

v41: When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb,

and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

v42: In a loud voice she exclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!”...

v46f: And Mary said; “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour...”

v56: Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home. Extracts from Luke 4, v 16-21, v16f: Jesus went to Nazareth...

and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom.

He stood up to read and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him.

Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

v18: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor...”

Completing the passage, v20: Then he rolled up the scroll...and sat down. The eyes of everyone...were fastened on him.

v21: He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

The Address was entitled: “What’s in the box?”

This title was discussed in the context of: “Who was The Baby in the Crib?” In the first scripture Elizabeth realises how blessed Mary’s child is and Mary’s Song (v 46-55) expresses this. In the second scripture, Jesus, grown up, is anointed by the Spirit of the Lord and becomes the Son of God.

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In reflection on the message from Fourth Sunday in Advent, 19th Dec.

CAROL SERVICE

The Fourth Advent Candle, Was lit.

Hope, Peace, Joy and Love

The Story of the Nativity is told in a series of readings.

The first carol was “Joy to the world, the Lord has come!”

Reading 1: Isaiah 9, 2-7, Christ’s birth and Kingdom Foretold

Reading 2: Micah 5, 2-4, The prophet Micah foretells the glory of Bethlehem

Reading 3: Luke 1, 26-38, The Birth of Jesus foretold

Reading 4: Luke 2, 1-7,

Reading 5: Luke 2, 8-20, The shepherds and the angels

Reading 6: John 1, 1-18, The Word became flesh

Carol 2 (after reading 1) “Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes”

Carol 3 (after reading 2) “O little town of Bethlehem,”

This was followed by a You Tube Audio of "Silent Night" ('7 O'clock News')

Carol 4 (after reading 3) "The angel Gabriel from heaven came"

**This was followed by a video of "The Magnificat" (Luke 1, 46-55)--
Mary's song of Praise and Justice**

**Carol 5 (after reading 4) "God rest you merry gentlemen, let nothing you
dismay"**

After carol 5 a video "Comfort and Joy" was shown, followed by reading 6.
A Poem "Christmas Joy" by Ellwood Haines Stokes was read.

Carol 6 followed, "Angels from the realms of glory"

The Minister summed up the theme of the service: **Joy to the World, The Joy
of Christmas.**

Carol 7 concluded the service:

"Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the new-born King"

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The Christmas Eve Communion Service 24th Dec

The opening Carol was "Once in Royal David's City"

The FIRST READING was from Isaiah 9, v 2-7:

v2: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...

**v6: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given
and the government shall be on his shoulders.**

**And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor,
Almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Carol "Born in the night, Mary's child"

Then a video was shown of a children's nativity play
from the St Paul's Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand

Carol was "See him lying on a bed of straw"

The SECOND READING was from John 1, v 1-14:

**v1: In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the
word was God...**

v14: The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

Carol "Love came down at Christmas"

Christmas Eve Communion

Carol "O come all you faithful, Joyful and triumphant"

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The Christmas Day Celebration 2021

The opening Carol was "Joy to the world, The Lord has come!"

The five Christmas candles were lit.

Carol "Come and join the celebration"

READING: John 3, v11-17:

Jesus teaches Nicodemus about eternal life. John 3, v16 sums up Jesus' teaching:

v16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

TALK: The gift of love.

Carol "The first Nowell"

Carol "O come all you faithful, Joyful and triumphant"

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In reflection on the messages from Sunday 2nd January 2022, New Year Service

Extracts from Old Testament Prophecy, Isaiah 42, v1-9: **The Servant of the Lord**

v1: Here is my servant, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.

v6f: I, the LORD, have called you...

to make a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison.

Extracts from Gospel Reading, Luke 2, v21-40: **Jesus Presented in the Temple**

v22: When the time came...Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. There were two witnesses: Simeon and Anna.

v25f: Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon who was righteous...

and possessed by the Holy Spirit, who had revealed to him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

v28: Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God.

v30f : "My eyes have seen your salvation...A light for revelation to the Gentiles."

v36f: There was also a prophet, Anna (aged 84) who never left the Temple.

She came up to them...gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

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In reflection on the message from Sunday 9th January 2022, Praise the LORD
Call to Worsh1p from Psalm 150

Extracts: **Praise the LORD, Praise him...**

with the sounding of the trumpet... with the harp and lyre...

with the timbrel and dancing...

with the strings and pipe...with the clash of symbols...

Let everything that has breath...Praise the LORD.

Extracts of Bible Reading from Psalm 103

**v1f: Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives
all your sins.**

**v11: For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him.**

v13: As a father has compassion on his children.

**v22: Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion.
Praise the LORD, my soul.**

HYMN 560: Praise my soul, the King of heaven.

In the Address during the service, the words of Psalm 103 and the hymn
were discussed in detail as they express God's love for us
and emphasise that we should

Praise the LORD like there is no tomorrow.

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In reflection on the message from Sunday 16th January 2022, **The Sunday
Service**

Extracts from first Bible Reading Psalm 122, **Going To Jerusalem.**

**v1: I rejoiced with those who said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”**

v2: Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem.

**v6: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, “May those who love you be
secure.”**

**v8: For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, “Peace be within
you.”**

**v9: For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your
prosperity.**

Extracts from second Bible Reading from Acts of the Apostles 2, v42-47.

The Fellowship of the Believers...

**v42: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to
fellowship,**

to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

**v43: Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs
performed by the apostles.**

v44: All the believers were together and had everything in common.

v47: Praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.

And the LORD added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The Congregation shared Communion.

Brian Beagley

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 12th February	Ministry Enquirer's Event
Saturday 5th or 12th March	Exploring the Future of our Church
Saturday 21st May	Free Church Choirs – Lichfield Cathedral

Regular Meetings

Every **Monday** Chat and Prayer session on Zoom - log in after 6.45pm for a 7.00pm start and ending about 8.00pm

Tuesday Weekly Bible Study Group – see Richard Benham for details

Wednesday-at-One – Wednesday 1.00pm

Wednesday Monthly House Group – meeting via Zoom.
Next meeting Wednesday 9th February 7.30pm.

Thursday – Prayer meeting for future of the church 11.00 Front Foyer

Friday prayer group 10.00am (in the church).

If you need any help using Zoom please contact Tony Thomas.

Please submit material for the March edition of Contact by Sunday 20th February. Articles can be emailed to dghc1@btinternet.com. The next edition of Contact will be available on Sunday 27th February.

Thank you to everybody who has submitted articles this month.

Some amusing mis-prints spotted in church notices:

Mrs Jones, our much-loved organism, will be retiring at the end of next month.

This year Ash Wednesday is on Thursday February 10th