

Winterbourne Churches' Newsletter

www.fromsidechurches.org.uk

www.salemchurch.org.uk



December 2025

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Church Lane, Winterbourne, BS36 1SE

Acting Rector: **Rev David Jones,**
Phone: 07737 529687
Email: david.jones@fromsidechurches.org.uk

Associate Priest **Rev Joanne Hodge** Phone: 07758 648264
Email: j.hodge@fromsidechurches.org.uk

Associate Priest **Rev Julia Chard** Phone: 07811 524533

Churchwardens **Chris Greef** 01454 774479
Derek Andow 01454 775024

BENEFICE AND PARISH OFFICE

95 High Street, Winterbourne, BRISTOL, BS36 1RD

Administrator **Nessa Jarman** Phone: 01454 776518
Email: office@fromsidechurches.org.uk

Opening hours Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9am-1pm

WEDDINGS/BAPTISMS/CONFIRMATION/FUNERALS

Enquires should be made to the Benefice Office - 01454 776518

PASTORAL VISITING

If you need a pastoral visit or know someone who does, please contact Pearl on 01454 314184

St Michael's Community Centre Bookings Contact the Benefice Office

SALEM METHODIST CHURCH

Factory Road, Winterbourne, BS36 1QL

Minister **Rev Leigh Maydew**
Phone: 07388 083488
Email: leigh.maydew@methodist.org.uk

To whom enquiries for Weddings, Baptisms, or Funerals should be made.

Senior Steward **Margaret Johnston** Phone: 01454 773626
Email: 123margaretjohnston@gmail.com

Hall Bookings **Jayne Glass** Phone: 07935 377790
Email: jaglass103@gmail.com

A message from Revd Malcolm Strange

Dear Friends

This is the last time I will be contributing to 'Thought for the Month'. By the time you read this Jo and I will have had our 'Farewell Service' at St Peter's and will have fully moved to our new home in Gloucester Diocese. We have had a wonderful time on the Fromside and leave with many happy memories, so thank you all for your support, care and love over the past 23 years, (nine of which have been as your Rector).

However enough of me. As you read this, we have entered the Christian season of 'Advent', a time of reflective preparation for the great celebration of Christmas. It has been a great sadness to me in my forty-one plus years as a minister that the Advent Season has lost and continues to lose its significance as the commercialisation and secularisation of Christmas dominates our lives, leaving the great celebration of light and love on the sidelines.



When I was a lad, (that sounds like a line from a Monty Python Sketch), I loved the quiet reflective nature of the Advent Season. Advent Crowns and Candles, Advent Calendars with pictures behind each door not sweets, leading us day by day to Christmas Day when a double window would be opened to reveal the nativity scene. Reflective stories and readings, special services and hymns/carols all helped in the preparation for what was something really special.

I fear that commercialisation and secularisation rob us of the specialness of the festival, with many folks having had enough by Christmas afternoon, absolutely no chance of continuing our celebrations until twelfth night!





Advent provides us with an opportunity to reflect on ourselves, our community, on our world. Without reflection, humanity cannot even begin to change its ways, making life better for all people. Without inner reflection and change, selfishness rules and selflessness struggles for air and is discarded by many as weakness.

Our world, beautiful as it is, can be a dark place and the Christian celebration of light, like those of other faiths Hanukkah or Diwali for example, remind us that there is a better way, that humanity can conquer the darkness by embracing love and the God who is its source and creator.

So, my final challenge for you as I leave is to try and use Advent this year as a time to reflect on how you can be a better human being, lay aside the 'stuff' that gets in the way and holds you back. If you strive to do this, you will inevitably embrace the light and if enough of us do it, changing lives for the better as a result, then our world will see the darkness diminish and the light of love shine forth for all.

God Bless you all & Happy Advent

Fr Malcolm



Salem services in January

4th Jan	Miss N.Sharp
11th Jan	Rev L Maydew (Holy Communion/Covenant)
18th Jan	Mr C. Leese
25th Jan	Mr T. Lansdown

SUNDAY WORSHIP IN OUR CHURCHES

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

1st Sunday 4pm St Michael's Community Centre
ST MICHAEL'S PRAISE

2nd Sunday 10.30 St Michael's Church
PARISH COMMUNION



3rd Sunday 10.30 St Michael's Community Centre
CELTIC WORSHIP

4th Sunday 10.30 St Michael's Church
PARISH COMMUNION



Also in St Michael's Church

2nd Sunday at 4pm - Pause for Thought or Healing Service

1st & 3rd Sunday at 8am - Holy Communion

See page 17 for details of special events
www.fromesidechurches.org.uk

SALEM METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SERVICES at 10.30

7th Dec Rev Leigh Maydew (Holy Communion)

14th Dec Mrs V Lear

21st Dec No morning service

- Remembering service at 4pm

28th Dec at Badminton Road



Further details on the website www.salemchurch.org.uk



"Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat,
please to put a penny in the old man's hat
If you haven't got a penny a ha'penny will do,
if you haven't got a ha'penny then God bless you."

Yes, Christmas is coming, a time to look forward to, hopefully with our families and friends. But it can be a time of excess. It doesn't need to be, so see if you can cut down on Christmas waste by thinking about the environmental impact of what you buy, and use some of the savings to help those who struggle, like the old man in the poem.

Challenge #1: This Advent ponder on Jesus' coming to be with us on earth. How are we preparing His creation for Him to live with us here? Pray for grace and wisdom to play your part in caring for creation.



Challenge #2: Christmas cards. Try to avoid ones with glitter or metallic bits: they are much harder to recycle. And how about recycling old cards yourself: they can be cut up to make gift tags for future use.



Challenge #3: Christmas presents. Be creative in the gifts you give this Christmas; make sure your desire to be loving is not damaging the environment. And reuse your wrapping paper. Take a bit of care unwrapping your presents (it adds to the gift experience), save the paper and reuse next year.

Challenge #4: Christmas decorations. You don't have to buy new decorations every year - old ones are just as good and help remind us of previous happy Christmases. Real trees have a much lower carbon footprint than artificial ones, especially if disposed of by wood-chipping. An artificial tree would need to be reused for ten years to be comparable.





Challenge #5: Christmas food. Buy as much locally produced, in-season food as you can. Try not to over-cater and don't waste food.

Challenge #6: Enjoy the feast of Christmas! Don't forget to recycle your rubbish. Don't waste unwanted presents but find new homes for them through the charity shop or on ebay.

Challenge #7: Get ready with your environmental New Year's Resolution. How will your care for creation in the coming year?

Finally, celebrate the joy of Jesus coming to be with us. Wonder at his incarnation, how he embraced being human, vulnerable and very much part of the creation that He made, all to restore it into peace with God.



And don't forget the "old man". There are so many people all around us who need our support, especially at this time of year.

Chris Greef

Carols in the Barn

Saturday 13th December

&
Sunday 14th December

3pm (Gates open at 2.15)

Winterbourne Medieval Barn

Church Lane, Winterbourne, BS36 1SE

Tickets £5 (£1 for children)

to include mulled wine, fruit juice & mince pies

see www.WinterbourneBarn.org.uk

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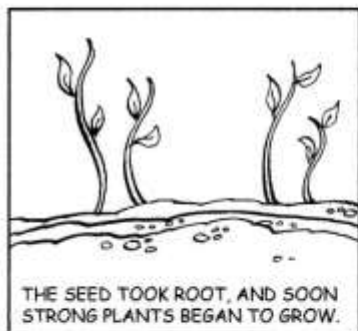
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The tale of the Wheat and the Weeds

JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS

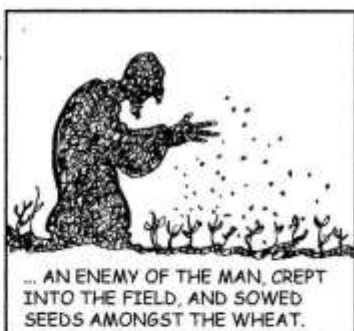


ONE WAS ABOUT A MAN WHO SOWED SEED IN HIS FIELD.



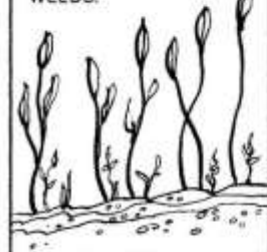
THE SEED TOOK ROOT, AND SOON STRONG PLANTS BEGAN TO GROW.

BUT ONE NIGHT, WHEN EVERYONE WAS ASLEEP...



... AN ENEMY OF THE MAN, CROPT INTO THE FIELD, AND SOWED SEEDS AMONGST THE WHEAT.

AS THE WHEAT BEGAN TO GROW, SO DID THE WEEDS.



WHEN THE SERVANTS SAW THE WEEDS THEY SUGGESTED RIPPING THEM OUT.

NO LET'S LEAVE THEM UNTIL HARVEST TIME!



IF YOU PULL THEM UP NOW, YOU MIGHT KILL THE WHEAT TOO. WE'LL SORT THEM OUT AT HARVEST.



WHEN THE WHEAT WAS READY, IT WAS HARVESTED INTO HUGE BUNDLES.

BUT THE WEEDS WERE BURNED IN A LARGE FIRE.



THE PARABLE TELLS US THAT ALTHOUGH WE LIVE ALONGSIDE BADNESS, WE CAN KEEP SEPARATE FROM IT.



Dear Friends

On behalf of Jo and myself can we say a massive heartfelt thank you for the very generous gifts from the Benefice Churches, you are all stars and we love you all very much.



Can we also say thank you for all the other gifts, cards, letters and emails wishing us well for the future, your appreciation of our ministry is so humbling.

We were both knocked out by the number of you who came to our Farewell Service at St Peters, so many and standing room only (not much of that either), again very humbling but also uplifting for us, helping to make an emotional day easier. A massive thank you to Elm Park School and all who helped to put on such a lovely reception, the atmosphere was magical and the cake was yummy!

Can we take this opportunity to wish Fr David (Acting Rector), The Ministry Team, Wardens, other Church Officials and all of you every Blessing as you move into the next exciting chapter of the Benefice's story.

Do keep in touch (new email address malcolmstrange91221@gmail.com). We will miss you, but we are both now ready to take this next step in our future journey together and are prayerfully waiting to see all that God may be calling us to be.



God Bless you all and take care of yourselves, you will of course remain in our prayers

Love
Malcolm and Jo.

JOY

Christmas Eve

4pm CRIB SERVICE

9pm BETHLEHEM MIDNIGHT MASS

**All Saints Church
Winterbourne Down**

Christmas Day

10am FAMILY COMMUNION

**St Michael's Church
Church Lane, Winterbourne, BS36 1SE**

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A message
from
Revd. Leigh Maydew

This year's Christmas campaign from the Methodist Church is entitled *Gifted*. *Gifted* is a message of good news to a weary world, it is a reminder that **You are a gift. Made with love.**

Through *Gifted*, the Methodist Church is trying to remind people that they have an inherent worth and beauty, not because of anything that they have done, not because of what they can give, but rather because of who they are.

It's easy isn't it to feel like we're a bit of a spare part, it's easy to feel like because of our age or ability we can no longer be useful to society, perhaps even to think that we're a burden to others.

But this negates the fact that we are 'fearfully and wonderfully made' (Psalm 139:14). It is the Christian belief that we are all made in the image of God, and because of that we are loved by God. **We are a gift. Made with love.**

Many years ago now I had the privilege of travelling to Brazil with The Boys' Brigade as we explored the topic of Brazilian street children, whilst there I bought a keyring. A bright orange (not quite as bright orange anymore) squashy circuit with a big smiling face, on the reverse it says *Sorria Jesus Te ama*, translated it means, *Smile Jesus loves you*.



Friends, this Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, please remember that you too are made by God, that you too are a gift to the world, and most of all, *Sorria Jesus Te ama*.

If you'd like to receive weekly emails from the Methodist Church related to the Gifted campaign, please head to www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/christmasresources/ to sign up.

Leigh

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cake and a
cuppa



Crafts

Games



Singalongs



Quizzes

We meet on the first Wednesday and the third
Thursday of each month

Come and join us, we'd love to see you.

Further information from Edna Snaith 07789 662694

CROSSWORD

Across

1 Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)

7 David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14,15) (7)

8 They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries (5)

10 Small deer of European and Asian extraction (4)

11 Seized control of (Numbers 21:25) (8)

13 Terror (Luke 24:5) (6)

15 First World War heroine shot by the Germans in Brussels, Nurse Edith (6)

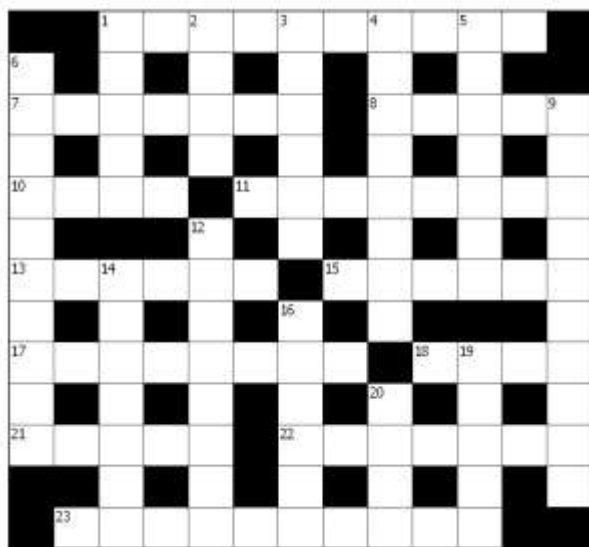
17 Stormy (8)

18 A bitter variety of this, together with lamb and unleavened bread, was the Passover menu for anyone unclean (Numbers 9:11) (4)

21 Arson (anag.) (5)

22 How John Newton described God's grace in his well-known hymn (7)

23 Habitation (Isaiah 27:10) (10)



Down

1 and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8) (5)

2 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as ... as a lion (Proverbs 28:1) (4)

3 One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)

4 He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19,20) (8)

5 City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)

6 Offer your bodies as living, holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1) (10)

9 Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)

12 One who accepts government by God (8)

14 Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual (Exodus 30:1) (7)

16 He asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) (6)

19 Are (Romans 13:1) (5)

20 You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will ... his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21) (4)

Answers on page 27

Salem Diary

It is surprising how quickly the year marches on. Here we are, only 5 weeks (at time of writing), to Christmas and all the activities that that entails.



The December Christmas Coffee Morning is Wednesday December 3rd with Christmas refreshments. We would love to see you there.



On December 7th we will hold our Remembering service at 4 p.m. It will be a quiet, reflective service with the opportunity to remember loved ones we have lost, by lighting a candle, writing a name on a star to put on the Christmas tree, and singing a few well known carols. There will be light refreshments after the service and a chance to chat with friends. All are welcome.

As in previous years we will be giving out Christmas bags to children in the local community. In that bag will be an invitation to come to make a Christingle on Saturday December 20th and join with those who enjoy a Bacon Butty on that morning.

Elm Park School will visit on Wednesday December 17th for their carol service. It is always a joy to welcome the children & staff for this occasion

The carol service is at 4 p.m. on Sunday December 21st (There will be NO morning service on that day) All are invited to come and share with us.

PLEASE NOTE: - there will no Film afternoon or Women's Fellowship in December

Regular activities will continue in January as follows:

Wednesday 7th	Coffee morning
Tuesday 13th	Film afternoon
Saturday 17th	Bacon Butty coffee morning
Tuesday 27th	Women's Fellowship



**FRIENDS AT SALEM WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR**

Special events in & around St Michael's

Saturday 6th December from 3.30-5.15

MESSY CHURCH
in St Saviour's Church Hall



Sunday 7th December at 4pm

PRAISE
in St Michael's Community Centre

13th & 14th December at 3pm
CAROLS IN THE BARN
in Winterbourne Medieval Barn
see page 7



Friday 19th December at 6pm

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

at St Michael's Church

see back page

Sunday 21st December at 10.30
CELTIC WORSHIP
in St Michael's Community Centre



FOR CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY
see page 11

Sunday 28th December at 10am
BENEFICE COMMUNION
at All Saints, Winterbourne Down



The many journeys of the Stone of Scone

Some 75 years ago, on 25th December 1950, the Stone of Scone, the coronation stone of British monarchs, was taken from Westminster Abbey in London by four Scottish students as a home rule gesture. They transported it to Scotland but broke it accidentally. It was later left by them in the ruined Arbroath Abbey, repaired and returned to London to be used in the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.



From 1996 it was kept in Edinburgh Castle, but last year it was moved to a new museum at Perth – two or three miles down the River Tay from Scone Abbey, where it had been used in the crowning of Scottish kings.



The Stone, also known as the Stone of Destiny, is a block of red sandstone that was taken by Edward I “Longshanks” of England in 1296 and used in the crowning of English monarchs since then. It is still used to crown UK kings and queens – most recently King Charles III in May 2023 – but it has returned to Perthshire for the first time in 700 years, and is now freely available to view there.

An old symbol of Scottish monarchy, the Stone was first recorded as being used in 1249 for the inauguration of the boy-king, Alexander III. It was taken by the English as war loot – a symbol of Edward’s perceived right to rule.

There are various stories about the origins and history of the Stone. One goes back to biblical times, naming it as the Stone of Jacob, taken by Jacob from Bethel as described in Genesis 28 and then removed to ancient Ireland by the prophet Jeremiah. There are also claims that the Stone at Perth is not the original, and many stories of the intricate measures taken to ensure its safety during the war years.



Christmas Unwrapped!

All of us have received unwanted gifts at Christmas. For Joseph the gift of a child, as recorded in Matthew chapter 1, was not something he really wanted. Although he was engaged to Mary, her pregnancy would be grounds for divorce. Not surprisingly, with the associated social disgrace, Joseph wanted to divorce Mary quietly (Matthew 1:19). However, God intervened in a dream: *'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means, God with us.'* (1:23). In a scary and uncertain world, what does the message of **Immanuel** say to us today?



God is present with us

God assured Joseph that He was working in all that Joseph was going through. The eternal and creator God entered time and space as a baby. This baby is both uniquely divine but also fully human. This means that we can know God personally, not just know about Him. The Holy Spirit is committed to making Jesus' life and character real in us, and bringing meaning to our circumstances, just as He worked in Mary's life.



God is on our side

Christmas touches some raw nerves in our lives, including stress, family rows, loneliness and financial pressures. However, God does not remain aloof from our experiences. In Jesus He enters our world of hopes and fears, joys and disappointments. He understands what we are going through, as He is alongside us. By the cross and resurrection, He gave His life that we might know His love, joy, peace and forgiveness.

For Joseph, as well as us, the Christmas message is one of hope in an uncertain world. It is a time to re-consider the claims of **Immanuel** ('God with us') as we entrust ourselves to Him for the coming year.



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Craft Workshops

Metalwork Christmas Decorations - Wednesday 3 December, 6.30 - 9pm
Create your own brass or copper Christmas tree decoration in this relaxed and festive evening workshop. The price includes full tuition and all equipment and materials, along with mince pies, mulled wine and Christmas music to enjoy your evening.

Music and Drama

Carols in the Barn – Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 December, 3pm
Experience the old Christmas story told through a light-hearted drama suitable for all ages. See page 7
All events at the Barn should be booked online at Ticketsource or via the Barn's website. If you need to book in person, contact the office (open part-time) to arrange a time to visit.

The Medieval Barn is fully accessible for wheelchairs. Free parking at the Barn for all events, and plenty of space for drop off / pick up and for bikes.

Looking for Christmas presents?

Why not book a workshop place or a ticket for an event in 2026 as an unusual gift for a loved one! A selection of craft workshops for January to March 2026 will be open for bookings from November. Classes include fused glass, making medieval clay tiles, wood carving, and willow weaving. Workshop numbers are limited to 8 - 10 people and tend to sell out very quickly. Varied musical events restart in March with a fun ceilidh on 21 March in honour of St Patrick's Day. Full details of all early spring events will be on the website shortly.

Free parking at the Barn for all events. The Medieval Barn is fully accessible for wheelchairs. More information and booking details on the Barn website

Winterbourne Medieval Barn, Church Lane, Winterbourne BS36 1SE

For further details about Winterbourne Medieval Barn Trust see
www.WinterbourneBarn.org.uk & facebook.com/winterbournemedievalbarn

WMBT Registered Charity number 1112908

WINTERBOURNE MOTHERS' UNION

would love to welcome you to tea
on Monday 15th December at 2.30
in St Michael's Community Centre



where

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hope you will want sing along
with their entertainment



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Please let Sue Reynolds know if you can attend
suereynolds2006@yahoo.co.uk

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Reflecting Faith: Do we hear God's Word today?

For the last few months, we've been looking at the way that church services are put together. After the Gloria each week, we hear 'God's Word' as written in the Bible. This is usually three passages: one from the Old Testament, one from the epistles, and one from the gospels.

But *how much* do we hear of God's Word? Though we say we want to 'hear God's word', actually the amount we hear week on week is quite minimal.

In bygone days, when the 1662 Book of Common Prayer was universally used in churches, it brought with it a two year lectionary: (unlike today's three year lectionary: lectionary being the recommended or obligatory Bible readings for each day).



This gave congregations, if they came to daily services both morning and evening (which in those times they most likely did) during the course of a year, an opportunity to hear read *the whole Old Testament once, the New Testament twice and all the Psalms twelve times*.

What a contrast to today! In most UK churches, attendance is now at only one service each week, mostly on Sunday. During that service, perhaps 15 or 20 Bible verses might be read.

Now, there are around 31,100 verses in the Bible, which means that at a generous 30 verses a week the congregation will hear around 1,560 verses in a year – that's around 5% each year. So even on a three-year cycle, with a few extra readings for good measure, we hear no more than 20% of the Bible.



I suspect there are two key reasons for this diminution of Bible verses being read. Firstly, church services have got shorter and take up far less time. Secondly, congregations have become more literate, and so it is thought that they do not need it all read out to them.

It would be interesting to know how much of the read-aloud-Bible people heard and listened to and absorbed, in relation to how much people do today, with the shorter verses being read to them coupled with much shortened sermons.

This month

Next time you go to a Sunday church service listen to the Bible reading with keen ears. How much do you recall a few days later? How much of the Bible that you have not heard recently in church have you read for yourself?



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Mouse Makes

A baby needs clothes
to keep warm like
a snugly sleep suit
or a vest and nappy.

What were you dressed in?

Jesus was wrapped in

.....
read Luke 2:7

A baby needs
somewhere
to sleep like
a crib or a cot.
*What did you
sleep in?*

Jesus slept in a

.....
read Luke 2:7

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus,
God's Son and our Saviour
coming into the world as a baby,
and we look forward to the time
when Jesus will come again,
not as a baby but as the
King of kings and Lord of lords!

read
John 14:3

A baby needs somewhere
to be born like at home
or in a hospital.

Where were you born?

Jesus was born
in a stable in

.....
read Luke 2:1-6

A baby needs
a name.
*What name were
you called?*

Jesus was given
a special name
that had a
special meaning.

read
Matthew 1:21-23



HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ★ NOLLAIG CHRÍDHEIL ★ NOLLAG SHONA
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN



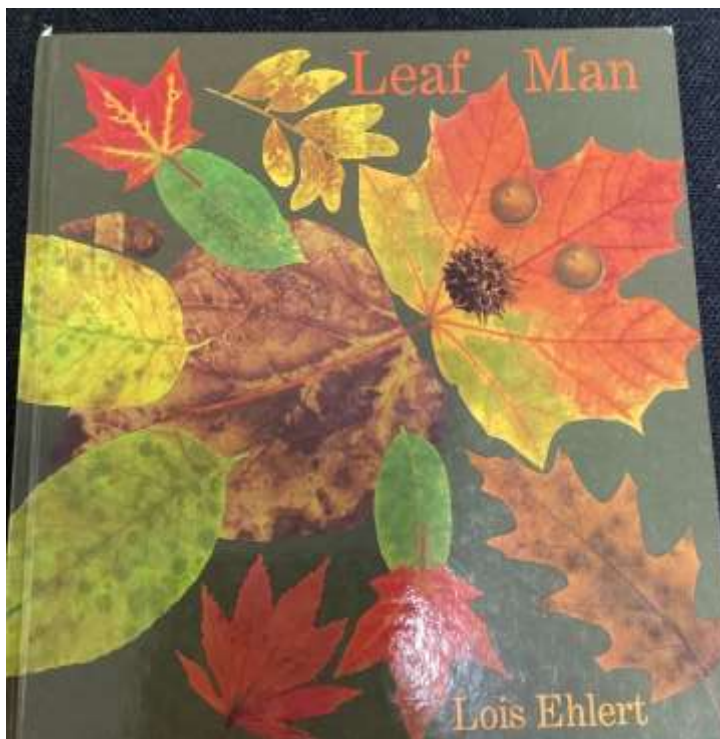
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Headteacher Mrs. Kirsty Robson
Phone 01454 867105

Reception have been learning all about Autumn this term. We've had fun going on an Autumnal walk around the school observing changes to the trees. We've collected lots of Autumn treasures such as conkers and acorns to use in our maths activities and made lovely leaf print pictures in art.

We read the story of Leaf Man by Lois Ehlert. We had great fun creating our very own Leaf Men using leaves and other items that we found in the playground. We hope you like our creations.





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ACROSS: 1, Tabernacle. 7, Absalom. 8, Incas. 10, Roes. 11, Captured. 13, Fright. 15, Cavell. 17, Cyclonic. 18, Herb. 21, Sonar. 22, Amazing. 23, Settlement.

DOWN: 1, Taste. 2, Bold. 3, Ramiah. 4, Abiathar. 5, Lucerne. 6, Sacrifices. 9, Saddlebags. 12, Theocrat. 14, Incense. 16, Pilate. 19, Exist. 20, Save.



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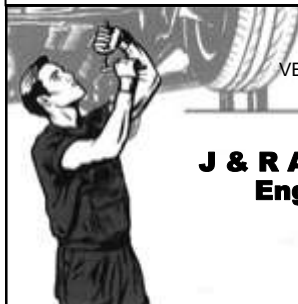
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BY CANDLELIGHT**

followed by mulled wine & mince pies

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Please send contributions for the February Newsletter by email to Gill Greef (gill@gillgreef.com) or deliver them to the Church Office St Michael's Community Centre, 95 High Street by Thursday 15th January.