

Christ Church Ainsworth Parish Magazine



Christmas At Christ Church
(Photo courtesy of Kat Sowden)

Serving the Community

www.ainsworthparish.org.uk

December 2021

Price 50p

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Our church building is COVID-secure, so you can either attend worship physically or worship with us on Facebook:

Sundays

- 10.30am in church for COVID-secure Communion
- 12 Noon for live-streamed midday worship on our Facebook Page

Wednesdays

- 6.30pm in church for Mid-Week Praise, recording posted later on Facebook

To join us on Facebook, follow this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchAinsworth/>

NB: If you are not on Facebook, you can still watch the service – when it says “Log in” “Create New Account” simply click “Not Now” (which is below these two options)

If you missed any of our livestreamed services, some of them can be found on our website <https://www.ainsworthparish.org.uk/online-worship.html> or our YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1kRCPBlymPoDSyhH9CZYrw>

The Prayer Book Society also lists some churches livestreaming BCP services: <https://www.pbs.org.uk/churches-and-services/-1>



Parish Diary December 2021

(Subject to any current covid restrictions)

Wed. 1st 6:30pm Mid-Week Praise (in Church)

Sun. 5th **THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

10:30am COVID-secure Communion (in Church)

12 Noon Midday worship (Facebook page)

4:30pm Christingle Service (in Church)

(Please note the change of time)

Wed. 8th 6:30pm Mid-Week Praise (in Church)

Sun. 12th **THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

8:00am COVID-secure BCP Communion (in Church)

10:30am Christmas Parade & Family Service

12 Noon Midday worship (Facebook page)

Wed. 15th 6:30pm Mid-Week Praise (in Church)

Sun. 19th **THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

10:30am Carols and Communion (in Church)

12 Noon Livestreamed midday worship (Facebook)

6-30pm Carol Service (in Church)

Traditional nine lessons and carols, followed by mince pies and mulled wine

Wed. 22nd 6:30pm Mid-Week Praise Scratch Nativity (in Church)

Fri. 24th **CHRISTMAS EVE**

2-00pm Christmas Eve at the Crib - *A Special service for children of all ages (Come dressed as a Nativity character)*

11-30pm Midnight Communion



Sat. 25th

CHRISTMAS DAY

- 8:00am COVID-secure BCP Communion (in Church)
- 10:30am COVID-secure Communion (in Church)
- 12 Noon Christmas worship (Facebook page anytime over the Christmas period)

Sun. 26th

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

- 10:30am COVID-secure Communion (in Church)

Sun. 2nd Jan

THE EPIPHANY

- 10:30am COVID-secure Communion (in Church)
- 12 Noon Livestreamed midday worship (Facebook)



Planning to attend our church building for worship?

The following COVID-19 Secure restrictions apply:

For your comfort we are operating three zones, offering different levels of security. The Zone you choose to sit in depends upon YOUR assessment of personal risk. For example, if you have few concerns and are not bothered about being pinged by the NHS Test & Trace app, then sit in Zone 1. If you are clinically vulnerable, you might prefer Zone 3.

Zone 1 (right hand side of the aisle and first 4 rows at the front on the left):

- You are advised to wear a facemask, but it is your decision.
- There is no requirement to remain socially distant.

Zone 2 (Remaining pews on left hand of the aisle – 1m⁺ social distance):

- Please wear a facemask
- Please sit in the designated pews, sitting in the space indicated by arrows.

Zone 3 (upstairs left & centre pews and the back Choir pews - 2m social distance)

- Please wear a facemask
- Please sit in the designated pews, sitting in the space indicated by arrows.

Singing: We now sing in church (hymns and The Gloria). There is no need to join in, but if you you are welcome to wear a facemask if you choose to.

Communion:

- Clergy will continue to preside in a COVID Secure manner.
- For now, we will not be sharing the Common Cup. Instead, after gelling their hands, clergy will carefully dip your wafer in the wine before safely dropping it in your hands.
- Zone 1 – we will distribute to you from the Communion Rail. Please mask and line up as directed.
- Zones 2 & 3 – remain seated, clergy will come to you.

General:

- We will leave the doors open to enhance air circulation.
- Please gel your hands as you enter and leave the building.
- There is a collection plate on the font, but this will not be passed around.
- Although we shall now stand at various points in the service (e.g., for the Gospel), you are at liberty to remain seated throughout if you wish.
- To avoid handling service books, a PowerPoint version of the order of service is projected in church. However, if you struggle with this, there are a few printed orders of service available on request (please take them home with you afterwards).
- If you are in Zone 1, please allow those in Zones 2 and 3 to exit first as they need to maintain social distance.

Whether you attend worship in church with others, or prefer to join with us on Facebook, is entirely your decision. Our responsibility is to ensure you have the choice.

Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not join us in church due to the risk to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately and arrange a PCR test. Likewise, please stay at home if you have been pinged by Test & Trace.

A few words from the Vicar

I had hoped we could enjoy a Mission Communities free month this month, but the Diocese had other ideas. Their latest paper on the subject confirms that this parish will form part of a grouping stretching from Ainsworth and Walshaw in the North, to Whitefield in the South. I mentioned last month that our PCC has serious reservations about the feasibility of a grouping covering such a wide geographical area. Anyway, on your behalf, the PCC is determined to do its best to make this work.

The paper recommends that the formation of each Mission Community is underpinned by prayer. I certainly wouldn't wish to argue with that sentiment. Prayer will be essential if we are to make our grouping work, and that much should not need spelling out.

However, a rather interesting suggestion from the Diocese is that, to prepare for this important change, groupings should organise prayer walks between each of their constituent churches. I can just imagine the route. Once we've made our way across country, over top lodge bridge, dodged the sheep and cattle, climbed to the summit of Bentley Hall Road before dropping down into Walshaw, the remaining 13 plus miles should be a doddle!

Please let me know if you're up for it. I promise to have Silletts on standby!

Since the end of July, as a Church, we have been functioning with a semblance of pre-COVID normality. But will we ever return to precisely the way things were before the first lockdown? Frankly, no!

Firstly, we have banked some useful changes forced upon us by the pandemic. To name but two, I decided long ago to continue livestreaming at 12 noon on Sundays and we have discovered that it is easier to host meetings, study courses etc., on Zoom.

Some activities simply will not be returning because the pandemic has hastened their inevitable decline. Sunday School is a good example. Few families with children attend on Sunday mornings, with most now attending Mid-Week Praise on Wednesday evenings.

Other things remain on hold, such as the COVID security measures in Church. Individuals vary in their understanding of the continuing risk from COVID, and it is my responsibility to ensure *everyone* feels safe when attending worship. Chief amongst the continuing restrictions is that we still do not share the Common Cup during Communion. There is no appetite for its reintroduction within the congregation, and I

cannot be certain when, if ever, this high-risk activity will be reinstated. Unfortunately, the obvious solution, individual cups (like the Methodists use), is currently banned by the House of Bishops.

In some cases, we simply do not have volunteers to replace those who have moved away from the area during the pandemic or felt the time was right to step down. In other cases, it is unclear whether volunteers plan to resume.

And then, we have Mission Communities

So, being pragmatic, church life will not fully return to the way things were before COVID. All of us, me included, need to lament, and then move on.

So, Christmas. Unlike last year, when we were mostly online, this year we return to something like normal, with all but one of our seasonal services in Church. Full details can be found in the Parish Diary.

God Bless

Dave

Editor's Spot ...

Welcome to the December 2021 edition of Christ Church Ainsworth Parish Magazine, which is once more packed full of reports, articles and useful information. I am constantly amazed by the wide variety of reports and information that are sent in for inclusion in the magazine – and always very grateful!

It seems incredible that we are drawing towards the end of another year, and what a strange year it has been. Whilst many of us are now back out and about and once more enjoying our freedom, there are lots of things which haven't yet returned to their pre-pandemic format, and inevitably some things that will become confined to history.

One of the big things that the pandemic showed us, was that we are able to adapt; not all of us like change, and in reality, many of us would prefer to stay within our comfort zone when it comes to what we do and how we do it, but when the chips are down and we have to do it, we can embrace change, and sometimes we are pleasantly surprised when we do.

One of the things that I'm glad to see making a post-pandemic comeback, is the Parish Diary – there are lots of things going on in Church throughout Advent and over the Christmas period, so don't

Bible Reading Fellowship

Shop for Christmas cards and wrapping paper without the queues on brfonline.org.uk. Bible Reading Fellowship also have an extensive online shop with many books that would make ideal gifts, perhaps especially "The BRF Book of 365 Bible Reflections". You can browse sample pages on their website brfonline.org.uk/365-bible-reflections.

The Children's Society

The Children's Society has been fighting for the hope and happiness of this country's young people for over 140 years, and Christingle celebrations play a huge part in their work.

Thanks to your support, they are able to run vital services that keep children safe and help them through their toughest challenges. Christingle celebrations also help them to run campaigns that bring about big social changes so that young people can have better lives today and greater opportunities in the future.

One of the Society's project workers, Karen, provides young people who are in care with one-to-one support. Here she tells us how she helped David, a young person she works with, continue to have support when lockdown meant they couldn't meet.

"Everything I do with David is around connecting with him. He lives in the middle of nowhere so there is nothing around and no escapism. Because he is a social person, he's feeling frustrated with it all.

I sent him a care package, some water colour pencils and art equipment. I said, "I want you to know that I'm thinking of you, even though I can't see you". I think he sees now that I see him as a person rather than a statistic.

We did a games session virtually and a three-hour baking marathon. He was in his kitchen, and I was in mine, and we talked about what he wanted to do as a career, which he's never had focus and dreams before. That's a big improvement.

I think it's important that we can do that little bit extra, go the extra mile. I've done it with all my young people, I've sent them out care packages, whether it's chocolate or a magazine or a puzzle book or an A4 pad and some pens - simple things to you and I but they're really big to the young people.

David was missing people and the interaction face to face with people. He's a lively chatty person who likes people, and since I've

been working with David, his aggression, his abilities at school, what he's doing at school, have all improved."

This is just one story of help, friendship and support given by one project worker. Mark Russell, Chief Executive of The Children's Society continues; "Your celebrations aren't just raising funds to help our country's vulnerable children, they're also bringing communities together to share a moment of joy and hope. After the year we've all had, we need that kind of unity and togetherness more than ever right now, and I want to express my sincere gratitude".

Christingle Service - Sunday 5th December 4.30pm.

Please join us for our candlelit celebration held in our beautiful Church.

This year, we are holding a "make-your-own" Christingle with a difference! Each child will be given a paper bag containing all they need to make a Christingle. During the Service, we will hear about how the Children's Society helps young people from all backgrounds in our local area and throughout the country. We will talk about what the different parts of the Christingle represent, sing favourite carols, have fun putting the Christingles together, and try not to eat the sweets before the end! Then finally, the lights will be dimmed, the glow sticks snapped, and the Church bathed in a soft light from the Christingles held aloft. It's a magical atmosphere – why not come along and see for yourself.

How To Donate To The Children's Society

In person - Please place your donation in one of the Christingle envelopes in the pews in Church. You can donate at the Christingle service or any service throughout December. If you can gift aid your donation, that would be much appreciated.

Online - Alternatively you can donate online by clicking the link below and clicking make a donation.

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/christingle/christ-church-ainsworth>

Thank you

Susan Campbell
Local secretary

#HelpFromHome - Raise **FREE** funds
for us every time you **shop online**

[Find out more](#)



Easyfundraising

A great result last month as one of our supporters won a fantastic £50 donation for our cause on the Easyfundraising 'Spin To Win', bringing our monthly total raised to £53.46 and our overall total to £818.87. A huge thank you to everyone for raising donations via #easyfundraising!

If you haven't signed up to support us yet, it's easy and completely FREE; You can find our easyfundraising page here:

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ainsworthpc/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_medium=email&utm_content=rm-rbd21-e1

Christmas Wreaths

The churchyard team are again going to be doing wreaths for this Christmas.

To order a wreath, please take an envelope from the back of church (or use your own) and place the completed details in the envelope with the monies – cash only. Place the completed envelopes in the box at the back of the church. Please state if you want the churchyard team to place the wreath on a grave for you, or if you wish to collect it yourself. If you want the churchyard team to do it, please state where the grave is and the names on the grave so we can find it for you. The cost is £10 per wreath (cash only), orders must be placed on or before **Friday 10th December**. Collection date for the wreaths is **Wednesday 15th December between 9 and 12am**. Wreaths will be placed on graves at this time as well.

Completed envelopes can also be put through the Vicarage door or sent by post (with monies included) to: Jan Hayes – 14 Browns Rd, Bradley Fold Bolton BL2 6RQ (or hand delivered to this address). Any enquiries please call 01204 796404.

Just A Thought

Happiness isn't about getting what you want, it's about wanting what you get.



Coffee and Conversation

Tuesday 14th December

10.30 – 12 noon

Ainsworth Church and Community Hall

*"A cup of coffee shared with others
is happiness shared and time well spent."*



Notices, Acknowledgements & Announcements

Ainsworth History Society Meeting

Monday 6th December

7.30pm, Duke William, Well Street

Everyone welcome.

Coffee & Conversation

Tuesday 14th December

10.30 – 12 noon Ainsworth Church & Community Hall

‘A cup of coffee shared with others is happiness tasted & time well spent’

Everyone welcome

Christingle Service 2021

Sunday 5th December

4.30pm Christ Church Ainsworth

Why not join us for this family friendly, fun and joyful service, which supports the incredible work of The Children’s Society; everyone welcome.

Ainsworth Community Christmas Tree Lights Switch On!

Sunday 5th December, 3pm

The Delph

Ainsworth Friends of The Delph invite you to our Ainsworth Community Christmas Tree lights switch on; Sunday 5th December from 3pm, with lights switch on at 3.30pm by the Mayor of Bury. Please bring a bauble to put on the tree and a tin for Bury Food Bank. Refreshments available.

Christmas Quiz Sheets

Available in Church throughout December; £1 each - all proceeds to Church Funds

Homemade Cakes & Bakes

A selection of delicious homemade cakes and bakes will be available in Church each Sunday throughout December – yours for a small donation to Church funds.

Porch Boxes

We are now able to receive donations for Porch Boxes in Church again; we will also be supporting Porch Boxes again this Harvest. It’s also still an option to support Porch Boxes through a donation: A cheque made payable to “The Porch” sent to Michael Perrin, 14 Kenmore Avenue Bury BL8 2DY or Bank transfer to Account number 81643089 sort code 09-0155 account name The Porch or Online

<https://porchboxes.wordpress.com/>

Around The Organisations ...

Beavers

Last month the Beavers made poppies for Remembrance Sunday, remembering all the Service personnel who had died fighting in the Wars. For Children in Need the Beavers made Pudsey Bear drawings.

Twelve new Beavers were invested but sadly, because of the Covid restrictions, the parents were not allowed to attend, however many pictures were taken and sent via the WhatsApp group. All looked very smart in their new neckers. The Beavers were well behaved in the Remembrance Sunday service standing completely still and quiet during the two minute silence.

We are now looking forwards to our Christmas Party and hope to have a visit from Santa.

We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Rikki

Cubs

Sean has resigned as Cub Scout Leader (Akela), but the pack will continue to run as normal. We thank him for the work he has done over the last few years. Over the next few weeks we will combine with Scouts for part of the meeting as well as doing activities on our own.

Cubs have been busy with Teamwork, Air Activities and Skills badges. Hopefully they will be completed before the Christmas break.

Five Cubs joined with the Scouts on their Bonfire weekend camp to ensure they completed all the tasks for their Silver Award – these included all the activities they have missed due to being online and so the outdoor work was not able to be completed and achieved during lock-down.

A big thanks to Stacey and her leaders for agreeing to take them, and, despite some pretty poor weather conditions, ensured they pitched tents, slept under canvas, packed equipment, and many other outdoor activities. They will be presented with their awards at December Church Parade

What a great turn out we had at the church yard prior to Remembrance parade to help clear the leaves from the paths and the

graves so that it ensured they were safe for the congregation to walk safely. It was good to have so many parents helping as well.

Cubs will finish on Friday, 9th December for the Christmas break; best wishes to everyone and here's to a better 2021!

Gwen - Baloo

Scouts

6pm Friday 5th November was the start of a very wet and blustery weekend for the Scouts and some of the older cubs.

The group headed to Bibby's Farm for the weekend, where they had a brilliant sight of all the fireworks all around from Chorley, Preston and as far as Blackpool each night. The camp was jam-packed with activities that went towards the Scouts Camper Badge and the Cubs Chief Scouts Silver award. Activities included pioneering, orienteering, and we actually created a giant catapult

Despite a few tent failures, and some wet and blustery spells, the group had a really good weekend.

The weekend was planned and run by George as he had to do this to earn his 'Nights Away Permit'. George passed with flying colours and can now take the Scouts away without me (woo hoo!), although apparently, he says that's not allowed - tee hee!

On the Saturday of Remembrance weekend, we helped the Church Yard team by clearing all the fallen leaves from the graveyard. The children all worked really hard, and some had great fun jumping in the leave piles throughout the morning. Whilst there we put some heathers on the Commonwealth War Graves within the Church Yard.

What a fantastic turn out we had for Remembrance Parade, it is so good to be back to the services. Who knew the Scouts could be quiet for 2 minutes, it doesn't happen on a Friday night!!! I bet even some of the parents were surprised.

We are now in the process of planning our next camp which happens 3rd to 5th December, so will update you on this in the next magazine.

May we take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and enjoy yourselves

From Scout Leaders – Aled, Ben, George, Mollie and Stacey

12th Radcliffe Brownies

As always, activities involving food go down very well, so we enjoyed trying to make a tower with fruit and vegetables using a skewer and apples as the foundation – and of course we had to eat them once we'd finished! Following the theme of “mystery” we all created different pictures using food colouring and shaving foam – and the room smelled very pleasant afterwards! We solved a problem about a stolen chocolate bar, completing challenges to gain clues (and since everyone managed to do all the challenges - and work out who stole the chocolate bar - we all had a chocolate bar to celebrate!); we wrote secret messages using baking soda and fruit juice and matched shoes to their owners!



We are pleased to have been able to award badges to the Brownies - the Clever Cogs engineering badge to Amelia, Eloise, Grace, Hattie, Isla, Izzy, Jessica, Lily-May, Lucy, Polly, Poppy, Poppy, Scarlett and Tayah; Grow your Own badge to Hattie and the Baking badge to Grace, Hattie, Harriet and Tayah. Well Done girls!

Things are beginning to return to normality and so in October we attended our first Church Parade in over 18 months. Bea carried the flag and Erin and Sofia escorted.

Polly, Brown Owl

Rebuilding Hope and Confidence

A year of uncertainty, difficulties, caution, renewing, hope, and thanksgiving is drawing to a close and we look forward in anticipation to next year. We will have a new theme as we step forward in faith.

However, we have some celebrating to do first as we rejoice in the birth of Jesus.

You will all know about our Christmas party which this year is on 7th December, 2pm for 2.30pm. If anyone is unsure of the arrangements, please get in touch with Jean E or me. Put your glad rags on and come to enjoy the afternoon!

Most importantly, don't forget to bring a small gift for your PRAYER PARTNER. If your prayer partner is unable to be there, please can you make arrangements to get your gift to them before Christmas. I love this time as we find out who has been praying for us for the last two years and we reveal ourselves to the person who has been the subject of our prayers.

There won't be another meeting in December as the week running up to Christmas Day tends to be a rather busy time. We will meet up again in January. Details in next month's magazine.

Mothers' Union Advent Calendar: Over the course of the Advent season, Mothers' Union will be hosting a digital advent calendar on the website. There will be a link to this which we will forward to those of you who are online, when we receive it.

Each day will have a text based or video content relating to an area of our work in different countries around the world with a chance to enter into a competition to win some lovely prizes.

We hope that this will appeal to members and non-members alike and represent a fun way to share the good work of Mothers' Union.

Finally, members join with me in wishing everyone who reads this online magazine and all of our Church congregation, a Very Happy Christmas.

Jennifer White (Hon Sec)

Ainsworth History Society www.ainsworthhistorysociety.org

We now meet on the First Monday of each month from 7:30pm in the enclosed area at the Duke William (the gazebo with sides and heaters!). The next meeting is Monday 6th December, when we will have a just-for-fun quiz – don't worry, no one will be keeping scores!. All are welcome.

November Meeting:

We were pleased to find that the heaters and sides in the gazebo meant that we were warm for the meeting. After seeing some adverts from the 1945 parish magazine, we looked at Ainsworth 100 years ago, using information from a book by Rev Woods, who was vicar in the parish from 1905 to 1930. He describes Ainsworth as an isolated village, standing on a hill three miles from everywhere!



“Daddy” Woods didn't think he was well-paid at £260 a year, though most of the villagers earned less than £1 a week at that time; nor was he particularly impressed with the vicarage (now the “Old Vicarage”) - he felt the rooms were too small and the place wasn't compact – too much stone passages was how he described it. Despite that there seem to be advantages – it had a coach house and stable and a paddock of nearly an acre. Hilda Lord once told us that she remembered the toilets there were outside - a stone building with 2 holes!

He also provided a view of Ainsworth during his time here - the villagers, the housing, the drinking houses and the school as well as the Church.

Ainsworth History Society meets on the first Monday of each month. The next meeting of the Ainsworth History Society will be held on Monday 1st November in the covered area at The Duke William on Well Street – **please note the earlier time of 7.30pm**. Everyone is welcome.

From the Archives – December 1996

As you would expect., the Parish Magazine of December 1996 had a large focus on the forthcoming Christmas activities; a snowy church scene graced the inside front cover with beneath it the caption, '*The hinge of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable*' – very deep!

The Parish Diary for that month included details of the Deanery Advent Service, Christingle Service, Parish Christmas Lunch, a special evening service followed by singing in the Church and Community Hall, led by members of the Affetside Choir, 3 Carol Services for the various groups, organisations and School, plus the Parish Carol Service, a Communion and Crib Service, the First Communion of Christmas and a Christmas Day Communion Service – blimey!

In his 'Letter to The Parish', Father Alan wrote of the importance of Advent and the need to make time for quiet preparation and reflection, expressing his regret at the way shops seemed to be promoting Christmas earlier and earlier – a trend that has, if anything, become worse over time rather than better.

The 'Holiday Church' featured in the December 1996 Parish Magazine was St. Trillo, Llandrillo-Yn-Rhos; at that time, it was the smallest church in Great Britain still in use, having seating for only 6 people. The article was written by Revd. K.P. Bullock, who spoke warmly of his experience of leading Eucharist in this tiny church.

In December 1996, the 'Face To Face' interview was with David Gerrard, who was (and still is) Head Teacher at Christ Church Ainsworth School. In a note elsewhere in the magazine, Mr. Gerrard expressed his "*..deep sadness over the death of former Governor of the school, Mrs. Edith Pannequin.*"

The various groups and uniformed organisations were busily planning Christmas parties and activities; the Guides also continued to work towards their Silver Challenge (tasting 25 different fruits and vegetables and planting 25 bulbs); meanwhile, the boys' sections seemed to have had a bit of a winning streak, with Ventures, Cubs and Beavers all winning their sections at the District Swimming Gala and Scouts coming 2nd – almost a clean sweep!

In December 1996 there were 3 Baptisms, 1 Wedding and 1 Funeral recorded from the previous month. The number of Communicants for the previous month was listed as 424 and the collections totalled £1599.

On Reflection

This series of reflections was written during the 1st Lockdown by Elizabeth Spiers, a member of the CYFChurches.org Benefice in West Sussex.

Reflection 7 - Mary by Elizabeth Spiers.

'In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So, Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and 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 available for them.' (Luke 2:2-7)

I heard someone say: we're not human beings having a spiritual experience, we're spiritual beings having a human experience. I thought a lot about that while reflecting on this passage.

It was such a human experience. Mary had to travel 80 difficult miles because of a census called by Caesar so he could tax his subjects. She spent many nights on the road and when she did arrive in Bethlehem, there was no reservation waiting for her. Mary was travelling with a man who was not the father of her baby and perhaps she was hoping to get away from all the gossip her pregnancy most likely caused. She wouldn't have had any privacy when giving birth and once he was born, seemingly the best place to put her baby was the animal feeding trough.

And yet, it was such a spiritual experience. Mary travelled from Nazareth to fulfil an Old Testament prophecy which foretold that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. She travelled while pregnant following a visit from the Angel Gabriel and what the Bible calls an 'overshadowing' of the Holy Spirit'. Joseph hadn't divorced her, but only after a dream in which an angel had told him that the child was very special and not to worry about the fact that he wasn't the father. And when Jesus was born, Mary used strips of linen to wrap the baby and put him in the manger so that the shepherds would know they had found the King of Kings (v12).

Nothing was random.

- God caused Caesar to call a census so that a prophecy could be

fulfilled.

- A dream with an angel caused a man thinking of divorce to marry his betrothed.

- A baby's wrappings and crib were a sign for the shepherds. I think of the song 'Mary, did you know?' in which there's a line that says, '*the child which you delivered will soon deliver you*'. Mary delivered naturally; Jesus delivers us spiritually.

We too are both spiritual and human. We're living our lives with experience of both, just as Mary and Joseph did. God uses things of the world to work out His purposes. Sometimes we see it, sometimes we don't. Sometimes we just treasure these things in our hearts as Mary did.

Through The Seasons – Ainsworth In November

*Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day ...*

These words, the first two lines of Emily Bronte's poem, 'Fall Leaves, Fall', seem to have been pertinent throughout the month of November. When the clocks changed at the start of the month, the long, lazy Autumn, '... season of mists and mellow fruitfulness ...' that we had been enjoying, seemed to morph overnight into a season of mists and murk and mud. The few leaves which managed to cling to the branches despite the persistent wind, didn't stand a chance against the torrential rain; even the willow trees have now had to admit defeat.

Consequently, throughout the village and surrounding area, the paths and tracks are liberally coated – a glorious crisp, rustling golden carpet on a bright sunny day, but slippery and somewhat treacherous when wet!

Whilst the lovely new footpaths have greatly improved the footing across the Paddock Leach land, elsewhere the fields are sodden, the mud and puddles have made a comeback and it's a case of walking boots off, wellies back on! The water level has risen dramatically in all three of the Whitehead Lodges putting stone skimming and paddling out of bounds once more.

Whilst most of the wild flowers are now a distant memory, there is still plenty of colour to be found round and about; at this time of the year the Holly bushes come into their own - the bright red berries contrasting sharply with the dark



green leaves; a few tiny Cyclamen are still bravely flowering near to



the Weaver's Cottages, and the Gorse is still in bloom in places around Whitehead Lodges; interestingly a number of Ivy bushes are sporting clusters of buds, seemingly about to burst into bloom.

Once again there has been a subtle shift in the bird life locally; the large flocks of Canada Geese have begun to disperse, but Cormorants, Gulls, Swans, and some form of Diving Duck seem to have taken their place, alongside the regular Ducks and Coots that appear to be permanent residents; the Great Crested Grebes have also made a reappearance. Kestrels and Sparrow Hawks can regularly be seen hovering above the fields and farmland in search of prey and the local Owl population have become much more vocal again.

Walking along the footpath near to Cuckoo Woods as dusk fell at the end of a persistently wet day, brought a sighting of a large Fox crossing the track just ahead, and then a full-on flying display from a Barn Owl as it silently flew the length of the copse alongside the track – more than sufficient recompense for an otherwise grey, soggy walk!

This month's sightings include:

Blue Tits, Coal Tits, Jays, Pied Wagtails, Song Thrush, Barn Owl, Dunnocks, Long Tailed Tits, Robins, Kingfisher, Chaffinches, Tawny Owl, Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe, Green Finches, Heron, Kestrel, Sparrow Hawk, Bats, Foxes, Badgers, Deer,

The final verse of Sara Coleman's poem, "The Garden Year", reads, "Chill December brings the sleet, Blazing fire, and Christmas treat."

Watch this space for an Ainsworth in December update, and please keep e-mailing your own nature discoveries to

ainsworthmagazine@gmail.com

Hidden Gems

Kirstall Abbey & Abbey House Museum

Kirstall Abbey is a ruined Cistercian monastery in Kirstall, Leeds. The original plan for the building of the monastery was down to Henry De Lacy, Lord of the manor of Pontefract and 2nd Lord of Bowland, who promised to dedicate an Abbey to the Virgin Mary should he recover from a life-threatening illness. Recover he did, and originally the Abbey was to be built on land belonging to De Lacy, near

Barnoldswick, however the site was deemed to be unsuitable, and the Abbey was eventually built on its current site, near to the River Aire, in 1152.

In 1589 the Monastery was surrendered to King Henry VIII's Commissioners under the Dissolution Of The Monasteries Act. The Abbey passed through various hands, until in 1889 it was bought by Colonel John North, who subsequently presented it to Leeds City Council. Following a major restoration project, the Abbey ruins were opened to the public in 1895.

As a Grade I listed building and Historic Monument, the Abbey ruins are both beautiful and fascinating. Knowledgeable and helpful staff are on hand to provide regular tours and answer questions, there's also a well stocked gift shop and a lovely Tea Room. Artisan Markets are held regularly in the Abbey grounds throughout the Summer months, along with various events and outdoor theatre productions.

A short walk across the park (and on the opposite side of the road that now runs through the original grounds), Abbey House Museum is situated in what was originally the Abbey Gatehouse.

The Museum provides visitors with a unique opportunity to discover what life was like in Leeds in Victorian times, with cobbled streets and authentically recreated shops, a pub, school room and houses. A quiz sheet (really difficult!) encourages visitors to examine each area thoroughly and also provides snippets of additional information.

The first floor of the museum houses an incredible collection of toys and memorabilia from bygone times, along with various other topical exhibitions throughout the course of the year. The museum is surrounded by a small garden area, with the Abbey House Café offering a selection of drinks, snacks and light refreshments. However young or old you are, this is a hidden gem that is definitely well worth a visit

For more information about Kirstall Abbey or Abbey House Museum, visit www.museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/kirstall-abbey/

Why Do We Say That Then ... ?

"Steal your thunder..." This came from playwright John Dennis in the early 1700s. One of his plays was not very well received, but his cutting edge sound effects for thunder were; he soon found that others had copied the effect and had literally "stolen his thunder."

Poems From The Parish (And Beyond ...)

What Does Christmas Mean?

Carols and songs that the school children sing,
Holly that hangs on your door in a ring,
Ribbons that wrap up the gifts that we make,
Icing that covers the whole Christmas cake,
Snow that might fall and lie deep on the ground,
Trees that we dress up and all gather round,
Mary and Joseph, the school Christmas play,
Antlers on reindeer that pull Santa's sleigh,
Stockings and presents we share Christmas Day.

It's easy to think of the things we enjoy,
Sometimes we forget that a small baby boy,

Lay wrapped in a manger a long way away,
Only animals watched as He slept in the hay,
Very soon shepherds came from the hills all around,
Each one leaving their sheep they knelt down on the ground,

Angels sang in the sky; by the light of a star,
Next day three Wise Men came from countries afar,
Dismounting, they took off their cloaks lined with fur,

Placing gifts before Jesus, gold, incense, and myrrh,
Endless Angel song rang from the heavens above,
Announcing the story of God's wondrous love.
Christmas cards, Christmas presents, the school Christmas play,
Each year we remember that first Christmas Day.

A L Hartley

Space To Share A Prayer

Jesus, Word of love, become flesh –
Heal our wounds,
Grant us forgiveness,
Help us in our struggles,
Immerse us in your love,
That we may love as you have loved,
Whatever the cost. *Amen*

The Nation's Favourite Carols

Each year, throughout December, Classic FM invites listeners to vote for their favourite Christmas Carols, the top 30 are then counted down on Christmas Day between 1 and 3pm. In 2020, 'O Holy Night' took the top spot for the fifth consecutive year, with 'Silent Night' coming in a close second. Here's the Classic Fm top 30 carols from 2020:

1. O Holy Night
2. Silent Night
3. In the Bleak Mid-Winter (Holst)
4. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
5. In the Bleak Mid-Winter (Darke)
6. O Come All Ye Faithful
7. Carol of the Bells
8. Once in Royal David's City
9. O Little Town of Bethlehem
10. Joy to the World
11. Away in a Manger
12. O Come, O Come Emmanuel
13. God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen
14. Ding Dong! Merrily on High
15. Coventry Carol
16. The Holly and the Ivy
17. It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
18. Good King Wenceslas
19. In Dulci Jubilo
20. Gaudete
21. Sussex Carol
22. The Three Kings
23. Candlelight Carol
24. We Three Kings
25. The First Nowell
26. See Amid the Winter's Snow
27. I Saw Three Ships
28. Jesus Christ the Apple Tree
29. Gabriel's Message
30. Star Carol (Rutter)

Olde Worlde Weather Lore – December

If sun shines through the apple trees upon a Christmas Day;
When Autumn comes those branches will a load of fruit display

Did You Know ... December Facts

1st December– On this day in 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to move to the back of a bus and give up her seat for a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama.

2nd December - On this day in 1697, St. Paul's Cathedral, designed by Christopher Wren, was consecrated for use, the previous building having been destroyed in the Great Fire of London.

3rd December – On this day in 1967, the first human heart transplant was performed in South America by Dr Christian Barnard on Louis Washkansky.

4th December – On this day in 1791, The Observer, the oldest Sunday newspaper in the world, was first published.

5th December – On this day in 1766, Christie's, the world's largest auction house, held their first sale in their permanent saleroom in Pall Mall, London.

6th December – On this day in 1921, the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed, Ireland received dominion status and the partition created Northern Ireland.

7th December – On this day in 1909, Inventor, Leo Baekeland patented the first ever thermo-setting plastic, Bakelite, in effect the birth of the plastics industry.

8th December – On this day in 1864, the Clifton Suspension Bridge, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was finally opened 5 years after his death.

9th December – On this day in 1866, the first traffic lights were installed outside the Palace of Westminster. These original lights used semaphore arms and were illuminated at night by red and green gaslights.

10th December – On this day in 1936, Edward VIII signed the Instrument of Abdication, giving up the British throne to marry American divorcee, Wallis Simpson.

11th December – On this day in 1913, the 'Mona Lisa' was recovered, 2 years after being stolen from the Louvre Museum.

12th December – On this day in 2019, the British General Election was won by Boris Johnson's Conservative Party, with a landslide 80 seat majority.

13th December – On this day in 1577, Sir Francis Drake set out from England to circumnavigate the globe.

14th December – On this day in 1895, George VI was born.

15th December – On this day in 1840, Napoleon Bonaparte received a French State Funeral in Paris, 19 years after his death.

16th December – On this day in 1653, Oliver Cromwell was appointed Lord Protector of England, Ireland and Scotland.

17th December – On this day in 1986, Mrs Davina Thompson makes medical history by having the 1st heart, lung & liver transplant at Papworth Hospital in Cambridge, England.

18th December – On this day in 1892, Tchaicovsky's ballet, The Nutcracker, premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia.

19th December – On this day in 1932, the British Broadcasting Corporation began broadcasting overseas.

20th December – On this day in 1894, England beat Australia by 10 runs in the 1st six-day Test Cricket match.

21st December – On this day in 1988, Pan Am Flight 103 was destroyed in mid air by a terrorist bomb, killing all 258 people on board.

22nd December – On this day in 1882, the first string of Christmas tree lights was created by Thomas Edison.

23rd December – On this day in 1954, the first human kidney transplant was performed by Dr Joseph E. Murray at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, in Boston, Massachusetts.

24th December – On this day in 1777, Kiritimati, also known as Christmas Island, was discovered by English Explorer, James Cook.

25th December – On this day in 1066, William the Conqueror was crowned King of England at Westminster Abbey, completing the Norman conquest of England.

26th December – On this day in 2004, a 9.3 magnitude earthquake created a Tsunami which affected Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Malaysia, the Maldives, and the edges of the Indian Ocean, causing devastation and killing over 230,000 people.

27th December – On this day in 1845, Ether was first used in childbirth in Jefferson, Georgia, USA.

28th December – On this day in 1065, Westminster Abbey in London was consecrated.

29th December – On this day in 1170, Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket, was assassinated before the high altar of Canterbury Cathedral by four knights.

30th December – On this day in 1865, Author, Rudyard Kipling, was born.

31st December – On this day in 1923, the BBC began using the Big Ben chime on the lead in to it's main news programme.

Strap Lines

God doesn't just call people who are qualified; He calls people who are willing and then qualifies them.

Ability is what we are capable of doing; motivation determines what we do; attitude determines how well we do it.

A river cuts through a rock, not because of its power, but because of its persistence.

Background and circumstances may influence who we are, but we are responsible for who and what we become.

Time for A Smile

At a wedding ceremony, the Vicar asked if anyone had anything to say concerning the union of the bride and groom, otherwise it was time to forever hold their peace. The moment of silence was broken when a young woman carrying a child walked slowly down the aisle towards the Vicar. The calm, happy atmosphere suddenly changed; the bride turned to the groom and slapped him; the groom's mother fainted, and the best man was left wondering how he could best handle the situation.

The Vicar then asked the young lady, "Please tell us exactly what you have to say and why you came forward." She replied, "I'm so sorry, but we can't hear at the back."

A clergyman consulted his doctor about his wife's snoring, "It has to STOP," he insisted.

The doctor was intrigued: "Does it really bother you that much?"

The clergyman explained, "Well, it's not just me, it's bothering the whole congregation."

The Extended Parish Puzzler

Think Of A Word

Can you think of a different festive word beginning with each of the following letters:

T U R K E Y A N D T I N S E L

Christmas Anagrams

Unscramble the letters to find some Christmas words

1. VAYITTNI
2. LGSNEA
3. LYHLO
4. SLCAOR
5. OSITLMTEE
6. RENMGA
7. KAECRRC
8. EEENRDIR
9. DGIDPNU
10. DEERHSPH

(Answers on page 32)

How Well Do You Know Our Village?

Last month's inscription can be found on the row of terraced houses between the Delph and Stonedelph Close (53 – 67 Church Street!).

Any idea where the following inscription can be found?

Answer in next month's mag.

J.J.H
J.R.H.
1857

Nativity Word Search

Can you find 10 words that are linked to the Nativity in this grid?

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

Need a bit of help? Here's what you are looking for:

- Angel
- Magi
- Shepherd
- Mary
- Joseph
- Manger
- Jesus
- Donkey
- Bethlehem
- Stable

Who's Who

Vicar	Revd Dave Thomson Christ Church Vicarage Ainsworth Hall Road. Ainsworth BL2 5RY vicar@ainsworthparish.org.uk Twitter @Vicar_Dave	01204 398567
OLM	Revd Debra Johnstone	01204 399630
Churchwarden	Alison Hartley	07952 709041
Church Treasurer	Vacancy	
Secretary of the PCC	Vacancy	
Organist	Jenny Johnson	07734976978
Gift Aid & Freewill Offering Secretary	Carole Butler	07379 196608
Safeguarding Officer	Peter Holden	01204 596938
Church Hall Booking	Geoff Hampson	07910817577
Church Lottery	Judith White	07812074776
Magazine Editor	Alison Hartley	ainsworthmagazine@gmail.com
Magazine Secretary	S Varnom	0161 761 5686
Magazine Adverts	June Brooks	01204 527244
Primary School Head	D Gerrard BA(Hons)PGCE	01204 527484

Services

Sunday 8.00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30am	Family Service, 2 nd Sunday Family & Parade Service
12.00pm	Baptisms (Except 2 nd and last Sunday)

Weds 6.15pm Mid-Week Praise

Home Communion is available for anyone unable to attend Church due to illness or frailty

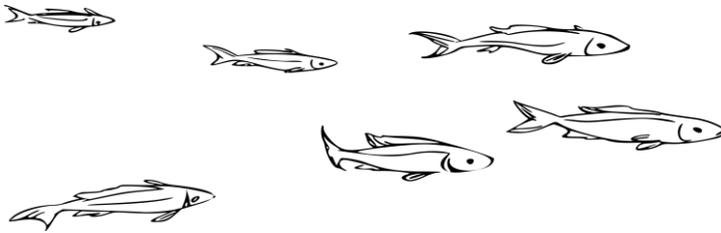
Arrangements for Baptisms, Marriages, Banns of Marriage and Funerals

Contact Revd Dave Thomson.

(Answer to Christmas Anagrams: 1) Nativity; 2) Angels; 3) Holly; 4) Carols; 5) Mistletoe; 6) Manger; 7) Cracker; 8) Reindeer; 9) Pudding; 10) Shepherd

Who's Who For Church Organisations

Mothers Union	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday of the Month at 7.30pm Branch Contact Jean Eddleston	0161 761 2147
Sunday School	Sunday at 10.25am in the Church Hall Jan Burrow Vicky Howcroft Swift	0161 761 1958 07789 432103
Altar Flowers	Kathy Armstrong Rand	07748 020743
ABC First Steps Toddler Group	Fridays 10.00am - 11.30am Church Hall Jennifer White	07964 587694
Group Leader	Bill White group.ainsworth@praws.gmnscouts.org.uk	01204 595378
Beaver Scouts	Friday at 6.00pm in the Church Hall Leader Valerie Watts	01204 398634
Cub Scouts	Friday at 7.00pm in the Church Hall	
Scouts 14 th Radcliffe	Fridays at 7.30pm in the Church Hall Leader Stacey White scouts.ainsworth@praws.gmnscouts.org.uk	07742 610281
Explorers	Monday 7 – 8.30pm; last Wednesday of the month 7.30pm in the Church Hall Leader John Turner	01204 381590
Rainbows 16 th Radcliffe	Thursday at 4.30pm to 6.00pm in the Church Hall Rainbow Guider	
Brownies 12 th Radcliffe	Thursday at 7.00pm to 8.15pm in the Church Hall Brown Owl Polly Ryder	07437 519045
Brownies 16 th Radcliffe	Thursday at 6.15pm to 7.30pm in the Church Hall Sarah McAnulty	07955373623
Guides 12 th Radcliffe	Thursday at 7.45pm in the Church Hall Captain Emma Lee	0161 764 2243



Little Fishes

The Christmas Story



Advent And Christmas

Advent is a really important part of the Christian calendar and marks the start of the Christian year. Advent begins on the Sunday nearest to the 30th of November (this year Advent Sunday was the 28th November) and lasts for the 4 weeks that lead up to Christmas Day.

The word 'advent' means 'coming'; there are three types of 'coming' that Christians think about during Advent. The first, and probably the one that we think of the most, is when Jesus was born over 2000 years ago; Jesus **came** into the world. The second meaning is about what's happening in the world today - Jesus wants to **come** into our lives now. And the third will happen in the future when Jesus **comes** back to the world as our King and Judge.

No one is really sure when Advent was first celebrated, but it could have been as long ago as 556, when monks were told they must 'fast' during December on the run up to Christmas to help them to concentrate on the true meaning of Christmas. 'Fasting' means eating no food at all, or only a tiny amount, for a whole 4 weeks! It's a good job we don't have to do that now!! BUT we should still make sure that we use Advent to prepare, to take time to be joyful, but also to take time to think about our lives and our actions and to say sorry to God for all of the wrong things that we do and to ask Him to forgive us.

The Christmas Story

Lots of people get very excited about Christmas; some people get excited about the presents that they plan to give to others, some people get excited about the presents that they hope to receive, and some people get excited because they will be seeing family and friends ... there are lots of reasons to get excited, but in the Gospel of Luke 1 - 2 and also Matthew 1 - 2, the Christmas Story reminds us of the real reason ...

Long ago, God sent his messenger, the angel Gabriel, to a young woman who lived in the town of Nazareth. The woman's name was Mary, and she was engaged to marry Joseph.

The angel Gabriel said to Mary: 'Peace be with you! God has blessed you and is pleased with you.' Mary was very surprised by this and wondered what the angel meant. The angel said to her,



'Do not be afraid, God has been very kind to you. You will become pregnant by the Holy Spirit and give birth to a baby boy and you will call him Jesus. He will be God's own Son and his kingdom will never end.'

Mary was very afraid, but she trusted God. 'Let it happen as God chooses', she replied to the angel. Gabriel also told Mary that her cousin, Elizabeth, who everyone thought was too old to have children, would have a baby boy whom God had chosen to prepare the way for Jesus.

Joseph was very worried when he found out that Mary was expecting a baby before they were married. He wondered if he should put off the wedding or maybe even cancel it altogether, but then an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: 'Don't be afraid to have Mary as your wife.' The angel explained that Mary had been chosen by God to be the mother of his Son and told Joseph that the baby would be named Jesus, which means 'Saviour', because he would save people. When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel had told him to do and married Mary so that she became his wife.



At this time, the land where Mary and Joseph lived was ruled by the Emperor Augustus. Augustus wanted to make sure that



everyone who lived in his land paid their taxes, so he came up with a plan to make everyone return to the town where their families originally came from, so they could be registered there, then no one could avoid paying their taxes.

Joseph's family came from Bethlehem, so Mary and Joseph had to travel all the way to Bethlehem to register. It was a very long

journey; there were no cars or taxis or buses or trains - in those days if you needed to go somewhere you simply walked and carried all your luggage on your back, or if you were very lucky you might have a donkey that could carry your luggage.

Mary's baby was almost ready to be born so Mary and Joseph could only travel very slowly.



When they finally reached Bethlehem there were so many people already there trying to register themselves, that Mary and Joseph couldn't find anywhere to stay; it seemed that every Inn and every room was already taken; everywhere Joseph tried he got the same answer, 'Sorry mate, there's no room for you here' ...

Mary was very, very tired, and eventually a kind Inn Keeper took pity on them and told them they could rest for the night in his stable, and so Mary and Joseph settled down in the straw with the



various animals that lived there, and later that night Mary gave birth to Jesus, the Son of God. As Mary and Joseph were so far away from their home and their family, they wrapped the baby in cloths and tucked him in the manger so that he would be warm

and comfortable in the hay.

When Jesus was born a bright, new star appeared in the sky, shining down on the stable in Bethlehem and giving a great light to the whole of the world.



Meanwhile, high on the hills outside of Bethlehem, a group of Shepherds were looking after their sheep through the long night,



when suddenly an angel appeared before them, and the glory of God shone around them. As you can imagine, the Shepherds were very, very scared, but the angel said, 'Don't be afraid. I have good news

for you and everyone. Today, in Bethlehem, a Saviour has been born for you. You will find the baby lying in a manger'.

Then many more angels appeared in the sky and began praising God singing: 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace to everyone

on earth!' The Shepherds were astonished and said to one another, 'Let's go down to Bethlehem and see what has happened.'

So, the Shepherds left their sheep up on the hills and went to Bethlehem as quickly as they could. There they found Mary and



Joseph in the stable, and the baby lying in a manger, just as the angels had told them. When they saw him, the Shepherds were filled with wonder and told everyone what the angel had said and everyone who heard the story was astonished.

And so, the shepherds returned to their sheep, praising God for sending his Son to be their Saviour.

Elsewhere, in a faraway country, some Wise Men saw the bright, new star shining; they were very clever men who studied the stars and knew that a bright new shining star would appear when a great king was born, so the Wise Men set out to follow the star, hoping it would lead them to the new king so that they could worship him and present him with special gifts.



The Wise Men followed the star towards the country of Judea and when they came to Jerusalem, they began to ask people: 'Where is the child who is born to be the king of the Jews?'

Now King Herod was the king of Judea at that time, and when he heard what the Wise Men were saying it made him very angry; he didn't like to think that someone might be going to take his place as king. Herod sent for the Wise Men and pretended to be friends with them, he told them to keep following the star until they had found the baby king, and said: 'When you have found him, let me know where he is, so that I can go and worship him too'. But secretly, Herod had no intention of worshipping him - he was actually planning to kill the baby king.



The Wise Men followed the star and it led them towards Bethlehem and then, at last, it

seemed to stop and shone down even more brightly, right over the place where Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus were staying.

At once the Wise Men bowed down and worshipped him, and offered the gifts which they had brought, gifts of gold,



frankincense and myrrh. But the Wise Men were warned by God, in a dream, not to go back to King Herod, and so they returned home to their homes

in the East by a different way.

Not long after the Wise Men had gone, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up! You must take Jesus and Mary and escape to Egypt, for King Herod is going to search for Jesus and try to kill him.' So, Joseph got up and took Jesus and Mary, and during the night they secretly left for Egypt.



When Herod realized that he had been tricked by the Wise Men, he was furious; he gave orders that all boys aged two years or younger in Bethlehem and the surrounding area were to be killed. He hoped that by doing this, the new baby king must surely be among those who were killed.



But Mary and Joseph and Jesus had escaped, and Jesus spent his early years living safely in Egypt. Some years later, after Herod had died, Joseph had another dream in which an angel once again appeared to him. The angel said, 'Get up, take Jesus and Mary and go back to Israel, for those who were trying kill Jesus are dead.'

So, Joseph took Jesus and Mary back to Israel, but when he heard that Herod's son was now king of Judea, he was afraid to go there; so, instead, they went to Galilee, and lived in their old town of Nazareth.

Of course, this is not the end of the story of Jesus - it is only the beginning. Jesus wants each and every one of us to be a part of His story, not just at Christmas time, but always.



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