CHURCH ALIVE

St. John the Baptist
Midsomer Norton

January 2020

Price 50p

THE PARISH OF MIDSOMER NORTON WITH CLANDOWN

Vicar
Vacant Tel: 412118

Parish Office Tel: 411216
Email: msnparishoffice@aol.com

Churchwardens
Mrs Shirley Blackbourn
18 Charlton Road
Midsomer Norton Tel: 413299

Mrs Carol Moore
1 The Dymboro
Midsomer Norton Tel: 412226
Email: carolmoore226@yahoo.com

SERVICES

SUNDAY
8:00 a.m. Said Mass
9:30 a.m. Family Sung Mass
6:00 p.m. Evening Service (As announced)

WEEKDAYS Mass is celebrated on Tuesday at 12 noon,

Baptisms, Weddings etc. by arrangement through the Parish Office or Churchwardens. **Communion at home** for those unable to attend church it is easily arranged with the Churchwardens

Safeguarding

Who should you talk to if you observe or are told about Safeguarding concerns?
Gary Lewis, Parish Safeguarding Officer Tel: 07967 633237
or email: safeguarding@stjohnschurchmsn.org.uk
Information about reporting concerns is available on the Diocese's website here: https//www.bathandwells.org.uk/diocese/safeguarding/reporting-concerns-or-abuse/.

Church Alive

The Parish Magazine of
Midsomer Norton with Clandown
Volume 804 Number 1

Our Front Page Message this month is from Fr. Tony

I remember my surprise a while ago when I discovered that the humble banana has 50% of the same DNA as a human being! What does this mean? Do two bananas make one person? Should I think of a banana as my half-brother?? Perhaps I should show much more respect to a banana when I come across one … Well, the last of these is surely true, not based on how much DNA we share, but on the basis that we are both part of God's creation. (This was the basis for St Francis speaking respectfully of 'Brother Sun' and 'Sister Moon')

Most religions proclaim that creation is the work of God, and that therefore all created things ought to be respected, not just because of their usefulness to us, nor only because we and all creation are inter-dependent, but because all things are part of God's handiwork and to respect Him must surely involve respect for what he has made. This gives an added impetus to our concerns about ecology. We are warned, - almost daily it seems, - that global warming threatens our future, or at least our grandchildren's future. But this is not just a matter of self-interest, a question of how may we secure our own, or our family's, future. Not to respect creation is not to respect God, its creator and that must be – in Christiaan terms – a great sin against the Creator.

However, within our Christian faith we have an added factor: God not only created all things, but created mankind in his own image, and entered into his creation, taking on human nature – as we are celebrating at this time.

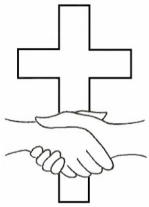
"The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us". This gives us reason to worship Jesus, Son of God and Son of man, and to respect every person made in God's image. Respect seems to have become in short supply in public discourse of late. Why? Some put it down to social media, where people often seem to rush into print, writing of others in a way they would never speak to them face to face. Then there has been the great difficulty we have experienced over the impasse in political affairs: instead of taking issue with a point of view there has been a readiness to disparage the person holding the view.

Within the Christmas story we find examples of respect and disrespect. The Wise Men came to the Christ Child, bringing their gifts as a sign of respect. The shepherds had no gifts to bring, but simply by coming, and then going off joyfully, they too showed respect. Herod, however, showed no respect to the Wise Men, to whom he lied, nor to the children whom he had slaughtered in a vain attempt to dispose of Jesus. Why? – because he had no care for either foreign dignitaries or his own powerless subjects, but his only care was for himself and his own position.

By the time you read this, we shall have moved into the New Year. You may have made your resolutions but I hope it's not too late to add another. May we resolve to show respect to one and all. We must stand up for our faith, and that may lead us to take an opposing view to some of those around us. Whenever we do so, may we ask the grace of God to show a care for them as people, and to look for the image of God in them; for they, like us, are among those for whom Our Lord came into the world.

Yours respectfully,
Fr Tony

Ladies Group Report



During November and December we met in small groups for a series of craft afternoons and evenings. Margaret Marshall hosted, provided craft materials and gave help and advice so that those attending could make Christmas cards. We all used the same basic patterns but each card was an individual creation. Everyone was very proud of what they had made and we raised some money for Children's Hospice South West too. Many thanks to Margaret for planning and leading these events.

In December we held a Christmas social. Everyone brought along a sweet or savoury item to share. There was plenty of food for everyone. This was a very pleasurable event and we were all able to enjoy a drink, some lovely food and the fellowship of members.

The programme of events for 2020 will shortly be available at the back of church. In January Father Tony will be coming to speak to us. New members are always welcome at Ladies Group. If you would like more information please contact Kay Harvey or any committee member.

Midsomer Norton Churches Together

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 18th to 25th. It has been agreed to hold a united service on Sunday 19th January 6pm at Somervale School, hosted by Welton Baptist Church.

Please do try to go to this service to show our support to reflect and reaffirm our choice to work more closely together

This Greeting arrived too late for the December magazine, but including it for you this month.

Christopher & Diane
Laura & Oliver
Alice, Giles & Emma
Wish all their friends in
Midsomer Norton
A very Happy, Holy and Peaceful
Christmas
And New Year.

Samaritan's Purse - Operation Christmas Child 2019

It gave Ralph and I great pleasure to be able to take 27 Shoe Boxes to Betty Pratten's house back in December, ready for collection the next day. Isn't it a warming thought that we have helped to make it a very special Christmas Day for all those children. I'd love to be there to see the joy on their faces!

Thank you to those who gave Shoe Boxes. I know that you put a lot of thought and effort into doing them. God bless you.

Chris Plummer

ST JOHN'S MOTHERS UNION

Our December meeting was our Christmas Lunch which was at the White Post. We met at 12.30pm and enjoyed a delicious lunch. It was lovely to have Mary Cheshire with us. Mary has been a member for many years. Everyone enjoyed themselves.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sue Holley for organising everything, from booking the meal, getting everyone's menu and sorting the money to organising drivers and transportation.

Our next meeting is Tuesday 14th January which is a talk on Dementia Friends with Tracy Curtis; and I would like to open this to all friends, family and church members, I look forward to seeing you all in the Church Hall at 2.30pm.

Have a Happy and Peaceful New Year
Sally

From The Registers

Holy Matrimony
"May they live together in joy and peace"

6th December Desmond Clive Thomas Deane & Michelle Jordan

Christmas Fayre 2019

What a fantastic result! As at December 11th a total exceeding £1,500 has been raised. Not only does that figure exceed last year's Fayre, but it is another record year. Many, many thanks are due to all of you who contributed in so many ways. I know that some folk were busy throughout the year making and creating crafts to sell and many people were very busy in the weeks building up to the Fayre. To me it showed St John's at its best: superb teamwork; a splendid and convivial atmosphere; a welcome to our local community; and a willingness to roll up our sleeves and take on any task that needed to be done without asking. I am very grateful for your support, good humour and hard work.

In the aftermath of such events, we always think of what went spectacularly well and what was very hard work in terms of shifting items. In the light of this we, that is the stallholders and me, have decided that we will not have a bric-a-brac stall next year. It is hard work setting up this stall and brings in less than we would hope despite some good quality pieces and of course the leftover things must be disposed of. Many thanks to Sheila, Janet and Lynne who have worked tirelessly to make the tables look attractive and are well versed in persuading the customers to buy, but they agree that the time has come to call it a day. Similarly, I am so grateful to Pat and Hilton who have gone to a lot of bother for several years to collect jewellery, mount it and display it creatively. They too believe that the Fayre attendees are not interested in buying jewellery and so, reluctantly they too have decided not to continue with their stall.

If we are to continue to raise over a thousand pounds from the Fayre, we will need some fresh ideas. With that in mind, we come to:-

Christmas Fayre 2020

Pat Daniels is already planning ahead for this event and proposes running:

1. A 'Christmas' Lucky Dip stall with suitable festive gifts
2. A 'Christmas' stall where wrapping paper, napkins and homemade tags will be sold

Pat will stock the Lucky Dip stall, but she would appreciate some donations for the 'Christmas' stall. It is being mentioned now because you may find some bargains at garden centres and the sales in the shops in January. In addition, a box will be in the back of the church for used Christmas cards suitable for tag making. Donations of new rolls of wrapping paper and Christmas napkins may be given to Pat after church services. Many thanks once again for your help.

Please let me know if you have any other new ideas for the 2020 Fayre.

Tony Daniels

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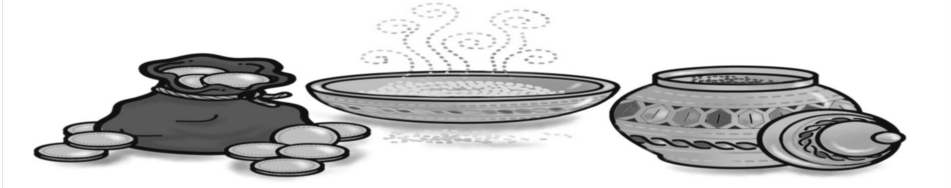
On behalf of all the congregation and friends of St John's, we would like to say a huge thank you and congratulations to Tony for organising a successful and enjoyable Church Fayre.

Your hard work and enthusiasm is very much appreciated.



Letter from the Right Reverend Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton

A rich journey

'***A cold coming we had of it***
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey…'
T.S. Eliot's 'Journey of the Magi'

How many of us are making journeys over the turning of this new year? Perhaps it has been an opportunity to catch up with family or friends we haven't seen for a while. Perhaps for some of us, it's been about fun and relaxation, (although skiing doesn't appeal for either, for me!)

Perhaps some of those journeys have been disrupted by weather or illness. Or perhaps they've been punctuated by the plaintive cry, 'Are we there yet?' During winter months we are often seeing the journey as a 'means to an end' rather than something of value in itself. However travelling with others or meeting people on the way can make journeys so much richer.

On my windowsill at home sits a wooden cross with a shell attached. It's made from the stick my son used to walk the Camino de Santiago, one of the most popular of pilgrim paths in Europe. I'm not sure I have the legs to do it! Two of my sons have walked it from France to the coast of Spain, each on their own, but meeting strangers along the way who have become friends.

2020 is being marked by our Cathedrals as a year of pilgrimage. You will be hearing more from our Cathedral here in Wells as they invite us to share in pilgrimage with them. Journeying together gives opportunity for us to discover something new as we share in others' perspectives and experiences, not just our own.

At this time of Epiphany we remember the journey of the wise men who travelled together to seek out something new. A star had appeared which indicated to them there was new learning to be had. And so they left the familiar and went to explore what was new.

So... what new thing might you wish to explore this year? Who might you travel with? And what might you do once you find it?

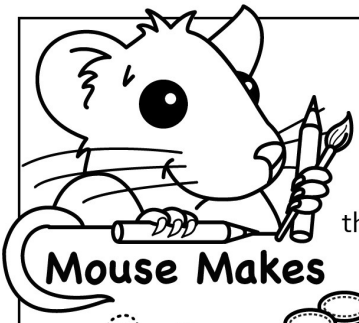
Wishing you a very special new year!

The Right Revd Ruth Worsley
Bishop of Taunton

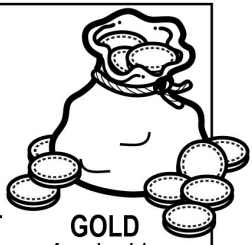
6th January - Epiphany

On 6th January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian.

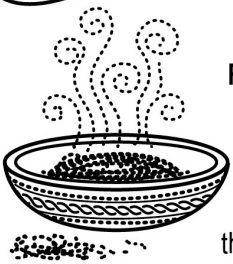
Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the 8th century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.



EPIPHANY is the time in the Church year that we remember when the 'wise men' or 'Magi' followed a star that led them to the Christ child Jesus. They bowed down and worshiped him and left *three* special gifts:

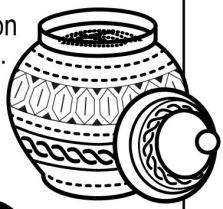


GOLD
A valuable metal. Reminds us that Jesus is **King of Kings**.



FRANKINCENSE
A sweet smelling incense used in the Temple to worship God. Reminds us that **Jesus is God**.

MYRRH
A fragrant spice put on a body before burial. Reminds us that Jesus was to die so that he could be our **Saviour**.



Can you find these words below in the word search?

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How did God warn the wise men?

READ
Matthew 2:1-12

JESUS • BORN • BETHLEHEM • JUDEA • WISE • EAST • JERUSALEM • KING
STAR • WORSHIP • HEROD • PRIESTS • CHRIST • PROPHECY • SHEPHERD
ISRAEL • GO • FIND • LOOK • SAW • JOYFUL • MARY • BOWED • GIFTS
GOLD • FRANKINCENSE • MYRRH • WARNING • DREAM

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Below is a Prayer you may wish to use and will hear sometimes in Church, during our Vacancy.

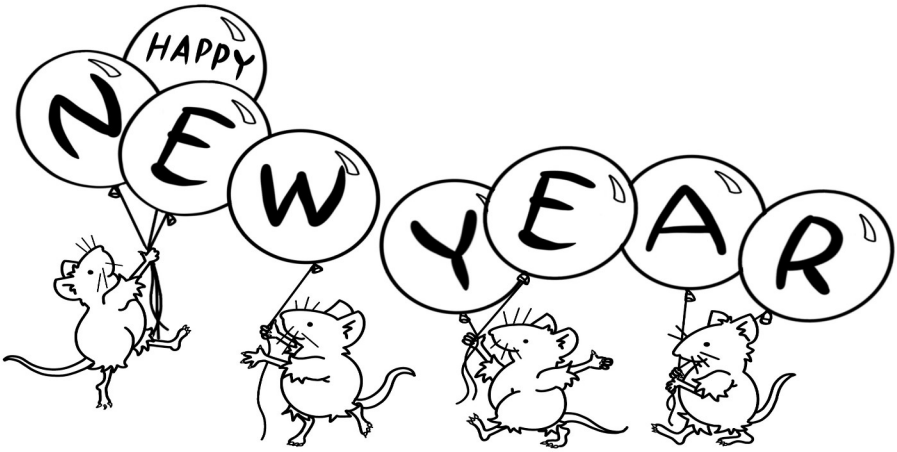
St John's Church Vacancy Prayer

Lord God, we pray for your guidance during our vacancy here at St John's. Grant that the light of your Holy Spirit may guide all of us involved in continuing worship here during the period of change and uncertainty. Grant us courage to use our gifts and talents so that we might all grow in faith.

Assist our Bishop, our patron, Christchurch Cathedral Oxford and our own Parochial Church Council in the process of recruiting the right priest for this church.

Grant that the priest called by you to this parish will hear and respond to your call and that those involved in the selection process will also recognise that call. Equip the priest to have the skills and patience to minister to your flock here. And help us to embrace new ways of furthering your kingdom in Midsomer Norton.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
(A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT)

Come – Everything is Ready!

Everything is ready and the invitation is for everyone - men, women and children of all ages to join this Day of Prayer.* Women of Slovenia, one of the smallest and youngest countries in Europe, have prepared this years' service and they encourage us to reflect on the barriers they have faced since the end of the Second World War when their country was a part of Yugoslavia, a Marxist socialist republic. They share the challenges they have met and the hopes they have for the future.

World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organisation which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world: their hopes, concerns and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service and then local groups make their plans. Finally, at a church near you on Friday March 1st 2019 people will gather to celebrate the service prepared by the women of Slovenia.

The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 120 countries. It begins in Samoa and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world --- through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa some 38 hours later.

* For further information and resources, together with details of services in your area see the WDP website: www.wwdp.org.uk

Locally, there is a service on Friday 6th March 2.pm at Midsomer Norton Methodist Church.

FROM THE PARISH PUMP

By Tony Horsfall of Charis Training.

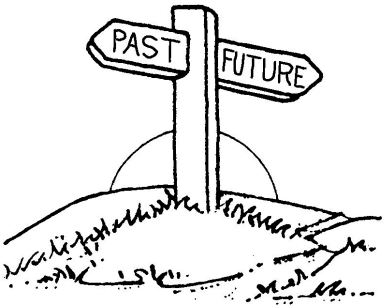
Facing both ways

January gets its name from the Roman god Janus, the god of beginnings and transitions, of gates and doorways. Traditionally Janus had two faces, one looking to the past and one to the future. It reminds us that as we start a new year we can look back to the past with gratitude and to the future with expectation.

In his hymn, '*How good is the God we adore'*, Joseph Hart (1712-1768) speaks about God as our faithful, unchangeable friend and finishes with this beautiful thought: 'We'll praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that's to come.' This seems to be a good pasture to take as we enter 2020.

First, we can look back on the year that is gone and give thanks for all the blessings that we have experienced. Thankfulness is really a choice. None of us will have had a perfect year, and many of us will have had some dark days indeed, but if we look carefully enough, we will see that there were also many wonderful days and golden moments. Let's choose to focus on those and to acknowledge the work of God in our lives. *For what are you grateful as you look back to 2019?*

Second, we can put our faith in God for all that is to come. None of us know the future. We will have our hopes and our dreams, and have made our plans for the year ahead, but no-one can guarantee they will come to pass. There will be surprises for sure, both good (we never expected that!) and bad (I didn't see that coming!). How wonderful then to have a God who knows the future and in whose hands we are safe, no matter what comes to pass. Let's choose to place our trust in Him as 2020 unfolds. *What are you most looking forward to as you peer ahead of you this year?*



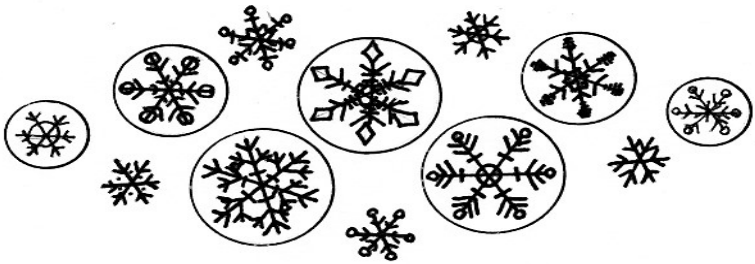
ROTAS for JANUARY

Coffee & Offertory Rota

Date	Coffee	Offertory
5th Jan	Mrs M Barnes Mrs L Powell	Congregation
12th Jan	Mrs J Barnett Mrs S Holley	Mothers Union
19th Jan	Mr J Sheares Mrs T Ballistone-Thicke	Congregation
26th Jan	Mrs J Hill Mrs M Maddock	Ladies Group

Reader *Intercessions* & Sides Persons Rota

Date	Reader/*Intercessions*	Sides person
5th Jan	Gary Lewis *Gary Lewis*	P Shellswell, P Clynes L Hurst, M West
12th Jan	Esther Marshall *Beth Davies*	T Marshall, N Barnett J Martindale, J Shears
19th Jan	Carol Moore *Rebecca Daley*	S Dryburgh, A Fitch R Broughton, S Broughton
26th Jan	David Moore *Hilary Denning*	K Harvey, E Marshall A Broadhurst, L Broadhurst



Parish Directory

		Telephone
Bible Reading Fellowship	Mrs Angela Fitch	413636
Choir Leader	Mr Geoff Miles	
Church Cleaning	Mrs Pat Clynes	412928
Church Hall Bookings	Mrs Helen Bailey	07923 501966
Coffee Rota	Mrs Margaret Small	411474
Electoral Roll Secretary	Mrs Christine Plummer	416343
Flower Rota	Mrs Jenny Barnett	413319
Gift Aid Secretary	Mrs Kay Harvey	416050
Head Server	Mr John Norman	
St John's School		412019
Ladies Group Leader	Mrs Kay Harvey	416050
Magazine Advertising	Mrs Maureen West	433784
Magazine Editor	Mrs Linda Broadhurst	415562
Magazine Distribution	Mr Ralph Plummer	416343
M U Branch Leader	Mrs Sally Curtis	201435
Organist	Mrs Margaret Whatley	418072
PCC Secretary	Mrs Margaret Marshall	413895
PCC Treasurer	Mr John Shears	479033
PCC Vice Chairman	Mrs Shirley Blackbourn	413299
	Mrs Carol Moore	412226
Safeguarding Person	Mr Gary Lewis	07967 633237
Tower Secretary	Mrs Margaret Marshall	413895

Church Organisations

The Choir practise on Fridays from 6:30 pm until 7:50 pm.

The Mothers' Union: Prayer Group meets on the first Tuesday of the month except January and August. The Branch meeting is on the second Tuesday of the month.

The Ladies Group meets on the second Thursday of the month

Magazine deadline for copy is the 14th of the month
To: Mrs Linda Broadhurst, 43 Furlong Close, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2PR
Telephone: 01761 415562 Email: stjohnsmagazine@aol.com

January 2020

Sunday 5th	**Epiphany**	Fr Jim
Tuesday 7th	10:30	Coffee Morning in Church
	14:45	Mothers Union Prayers
Thursday 9th	19:30	Ladies Group
Sunday 12th	**Baptism of Christ**	Fr. Tony
	18:45	Midsomer Choral
Tuesday 14th	10:30	Coffee Morning in Church
	14:30	Mothers Union
		Magazine Copy Date
Sunday 19th	**Epiphany 2**	Fr. Jim
	18:00	**United Service at Somervale School**
Tuesday 21st	10:30	Coffee Morning in Church
Sunday 26th	**Epiphany 3**	The Rev'd Christopher Marshall
Tuesday 28th	10:30	Coffee Morning in Church