

CHURCH ALIVE

December 2023



**St. John the Baptist
Midsomer Norton**

Price 50p

THE PARISH OF MIDSOMER NORTON WITH CLANDOWN

Vicar

The Revd: Guy Scott
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Midsomer Norton, BA3 2HZ

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Email: vicarmsnstjohns@gmail.com

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Liz Casson

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Mrs Pat Clynes Tel:
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Midsomer Norton, BA3 2PP

Tel: 412928
Email: patclynes@hotmail.co.uk

Mrs Hilary Denning
87 Nelson Ward Drive
Radstock, BA3 3FS

Tel: 07828 550006
Email: hilaryjohn87@gmail.com

SERVICES

SUNDAY

8am Said Eucharist 10 a.m. Parish Eucharist

WEEKDAYS The Eucharist is celebrated on a Tuesday at 12 noon.

Baptisms, Weddings etc. by arrangement with the Vicar.

Communion at home for those unable to attend church it is easily arranged with the Vicar.

Safeguarding

Who should you talk to if you observe or are told about Safeguarding concerns?

Ann Munton, Parish Safeguarding Officer Tel: 07895038871

Email: midsomernortonsafeguarding@gmail.com

Diocesan safeguarding manager: Ben Goodhind, Tel: 01749 588917

Email: <https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/reporting-concerns-or-abuse>



Church Alive
The Parish Magazine of
Midsomer Norton with Clandown
Volume 807 Number 12

Extra Services and Concerts over the Christmas Season

Sunday 3rd December: 4pm Candlelit Advent Carol Service

Tuesday 5th December: 10:30am Probus Carol Service
(please note there is no 12 noon Eucharist on this day)

Sunday 10th December: 16:00 Silent Prayer

Tuesday 12th December: 19:00 Rotary Club Carol Service

Wednesday 13th December: 15:30 Christingle Service
with St John's School

Saturday 16th December: 19:30 Midsomer Choral Society
Christmas Concert

Sunday 17th December: 16:00 Carol Service

Monday 18th December: 19:00 Mendip Male Voice Choir
Christmas Concert

Christmas Eve: 8am Holy Eucharist
16:00 Crib Service
23:30 Midnight Mass

Christmas Day: 09:30 Christmas Parish Eucharist

Thursday 28th December: The Holy Innocents
10:00 Holy Eucharist

Sunday 31st December: New Year's Eve
08:00 Holy Eucharist 10:00 Parish Eucharist

Reflections from the Ministry Team



Dear Friends,

There can be a feeling that with Christmas coming every year and the story being known so well, that there's nothing new to be said or discovered. This I believe to be a serious error. We should always be looking afresh at our faith and making new discoveries.

Sometimes we can do this by taking a different slant, looking for something different, or approaching it in a different way.

The themes of generosity and remembering can be sought and found in the Christmas story. The unspeakable generosity of God in freely giving his Son to redeem the world, the generosity of Mary and Joseph in saying 'yes' to their part in God's plan, the generosity of the Wise Men and the Shepherds in their gift-giving to the Christ-child, the generosity of the hospitality shown. And the theme of remembering is also readily to be found; not perhaps initially, or even as events were happening, but in the piecing together of the story, in the reflection of what it all might mean, both then and now. The referring back to the Jewish scriptures, the pondering of Mary in her heart, the putting of two and two together of Joseph, the shepherds and the Wise Men.

So, as we 'revisit', to greater or lesser extent, the world-changing story of the birth of Jesus, what should we expect? I suggest that in order to enter fully into the drama, the only thing we should expect is the unexpected! Just as the original participants were surprised, amazed, perplexed, awe-struck, fearful and bewildered by events as they unfurled, so should we be open, as they were, to new possibilities and truths. As we remember again the story of God's Incarnation, let us take time to consider our response. The participants in the original story responded with generosity and faith to their part in God's great plan. How do we respond to God's part for us in his great plans today?

What does Christmas really mean to us? Is it just a story, so familiar to us that it has lost its impact? Or is it a story that we look at afresh in our remembering each and every year, eagerly seeking new insights and new messages for us here and now? Are we prepared, like the original participants, to let ourselves be changed forever by those events more than two thousand years ago? That, I believe, is the challenge to us all; our response, and the implications of that response. How thankful do we really feel? How generous will we be as a result of our gratitude? Is our memory of the events a passive acknowledgement of what happened, or does it fire and inspire us to do new things for God?

I pray that this may be for all of us a blessed, meaning-filled, life-changing Christmas, and that our excitement, joy and sense of wonder may be shared by all those whom we joyfully welcome to St. John's at this special time of year, when heaven and earth are joined, and when we welcome once again the Christ-child into our lives, our families, our work and our hearts.

With expectation,
Guy

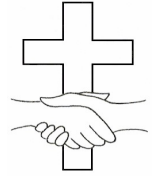
Diocesan News in brief

A unique step of faith

It was a joyous day in Wells Cathedral on Saturday, 4 November when 86 people were confirmed by Bishop Michael, Bishop Ruth and Bishop Christopher - there were so many fitting them all in the group photo was a bit of a challenge!

Bishop Michael said, "What an amazing afternoon. It has been such a privilege to be with so many different people, each with their own story, each taking their unique step of faith and looking forward to the future together. We are all on an amazing high as a result of it."

Ladies Group November Meeting



Thank you to Lynn for hosting this year's AGM.

Due to illness and the inclement weather, we didn't have a full complement of members at the meeting.

Business was dealt with quickly, including Election of Officers (unchanged) and confirming that subs are to remain at £12.

The provisional programme for 2023-2024 was approved.

During coffee, arrangements for the Christmas Tree Festival were discussed, including details of the Ladies Group tree for the event.

Our Christmas social will be on 14 December, hosted by Sally.

Children's Hospice South West

Please can you save the stamps from your Christmas card envelopes and deposit them in the box at the back of church. The money raised from the stamps helps further the work of the hospice.

Thank you

Friendship Group

Grateful thanks to Carol and Pat for driving members to Dobbie's in Shepton Mallet in November. Eleven of us enjoyed lunch together. Afterwards a look around the store and garden centre was carried out by many.

On 12th December from 2:30 - 4pm we are having Advent and Christmas readings along with Carols. We would love to welcome any visitors who would like to join us.

CHRISTMAS SHOP

We will be holding a 'Christmas shop' stall during the Christmas Tree Festival where we will be selling Christmas items. It is hoped that we will continue to open the 'Christmas Shop' on Sundays during Advent after the 10am Sunday Parish Eucharist.

Advent Service by Candlelight 4pm on Sunday 3rd December

If you are intending to come to this Service, please can you bring a Lantern with a battery candle if possible.



Christmas Cards in Church 2023

We will be using the same system for distribution of Christmas cards brought to church as in 2022.

The box for depositing cards will be placed in church on Tuesday 5 December and removed after the 10am service on 17 December.

The cards will be sorted and made available to pick up at the Carol Service (4pm on 17 December) or when the church is open.

Please note, this facility is just for **regular** attenders at St John's.

Cards in the box for **non-regular** members of the congregation will not be delivered.

Church Clock

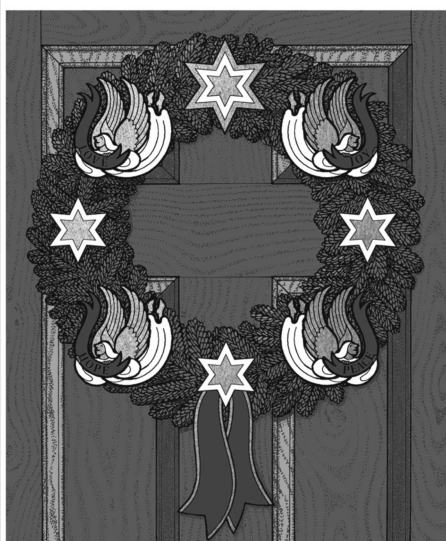
For some considerable time, the mechanism for striking the hour on the Church clock has not been working. No servicing has been done on the clock for many years.

There is no top on the clock case, so when the ringing room walls were brushed down several years ago, dust fell into the clock works.

Inspections have been carried out by two clock companies and estimates for the work needed were received.

The PCC have agreed that as a public time piece the work should be done and investigations of how to cover the costs are being researched.

Two anonymous donors have already offered to help with the cost should the work go ahead.



Why do people hang wreaths for Christmas?

It is believed that the holly wreath, with its sharp, pointed leaves, represents the crown of thorns worn by Christ on the Cross and the tiny red berries represent the drops of blood.

When a wreath is hung on the door, it is viewed as an invitation for Christ and the spirit of Christmas to enter into their home.

A unique story

When I speak to my Mum on my birthday, she often recalls to me the events that surrounded my arrival in the world. These include nearly being born in the hospital lift, my older brother being smuggled in to see me under my dad's overcoat and of various aunts sneaking onto the maternity ward out of visiting hours by wearing their WRVS uniforms.



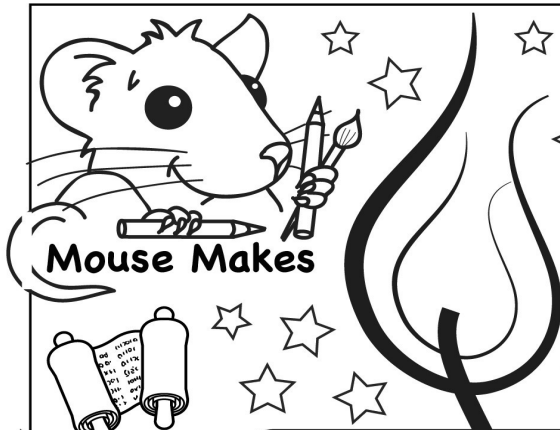
Each of us has a unique story about our birth. At Christmas we'll be recounting once again the story that we share about another birth - the birth of Jesus. Across the world we'll be re-telling and re-enacting what happened in Bethlehem more than 2000 years ago. We'll recall the journey of Mary and Joseph, the birth in the stable, the arrival of the shepherds, the song of the angels, the visit of the Magi.

Our own birth stories are unique to each of us. Jesus's is common to us all. And not just because we all know about it. For in our recollection of Jesus' birth, we'll also be remembering that that in him, God came to be at one with us. In Jesus God arrived to share fully in our humanity, experiencing complete solidarity with every aspect of our human condition. Jesus is 'God with us' – in trenches in Ukraine, bomb shelters in Israel and Gaza, in hospital wards where loved ones die, in relationships where there is conflict and distress.

Just as much as he is with us in our greatest joys and our deepest woes, Jesus is also for us. One of the earliest teachers of the Church said this: 'He became what we are so that we might become what he is.' The baby born in Bethlehem stands with us not only in all that we experience. This child also comes to offer us the possibility of opening every part of our lives to the transforming power of God's life of love and joy and peace. He comes so that every day we can become a little more like him.

This is the good news of Christmas and may it be yours this year.

A very Merry Christmas to you all.
Bishop Michael



Mouse Makes



GOD'S PROMISE

Isaiah 9:6-7

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



AN ANGEL MESSENGER

Luke 1:26-38

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

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

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



A LONG JOURNEY

Luke 2:1-20

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



THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

John 3:16

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

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

Colour in one star each day until Christmas

Dec23 © deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk



CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Please come along to Church on

Friday 1st December 10am to 4pm

And 6pm to 7:30pm with lit trees.

Saturday 2nd December 10am to 4pm

Sunday 3rd December 12:30 to 3:30pm

At 4pm **A Candlelit Advent Service**

This will close the Festival.

Please bring lanterns or non wax candles with you

On all days refreshments will be available

St John's Church will have its doors wide open,
to welcome everyone from its community and
neighbouring villages and towns.

*'O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
How lovely are your branches'*

Celebrating the success of the first Launchpad initiative in Bath and Wells

In October, the Diocese of Bath and Wells marked the success of the first group to trial the new cascade model of Launchpad. The initiative, created by Youthscape, is aimed at nurturing youth ministry and connecting young people with the church. The program teaches church leaders how they can initiate youth work in their church and in doing so, strengthen the bond between young people and the church.

The Revd Guy Scott, Vicar at St John's Church, Midsomer Norton, was one of those who took part, he said, "I found the course really helpful and encouraging. It made you reflect on what you've got and not what you don't have"



Manna mailing from the Diocese

Let's make it an Eco Advent

This year across Bath and Wells, church and school communities, as well as families, are being encouraged to have an Eco Advent. You can join in and combine the spirit of Advent with a commitment to the environment as you enjoy an eco-friendly journey to the manger... from the comfort of your own home.

Every day, as the countdown to Christmas continues, you can explore ways to reflect on and appreciate God's creation and share simple actions to take care of it better. Through Eco Advent, each day leading up to Christmas can be meaningful, both spiritually and environmentally.

Ruth Slade, Growing Faith and Everyday Faith Adviser says, "More and more people are aware of the environmental impact of Christmas and as Christians, of course, we are committed to caring for creation. We wanted to offer a fun resource to both celebrate our journey to Christmas and at the same time reflect on our duty to care for this beautiful world that God has gifted us.

"As well as offering daily Bible verses, prayers and reflections, everyone can join us in our Advent journey by first setting up a starry spiral path to a manger, and follow the daily tasks we are sharing on our website and social media channels. In true eco-fashion, there's no need to buy any special resources, just use what you have to hand to craft what you need to create your starry spiral and manger."

A helpful guide to joining in with Eco Advent is available to download from bathandwells.org.uk/eco-advent, where you will also find the daily Advent tasks.

From The Registers

Christian Funeral

“May they rest in peace”

16th November Eileen Joy Chapman

17th November John Scott Dryburgh



FROM THE PARISH PUMP

24 December Christmas Eve

How do you celebrate Christmas Eve? It has its own customs, the most popular of which is going to Midnight Mass, or the Christ-Mas. This is the only Mass of the year that is allowed to start after sunset. In Catholic countries such as Spain, Italy and Poland, Midnight Mass is in fact the most important church service of the entire Christmas season, and many people traditionally fast beforehand. In other countries, such as Belgium and Denmark, people dine during the evening, and then go on to the Midnight Service.

The British are behind some countries when it comes to exchanging presents: in Germany, Sweden and Portugal the custom is to exchange on Christmas Eve. But the British are ahead of Serbia and Slovakia, where the Christmas tree is not even brought into the house and decorated until Christmas Eve.

Yule logs are not so popular since the decline of the fireplace, but traditionally it was lit on Christmas Eve from a bit of the previous year's log, and then would be burned non-stop until 12th Night (6th January). Tradition also decreed that any greenery such as holly, ivy or mistletoe must wait until Christmas Eve until being brought into the house.

Date	Reader/<i>Intercessions</i>	Sides person
3rd December	Lesley Garvey <i>Kay Harvey</i>	J Shears, E Densley
10th December	Heather Hill <i>Linda Broadhurst</i>	D Winter, J Winter
17th December	Les Martindale <i>Colin Tincknell</i>	N Barnett, P Marriott
24th December	08:00	Pauline Shellswell
	23:30	A Broadhurst, L Broadhurst
25th December	09:30	R Broughton, S Broughton
31st December	10:00 Carol Moore <i>David Moore</i>	A Fitch, L Hurst
If you have to swap or cannot do any of the dates, please can you let Pat or Hilary know. Thank you		

St John the Baptist, Midsomer Norton Hire of Church Hall

The hall can be hired for £12per hour for regular or one-off bookings
There is disabled access and toilet facilities, along with a baby changing area. A fully fitted kitchen, table & chairs and will fit a 15x15 bouncy castle for children's parties

Please contact: Carolyn Wroe on 07591 557578

This month's front cover was taken by the Editor December 2022

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

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 Carolyn Wroe	07591 557578
Coffee Rota	Mrs Margaret Small	411474
Electoral Roll Secretary	Mrs Linda Broadhurst	415562
Flower Rota	Mrs Carol Moore	412226
Gift Aid Secretary	Mrs Kay Harvey	416050
Head Server	Mr John Norman	
St John's School	Mrs Danielle West-Gaul	412019
Ladies Group Leader	Mrs Kay Harvey	416050
Magazine Editor	Mrs Linda Broadhurst	415562
Magazine Distribution	Mrs Linda Broadhurst	07941 204179
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PCC Secretary	Mrs Margaret Marshall	413895
PCC Treasurer	Mrs Kay Harvey	416050
PCC Vice Chairperson	Mrs Hilary Denning	07828 550006
Safeguarding Person	Mrs Ann Munton	07895 038871
Tower Secretary	Mrs Margaret Marshall	413895

Church Organisations

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

The Friendship Group: meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

The Ladies Group meets on the second Thursday of the month

The Society of Our Lady of Walsingham meets every 3rd Friday of the month at 11am for Said Mass and the Angelus. The Cell takes an annual Pilgrimage to Walsingham in September. A warm welcome is extended to all who would like to attend the service or join us on Pilgrimage.

Further details can be obtained from a member of the Clergy.

**You can stay in touch with us on our website: www.stjohnschurchmsn.org.uk
Twitter: [@StJohnMSN](https://twitter.com/StJohnMSN), on Facebook: [@StJohnMSN](https://www.facebook.com/StJohnMSN)
and on YouTube: [St John's MSN channel](https://www.youtube.com/StJohnsMSN).**



The Prince of Peace

December
2023

Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd
See page 11 for details of times

Christmas Tree Festival

Sunday 3rd	1st Sunday of Advent	
	16:00	Candlelit Advent Service
Tuesday 5th	10:30	Probus Carol Service
Sunday 10th	2nd Sunday of Advent	
Tuesday 12th	10:30 - 11:45	Coffee in Church
	14:30	Friendship Group
Wednesday 13th	15:30	Christingle Service
Thursday 14th		<i>Magazine Copy Date</i>
	19:30	Ladies Group
Friday 15th	11:00	St Johns cell of Our Lady Of Walsingham - Eucharist
Sunday 17th	3rd Sunday of Advent	
	16:00	Carol Service
Tuesday 19th	10:30 - 11:45	Coffee in Church
Sunday 24th	4th Sunday of Advent	8am Eucharist only
	16:00	Crib Service
	23:30	Midnight Mass
Monday 25th	Christmas Day	09:30 Christmas Parish Eucharist
Thursday 28th	10:00 - The Holy Innocents	Holy Eucharist
Sunday 31st	1st Sunday of Christmas	