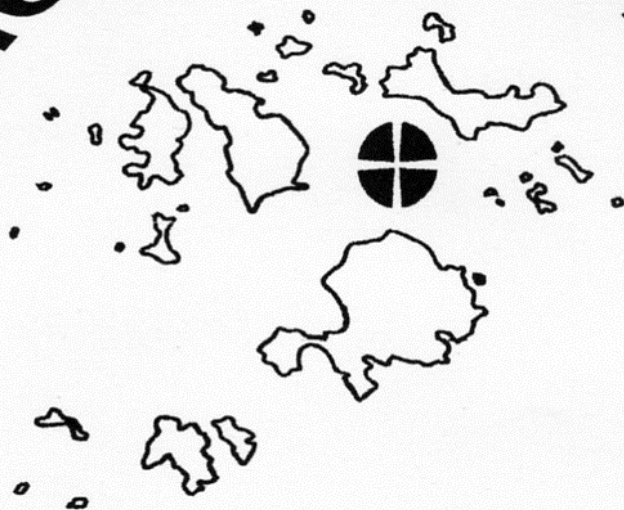


**Isles of Scilly**



**Methodist Church Circuit**

**IN TOUCH**



December 2012  
& January 2013



## Thoughts from the Manse



There is something very special about being resident on these islands in the winter months. The summer visitors are no longer with us, somehow the pace of life seems a little slower, we have time to catch up with the familiar faces who we meet in the Co-op, and we realize some of the joys of living in an island community.

Some jobs of course are less in the winter months; those involved in looking after our summer visitors can take a well-earned rest, some of our shops and hotels close for the winter period, and many hard working islanders go off on holiday to far flung parts of the globe.

This of course is not the case for our flower growers and those involved in picking, packing and transporting this traditional Scillonian winter harvest. We are indeed thankful that it is still a part of island life, a reminder of maybe what life was like in Scilly years ago, and it is certainly a real joy to find local flowers in our chapels when we meet to worship on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week.

There are also other jobs that have to be done all the year round. At home there are the domestic tasks of cleaning, cooking and doing the washing, and we rejoice that because of modern day aids these tasks now take up less time than they once did. I know that today 'washing up' at the kitchen sink is a thing of the past in many households, but so far in our modest household we have not given in to this particular temptation, instead either Mary or I stand at the sink to do it in the old fashioned way 'by hand'.

Washing up is one of those household tasks that I am quite happy to do, indeed it is quite satisfying to see the freshly cleaned cups and plates stacked away in the cupboard at the end of the day. However, in recent years there has been a problem, for there have been times when Mary has taken these dishes from the cupboard and put them on one side, and pointed out to me that actually 'they were not really clean!'

Mary, of course, is usually right, and it is usually because I have done the washing up without wearing my glasses. I had quite simply not seen what was there; what I thought was clean was in fact far from what it should have been. I could and should have done better; but maybe for most of us, this is just what life is like.

Now, let me take this talk of the ordinary and turn it into talk of the spiritual! Some have described John's Gospel as the 'Spiritual Gospel' because time after time Jesus is seen to take talk of the ordinary and turn it into talk of the spiritual. Ordinary bread becomes the 'Bread of Heaven' which brings life to this world, ordinary water becomes 'Living Water' which is given by God to bring the gift of Life Eternal, and

ordinary day to day life is compared to the gift of 'Abundant Life' which is offered by God to all who will receive this gift in His Son Jesus.

Other scholars have described John's Gospel as 'The Gospel of Truth' because John uses the word 'Truth' twenty-five times in his Gospel (and another twenty times in his three brief epistles). It is John who lays Jesus before us as the one who shows us the truth about God, and it is in John's Gospel that Jesus makes the claim to be 'The Way, The Truth and The Life'. But it is John's particular take on 'The World' that always rings so true to me every time I read it.

In John's Gospel, time and time again, that we find Jesus saying some very uncomfortable things about this world in which we all live, and of its great need to receive what is described as 'New Life' from God. John uses the word a staggering seventy-eight times in his writings. What he says is very challenging but to me it always rings true. Yes, according to John the world, just like my washing up, could be better than it is.

When I wear my glasses I can see my washing up for just what it is, and it is a little like this when we read John's Gospel.

In John we see that this world in which we live is certainly not what it should be or what it could be, and John reminds us all that even though life might be great at times, it is far from being perfect, and that is true even here on the beautiful Isles of Scilly.

As we read what Jesus has to say about this world, we find that in the beginning all was well, indeed we are reminded of that perfect creation recorded for us in the very first book of our Bibles. But as we read on we find that time after time, throughout history, this world has turned away from God, and instead has chosen to live by its own ways and values instead of living by those given to us by God. John tells us of how Jesus speaks of us living in a world of darkness instead of in the light of God's love, and as we celebrate the birth of Jesus in our Christmas services again we will be challenged to cast aside this darkness and walk in the light of our gracious and compassionate God who has come to us in Jesus.

The Christmas story in John's Gospel is the story of God sending His Son into a world of darkness. It tells us how the Jesus of eternity steps into a fallen creation, and of how in Him, our Sovereign God has chosen to share in all that makes us human so that we may have hope, live in light, and receive what John describes as the gift of Life Eternal.

Yes, John tells us the truth about this world, and the truth about our God of grace. John does not look at this world through rose-coloured spectacles but instead, through the eyes of faith, he tells us the way that it is. He speaks of some believing in Jesus and others rejecting Him, and he speaks clearly of how some have received new life in His name. This certainly is the real message of Christmas, the story of God intervening in the sadness of this world so that at the coming of His Kingdom we will

no longer live in darkness but instead in the light of His love. This we will be celebrating at our services over Christmas.

Our fellowship evenings on Friday evenings will continue through the winter. Our annual Methodist Covenant Services will be held on January 13<sup>th</sup> on St Mary's and St Martin's and we will be joined by our Anglican friends and their newly-appointed minister, Canon Paul Miller at both services. We look forward to working with Canon Paul and his church as together we set out in mission to residents and visitors of these islands.

Looking just a little way ahead, don't forget that Mike King who is the Vice-President of the Methodist Church is visiting our islands from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> February. He will be speaking on St Mary's on the Friday evening at the Methodist chapel and in the Parish Church on the Sunday. Also on the Sunday he will be speaking in St Martin's Methodist chapel.

If you are washing up over the Christmas holidays remember to wear your glasses. Take time to read through the wonderful words of John's Gospel, and give thanks to our God of grace who, in the child who was born in a back street stable, has come so that we may have life in its fullness and may know the greatest gift of all time, the gift of Life Eternal in the name of the Lord Jesus.

May the season of Advent, and the celebrations of Christmas fill us with joy, and may this joy be seen in our kindness and love to one another.

I remain, by the grace of God, the Methodist minister on these remote yet beautiful islands for a while.

*Charles R. Gibbs*

### **St Mary's Church Gift Day**

We give thanks that on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September over twenty people came to the Manse to give gifts to our Methodist Church on St Mary's. In addition to this we received many letters and gifts from our friends on the mainland bringing the total on the Saturday evening to the wonderful sum of £3233. In addition to this most encouraging amount there are other monies promised to add to this very fine effort.

This generosity will indeed be a great help in the continuing work of our Methodist Church on St Mary's. It was a delight to meet with friends on our gift day, to share with them our vision of caring for all who live on these islands, and to encourage one another in sharing God's great love to all upon their journey through life.

Thank you *Charles R. Gibbs*

## **News from St Martin's**

As is usual at this time of year, several of our congregation have taken holidays and we give thanks for times of refreshment and safe journeys. We know that Charlie enjoyed giving his Land Rover some long runs on the mainland.

Our thoughts have been with Colin Daly and his family since Steve's death on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Although Steve had not been well enough to worship with us in recent months, she used to attend Chapel sometimes, and will be fondly remembered for her generous and enthusiastic buying at the Harvest Auctions. It was good that several people who live on the mainland, and have St Martin's connections, were able to attend the cremation. A memorial service is to be held at Chapel on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Steve was quite a character and St Martin's folk will have their own fond memories. I personally recall all that she did for St Martin's school and other island organizations, not to mention her good cooking and Whist Drives at Christmas parties! We pray that such recollections will be a comfort to her family at this time of loss.

It was lovely to have Smudge Smith join us for the Remembrance Service this year. On the way up to St Martin's the Lightning was stopped in the tide near the Crow so that Smudge could lay a wreath in memory of his mates who had served in Air Sea Rescue during World War II. Smudge has done so much for the British Legion and Army Cadets over the years.

Jinny Stevens welcomed Canon Paul Miller to St Martin's at the start of the well-attended Remembrance Service. He led the worship and Rev Gibbs gave the address, the text being 'Blessed are the peacemakers'. When we gathered at the War Memorial just outside the Church door, Carl Bray (Coastguard) read the Roll of Honour before laying a wreath. He was followed by four children who together laid the wreath they had made at school. Thank you Rosie, Piran, Jake and Izzy. It was really good to have you there.

Friends at St Martin's send their good wishes for a joyous Christmas and a healthy and peaceful New Year to all readers of In Touch. May we once again be filled with the love of the Babe of Bethlehem.

*Heather Terry*

## Christmas Prayer

Dear Lord,

What's it really all about, this "season of celebration"? People rushing everywhere, overspending, double-booking diaries in frantic attempts to meet the demands of a twenty-first century Christmas. And what about those who find Christmas anything but joyful – those who have lost loved ones, those who are old and alone and tired and longing for it all to be over? What's it really all about?

Lord, in the middle of the busy-ness and bustle, help us to remember that this is nothing new. Jesus came into a world of rush and frenetic activity. He came to a town so busy that there was no room for his family. And help us to remember that you know what it's like to have a loved one – your dear Son - away from home at Christmas.

Lord, still our hearts, and open them to recognise and receive your great gift to us. May we make room for Jesus and know the peace and security of his presence this Christmas. Help us to know that this is what it's really all about.

In the name of Jesus,  
Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*



us.  
the

## **Methodist's Outreach**

Here in the Isles of Scilly we Methodists support two charities in practical ways.

In addition to our normal fund raising for the Methodist charity Action for Children, we have this past year been making a collection of one and two pence pieces. In the summer we asked the holiday visitors to lay their coins around the St Mary's chapel door. As the coins got rather dirty with our damp weather we gave collecting boxes to our local friends. Many thanks to all who have given, resulting in very worthwhile sums of money.

We support another charity, UCDF (Ugandan Child Development Fund) in a different way. We send little knitted Teddies in brightly coloured cotton bags to deprived children in Uganda. A boxful has just been posted off to the organizers and will, we hope, arrive in Africa in time for Christmas. We thank Maria Tomlinson who knits most of the bears and Mary Barnes who makes the bags.

During a holiday visit back in the summer a dear lady spent time knitting no fewer than eight Teddies! However, she did not have time to stuff them and sew them up – a long job! Moreover, in contrast to the usual pattern, they all have white faces, hands and feet – not the normal Teddy Bear colour. However, we are glad to know that they will still be welcome in Uganda where many white people still live.

*Gwen Clarkson*

Maybe they are Polar Teddies!!! (Ed)

## **Birthday Greetings**

We send our best wishes to Louis Asten, Margaret Crane, Keith Grossett, Pauline Jackson Cocking, Margaret Jones, Steve Ottery, Gladys Perkins, Josh Smith and Merryn Smith in December and to Sue Bavin, Gordon Bird, Stephanie Bird, John Goody, Layla Guy, Martin Parker, Anthea Roberts, Tony Thomas, William Thomas, Nathan Thomas and Liz Turner in January.

We hope they all have a very happy time.



## Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Words by Charles Wesley – Music by Mendelssohn

On Christmas Day 1738, Charles Wesley preached at St Mary's Church in Islington and gave the wine at Holy Communion. Next day it was George Whitfield's turn. 'We had a sacrament this and the four following days – the whole week was a festival indeed; a joyful season, holy unto the Lord' he said.

Was this the first Christmas ever to be enriched by this hymn? In its original version it was published a few months later; Whitfield was one of those who afterwards shaped it to its present form.

So whenever we sing these words today, we are heirs to the work of England's finest hymn writer and her greatest preacher.

The composer Mendelssohn belongs to the next century but he did not live long enough to hear his famous music matched with this magnificent hymn.

*Hark the herald angels sing  
Glory to the new born king,  
Peace on earth and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled.  
Joyful all ye nations rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With the angelic host proclaim  
'Christ is born in Bethlehem'.  
Hark the herald angels sing,  
Glory to the new born king.*

No doubt this hymn will be sung many times at carol services throughout the country.

With thanks to Trinity Methodist Church, Royton, in whose magazine this first appeared.





## Methodist Women in Britain Meeting at St Ives

Treloyan Manor at St Ives is set in delightful woodland overlooking the Hayle Estuary. It was a perfect setting for Methodist women to meet together, coming from the length and breadth of Cornwall and including the Scilly delegation. The Conference focused on the theme Bambela which is a South African word meaning 'Never give up'. Each session looked at the following thoughts - Never give up on each other; Never give up on worship; and Never give upon God. Jill Baker, President of the Methodist Women in Britain illustrated these by using photos of people she had met in Ghana and Uganda. It opened our eyes to the enthusiasm for worship in these countries and the pride the women take in belonging to the Methodist Church, often demonstrated in their dress. Much of the women's work in these countries is in education, with very large numbers of pupils, up to 1500, in several schools. Although the Methodist Connexion supports work overseas it is always at the request of the people themselves.

Bible studies were led by Rev Celia Phillips from Truro. It was good to be with other women in Methodism and to share with each other those things which we are doing in our communities. We were invited to lead worship at the beginning of one session and this was much appreciated, with a church in Saint Austell requesting the script of our dramatic presentation which showed Jesus never giving up on Peter. We enjoyed our time away, it broadened our vision of the Methodist Church and reminded us of the extra-ordinary work which can be achieved by ordinary women, like us, who have chosen to follow Jesus.

*Claire, Dorothy, Gwen, Sue and Mary*



I heard the bells on Christmas Day their old familiar carols play, and wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth, goodwill to men! -  
*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

If Jesus were born one thousand times in Bethlehem and not in me, then I would still be lost. - *Corrie ten Boom*

## **Sending love in 100 million shoe boxes**

This month hundreds of thousands of needy children across Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa will be eagerly opening shoe boxes of gifts sent by generous people in the UK, the US, Europe and Australia. Somewhere in the middle of all that there will be an historic shoe box: the 100 millionth shoe box that has been sent since 1990. No one will know quite which one it is, but it is a great milestone to celebrate.

Many local churches in these countries (from Bosnia to Liberia, Montenegro to Swaziland) are also offering the youngsters a short follow-up course called 'The Greatest Journey'. It simply explains who Jesus is, and what Christianity is all about. The literature and the course resources are shared at the invitation of local church leaders, after consultation with other civic leaders. Since 2010, 700,000 children worldwide have accepted an invitation to join the course. Please remember these children in your prayers – they face huge challenges in their young lives.

Operation Christmas Child was started in 1990, in Wrexham, by Dave Cooke, after he saw pictures of appalling conditions in Romanian orphanages on TV. That year he led a small convoy of vehicles from Wrexham to Romania, to help the children. In 1995 OCC merged with Samaritan's Purse.



### **All in the month of December**

75 years ago: on 21 Dec 1937 the premiere of Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was held in Los Angeles. It was Disney's first full-length animated movie.

60 years ago: on 25th Dec 1952 Queen Elizabeth II gave her first Christmas speech.

40 years ago: on 7th Dec 1972 Apollo 17 was launched – NASA's last manned mission to the Moon.

## **Churches help support food banks to feed thousands in the UK**

Churches across the country are supporting vital food banks for their local communities. One church in London is even offering honey made in its own hive on the church's roof.

A hive of about 10,000 bees on the roof of St Pancras Church on Euston Road produced their first combs of honey this autumn, as the church became a collection point for the Camden Food Bank. The church is part of the national network maintained by the Trussel Trust, which supports people referred for emergency food.

'We need food banks', said churchwarden Dorothea Hackman, 'so families feeling the bite of the recession and reduced benefits this winter will not have to send their children hungry to school'. In the past year the North Liverpool Food bank has fed 3000 people (just under half being children), raising 27 tonnes of food mainly from local churches and schools. Most of them come from the poorest families in the most deprived communities in Liverpool.

In Leicester many churches donate food to the Welcome Project, a diocesan voluntary group offering emergency food, supplies and advice to asylum seekers. The project focuses on helping those who arrive in the area with little or nothing to live on and are unable to work to support themselves.

The Trussell Trust recently revealed that a record-breaking 100,000 people have received emergency food from UK food banks in the last six months. It warns that rises in food and fuel bills this winter could force more Britons into a crisis. For more details on food banks: [www.trusselltrust.org/](http://www.trusselltrust.org/)





## Where did Christmas trees come from?

There are two early stories that mention fir trees. The first involves St Boniface, who went to Germany in the 8th century as a missionary and found people sacrificing a child to their god under an oak tree. Boniface was appalled, and rescued the child. He then chopped down the oak tree and found a tiny fir tree growing nearby. He gave this to the people and said: 'This is a symbol of life. Whenever you look at this tree, remember the Christ-child who is the one who will give you life, because he gave his

life for you'.

The second early fir tree story involves Martin Luther in the 16th century. It is said that one year he decided to drag a fir tree into his home and to decorate it with candles. He used it as a visual aid, telling people that the candles symbolized Jesus as the light of the world, and the evergreen tree symbolized the eternal life that Jesus gives to us. Many of the people who followed Luther were struck by the idea, and took up the custom.



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This is the Circuit magazine but it needs your contributions to make sure everyone knows what is happening.

In Touch can be read on line. Just go to our Circuit website [www.scillymethodists.co.uk](http://www.scillymethodists.co.uk) and click on the link to the newsletter. Back numbers of In Touch can also be accessed. If you would prefer to read In Touch in this way please let us know and we can save the cost of a paper copy.

Some material in this magazine was obtained from [www.parishpump.co.uk](http://www.parishpump.co.uk). We thank them for providing material for magazine editors to use.



"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think the Angel of the Lord texting the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."

## **A Year is Born**

We wish each other happiness as every new year chimes.  
And we want it for ourselves, good days and happy times –  
But do we make too much of it and is there too much stress  
Laid upon the importance of this thing called happiness?

A happy and a bright new year, the customary phrase!  
Happiness is sweet – but in these grim and troubled days –  
May it be a useful year, a year of work well done;  
A busy year with goals attained and moral battles won.

It's a strange and holy moment when, from belfry towers,  
The clocks strike out the solemn message of the midnight hours.  
A year is born, O pray for wisdom as it comes to birth –  
To do your share and build God's kingdom here upon the earth.

With thanks to Trinity Methodist Church, Royton.



## **Friday Fellowship**

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 30th November | The Wages of Sin is Death.....But<br>(Romans 6:12-23). Led by Charlie Gibbs         |
| 7th December  | Some thought for the season of Advent.<br>Led by Mrs Mary Ratcliffe                 |
| 14th December | Nothing will stop the coming of the Kingdom.<br>(Mark 4:26-29) Led by Charlie Gibbs |

# CHRISTMAS LANTERN WORKSHOP



**Sunday afternoons throughout  
December at St Mary's Methodist  
Church Hall - 2.30 'til 4pm.**

**2nd, 9th & 16th lantern making and  
on the 23rd we'll join the walking  
Nativity through Hugh Town and  
onto the annual Candlelight Service.**

***Fun for everyone of all ages.***

**No charge and free refreshments!**



# Mouse Makes

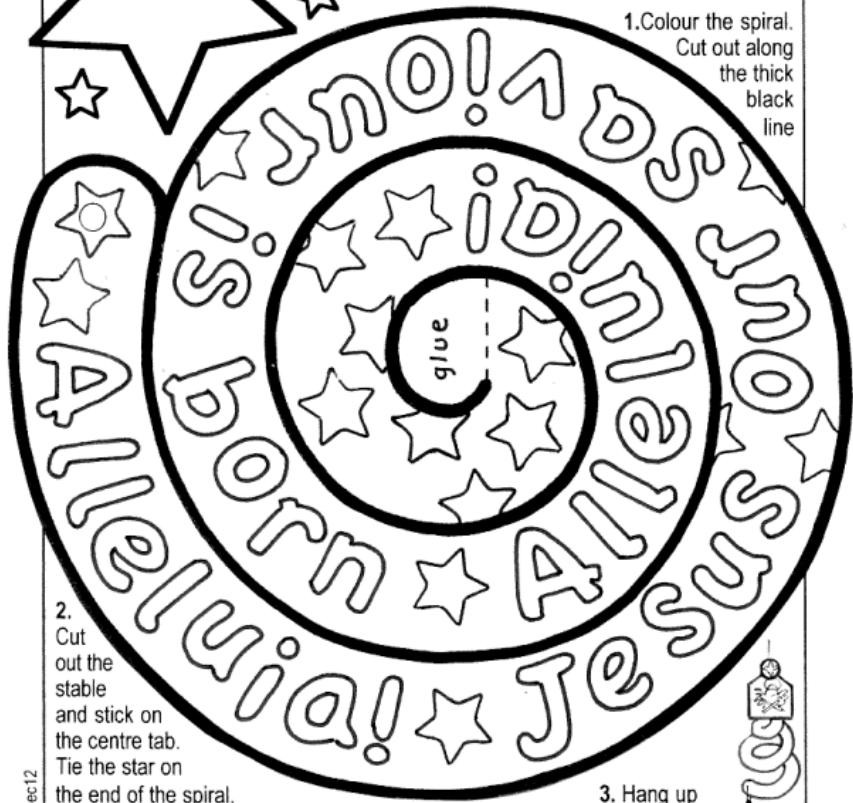


"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord"

Read:  
Luke 1-20



1. Colour the spiral.  
Cut out along the thick black line



2. Cut out the stable and stick on the centre tab. Tie the star on the end of the spiral.

3. Hang up

Dec12

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## JANUARY SERVICES

### ST MARY'S

6th	10.00 am 11.00 am	Children's Church Len Mitchell
13th	10.30 am  6.00 pm	Rev Charlie Gibbs <i>United Covenant Service</i> Barbara Hasler
20th	9.15 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	David Pender and Beryl Read Rev Charlie Gibbs Trevor Adams
27th	9.15 am  11.00 am 6.00 pm	Neil Didlick and Rev C. Gibbs <i>Holy Communion</i> Trevor Adams Rev Charlie Gibbs <i>Holy Communion</i>

### ST MARTIN'S

6th	11.00 am	Rev Charlie Gibbs
13th	3.00 pm	Rev Charlie Gibbs <i>United Covenant Service</i>
20th	11.00 am	Neil Didlick
27th	3.00 pm	Rev Charlie Gibbs

### PARK HOUSE

6th	4.00 pm	Rev Charlie Gibbs
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## DECEMBER SERVICES

### ST MARY'S

<b>2nd</b>	<b>10.00 am</b> <b>11.00 am</b>	Children's Service Rev Charlie Gibbs <i>(at Parish Church)</i>
<b>9th</b>	<b>9.15 am</b>  <b>11.00 am</b> <b>6.00 pm</b>	Rev Charlie Gibbs and Beryl Read <i>Holy Communion</i> Len Michell Rev Charlie Gibbs <i>Advent Carols</i>
<b>16th</b>	<b>9.15 am</b> <b>11.00 am</b>  <b>6.00 pm</b>	Neil Didlick and Mervyn Bird Rev Charlie Gibbs <i>Holy Communion</i> Len Michell
<b>23rd</b>	<b>9.15 am</b> <b>11.00 am</b> <b>6.00 pm</b>	David Pender and Beryl Read Rev Charlie Gibbs Rev Charlie Gibbs <i>Carol Service</i>
<b>30th</b>	<b>9.15 am</b> <b>11.00 am</b> <b>6.00 pm</b>	Barbara Hasler and Neil Didlick Rev Charlie Gibbs Rev Charlie Gibbs <i>Holy Communion</i>

### ST MARTIN'S

<b>2nd</b>	<b>3.00 pm</b>	Rev Charlie Gibbs <i>Advent Carols</i>
<b>9th</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>	Mary Ratcliffe
<b>16th</b>	<b>3.00 pm</b>	Rev Charlie Gibbs <i>Holy Communion</i>
<b>23rd</b>	<b>3.00 pm</b>	Rev Charlie Gibbs and Heather Terry
<b>30th</b>	<b>3.00 pm</b>	Christopher Savill

### PARK HOUSE

<b>2nd</b>	<b>4.00 pm</b>	Barbara Hasler
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