

# *St Helen's Church*

## *Low Fell*



**PARISH MAGAZINE**

**DECEMBER ~ JANUARY**

Website : [www.sthelenslowfell.com](http://www.sthelenslowfell.com)  
[officesthelenschurch@gmail.com](mailto:officesthelenschurch@gmail.com)

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/sthelenschurchlowfell>

“ If you have any concerns about your safety or that of any member of the church community please contact Helen Jones  
07505105184.

**PRICE 50p**

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# ST HELEN’S CHURCH HALL

## REGULAR USER GROUPS

UPDATED OCTOBER 2018



MONDAY

|                 |        |             |
|-----------------|--------|-------------|
| Yoga            | lower  | 9.15-10.15  |
| Kalmababy       | upper  | 9.30-12.30  |
| Weight Watchers | lower  | 12.00-2.00  |
| QE Hospital     | lower  | 2.30 - 4.30 |
| Brownie,        | Guides |             |

both 6.00

DAY

TUES-

All activities  
suspended

Mu- sic Bugs

upper 9.30

tes) lower 10.00 - 11.00

12.00 11 .00 -

|                           |       |             |
|---------------------------|-------|-------------|
| U3A (Local History) (2nd) | lower | 1.30 - 3.30 |
| MagiKats                  | lower | 4.00 - 6.00 |
| Scottish Dance            | lower | 7.00 - 9.30 |
| Bible Group (1st)         | upper | 7.00 - 9.00 |
| Wildlife (2nd)            | upper |             |
| PCC (3rd)                 | upper | 7.30        |
| Beekeepers (4th Tues)     | upper | 7.00-9.00   |

**THURSDAY**

|                |       |             |
|----------------|-------|-------------|
| China Painters | upper | 9.00        |
| GOPA course    | lower | 10.00-12.00 |
| MagiKats       | upper | 4.00-6.00   |
| Camera Club    | lower | 7.30-9.30   |

**FRIDAY**

|                         |       |               |
|-------------------------|-------|---------------|
| U3A Feel Good (1st )    | upper | 10.00 - 12.00 |
| QE Hospital             | lower | 10.00 - 12.00 |
| Toddlers [Church Group] | lower | 12.30-3.30    |
| TW Guild (1st/3rd)      | upper | 1.00          |
| Kalmababy               | lower | 3.30          |
| Aerobics                | upper | 6.00 - 7.00   |

**SATURDAY**

|                         |       |             |
|-------------------------|-------|-------------|
| Messy Church (last Sat) | upper | 10.30-12.30 |
| Karate                  | lower | 1.00        |

**SUNDAY**

|                           |       |               |
|---------------------------|-------|---------------|
| Coffee                    | lower | 10.30 - 12.00 |
| Parish Office for booking | upper | 10.45 - 12.00 |
| Marriage and Baptism      |       |               |

**HALL BOOKING RATES****Community Rates:-**

£10 per hour, or part thereof  
for large hall.

£8 per hour, or part thereof  
for small hall.

**Party rates for 3 hour slot:-**

£30 for large hall.

£20 for small hall.

**Commercial Rates:-**

£15 per hour, or part thereof  
for large hall.

£12 per hour, or part thereof  
for small hall.

Dear friends,

2020 has been a tough year for everyone, last year I imagine that you celebrated Christmas with little thought as to how it would be different in the near future.

For much of the year I know that many of you will have been shielding or at least seeing very few of your family and friends. We have seen great tragedy this year but also great courage and creativity. People have stepped up to support their neighbours, to give food and donations to local charities, to clap for carers and the NHS and to be a listening ear and a sharer of burdens. we have walked prayerfully alongside those who have lost loved ones, jobs, homes and health.

In the midst of these difficult times we need a message of comfort and joy. At the heart of Christmas is the good news that God is with us.

### **Hear the words of the Angel**

*'Do not be afraid , I bring you good news of comfort and joy that will be for all the people, today a saviour has been born he is Christ the Lord. Luke 2 v 10*

God is in the midst of us, there is no doubt that there is much difficulty in the life we are facing, but God is in the midst of us.

After hearing the words of the Angel the Shepherds hurried to the stable to see this vulnerable baby, the Glory of God... and they found him not in a pristine and sanitised palace but in the place where they housed the animals. a temporary dwelling in the mess and ordinariness of everyday life. Even in the mess and ordinariness of everyday life there is joy. This Christmas despite our difficulties we can receive him into the messiness of our own life circumstances and know that we are loved, so we celebrate with joy.

Even though we may feel devastated by corona virus we have no need to lose heart for God is with us and we rejoice with joy. As we step out in faith we know that we do not walk into the future alone, we journey together into a new future full of hope and promise where nothing is lost, for all is held in the love of God in Christ Jesus our loving, living Lord.

So today, may we respond as the shepherds did – 'come let us go to Bethlehem to see this thing that has happened'.

For love came down at Christmas and will remain with us full of grace and truth as we walk together towards new possibilities .

Amen

I pray that you have a blessed Christmas full of comfort and deep joy.  
Every blessing for Christmas and the coming New Year.

Revd Yvonne

### What the donkey saw

No room in the inn, of course,  
And not that much in the stable,  
What with the shepherds, Magi, Mary,  
Joseph, the heavenly host—  
Not to mention the baby  
Using our manger as a cot.  
You couldn't have squeezed another cherub  
in  
For love or money.

Still, in spite of the overcrowding,  
I did my best to make them feel wanted.  
I could see, the baby and I  
Would be going places together.

U A Fanthorpe







The Children's Society  
**Christingle**

Take part in  
**The Children's Society**  
**Christingle** and share  
the joy



**St Helen's Low Fell**  
**Join us on line at 4pm Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December**



**For Christingle**



**Check out our facebook page or website for details of all our  
Christmas services**



**[www.sthelenslowfell.com](http://www.sthelenslowfell.com)**

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

# THANK YOU

A heartfelt thank you to all who have managed to make some sort of a donation to our various Christmas endeavours.

It is usual to have a collection at each of our services for various charities who are each doing amazing work in these difficult circumstances both in our local community and in our wider world.

As many of our services have been on line there has not been an opportunity to give.

This year we support

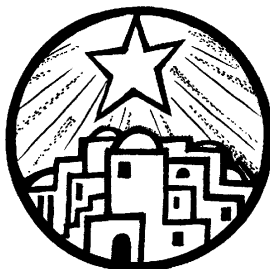
The Children's Society with our Christingle service at 4pm on Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup>

Embrace the middle east with our crib service at 4pm on Christmas Eve and our other Christmas services  
6pm Christmas vigil Eucharist on Christmas Eve.  
9.30 Eucharist on Christmas Day.

If you wish to donate please simply place your donation in a marked sealed envelope and leave in the basket at the back of church or drop off any donations to one of the Church wardens or a member of the clergy.

If you have enjoyed our services and want to donate to the continuing mission and ministry of the church here in Low Fell we would be most thankful. Like most organisations this year our funds are severely depleted but our outreach work continues to be a high priority as we seek to share the love of God with others in their struggles.

Any donations are always joyfully received



Kath Hayward works tirelessly and is the inspiration behind Bensham Food Co-op

She has sent this update on the work of the co-op this year.

We give thanks for her and I ask that you remember her in your prayers as well as the many asylum seekers and refugees and local people who benefit from this ongoing support.



On behalf of all the members and volunteers at the Food Co-op I would like to thank you for your ongoing commitment and support. Every week, without fail, donations are received, enabling food to be distributed and provided to everyone who attends.

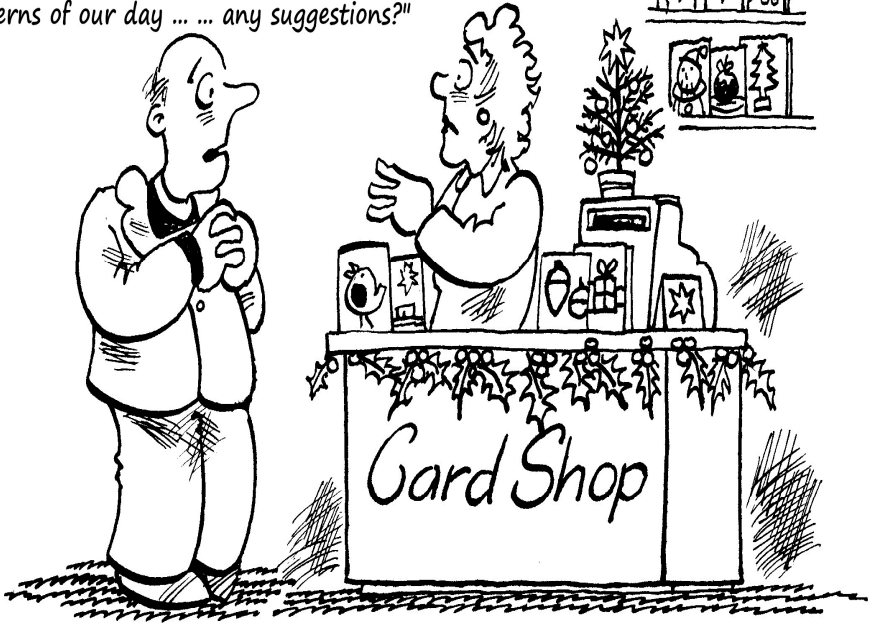
Since March, a staggering 1857 food parcels have been distributed. All parcels contain not only dried and tinned products, but a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables. Next Tuesday and Wednesday will be our last sessions until after the New Year. An amazing amount of sweets, biscuits, oil, rice and dates have been received to give alongside the usual food parcels. We have also received a considerable amount of toiletries that will be distributed as well.

Without your support we would have struggled to cope with the demand brought about due to this difficult and challenging year. Many of our previous food sources are no longer viable due to restrictions so donations are even more essential for the Food Co-op to continue. Thank you.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and hoping that you will be safe and healthy in 2021.



"I am looking for a Christmas Card that contains inclusive language, and yet retains the richness of 16th century English and is overtly Christian whilst being sensitive to the multi-faith patterns of our day ... any suggestions?"





# Christmas

## at St Helen's and St Chad's

Tuesday 15 December  
**COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE**  
7.00 pm - online

*followed by Zoom drinks (bring your own!) at 7.45 pm -  
email [office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.sthelenschurch@gmail.com) for the link*

Sunday 20 December  
**CHRISTINGLE SERVICE**  
4.00 pm - online

*collect a pack from St Helen's on Wednesdays after the 10.00 am service*

Christmas Eve  
**CRIB SERVICE**  
4.00 pm - online

Christmas Eve  
**VIGIL EUCHARIST \***  
6.00 pm *at both churches*

Christmas Day  
**EUCHARIST OF CHRISTMAS DAY \***  
9.30 am *St Helen's* 10.00 am *St Chad's*

ONLINE SERVICES ARE ON YOUTUBE.COM  
SEARCH FOR 'ST HELEN'S LOW FELL'

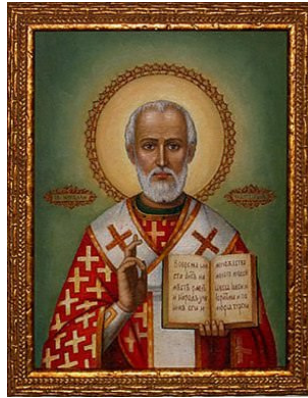
**\* please book attendance at services in church with Ray Shirley (0191 487 0403 - St Helen's) or Margaret Hope (07817 524 852 - St Chad's)**

# Saint of the Month

## Nicholas, Bishop

**Fourth Century**

**Feast Day 6 December**



The original Father Christmas or Santa Claus, from a corruption of his name in Dutch, St Nicholas has been and remains one of the most popular saints in both the Eastern and Western Churches. Innumerable churches are dedicated to him and he is the patron saint of countries, provinces, dioceses and cities across the world. He is also the patron saint of sailors, children, pawnbrokers and merchants.

Despite all this popularity what can be confidently stated about his life is very limited – simply that he was Bishop of Myra in Lycia (south-western Asia Minor) during the fourth century.

However, despite the limited facts, legends about him are also numerous. He is said to have saved three girls from prostitution by throwing three bags of gold as a dowry into their widows at night. He is also said to have miraculously brought back to life three murdered children who had been hidden in a barrel; and to have saved three unjustly condemned men from death; and to have rescued sailors off the Lycian coast.

His association with Santa Claus means that in some countries presents are given to children on his feast day rather than at Christmas.

His emblem in art is three balls.

DB

# Some Graces for Christmas

Let us thank God for Christmas.  
For this happy and exciting time of year,  
    thank you, loving Father.  
For Christmas trees and decorations,  
    thank you, loving Father.  
For cards and presents and good food,  
    thank you, loving Father.  
For fun with family and friends,  
    thank you, loving Father.  
For singing carols and listening to the Christmas  
story,  
    thank you, loving Father.  
For all these things because we have them to re-  
mind us of the coming of Jesus,  
    thank you, loving Father.

O God, our Father, as we  
remember the birth of your  
Son, Jesus Christ, we wel-  
come him with gladness as  
our Saviour and pray that  
there may always be room  
for him our hearts and in our  
homes; for his sake. Amen.



## **The cat**

A vicar and his wife were going out for the evening, and carefully set the security lights and put the cat out. But when they opened the door to go to the taxi, the cat slipped back in and disappeared upstairs. Irritated, the vicar followed it.

The wife waited with the taxi driver. Not wanting him to know that they were leaving the parsonage empty, she said: "My husband is just upstairs for a quick word with my mother."

A few minutes later, the husband arrived, breathless. "Sorry I took so long" he said, "but she put up a fight! Stupid old thing was hiding under the bed and I had to poke her with a coat hanger and grab her by the scruff of the neck to get her out."

## **Fire?**

The team at the local fire station had assembled to hear their training officer discuss the behaviours of various kinds of fire. He began: "You pull up to a house and notice puffs of smoke coming from the eaves. But the windows are blackened out and there is little or no visible flame. What does this tell you?" he asked.

Hoping the men recognised signs of a possible 'back draft', a condition very dangerous to fire fighters, he heard instead: "It tells me I've got the right house."

## **Films adapted for Wales**

It is said that the Welsh film industry has spent lockdown planning to remake numerous well-known films, but this time with a Welsh flavour. The following have been suggested as sure winners:

- \* 9½ Leeks
- \* The Lost Boyos
- \* Dai Hard
- \* The Eagle has Llandudno
- \* The Magnificent Severn
- \* Haverfordwest Was Won
- \* Austin Powys
- \* Independence Dai
- \* The LlanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlIantysiliogogogoch That Time Forgot
- \* The Bridge on the River Wye
- \* The Welsh Patient
- \* Look You Back in Bangor
- \* Evans Can Wait
- \* A Fishguard Called Rhondda
- \* Where Eagles Aberdare

## **Christmas can't come too early**

Every year it happens. I hear Christians lamenting how 'Christmas comes earlier every year.'

Since this September (or before!) supermarkets, shops and garden centres have been selling Christmas jumpers, socks and pyjamas and all kinds of other seasonal merchandise. Should we be annoyed or exasperated? Should we have gone around reminding people that it's much too early for tinsel and mistletoe?

This year, of all years, the answer from churches and Christians of all denominations must surely be a resounding 'NO.'

As people began looking to Christmas for some light in the gloom of the pandemic – and hard-hit businesses desperately need to increase their income and chances of survival – it sounds a woefully wrong note if the Church is saying 'hold back, it's not time yet...'

Because Christmas is that time of year when increasing numbers of people want to come to church services and share in the story of the new-born King. It is when carols are played in shopping centres, and there are openings to speak of the meaning of the season.

Churches might not be able to host big indoor carol services this year, but the challenge is how we take the Christmas message out into the streets and neighbourhoods around our buildings.

This year has been one like no other for millions of people, with little prospect of better news into the New Year. So we need to be declaring the Christmas message of hope and light and joy in the darkness. And to be doing so at every opportunity.

But also, we need to be doing so with sensitivity and care, for the many

who will find it hard to be celebrating this pandemic year, and with the prospect of large family gatherings in doubt because of Covid 19 regulations.

Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell wrote in his 2009 book 'Do Nothing Christmas is Coming', "Christmas is one of the most joyful times of the year. It is also one of the most stressful. It is laden with expectations. It is often overtaken with grief. It might be the season of good will, but it can feel like the last straw on an already overburdened camel." He added ruefully, "Wise men would not ride this one."

Archbishop Cottrell is right that Christmas has to be approached sensitively, that we need to take care in how we celebrate, that for many people who have lost loved ones and livelihoods during this traumatic year, Christmas will not be easy.

We come alongside people with the news that the baby born in the manger grew up to be the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief, who experienced suffering and bereavement. God, born as Man, who shared our pain as well as our celebrations, ultimately died on a cross to rise again.

Our mission is to bring a message of hope, and to do so with love, humility and sensitivity to a hurting disorientated world – one that's eager for light in the gloom.





*Martin received the latest Christmas coronavirus regulations from the diocesan office.*



## Epiphany for today

This month we celebrate Epiphany, when we remember the Magi from the East who followed a star to find the baby Jesus: *'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?'* (Matthew 2:1).

At the start of a New Year, amid the uncertainty of the pandemic, are we asking the same question? The gifts they offered show us how we can find Him in the uncertainty of the coming year: *'they bowed down and worshipped Him...and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.'* (2:11).

The *gift of gold* reflects that the Magi saw in the baby a king, destined to rule over us all. In this coming year we need to remember that Jesus is on the throne, the seat of power and authority in the whole universe. Will we crown Him king of our lives and dedicate all that we are and do to Him?

The *gift of frankincense* reflects that the visitors saw not just an earthly king, but God in human flesh. Incense symbolises the prayers of God's people and so this gift reminds us that God is worthy of our worship and prayer. Will we offer our praise and prayer, as we seek God to guide us through the uncertainties of this time?

The *gift of myrrh* reflects that these astrologers saw beyond the baby's birth and life, to His death which would secure life for all. Jesus was offered myrrh on the cross and was a spice used in His tomb. As we face the sufferings of this New Year, we can be confident that Jesus knows and understands our experience. Are we ready to trust Him?

*'Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice! Heav'n sings Hallelujah: Hallelujah the earth replies.'* ('We Three Kings').

## Overcoming disappointment

*'We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.'* (Martin Luther King, Jr).

*During this current pandemic, one of the dominant emotions is disappointment. It comes out of our expectations of life, even as people of faith. The life story that we adopt for ourselves is that life should be*

*long and healthy; we can become anything we want, and we have perfect families, homes, holidays and retirement! No wonder we're disappointed when things don't work out like this, especially during the pandemic.*

*Jesus tells the story of a wealthy farmer, living the good life (Luke: 12:13-21), when God says: 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' It's a very modern story, as this farmer's expectations of the future took no account of death or God. Like death, there are unexpected moments that interrupt our life story, including illness, redundancy, divorce, or the pandemic.*

*If we pay more attention to how Covid upsets us, we can discern where we have set our hearts. What life story are we really living for? What are our expectations for work, family and friends, health, God or church?*

*At the end of His parable, Jesus offers this challenge: 'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.' (21). At the beginning of a New Year, are we ready to align our story more to God's story for us? Reflect on Jesus' parable, asking how God can be at the heart of our life story.*

*What words would we like to see written on our gravestone when we die, describing the way that we've lived our life? With God's help, those words can reflect our life today!*

### **\*Where do we go from here?**

Perhaps this was a question the Wise Men asked after seeing the infant Jesus. They had come from a distant land to Jerusalem. They had followed a star and expected to see a royal child. Now in Bethlehem, they saw things differently. No doubt, Mary and Joseph shared with these men their recent experiences and knew God was with them. Now the Magi had to have eyes of faith to recognise that this child was God in the flesh.

On 6<sup>th</sup> January many churches will celebrate Epiphany. On this day we remember the Eastern Men bringing their gifts to Jesus. The word

'epiphany' describes their 'revelation' or 'insight' that this was no ordinary baby. Who could they tell? Not King Herod. They had a dream warning them to return home a different way.

Their return to familiar surroundings was going to be different. They couldn't be silent about what they had experienced. Their lives were now changed. On returning home they faced new circumstances and challenges.

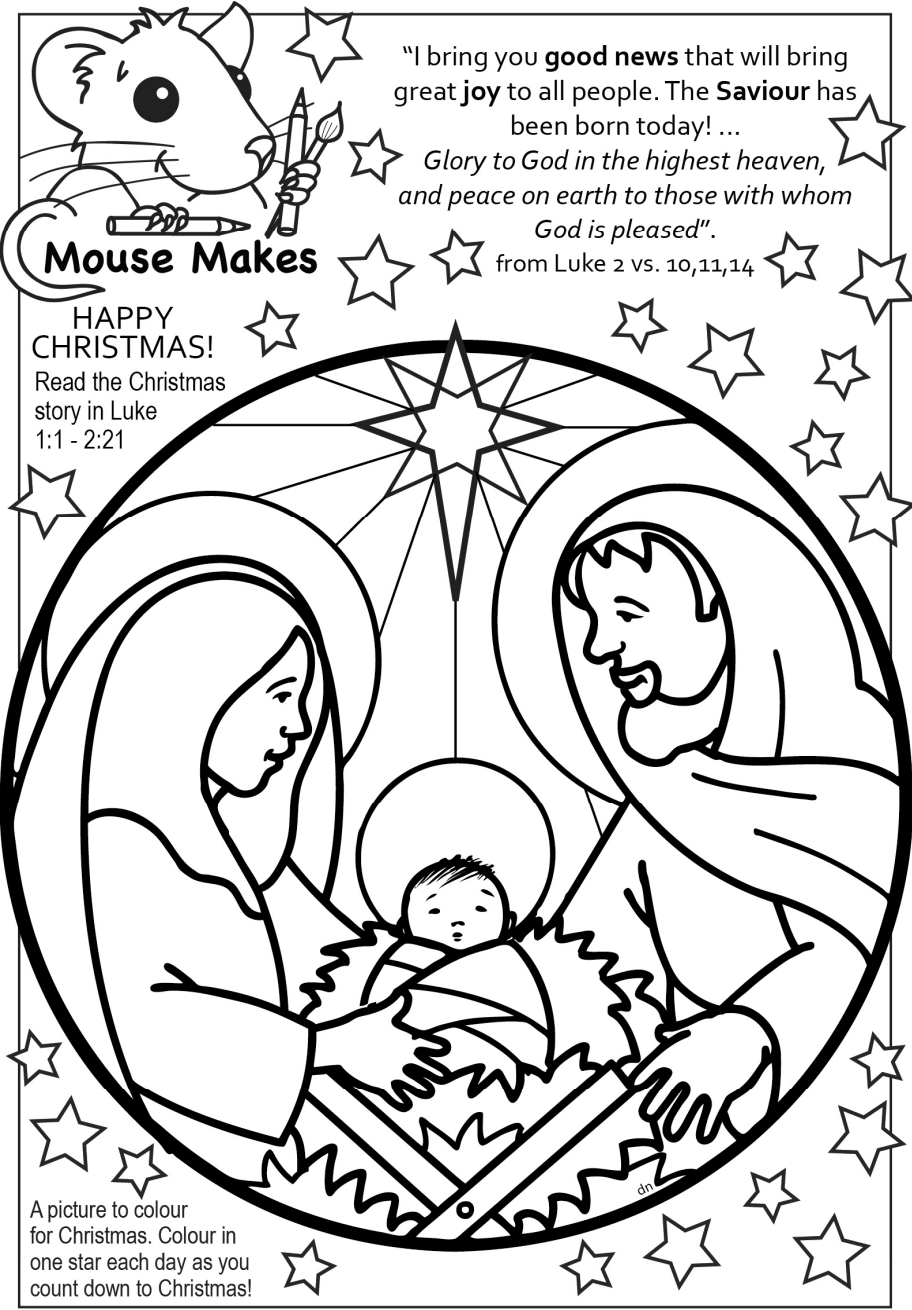
Doesn't this sound a bit familiar to us today? The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all of us in one way or another. Where do we go from here? We have celebrated our Lord's birth, but now we are returning to our previous activities. The festive break is over, and we are returning to changed, very difficult circumstances.

We go into a New Year that is so different from this time last year. While we might be downcast with all the upsets around us, there is one thing that has not changed.

It is almighty God! He is our rock. We can look to Him in this world of confusion and uncertainty. Perhaps, from now on, we shall be worshipping and serving Him in different ways. So, with the challenges that lie ahead, let's continually seek His guidance.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding....and He will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*





**Mouse Makes**

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**  
Read the Christmas story in Luke 1:1 - 2:21

"I bring you **good news** that will bring great **joy** to all people. The **Saviour** has been born today! ...  
*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased".*  
from Luke 2 vs. 10,11,14

A picture to colour for Christmas. Colour in one star each day as you count down to Christmas!

# Bible Bite

## A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Luke 2 verses 22-38

God promised the Jews that when times were bad, He would send a leader to save them. He told Simeon it would happen in his lifetime.

God told Simeon to go to the Temple.



He saw a couple with a baby.

Mary and Joseph had come to give their offerings for their first-born, Jesus, and for childbirth.



Simeon held Jesus and praised God.



I can now die in peace because You have kept Your promise.



I have seen the one You have sent to save Your people and all the world!



Mary and Joseph were amazed! Simeon blessed them, but said..



This child will show what people are really like inside and this will mean pain for you as well.



Anna the prophet was also in the Temple.

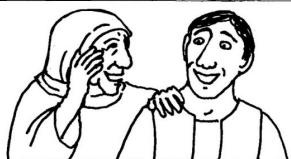


Her family was from the north of Israel and she was very old.

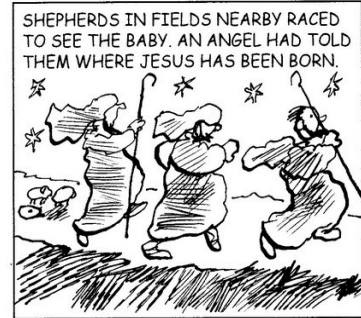
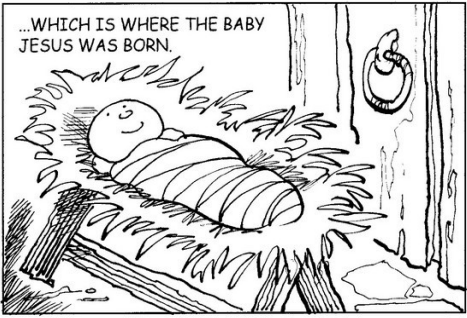
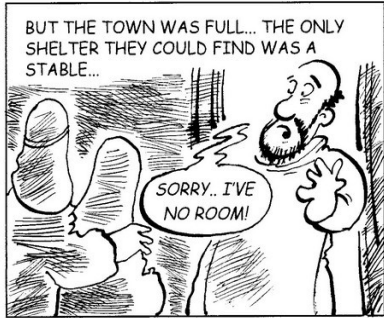
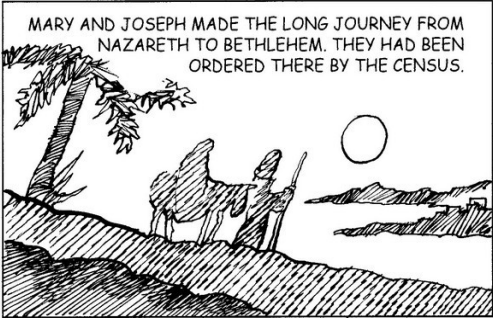
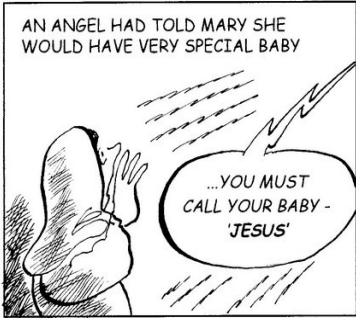
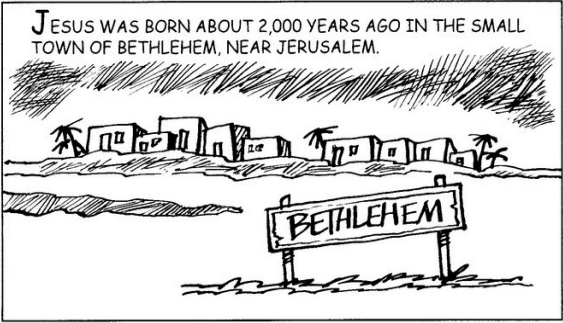


She spent every day praying in the Temple.

When she saw Jesus she praised God.



Anna spoke about Jesus to everyone who was waiting for God's Saviour.





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# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Priest in Charge (Day Off Monday)

The Revd Yvonne Greener: 767 Durham Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, NE9 6PL  
0191 491 1317 : greener.yvonne@gmail.com

## Curate (Day Off Thursday)

The Revd Alex Crawford : St Columba House, Peterborough Close,  
Gateshead NE8 1NL 07450 507 956 : revd.crawford@outlook.com

## Associate Minister (Day off Tuesday : Thursday)

The Revd Derek Brown: 29 Heathfield Road, Low Fell, Gateshead NE9 5HH  
0191 487 5922 : derekderekb@aol.com

## Authorised Pastoral Assistant

Sue Patrick: 07780 602 065

|                  |                |                                |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Churchwardens    | Tony Gunning   | 0191 487 4424                  |
|                  | Helen Jones    | 0191 420 4951                  |
| PCC Secretary    |                |                                |
| Treasurer        | Chris Garrett  | 0191 420 1894                  |
| Gift Aid Officer | Alison Gunning | 0191 487 4424                  |
| Organist         | Keith Downie   | 0191 477 5936<br>07761 333 905 |
| Verger,Sacristan | Sue Patrick    | 07780 602 065                  |
| Hall Bookings    | Ray Shirley    | 07703 412 819                  |

**PARISH OFFICE** - to arrange Banns, Baptism and Weddings call at  
the Church Hall any Sunday morning at 10.45am.  
No appointment required

**CHURCH HALL** - Applications to book the hall must be made  
on Sunday mornings at 10.30am in the Church Hall.

**WEB SITE : [www.sthelenslowfell.com](http://www.sthelenslowfell.com)**