

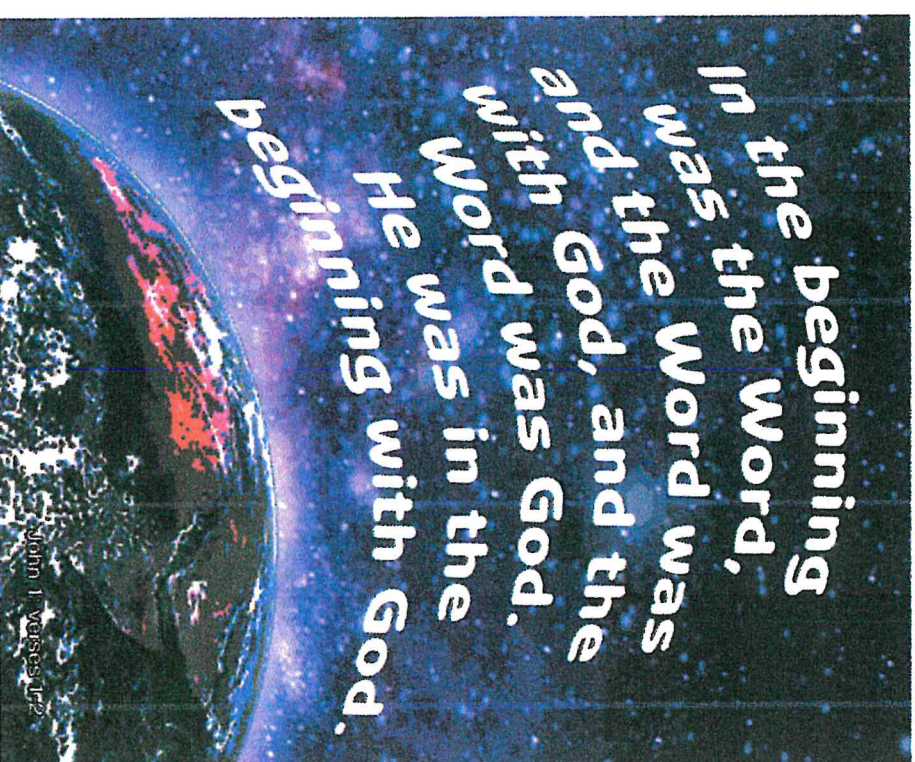
Useful Contact Numbers

Vicar	Revd. Rupert Higgins 20 Alton Road, Bournemouth. BH10 4AE	939799
Parish Secretary	Mandy Williams Parish Office 9am to 11.30am. e-mail stmarkschurch-talbotvillage@btinternet.com St Mark's website www.stmarkschurch-talbotvillage.org.uk	529349
Assistant Retired Priest	Revd Diana Newman	745136
S. Saviour's Lay Worship Leader	Mr. Jim Divall	512140
Churchwardens	Mrs Marion Marks	520840
Deputy Church Wardens	Mrs Janet Lee	710533
	Mr David Humphreys	527136
	Mr David Way	768410
	Mr John Gray	511745
	Mr David Kellard	382349
	Mr Trevor Adamson	511588
Verger	Mr Bob Tait	512409
Safeguarding Officer	Mr Kieran Marshall	570863
St Mark's Organist	Mr Paul Simkin	
Choir Master	Mrs Valerie Cox	746480
Mothers Union	Mrs Janet Moyse	527717
PCC Secretary	Mrs Ann Mace	
PCC Treasurer	Mrs Janet Lee	710533
Gift Aid Secretary	Mrs Janet Lee	710533
Planned Giving	Miss Alex Morris	07947842400
Youth & Children's Minister	Mrs Lynndsey Wilson	517648
Church Cleaning	Mrs Celia Hum	01202 027031
Church Flowers		
Electoral Roll	Mr Adrian James	07779613052
Flag Officer/Groundsman		
Intercession Readers		
Lost Property	Ms Angie Cornish	520052
First Friends Pre-School	Dani Haigh (Manager) St. Saviours	07826 040775
Magazine Editor	Revd Diana Newman	745136
Archivist	Mrs Carol Medlicott	01425672899
S. Mark's Sch. Head Teacher	Mr. Andrew Bright	512241
Uniformed Groups:	(see inside magazine)	
Visitors Group		
Bible Reading Fellowship	Mr Trevor Adamson	518737

St Mark's Church

Talbot Village ⊕

with St. Saviours, Scott Rd



Parish Magazine 60p
December 2021 January 2022

SERVICES AT ST MARK'S CHURCH

At the present time during the pandemic services at St. Mark's are temporarily changed

Sundays 9 am Holy Communion

10.30 am Family Service followed by shortened communion

6.30 pm Evening Service

Week Day Prayers in Church –

The church is open on a Thursday morning from 9.00am to 9.30am for prayer

SATURDAY PRAYERS IN CHURCH

Saturday prayers (the first Saturday of each month)

Saturday at 10am in church. All are welcome to share in this informal time of prayer for our church, community and other world issues that we feel we need to bring before God.

Parish Office:

Open weekdays Tues. 9 -12.30pm, Wed. 10 -12.30 pm Thu. 11-12.30 pm, Friday Closed. Tele: 01202 529349

When the Secretary is working from home: Telephone 01202 679841

Post: St Mark's Church, Wallisdown Road, Bournemouth. BH10 4HY

E-mail: stmarks_talbotvillage@btconnect.com

Website: www.churchofstmark-talbotvillage.org.uk

HALL BOOKINGS

Bookings for the new hall complex are taken in the Parish Office be-tween 9am and 12.30pm Monday to Friday.

REGISTERS

HOLY BAPTISMS

Carter Harvey Brooker

Cruz James Brooker

Imogen Hope Goodwin

Martin Hugo Burton

MARRIAGES

No Marriages took place

BURIALS AND CREMATIONS

We offer our sincere sympathy to friends and relatives of:

Doreen Nellie Emily Brewer

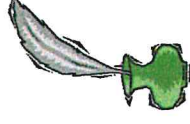
Laura Jayne Hydes

James Ernest Francis McIndoe

Jan Watts

Uniformed Groups:

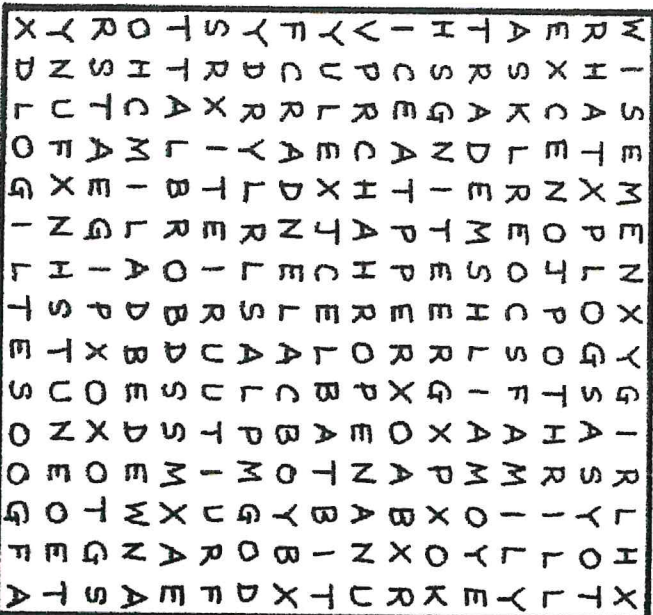
St Mark's Brownies	Mrs Eileen Ferbrache	579637
St Mark's Guide	Mrs Eileen Ferbrache	579637
St Mark's Beavers	Elizabeth Kimber	07507422197
St Mark's Cubs	Elizabeth Kimber	07507422197
St Mark's Scouts	Elizabeth Kimber	07507422197
St Saviour's Rainbows	Mrs Teresa Wray-Cook	731753
St. Saviour's Guides	Mrs Teresa Wray-Cook	731753



22 CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

All the words listed below have some connection with Christmas. Find them on the grid;
Every letter except X should be used at least once.

ASK	FUN	IVY	CUP
BED	TOP	BABY	GIFTS
BOY	EATS	POEM	ROBIN
GOD	GOLD	SACK	CANDLE
HAT	MAIL	CHEER	TURKEY
ICE	NUTS	FEAST	
GILT	TOYS	HOLLY	
GIRL	FRUIT	STORY	
LOGS	GOOSE	JOSEPH	
OPEN	TABLE	ORANGE	
TUNE	CALENDAR	WREATH	
YULE	GREETINGS	PANTOMIME	
TRADE			
FAMILY			
THRILL			
WISE MEN			



TEA	FUR	ACTS
CRIB	JOY	FOOD
JESUS	POP	MARY
LIGHT	BELL	ROOM
RED RIBBON	BULB	PARTY
SANTA CLAUS	HAIL	PRESENTS
	SNOW	
	STAR	
	TREE	

From the Editor As I am having an eye operation I have started this magazine a little sooner in case I have difficulty doing close up work, it also means I haven't been able to take some of the services I was down to do on the rota, but hopefully things will be back to normal very soon. I am hoping you will all make an effort to send in your articles to me as soon as possible to diananewman36@gmail.com

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

12th December _Christingle

19th December 10.30 am Crib Service

6.00 pm Candlelit Carols

24th December 11.30 pm Communion

25th December Christmas Day

9.00 am Said Holy Communion

10.30 am Family Communion

Just as a Vicar began his Christmas Eve service, the electricity in the church failed. The wardens found some candles and placed them around the sanctuary. Then the Vicar re-entered the pulpit, shuffled his notes, and muttered, "Now, where was I?"

A hopeful voice called out, "Right near the end!"

Clergy Letter

I love Christmas. I love the celebrations, decorations, carols and tradition. And of course presents. How could I forget presents? I love them too. Hopefully this year will be as enjoyable as ever and I am looking forward to it all very much.

We have many opportunities to celebrate Christmas at St Mark' and St Saviour' this year. We begin the build up with the Christingle Service on Sunday December 12th at 6pm. This is a lovely service of light for all the family and is not just for children.

On Sunday 19th December we have two big services. The Crib Service at 10.30am with a nativity and then the Candlelit Carol Service at 6pm. These are brilliant services to invite people to, especially anyone who doesn' normally come to church. Many people will be looking for Christmas Services to go to, especially after the last couple of years we have had.

None of us need any reminder of how fragile and uncertain our world is. We have all been living it.

At the first Christmas, Jesus was born into this fragile and deeply fractured world. The world of the Roman Empire in the first century AD was much the same as ours today. Although expressed in different ways and without our technology, flawed human beings living out destructive ambitions with little regard for other people. We have indeed conquered much in the last 2000 years but the one thing we haven' conquered is ourselves. Human nature has not changed.

Jesus was God living amongst us and he not only showed us what God is like but also came to die in order to pay for the world' and our sin – the effects of which we see all around us. That is what Christmas is about and, even in the midst of a troubled world which struggles to find peace and make sense of itself, that is worth celebrating – and even having a party for!

With my love Rupert

Eating in the 50s

1. Pasta was not eaten.
2. Curry was a surname.
3. A takeaway was a mathematical problem.
4. A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.
5. Crisps were plain; the only choice was whether to put the salt on or not.
6. Rice was only eaten as a milk pudding.
7. A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.
8. Brown bread was something only poor people ate.
9. Oil was for lubricating; fat was for cooking.
10. Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.
11. Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days and was regarded as being white gold. Cubed sugar was regarded as "posh".
12. Fish didn't have fingers.
13. Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.
14. None of us had ever heard of yoghurt.
15. Healthy food consisted of anything edible.
16. People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.
17. Indian restaurants were only found in India.
18. Cooking outside was called camping.
19. Seaweed was not a recognised food.
20. "Kebab" was not even a word, never mind a food.
21. Prunes were medicinal.
22. Surprisingly, muesli was readily available—it was called cattle feed.
23. Water came out of the tap. If someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it, they would have become a laughing stock!
24. And the things that we never, ever had on our table in the 50s and 60s: elbows or phones!

DBF Chairman, Nigel Salisbury writes:

"In 2019 a group under the leadership of Bishop's Council and Finance Committee member Rosemary Cook, and with support from other parish and Diocesan representatives, began a review of the Fairer Share system with the intention of addressing some of the perceived anomalies of the current system and looking at alternative approaches.



The output of their report was shared with Diocesan Synod in February 2020, but with the start of the pandemic shortly afterwards, it was felt the time wasn't right to implement any major changes to the system at that stage, and as you will be aware parishes have been asked to pay their Share for both 2021 and 2022 based on the current formula and their 2019 count numbers.

As we continue to address the financial consequences of lockdown, and Covid generally, at both parish and Diocesan level, and having published the budget and Share request for 2022, we are now also launching a consultation on Fairer Share so that decisions can be taken once the new Bishop is in place during 2022 for likely implementation in 2023."

The first stage of the consultation takes the form of a survey – an online questionnaire.

We are asking each PCC to find time to discuss this either in a regular meeting or by other means that works for you locally.

The survey will be sent soon to PCC Secretaries (with PCC Treasurers and Incumbents copied for information) and it asks the PCC to think about the core principles behind the three limbs of our current Fairer Share system and whether or not PCCs still support them.

The closing date for PCC submissions and feedback is Sunday 30th January 2022. After this, we will prepare an update for Diocesan Synod in February and take forward the next stages of consultation so that we are ready to implement any changes in time for Share requests for 2023.

St. Mark's Parish Share will increase by 5 percent in 2022



Youth Weekend Away 19th to 21st November



Blotting my copy book

Do you remember the start of term at school, when you were given new exercise books to write in? I loved the feel of those books that were still unworn and unspoilt. I would try to write my name and the subject on the front page with my very best handwriting. This wasn't easy, as we used to write with pen and ink and the nibs were very temperamental. It was easy to put too much ink on the nib, then when you started writing it would make a big blotch on the clean page. Another book spoilt on the first page! Needless to say, it got worse as the term progressed and the once pristine book became messier and more dog-eared.

I have a similar feeling every time we come to the start of a new year. January seems to be filled with promise of change and doing better. It's a lot like the clean slate of a new exercise book. Surely, we won't make the same mistakes as we did last year? Full of good intentions we start again, but guess what? It isn't long before we have made the same mistakes again and blotted our copy book once more.

Although 20/20 vision describes perfect eyesight, not many of us have it. And although the year 2022 will begin with the hope of doing better than we did in 2021 the reality is that before the month is out, we will have failed again. We are imperfect people and we make mistakes

Two things give me hope, however. First that God is able and willing to forgive us, so that our sins can be washed away, and we can be clean again. Second, that He is also able and willing to help us change, to give us the power we need to overcome our besetting sins. We cannot change ourselves, but God can. And no matter how often we fail, He is infinitely patient with us.

The CRUMBS Project Update November 2022

The challenges of 2020 / 2021 brought changes to CRUMBS and the team have continued to work hard to support disadvantaged adults in our community. As our founder Anne Gardner set out, CRUMBS provides vocational training and development opportunities to disadvantaged adults in need of a sense of purpose and opportunities to build their skills and aspirations. At CRUMBS, trainees learn to produce, present and serve a variety of food and bakery items and meet, socialise, and work with staff and peers. Trainees also benefit from opportunities to practice social and communication skills and boost their confidence and self-esteem.

CRUMBS now has 4 training and development programmes (Food Production & Service, Administration, Housekeeping and a Combined programme) which incorporate both practical training at our Hibberd Court training centre and online learning via e-Training units delivered through the CRUMBS online campus.

We continue to invest in digital and have big plans in this area. In addition to our new charity website and our suite of online learning units for trainees (through the CRUMBS online campus,) we are looking to upgrade our facilities at Hibberd Court in 2022 via a new server, stronger WIFI and converting a room into a dedicated IT suite for trainees with new laptops and equipment. We also have plans to develop new training units to help strengthen trainee's digital skills and inclusion.

CRUMBS would be delighted if St. Marks community members would come and visit us to find out more either through a Hibberd Court Lunch Club (planned for Tuesday 11th January 2022) or through a coffee morning. Please get in touch with us to let us know you would like to come either by calling Lee on 01202 519320 or emailing info@crumbs.org.uk

With your support we can help more people with a learning difficulty, mental health problem, stabilised addiction, or head injury to have opportunities to develop their skills and lead a more independent life.

(See photo page 13)

Lee Whalley

Christmas Prayer

Loving, Almighty God,

Thank you that You came into the darkness of this broken world on that first Christmas night, pouring in your Light, in the person of your Son, Jesus.

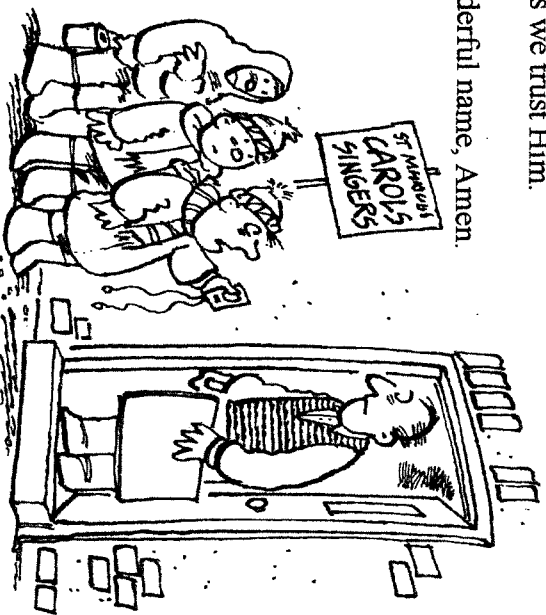
Lord, so much of our world seems dark, still. So many dreadful things we can't make sense of: the on-going pandemic, acts of violence and injustice against good people – innocent people, child poverty, employment problems, broken relationships ... so many difficulties. It's easy to feel overwhelmed.

Lord, help us to focus on you this Christmas. Open our eyes to see your bigger, eternal picture. Help us to hear afresh the Good News that nothing and no-one can ever extinguish your Light.

Jesus overcame the troubles of the world by His death and resurrection. Father may we re-connect with you, through Jesus, this Christmas and know the Love, the Joy and the Peace, which are your Christmas gifts to us, as we trust Him.

We pray in Jesus' wonderful name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



© www.parishpump.co.uk

*We don't sing carols no more...
you 'ave to listen to 'em off me iPod!*

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 2022.

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 2020?*

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 2022 unfolds.

What are you most looking forward to as you peer ahead of you this year?

17 January Anthony of Egypt - hermit who defied an emperor

If your Christmas and New Year break includes just too many people and even a bout of indigestion, then St Antony may be the saint for you. He was a hermit-monk with a reputation for making poorly people feel better.

Antony was born in Coma (Upper Egypt) in 251, and at 20 became an ascetic. He settled down in the complete solitude of a deserted fort in Pispir, where he spent the next 20 years busy fighting the whole range of usual hermit temptations, such as having queenly devils approach you for marriage, and other hazards like that.

In 306 Antony felt able to face the world again, and so he began visiting with some other hermits. One was Paul, and the story goes that the day they met, a raven provided lunch for them by dropping a loaf of bread nearby.

Antony was a godly man, and would pray for people. Stories went round that those he prayed for were healed, and so he became known as a miracle-worker. He was certainly brave: when in 311 the Roman Emperor Maximinus was persecuting the Christians, Antony went to Alexandria to encourage the church there to stand firm.

Years later he was stoutly defending the Christian faith in disputes with heretics.

Antony died in 356, but even hundreds of years later he was not forgotten. A medical band of people adopted his name, and thus The Order of Hospitalers of Saint Antony was founded (c.1100, in La Motte). It became a pilgrimage centre for those suffering from ergotism (called St Antony' Fire - a serious form of fungi poisoning). Antony was a tremendously popular saint throughout the Middle Ages. By then he was seen as the patriarch of monks, and a healer of both men and animals. Antony even gave us the word 'antony' a diminutive applied to the smallest pig in a litter, and to the smallest bell in a peal of bells.

The early church father, Athanasius, wrote The Life of Antony. This moving biography helped to convert the great Augustine.

GARDENING NOTES FOR DECEMBER AND JANUARY



Welcome to the quiet season of gardening

1. You can still plant spring bulbs provided the soil hasn't frozen hard
2. Prune perennials as low as you can and tidy and tidy
3. Mulch with compost and wood chips
4. Plan for next year especially for heat and and drought. Look into drip irrigation
5. Find out which plants prefer acid or alkaline soil or either

January

It is the beginning of the garden season so

1. Plant dry root roses
2. Begin pruning bush roses, apples and pears
3. Check dahlias and treat yourself to another amarillus
4. Keep warm and fit..... lots of walking and fresh veggie soup

Happy Christmas. Joanna.



PHOTO
CRUMBS
PROJECT

(Article
page 15)

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

I received as a present of a ticket for a Bird of Prey Experience at Liberty's Owl, Raptor and Reptile Centre, Crow Lane, Ringwood, Hants. What a fantastic day it was!

On arrival we had a good look around the various birds in the cages and then saw a demonstration of owls and raptors flying in the open.



After the demonstration we were given a talk on handling and looking after birds. I was amazed that all the birds are carefully weighed to ensure they are within the correct weight range. On the wall was a large blackboard with all the weight details. Also there were weighing scales with perches. A small loss of weight could be serious for the birds.

We went back to the demonstration field where we put on protective gloves and handled a number of owls and raptors. The birds would fly to me and feed from my hand – where this was not suitable the food was put on a post for the bird to take. Quite often I was brushed by their huge wings.

This was a really wonderful day out and thank you to everyone at Liberty's for all the work they put into it. **OEN**

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Salisbury Cathedral

Join a party of pilgrims to the Biblical lands of Israel and Palestine between 19 and 28 April 2022.

Led by the Dean, Nick Papadopoulos, who said

"We will stay in Galilee, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem, visiting many of the holy sites associated with the ministry of Jesus, and hearing at first-hand stories of the conflict that continues to grip the land of his birth."

The full itinerary and details of costs are set out online at [A Pilgrimage for Salisbury Cathedral 2022 – Lightline Pilgrimages](#); a

copy of the pilgrimage brochure is available from the Dean's PA, Cathryn Wright, during office hours (01722

555110; PAtotheDean@salcath.co.uk).

All are very welcome.

Parish News



It's now 6 months since we started the **Dementia Group** and it's growing rapidly. It helps many loved ones who are Carers, and those struggling with dementia. Everyone is welcome to join us. Our last meeting of the year will be in the Lounge on Tuesday 16th November and the group is also invited to join us at the Christmas Lunch on Monday 13th of December in St Mark's Church Hall. In 2022 we hope to restart in January on Tuesday 20th at 2pm. Come and join us every 3rd Tuesday of the month. For more information phone Marion 01202520840

Christmas Lunch

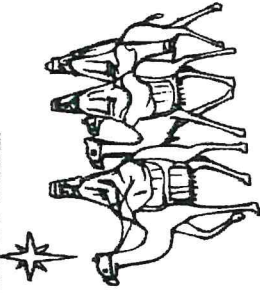
It's with great pleasure that with the wonderful help of Greg Singleton and his team, the Rotary Club, we are able to go ahead with the Christmas Lunch. I know a lot of you have really missed these monthly Lunches.

We are hopeful to continue the lunches in 2022 on a monthly basis. A list will be at the back of Church but you must book and pay either Marion or Janet, please spread the news around the Community.

Christmas Carols

Songs have always been sung at Christmas time, but at first the words were usually in Latin, which only the priests understood. St. Francis in Italy was said to be the first person to bring carols to the people in a language they could understand. The beginnings of the actual word carol are not known, but when the word was first used it meant a 'dance in a ring'. A group of people formed a ring and while they danced around they sang songs. Usually these songs were sung on the shortest day of the year, December 21st. When Christianity spread, the carols became special songs to celebrate the birth of Jesus. After that, it was the custom for December 21st to begin the carol season. At any time between then and 9 am on Christmas morning carols could be sung.

(Anne Farncombe)



6th Jan: 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, Origen, 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.

CHURCH FAMILY WEEK - END AWAY

A glorious family weekend of fun, friendship, fellowship and adventure at Chichester Harbour



News from St Saviours

St Saviours are still holding their Morning Services at 10-00am every Sunday, if you would like to join us for a change one Sunday. You can be sure of a warm welcome.

St Saviours came into the 20th century last week. We now have a sound system. Thank you for Trevor and Pete Rowe, for setting it up.

St Saviours is a different part of St Marks. The worship is like being in a village Church. We have a wonderful organist called Graham Roberts. Who never lets us down, and is always up to the challenge of a new Hymn.

More news next month.

Grandfathers

I was talking to my young Sunday School class, and a four-year-old boy suddenly asked me: "Miss, do you have a grandfather?" I replied, "I used to have two, but they both went to Heaven to be with Jesus."

He thought, shook his head sadly, and said, "One of my grandfathers hasn't gone to Heaven."

(Long pause while I tried to decide how to proceed.)
"He's gone to Bexhill-on-Sea."

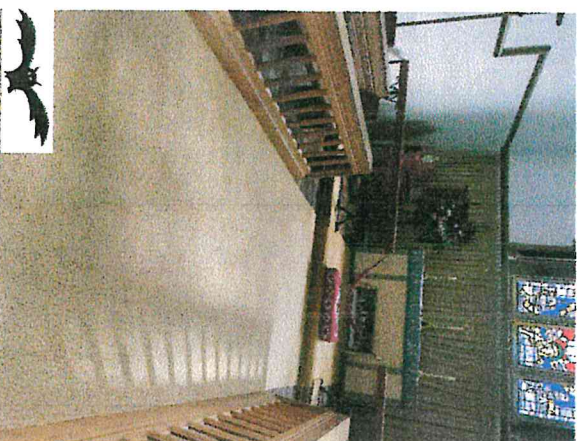


What a sparkling difference it made in church after some of our church

members and a cleaning team (arranged and paid for by the Bat Society) set to work. Please be sure to wipe your feet when you come to church now! A big thank you to all concerned.

MEN'S BREAKFAST – Saturday

11th December at 9am in the church hall. A time for the men in church to come together, enjoying a breakfast bap; Please sign the sheet at the back of church. Call Jonathan Williams on 7890335836 for further Information.



The Benefits of Religion

Everything, as St Paul notes, works together for good, for those who love God; but sometimes I regret that I wasn't myself born into a Christian family. Both my parents and grandparents were atheists; my father quite militantly so. Reluctantly - as with CS Lewis and many others - I became persuaded that Christianity was true when I was in my mid-Twenties, and I have been following the path - the Way - of Christ ever since then.

And, I think, the good thing about being not born into a Christian family, and having to find the Lord oneself (or more exactly, be found by the Lord) is that one becomes hyper-aware of how pointless, useless and hopeless atheism is. Indeed, quite recently I had to attend a Humanist wedding service (I felt obliged because it was a close friend's son's wedding). I was shocked at how completely unoriginal it was: it was exactly like a Christian service EXCEPT the missing bit that failed to mention God! Was that the best they could do?

But more important than this, not many Christians seem to know that in so many ways - outside of Biblical promises and blessings - the religious path generally has so many benefits over and above the obvious 'supernatural' or life after death components of belief. Here are three for your delectation and delight.

Researcher, Dr. Stephen Joseph. From The University of Warwick reported: "Religious people seem to have a greater purpose in life, which is why they are happier. Looking at the research evidence, it seems that those who celebrate the Christian meaning of Christmas are on the whole likely to be happier." Surely, good news?

Continued on page 8

Further, and very dear to my heart: relative to Christianity, which has a large collection of art, music and poetry associated it, atheism has a very small collection of art, music and poetry associated with it. Even in the ancient and pagan worlds of Greece and Rome, the body of overtly atheistic material is small compared with the material that celebrates, invokes or simply defers to the gods. In essence, atheism is completely uninspiring! In a slightly more frivolous vein, as the British columnist Giles Coren put it: "Is there anything more boring in the world than an atheist?"

Finally, and really importantly, examining various indicators of societal health, suicide specifically, The American Journal of Psychiatry reported in 2004 that "Religiously unaffiliated subjects had significantly more lifetime suicide attempts and more first-degree relatives who committed suicide than subjects who endorsed a religious affiliation." And this pattern seems repeated at national level. The 2003 World Health Organization's report on international male suicides rates (which compared 100 countries), of the top ten nations with the highest male suicide rates, all but one (Sri Lanka) are strongly irreligious nations with high levels of atheism. It is interesting to note, however, that of the top remaining nine nations leading the world in male suicide rates, all are former Soviet/Communist nations, such as Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia. Of the bottom ten nations with the lowest male suicide rates, all are highly religious nations with statistically insignificant levels of organic atheism."

Our happiness, our creativity and our lives are affected by what we believe - indeed, to have any mainstream religious belief is better for us than being an atheist. And, of course, being a Christian - with all the bold promises of our Lord - is best of all.

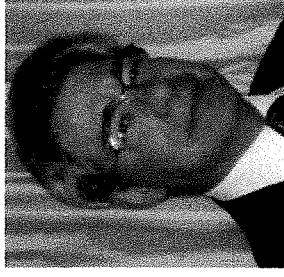
James Sale

Three St Aldhelm Crosses were awarded during Evensong in the Cathedral on Sunday 31st October at 4.30pm.

The St Aldhelm Cross is an engraved silver lapel cross given to lay people (non-ordained) who are nominated for outstanding contributions to Diocesan life. The annual award was created in 2005.

This year's recipients are Rosemary Cook, Graham Exon and Nigel Salisbury.

Graham Exon is on St. Mark's Electoral Roll and before the pandemic he regularly worshipped at our 10.30 am service with his wife Doreen. We hope we shall see them again soon, but send our congratulations to him for his award. In addition to his work as a banker, Graham has spent a lifetime in public service, principally in the field of education.



He is Chair of the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust, which oversees the work of 22 schools, and is the founding Chair of the Bournemouth Septenary Trust. He has also served as Chair of Governors of his local church school and a large independent girls' school. As a designated National Leader of Governance, Graham provided Department for Education targeted support to schools, academies and trusts over a wide area including Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire. Graham has worked with dioceses, local authorities, and the Regional Schools Commissioner to drive school improvement through the implementation of governance improvement.

He chairs the national Steering Group of the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service and is a past Chair of the Bournemouth Churches Housing Association. He is a keen church musician and music director. Graham says: "It is a great honour for me to be awarded the St Aldhelm Cross. I am proud to have been associated with so many schools, academies and trusts through a rapidly changing educational scene. It has been a privilege to work with so many in the development of the Christian ethos within schools."

(Diocese of Salisbury Grape Vine)