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**THE LINK**

*Your Parish Magazine*

*December*

*2020*

**ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EDITION**



**PARISH OF PENARTH AND LLANDOUGH**  
**PLWYF PENARTHYG A LLANDOUCHAU**

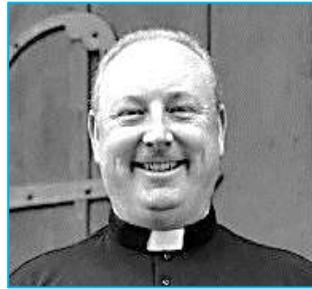
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## FATHER MARK WRITES ...



### **“Christmas is Coming, is Coming Again...”**

The words of the carol ring out, “Christmas is Coming, is Coming Again...” and we find comfort in the familiar tune and sentiment.

In decades past, everyone watched the same programmes on TV as one another, and talked about them the next day. “Did you like that bit in the Morecambe & Wise Christmas special when Eric said...?”. Perhaps you have a favourite film that you all used to sit down and watch on the TV? When I was growing up, my mother liked watching *The Sound of Music*. Each year we all held our breath when the family were being searched for by the Germans, in the dark convent - although we should have known by then that they would be OK, and escape over the hills to freedom! The whole family gathered around after *The Queen* to watch a James Bond film - although there was the traditional family disagreement over whether Sean Connery or Roger Moore was the best Bond. (There weren’t any other options in those days!). There were also traditional drinks (that we only had once a year!), the traditional buffet that my mother created (that was exactly the same each and every year), and the traditional sounds of shrapnel pinging across the room when someone was too enthusiastic with our industrial-strength nutcracker!

But this Christmas will be different for many people. We may not be able to have *Lessons & Carols*, or a Crib Service, with so many children inside the church it seemed to be bursting at the seams. But we can do other things instead. Perhaps this year we’ll tell the Nativity Story over the internet. Maybe it will be the start of a new tradition for some families in Penarth?

In fact, every Christmas is subtly different from every other one. Take for example the Christmas of 2016. At the Christmas Fayre in the Paget Rooms, I was called over to escort a gentleman from the building who was verbally abusing Father Christmas! You couldn’t really make it up! And for me, the Christmas of 1981 was different because we opened presents on Christmas morning that had been bought by our grandmother in advance, even though she knew she was not going to live long enough to see our faces that morning. The truth is, that although there is usually a common feel, a common framework, every Christmas is different from every single one that went before it. So perhaps when many complain that this Christmas is not as good as others, perhaps we should remember that in truth, there are enormous differences between Christmases every single year. It’s just

that this one will be simultaneously different for so many people in the country at the same time. But it needn't be worse –just different. Perhaps the spirit of the Blitz all British people have inherited will be re-kindled in their DNA, and we will not just get through it, but make it a Christmas to remember.

The baby in the stable at Bethlehem is a shining example to us of many things, at Christmas and beyond. But that baby grew up, and became an even better example. It changed from a child who challenged no-one, to someone who challenged an empire, a civilisation, a world, for all time. Our idealised conception of how things should be *are* sometimes challenged, right out of the blue – and we are called to adapt to that change.

God bless you all.

*Fr Mark Jones*

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## EDITORIAL



Father Mark's opening article explores the differences and similarities between Christmases past and present through his own memories of the season, incorporating his recollections of projectile nut-splinters, the predictabilities of the family Christmas that many will recall, and a shocking attack on Father Christmas himself in the Paget Rooms. Father Mark's piece ends with the exhortation to us to think positively about the unusual Christmas that we may have this year.

The magazine explores the experience of Christmas through readers' articles: a piece by Jan Cullen about a brave young woman's charitable work reminds us of the meaning of Christmas; Jennifer Davies explores remembered parish Christmas events, along with contrasting summer outings; Judith Martin-Jones takes us to the present with her account of the making of a special Christmas present. We also have an article that tries to work out when we first became worried by the commercialisation of Christmas using evidence from past editions of the *Church Times*, and this month's poem is one that you may want to read as 2021 dawns.

New to the December magazine this year is a special Christmas Quiz. The answers will be printed in January's edition of the *Link*. Please don't spend a whole month staring interrogatively at the questions, chewing your pencil, and looking blankly at nothing in particular out of the nearest window. Referring to the Bible is, of course, allowed. Good luck. We hope you enjoy doing it.

Our cover is a fresco by Giotto in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua. He painted it in about 1305. Mary looks sadly at the child as if foreknowing his earthly future; she places the baby in the manger tenderly. Giotto seems to be viewing the nativity in terms of both its spiritual meaning and also as an intense human drama.

Happy Christmas and happy new year to all the magazine's readers from Tom and me!

*Jan Knight*

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## **ADMIN CORNER**



This time of year, I would normally be really busy preparing things for the many services and events in December. This would include getting about 800 Christmas service cards ready, mainly for delivery by the Scouts to Llandough, but Scout Post is cancelled this year.

At the time of writing, Christmas services haven't yet been finalised – some will need to be ticketed and some can't happen, at least not in their usual way. Music and singing is a big part of our Christmas celebrations, but congregational singing is still not permitted so normal carol services can't take place. There may be other ways to do them, but even without them I'm sure we can still celebrate Christmas in a joyful way.

After the 'firebreak' lockdown, the hall has opened again, so things are quite busy. I have also worked on producing a calendar for Parish fundraising which I hope will do well. (*See separate article on page 20.*)

Work is ongoing for the merger with All Saints next year. We will now be Penarth Ministry Area instead of a Rectorial Benefice (basically just a name change). Fr Mark and members of both PCCs are already working on how all this will happen, but there's a lot to get through in a relatively short time. Happily the advert for All Saints' Vicar has now gone out, so hopefully someone could be in place by next spring.

*Rachel Elder*

## A Tribute to John William Bowers (1932-2020)



The late John Bowers, was one of the kindest, most helpful and willing gentleman, you could wish to meet. He was the proverbial "Cheeky Chappie", always able to make people smile and always with a kind word to give.

John was very much a behind-the-scenes volunteer. My own experiences of John come from his involvement in the parish catering and from the fundraising for *The Children's Society*. When we had a catering event John was always the goffer - carrying, lifting, packing away for us as a catering team, quietly loading up my car. John acted as doorman with Dennis at the lunches and as barman with Dennis and the late Terry selling the wine. He could sell snow to the Eskimos.

My main memory involving John is the Christmas Tree Festival weekend, John loved being in charge of the Cakes and Preserves, all laid out in military order, and heaven help anyone who altered the order. We, as a committee for *The Children's Society*, are indebted to John for all the wonderful help he gave to us behind the scenes: doorman at the Paget Rooms, active in the Open Gardens weekend as plantsman, organising, tidying, and putting up banners. Such great fun always. He loved people.

Holy Nativity was one of John's great loves. He worked tirelessly there over many years until ill health got the better of him. I hope from this small tribute, you will see John as one of life's most generous and kindest of human beings.

Thank you, John, for all you did and all you were to everyone. God Bless, and it was a privilege to have had you as a friend.

*Ann Lush on behalf of the Parish and The Children's Society*

## FEATURES

### Christmas Jollity and Children's Outings in the Parish Past

*Jennifer Davies remembers children's Christmas pantomimes, summer outings (and inexplicable chicken imitations) from the parish's past.*



I well remember the Parish Youth Club pantomime, one of at least three, which was produced in the old Church Hall, known as the Institute. This was a cavernous building which had a large stage and rooms underneath, suitable as dressing rooms. I only “starred” in one pantomime as a member of the chorus. It was in the 1950s and I think it was *Cinderella*. As I recollect it was produced by Alan Miller, who also starred in it. Joan Miller was the wardrobe mistress. Of the cast, several are still members of the congregation including Tricia Brinkworth and Pauline Norris. It played to packed houses for, I think, two nights. It was a long time before church pantomimes were revived in church under the energetic leadership of Joy Goodfellow, but these were all-age events, not just Youth Club. The photograph to the left is of the church pantomime, *Aladdin*, staged in the

late 1950s.

Moving on a decade to the 1960s, I remember as a Sunday school teacher helping at the Sunday School treat in about 1964. These were big occasions, continuing from the tradition of previous decades. It might have been the decade of the “Swinging Sixties” but these were a continuation of Victorian times as described in books like “Anna of the Five Towns” by Arnold Bennett. The event was led by the then curate, the late Ian Burbery.

“Health and safety” was an unknown concept then. The children had to be taken to Cogan Station for the Barry Island train, so were transported in the open back of Mr Perry’s truck, which he used in his work as a builder. Mr Perry was the father of Anne Jones. There were no seats, let alone seat belts! I do not remember anyone “counting them in or counting them out” on the truck or the train. The beach was packed and I am still not sure how we kept an eye on them. Then we went back to the hall for games, and tea supplied by church stalwarts such as Mrs Toye, mother of Brian Toye. Betty Wilson, as another teacher, will remember this occasion.

Fast forward now to the 1980s and 1990s when I was once again in Penarth. My children and grandchildren were in Sunday School, now held in the priest’s vestry

and the North porch. In the time of Canon Hilary Collins, there were annual Nativity plays with the Sunday School and junior choir members. Much work was put in by Sue Smith and Sara Pugh and later by Eirian Jones. On one memorable occasion Gloria Gill's grandchildren were dressed as chickens (I do not know why!) and lost all their feathers during the performance. Also at Christmas we ran traditional parties in the Church Hall and took trips to the pantomime at the Sherman Theatre – another adventure being when we caught the wrong train from Penarth. The summer activity was usually a BBQ at the Kymin with games. The tug of war was always a favourite.

At the moment, in the current Covid-19 situation, Joy Marsden is valiantly keeping the Sunday School going with the help of her own children and Albert and Ernest, children of Elin. Let us hope that this continues to grow, possibly helped by our own two new grandchildren, once the current pandemic is over.

It would be lovely to hear from other members of the congregation about their memories of past events as I am very conscious that there are many gaps in my recollections.

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## St Dochdwy's Store Cupboard of Human Histories

*Jan Cullen discovers and shares a memory of a brave young woman's charitable mission to a faraway land.*



Out of the old cupboard I'm exploring in St Dochdwy's appeared a little pale blue, linen-covered note book written, I discovered, by Olive Davies (nee Corbett) of Croft Mawr. The book tells the story of Olive's sister, Beatrice Elizabeth, who served at the Medical Mission Hospital at Malacca Straits settlements. The sisters were part of the Corbett family who lived at Cogan Pill (the Baron's Court) and I believe that Beatrice lived with her brother Andrew at Agivy on Cogan Pill Lane when not overseas.

Olive says that "Miss B E Corbett sailed for Singapore on Sept 12 1924 and worked at the hospital there for some time then she went to Malacca and has been working in this female hospital ever since.....". Also, we are told that the hospital had an English lady doctor, English sisters, of which Beatrice was one, and six Asiatic nurses, usually four Chinese and two Malian, who all spoke both English and Malay.

I think Olive's book was written as a basis for a presentation to encourage people to donate to the worthy cause. It offers insights into the day to day life in Malacca.

“The nurses get up with the sun at 6am and one of the sisters has to see that all their work, washing the patients, making the wards tidy is properly done and finished by 7.30. Miss Corbett generally does this. Then at 7.30 they have prayers in the small hospital chapel. After this the doctor and sisters go around and the various treatments are administered. The outpatients begin to arrive at 8.45. When they have been attended to the outside work begins. The outside work involves administering to people at a dispensary in the town between 10 and 12 before returning to see some more outpatients and another round of the wards before lunch.

“Lunch is mostly at 1.30 or 2. As it is so very hot in Malacca being nearly on the equator they try to rest in the afternoon, but generally they have jobs to do in the hospital, writing business letters and various odd jobs. At 6 is another surgery hour. About 6 the children and any patients who are well enough are taken down to the sea coast and sit and play until the sun sets and the mosquitoes get too big!”

We learn that the hospital is also a home for blind children: “such a number of poor little babies become blind through ignorance and neglect and these are cared for and taught. Very often a mother comes to the hospital and gives them her baby as it is blind. “



The day ended with prayers at 8.30 and another round of the wards. But work didn't always end there as “if there is an emergency, a doctor, sister and nurse often have to drive into the night which leaves the hospital short staffed. Sometimes if it is a midwifery case they may be hours away and then perhaps on getting back cases are waiting for them, so often they get little rest for many nights and cannot well make it up in the day time. They have lately increased the midwifery work they do and have the means of saving many a woman's and baby's life”.

Having captured her audience with these details of a working life in a far off place, Olive then reminds them that the hospital costs £1,600 a year to run (equivalent to £75,000 today), that a bed costs £14 and a cot £12 and that support is greatly needed. Olive implores parishes, Mothers' Unions and Sunday Schools to help financially or by making children's coats and trousers “in colour and to pattern”, babies sheets from old cotton curtains and larger sheets in patchwork “which cost nothing but the time for work”. Bandages, she says, can be made of unbleached

calico (6yds or 4yds long). Olive also asks for donations of lint, gauze, soaps (*Lifebuoy* or plain white) and baby blankets knitted on large wooden needles and in stripes. She tells us that Beatrice herself had arranged a flag day which raised £34 and a Malay opera promised them part of their proceeds but the cheque was only £2 10s 8d.

Beatrice wrote a letter of thanks to the parish on March 27 1930 for publication in the parish magazine and an acknowledgement and thanks for monetary donations (£5 from the parish and £3 from St Dochdwy's Sunday school as well as several individual donations from villagers) and gifts of bedding, clothes and bandages.

The little book has some other lovely photographs and postcards; one shows Olive and Beatrice in Malacca together so when Olive spoke it would have been from personal knowledge and from her heart.

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## A Tale of Two Quilts: Every Stitch a Prayer

*Judith Martin-Jones awakens a dormant personal interest in quilting and crafts her way resolutely towards a double Christmas gift.*



This story began around 45 years ago – or maybe more. Dreaming about setting up home – we married in 1976 – I had the idea of making a patchwork quilt for our bed.

The idea was sparked by articles in *Good Housekeeping* magazine which proclaimed that patchwork was back in fashion and quite the thing to do. Indeed I did do some of it – including a long skirt of patches of Laura Ashley corduroy; the result of that, once lined, was so heavy I almost needed assistance to put it on! I made a few other small items and began the task of cutting 3 inch squares of cotton for ‘the quilt’.

This was done in what is called the English style – that is, using stiff paper templates to which the fabric is tacked. Pages from glossy magazines were just right.



The colour scheme was also on trend in the 70s – reds, oranges and pinks together with a touch of black for drama. The fabrics were scraps from the many dresses Mum made for me and for herself, supplemented with remnants from David Morgan’s which caught my eye. I began the huge task of stitching these together with tiny stitches - my eye sight was obviously a lot better than it is now.

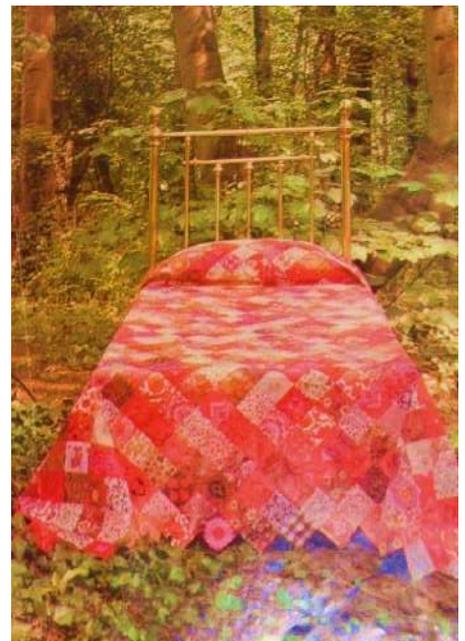
Suffice it to say a few other things interposed – home, family , work etc. .... and the pieces lay tidily wrapped in the trunk of unfinished projects.

Scroll on to 2020 when the Covid-19 lockdown prompted a sudden flurry of domestic activity. When baking banana bread and tidying cupboards had lost their stimulus, how about some quilt making? It occurred to me that the real recipients of this enterprise should be our twin granddaughters (now 22 months old) and that with some effort I might manage to complete the two quilts by Christmas. This has proved to be a not inconsiderable task as I am not a practised needlewoman and I had much to learn.

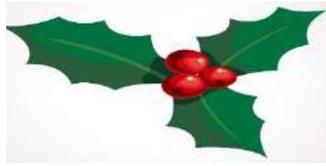
Some of our readers I know are very accomplished in this area and my results will not stand up to close scrutiny. But the process has been joyful and has brought back so many memories. My work station includes Mum’s inlaid sewing box with lots of the original contents and Dad’s Anglepoise lamp. Every click of her scissors reminded me of the many hours Mum spent lovingly creating clothes and furnishings for us. The paper patches when removed tell stories of their time: a Christmas pudding from Selfridges for 65p, or a bottle of vintage Burgundy for £1.70 anyone?

Several people helped me and I thank them for their generosity. My friend Magda gave me her (unused) sewing machine; Carol of ‘Sew Lovely’ delivered the various requisites; Marlene gave invaluable guidance on the ‘proper’ way to create quilts and we had lots of chats over tea and cake – at the appropriate social distance of course! Finally, and most importantly, my late Mum for whom sewing for us was a great joy and satisfaction.

The resulting pair of non-identical quilts have indeed incorporated very many memories and prayers – although at times I thought ‘Dear Lord why ever did I start this?’ I look forward to presenting them to Alice and Esmé and hope they have enjoyment from them.



## The 2020 Christmas Quiz



- 1 Which gospels begin with a genealogy of Jesus?
- 2 At what point in the story does Mark begin his narrative?
- 3 Which gospels mention that Jesus will have a precursor who will be 'the voice of one crying out in the wilderness'?
- 4 Which prophet had used these words that the gospel writers quote?
- 5 How many generations are there in the genealogy between Abraham and the Messiah?
- 6 Which gospel records the story of the visit of the Wise Men?
- 7 Which gospels do not include the story of the shepherds visit to the new born Jesus?
- 8 What alerted the Wise Men to the birth of Jesus?
- 9 Which Roman emperor sent out the decree that 'all the world should be registered'?
- 10 Where did the emperor say people had to go to register themselves?
- 11 Who was the governor of Syria at the time?
- 12 Why did the Wise Men not return to Herod after visiting the Holy Family?
- 13 What reason did Herod give to the Wise Men for his desire to know where Jesus had been born?
- 14 Which prophet had said that 'Out of Egypt I have called my son'?
- 15 What was the name of John the Baptist's father?
- 16 What punishment did he receive from the Angel Gabriel for not immediately believing what Gabriel had told him?

- 17 What physical sensation did John the Baptist's mother experience when Mary greeted her at the start of her visit to her?
- 18 How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth?
- 19 When Jesus was presented at the temple, two temple-goers showed particular faith and prescience about the meaning of the child Jesus. Can you name both of them?
- 20 After the presentation in the temple, Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth and we are told that Jesus 'grew and became strong, filled with \_\_\_\_\_'. What is the missing word?



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## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### The Church Times (*Friday December 18<sup>th</sup> 1970*)



### *When did we start worrying about the commercialisation of Christmas?*

If you look back through some old, pre-Christmas editions of the *Church Times*, you find that the worry about the commercialisation of Christmas is something that starts and increases during our life time. Indeed, Christmas is not a major topic for editorial comment at all in historical editions of the paper. The references to Christmas in the December 1870 editions, for example, are few and far between and appear mainly in adverts for religious goods (Christmas decorations such as 'painted texts', and 'painted banners') or in appeals asking for funds to provide for the poor at Christmas.

The references to Christmas are still mainly in the adverts in the December 1920 editions. Some are aimed at very niche markets indeed: 'Christmas presents for Anglo-Catholics' (3<sup>rd</sup> December 1920), for example, or 'Best Christmas Gifts for Choir Boys' - no mention of stink-bombs or catapults - in the following week's paper. In editorial parts of the paper, the ideals of Christmas appear sometimes as a point of reference against which to measure the moral climate of the world but even comparative references like this are not frequent.

The main idea in the December 1970 editorial below is the muffling of true Christmas by the busy hubbub of noisy, hedonistic pleasures.

Is it worse now than it was fifty years ago? Or better? Or different?

*There is still one week to go, and the last thing which any Christian publication should seek to do is to encourage its readers to play an even bigger part than the Church already does nowadays in the undue anticipation of Christmas. Yet there may be no harm, but some help, in suggesting, in good time, one or two of the ways in which Christ's people should be preparing to celebrate the anniversary of his birth when that happy moment comes.*

*Perhaps the most important thing is simply that some preparation should be made. The secular side of a modern Christmas gets more than its fair share of intensive preparations. To an extent unknown in earlier Christian times, Christmastide nowadays claims a generous devotion of time and energy, by way of buying presents and sending cards and planning feasts, from all who would keep up with their neighbours in midwinter jollity. But the great mystery of man's redemption through the incarnation of the Eternal Word demands other attention than the merely secular. It needs, above all, time for quiet recollection of what Christmas is really all about.*

*Admittedly it will not be easy, during these next few days, to make time for any quiet, concentrated reflection on the real meaning of the coming festival. But that is no reason for not trying. It does matter very much that even the busiest Christian should make the effort, however hard, of pausing — even if it be only for the few fleeting moments possible for the hard-pressed mother of small children or the preoccupied wage-earner of a large family — simply to consider again the marvellous love of God in sending his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live eternally through him.*

*Here lies the only ultimate secret, for mortal men and women, of an immortal comfort and joy. The best of all ways of preparing for Christmas is the quiet, calm recollection of these things. So one may be sure that, when Christmas comes, it will prove to be not merely the observance of common custom but the thrilling renewal of uncommon hope. On the midwinter festival of December twenty-fifth the world may celebrate merely the turn of the year from natural darkness to the promise of renewed natural light. The Christian does more than that. He makes ready, in this coming week, to celebrate on Christmas morning his own translation, by the mercy of Christ, out of mortal darkness into the marvellous supernatural light which is God's alone.*

*With such truths in mind, Christian men and women will be taking care to do all in their power to see that they keep next Friday in the right way. And that will mean giving an absolute priority to worship rather than to work or wassail — though work must be done and there is no harm in feasting. But the Church's worship comes first, and nothing must be allowed to stand for one moment in its way.*

*And with the true worship of the Eternal Love, made flesh in Jesus, must come the determination to show that love to a loveless world in every way possible. One thing for which Christians will assuredly wish to prepare at this time is the sharing of such good things as they may have at Christmastide with others who are lonely or deprived or lost in the wilderness of this world. In such sharing, as also in grasping every opportunity of distinctive witness to saving Christian truth, Christian people will celebrate Christmas, when it comes, as Christ himself would have them do for his sake.*

## FAITH IN THE NEWS

### Vatican hires cyber security to protect its library



THE Vatican Apostolic Library, which holds 80,000 documents, including the oldest surviving copy of the Bible and drawings and writings by Michelangelo and Galileo, has entered into a partnership with a cyber-security firm to defend its digitisation project against criminals, *The Observer* reports. The library's chief information officer, Manlio Miceli, said that it had faced an average of 100 threats a month since it started digitising its 41-million-page collection of historical documents in 2012. "We cannot ignore that our digital infrastructure is of interest to hackers. A successful attack could see the collection stolen, manipulated, or deleted altogether," he said. About one quarter has been digitised so far. The library is working in partnership with *Darktrace*, a company founded by University of Cambridge mathematicians, which claims to be the first to develop an AI system for cyber security.

### Churches to mark day of prayer for the Persecuted Church in China, India and Nigeria.



Churches and Christian organisations ... marked the 24th International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church recently. It is being promoted by the Evangelical Alliance, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Open Doors, and Release International, among others. The focus was on three countries where persecution is reported to be rising: China, India, and Nigeria. "Persecution doesn't just hide in the backwaters," the chief executive of Release International, Paul Robinson, said. "It is taking place in plain sight in the largest and most populous nations on earth." He pointed to Christians in China who were locked out of churches, and whose buildings were being demolished. In India, attacks and false accusations against Christians were now "almost a daily occurrence". In Nigeria, Fulani militants had continued to drive Christians from their homes.

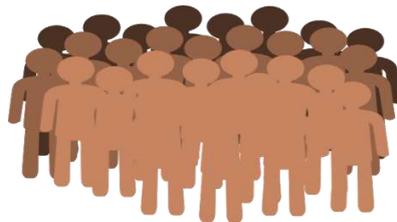
## Indian pastors under threat, says Open Doors



Christian pastors in India regularly face arrest owing to anti-conversion laws and rising religious nationalism, the charity *Open Doors* has said. The accusation is that they use “fraudulent means” to convert people to Christianity.

Although few are imprisoned, they often face years of being ostracised and unable to work while fighting to clear their names. Anti-conversion laws exist in eight of the 29 states in India. They forbid anyone to convert someone “from one religion to another by use of force or by allurement or by any fraudulent means”. Open Doors has urged the Indian government to guarantee the peaceful right to assembly and the right to freedom of expression for its citizens.

## Radio station crowdfunds to broadcast services



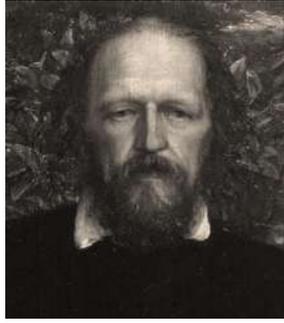
Petersfield Community Radio has launched a crowdfunding appeal to raise £1800 to install professional audio equipment in St Peter’s, Petersfield, in Hampshire, so that services can be broadcast live on a new online 24-hour radio station,

Shine Radio, which was launched in August. Donors will be rewarded with the chance to present a show on Shine Radio, read the news or weather, or, for donations of more than £350, present a promotional campaign for a business or a chosen cause.

Stephen Martin, who co-founded Petersfield Community Radio in 2019, explained: “One of the aims of the community project is to help alleviate insecurity, isolation, and loneliness through a bright, connected radio service in Petersfield. . . Shine Radio is helping already, but we cannot yet broadcast live from the church. When we recorded a carol service and made the audio available to local care homes, we were overwhelmed by the positive response.”

*All extracts are (occasionally slightly adapted) from the ‘Church Times’.*

## POEM OF THE MONTH



### **'Ring out, Wild Bells' from *In Memoriam A.H.H* (1850) by Alfred Tennyson**

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light;  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die

Ring out the old, ring in the new  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more,  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,

Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

This is a well-known Christmas and New Year poem. It is from Tennyson's sequence of 133 poems collectively called *In Memoriam A.H.H.* These poems were written over many years in memory of his friend, Arthur Henry Hallam who had died aged only twenty two in 1833. The poems as a whole are an elegy for Tennyson's lost friend and, as you'd expect, tell us about the poet's personal response to the baffling shock of the sudden death. But *In Memoriam* also grows into an intense and wide-ranging questioning of the cruelty of nature, of faith, and of the significance of life itself. Not much escapes Tennyson's scouring inquisition of life in the sequence of poems. He goes up to the edge of life and he looks into the darkness, scanning it for signs of a further truth.

All the poems in the sequence are in the same form as this one. Each canto (or verse) has four lines, each with eight syllables and a verse rhyme scheme in which the last line always rhymes with the first. It is often said that this pattern of rhyme helps to create a defeated, circular feeling, as each verse dwindles and draws back into itself rather than moving forward. This uncertainty would certainly suit the deep problems about which Tennyson is feeling and thinking.

This poem, though, is not full of weary disquiet. Its subject is the turning of the old year into the new - that point at which we all feel we can start again. The poem is a rallying call to life, hope and faith. Tennyson is rallying himself and us. He exhorts us again and again to 'ring out' the old, the rotten, the dark, and 'ring in' the new, the bright, the true, the pure. The two simple rhythmic commands themselves peal like church bells in the poem, reaching a climax in the seventh verse in which the old is rejected, and in the last verse in which a new world, not just a new year, is promised. This is a world made possible, says Tennyson, by a self-determined, moral and spiritual change in men and women. As Tennyson stands on the very edge of the new year, he reminds us that it is the inner change in people that will make possible the new life in 'the Christ that is to be'.

# REPORTS AND NOTICES

## PCC REPORT: November 2020

The PCC met by Zoom on 13<sup>th</sup> Nov. The main topics of discussion were:

### **Ministry Area transition.**

- As announced at the Diocesan Conference in September, the Bishop wants us to press ahead with a full merger with All Saints by the end of next year.
- A provisional date of 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020 has been set to get the Ministry Area up and running as one entity.
- The two charities would have to merge to create a new charity, and bank accounts also have to merge. However, the funds that have been set aside as 'restricted' funds or for special purposes will be kept for those uses.
- One PCC will cover all 5 churches and will be called the Leadership Group.
- Each church will have its own council to feed into the Leadership Group and there will be other sub-committees to look after things like finance, buildings etc.
- There will be 2 incumbent Vicars and a curate if one is available, but this may not always be possible.
- The All Saints' post may be filled by spring next year; the advert had just gone out.

### **Bookkeeper/Treasurer**

Fr Mark had discussed the role further with Gareth Hurman, but it seemed Mr Hurman may not be able to give sufficient time to carry out the many tasks involved. We may have to seek a different solution with someone more familiar with how church finances work.

### **Finance**

Roger Owen reported that so far we haven't had to dip into reserves. This was thanks to Diocesan rebates on the Parish Share, plus the faithful ongoing contributions of many parishioners who have continued their planned giving or made generous donations. If this continues, we may be able to get through the winter.

*Unfortunately we had technical difficulties, so the meeting had to stop. Another meeting will take place shortly to continue discussions on various buildings issues. Full minutes can be obtained by contacting the Parish Office.*

*Rachel Elder*

# CHRISTMAS TREE ADVENT CALENDAR



Although we cannot hold the Christmas Tree Festival this year, we will have a daily Advent Calendar on Facebook, featuring pictures from past years. So keep a look out for it from December 1<sup>st</sup> and check back each day.

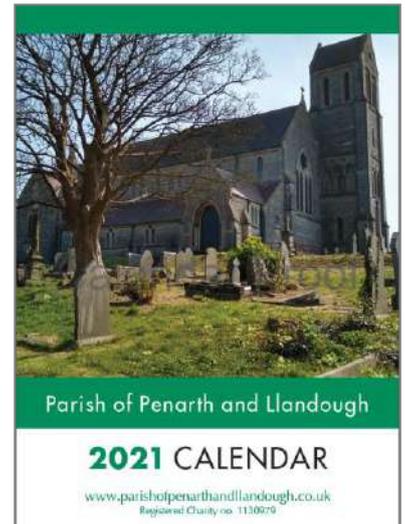


## PARISH CALENDAR

This year, we haven't been able to do the usual fundraising with fairs, sales, open days or anything much else. So, when I had an email from an online printing company that specialises in charity calendars & cards (called *Ask Calendars*), I wondered if this might be possible for us. Having got permission, I used their online software to upload pictures from our churches and make a calendar using their templates.

All I need now is for people to buy them! The cost is £7.50 with all profit going to Parish funds, so the more we sell, the more money we make. Ways to order:

- Put your name on the list at the back of each church
- Phone or email the Parish Office – let me know your name, address & phone number and how many calendars you want
- Go on our website and click through to the online shop (hopefully ready by December)



*Rachel Elder*

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## FROM THE REGISTERS

### Funeral

5<sup>th</sup> November: John William BOWERS of Penarth age 88 at Holy Nativity

### Interment of Ashes

23<sup>rd</sup> October: David George CHARLES of Penarth age 84 at Penarth Cemetery

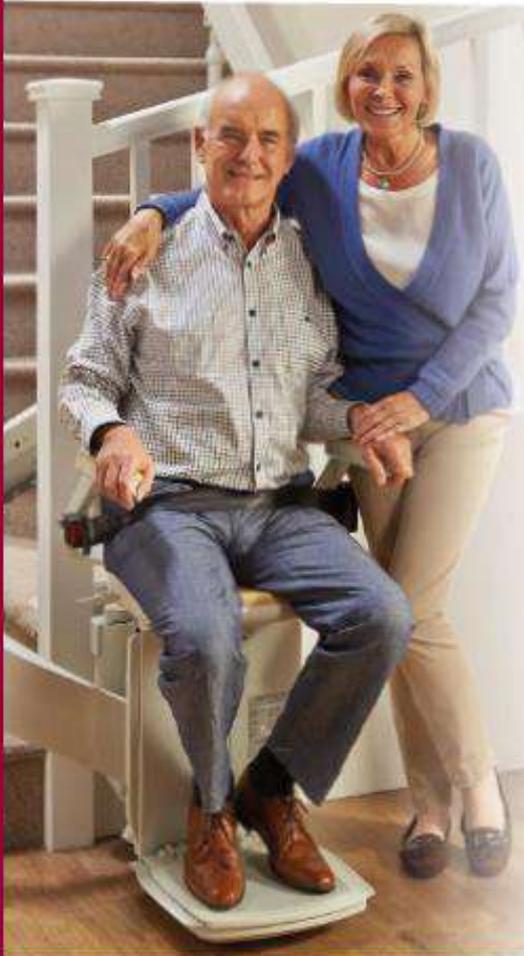
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## PARISH DIRECTORY

<b>Priest</b>	Revd Mark Jones revmarkjones@sky.com	029 20709897
<b>Parish Administrator</b>	Mrs Rachel Elder parishcommunityhall@uwclub.net	20708722 (Parish Office)
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mr Roger Owen	20702172
<b>Gift Aid Secretary</b>	Mrs Viv Liles	20712466
<b>Organists</b>		
St Augustine's	Mr Robert Court	20619436
Holy Nativity	Contact the Churchwardens	
St Dochdwy's	Contact the Churchwardens	
<b>Mothers' Union</b>	Mrs Delyth Williams	20705898
<b>Friends of St Augustine</b>	Ms Cathy Grove	20704298
<b>Church Wardens</b>		
<b><u>St Augustine's</u></b>		
Mrs Linda Guilfoyle	linda.guilfoyle2019@gmail.com	20706309
Mr Andrew Davison	aswdavison@outlook.com	07704 049053
<b><u>Holy Nativity</u></b>		
Mrs Kath Williams (one vacancy)	huwandkath@hotmail.co.uk	20708554
<b><u>St Dochdwy's</u></b>		
Mr Roger Owen	drowen46@gmail.com	20702172
Mrs Jan Cullen	jan.cullen@ntlworld.com	20704926

**Parish Hall**, Albert Road, Penarth CF64 1BX - To hire, please contact the Parish Office  
**Home Communion, Sick visiting and other pastoral matters:** Please contact Revd Mark Jones.

**Baptisms & Weddings:** to make initial enquiries, please contact Rachel Elder at the Parish Office.

**Concerts at St Augustine's** – please contact Mr Robert Court

**Parish website:** [www.parishofpenarthandllandough.co.uk](http://www.parishofpenarthandllandough.co.uk)

 **Facebook:** @penllanparish

# ADVENT PRAYER CALENDAR

*Use these words to reflect and pray this December*

1 Prepare 	2 Give thanks 	3 Mystery 	4 Repentance 
5 Friends 	6 Life 	7 Patience 	8 Mary 
9 Expectant 	10 Light 	11 Joseph 	12 Journey 
13 Joy 	14 Family 	15 Waiting 	16 Star 
17 Watching 	18 Angels 	19 Hope 	20 Wonder 
21 Peace 	22 Love 	23 Arrival 	24 God with Us 

