

INFORM



URC
VAN ROAD
Caerphilly
December '17
January '18

Minister

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From our Minister ...

The Bible has many stories about waiting. The ancient 'patriarchs' (and 'matriarchs'?) like Abraham and Sarah waited into the old age for children; the Hebrew slaves in Egypt waited for release, then wandered for forty years in the desert; the poor waited for an end to the reign of some of their own kings and the powerful people who exploited them; the Jewish people waited for an end to exile in a foreign land; the prophets waited, hoping for God's anointed servant to come to the people. Here are stories of patience and impatience, of the faithful and the doubtful, who had no choice but to wait.

We can re-live and prayerfully be part of the virtue of waiting, as we observe Advent, the season of looking forward in hope and prayer. This is very counter-cultural, at least in the affluent parts of the world like ours, where our economy is built on consuming things – the 'consumer society'. We don't have to wait, we are told. We can have a loan now, we can buy whatever we want when we want. No saving involved. No anticipation. We can even transfer the debts we build up from a credit card to another one. And the shopping culture which pervades and engulfs us, does not wait. From November, the commercial Christmas has flooded the shops, demanding that we spend money rather than wait. In the meantime, many in our world today cannot buy the things they need - food, education, medicine, a secure home. So perhaps a patient Advent, can help us to live in a way more attuned to God,

God whose mercy and love are for all people and all creation.

We can wait, and pray, and feel some sense of solidarity with those who have no option but to wait and hope, today, tomorrow and into an unseen future.

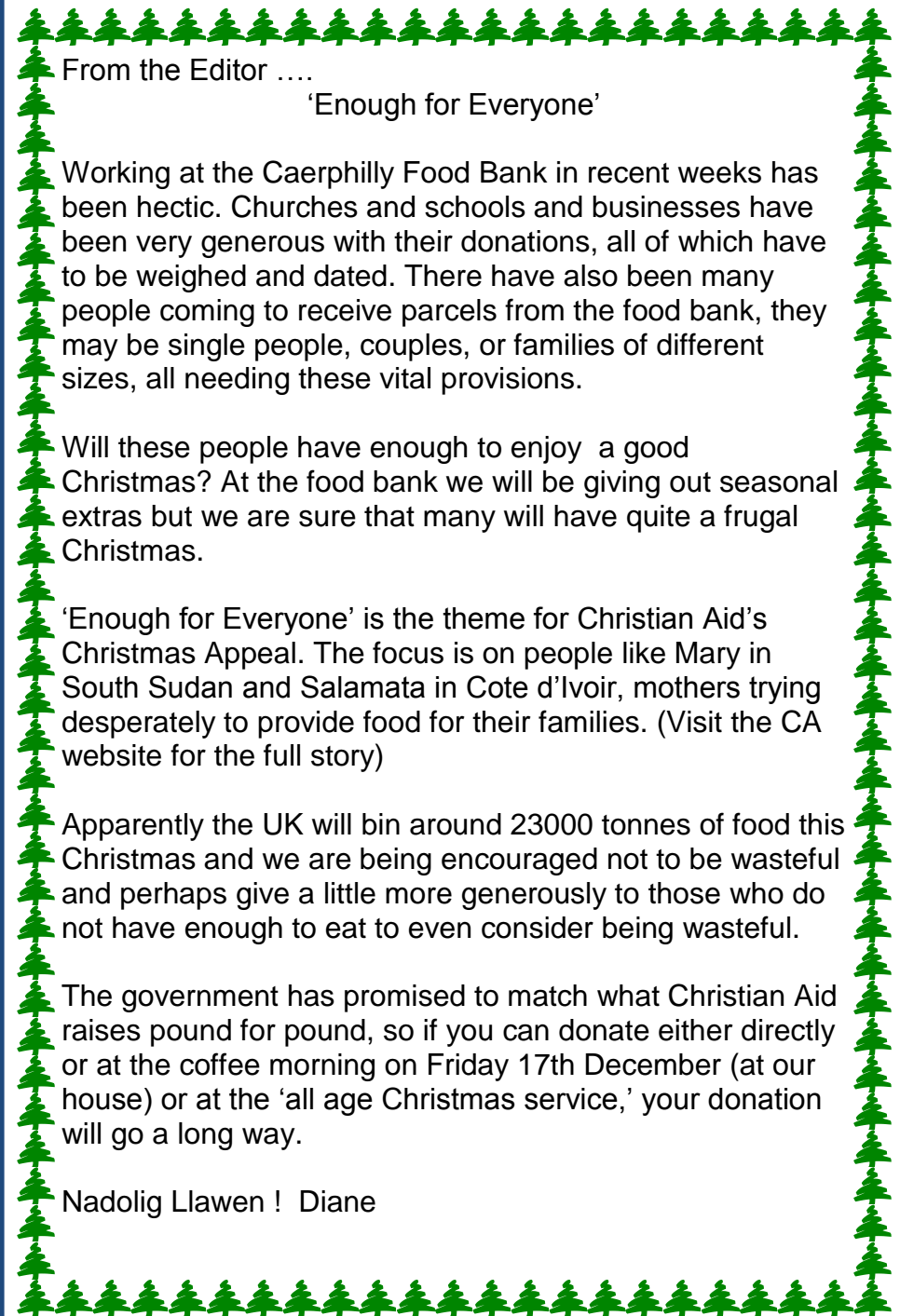
Waiting is not the end of the story. Christmas does not leave us in a hopeless place. We do celebrate the birth of the Christ child, God's Word made flesh. Carols are sung, presents are exchanged, feasts are shared. Here are signs and symbols of the Kingdom of God, which the prophets imagined as a great feast for all the peoples, (and which is one of the meanings in the Communion meal which Jesus gave to those who follow his way.)

Again, once Christmas Day is past, the commercial season loses interest. It's all gone stale; so onto the next thing. Let's sell chocolates and cards for Valentine's day. It's as if we throw away Christmas – all the wrappings and food. That's how a consumer society works. We are careless, we waste. We don't cherish and cherish what we have. But the older practices of the church, before we let commerce hijack Christmas, was to celebrate the birth of Christ with an on-going joy and gusto. Christmas is a season which leads us through Epiphany and the giving of the light of the world to all peoples, and through to Candlemas when the scripture readings told of how the baby Jesus was brought to the Temple. It is a long season of joy,

celebrating that God's love is come to the whole world. Some churches leave their cribs and candles and decorations until Candlemas on the second of February. The nature of this joy and celebration is different. It does not have to involve borrowing and buying and acquiring material things. Instead, it can inspire us to celebrate the coming of God among all people, in humility and love, full of grace and truth. God comes among the poorest and the worried, and sick and sad, the lonely and the lost, those who are still waiting, and brings good news.

In Christ,

SPI



From the Editor

'Enough for Everyone'

Working at the Caerphilly Food Bank in recent weeks has been hectic. Churches and schools and businesses have been very generous with their donations, all of which have to be weighed and dated. There have also been many people coming to receive parcels from the food bank, they may be single people, couples, or families of different sizes, all needing these vital provisions.

Will these people have enough to enjoy a good Christmas? At the food bank we will be giving out seasonal extras but we are sure that many will have quite a frugal Christmas.

'Enough for Everyone' is the theme for Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal. The focus is on people like Mary in South Sudan and Salamata in Cote d'Ivoire, mothers trying desperately to provide food for their families. (Visit the CA website for the full story)

Apparently the UK will bin around 23000 tonnes of food this Christmas and we are being encouraged not to be wasteful and perhaps give a little more generously to those who do not have enough to eat to even consider being wasteful.

The government has promised to match what Christian Aid raises pound for pound, so if you can donate either directly or at the coffee morning on Friday 17th December (at our house) or at the 'all age Christmas service,' your donation will go a long way.

Nadolig Llawen ! Diane



Walking the Way

Leaflets about 'Walking the Way' have been sent to our churches and these have been given out in the past few weeks.

'Walking the Way: Living the Life of Jesus Today' - is the name for the new resources produced by the URC to encourage us all in our discipleship and the mission of God through the church.

Walking the way replaces the old TLS (Training for Learning and Serving) which some of our members have done in the past.

'Walking the Way' is not a course, but an umbrella term for a growing and changing set of resources. These are made available to help us learn and grow in our Christian faith. There will also be courses people can participate in as part of the 'Walking the Way'.

It is most easily accessed on line, but you will hear more about what is available from the elders and minister as the resources are rolled out.

If you have a leaflet about 'Walking the Way' please do take it home and read it!

SPI

CAERPHILLY BOROUGH NIGHT SHELTER For the Homeless DECEMBER TO MARCH

We are urgently seeking Volunteers to be part of a team to look after the homeless through the worst of the Winter Months during the Night, 7 nights per week.

The shelters provide an evening meal, bed for the night and Breakfast.

Can you spare 1 night or morning per week or month?

Caerphilly, Bargoed, Blackwood, Pontllanfraith,
Risca

As volunteers we have additional safeguards in place, and being part of a team we can work to give some shelter through difficult times.

For further information please contact:-

Cliff Bray cliffsan@sky.com

Calling Caerphilly Churches

Volunteers Desperately Needed

Every Sunday night from December to March St Catherine's Church is hosting the Night Shelter (See adjoining page.)

Churches are being asked to volunteer to be put on a rota to welcome the residents of the Night Shelter on a Sunday afternoon from around 12.30pm to 5.50pm providing refreshments and a warm place to stay before transferring to St Catherine's.

It would be great if our church can support this. Volunteers need not stay for the whole time (perhaps just for an hour or two.) The more churches that volunteer means that each church will be required for fewer Sundays.

For more information please speak to Margaret Craig.

We hold in our prayers -

Vernon Holland Bill and Jean Mutter

Dorothy Banfield and family

Tony Moore Phyllis Colwell

Russell and Carole Boothe

Fred and Diana Hibbert

Sally Bourne (having undergone an operation for cancer)



Pulpit Supply

December

3rd 10.30am
(Advent 1)

Rev. Stephen Lewis
Communion

10th, 10.30am
(Advent 2)

Dr David Jenkins

17th, 2.30pm
(Advent 3)

All Age Service followed by tea

24th, 10.30am
6pm
(Advent 4)

Richard and Sarah Edwards
Carols and Readings
Rev. Stephen Lewis

25th, 10am

Christmas Day Service
Rev. Stephen Lewis

31st, 10.30am

Rev. Stephen Lewis

Mid Week Communion



Wednesday 13th December
10.30am
Rev. Stephen Lewis

Christingle Service with Rainbows and Brownies

Thursday December 7th at 5.30pm

All Welcome

Pulpit Supply

January

7th 10.30am Richard and Sarah Edwards

14th, 10.30am Rev. Robin Wood

21st, 10.30am Mr Lewis Lewis-Head
Communion

28th, 10.30am Mr Robert Moverley

Mid Week Communion

Wednesday 10th, 10.30am

Rev. Stephen Lewis

January 1st

10.30am - Walk (meet at 1015)

followed by lunch in church and

Service at 1pm

Everyone welcome to take part in all three or just 1
or 2 events. All friends also welcome.

The VAN-guard Centre

Charity Registration number 1109193

28th October

Superb concert by Andrew Randall, Baritone, who is a lay clerk in the Choir at Worcester Cathedral, and Conal Bembridge – Sayers who gave a piano recital as well as accompanying Andrew. Conal's piano playing is probably the best we have heard the piano played.

Exhibition 14th-24th November.

The 5th VAN-guard Centre Annual Arts, Crafts and Literary Exhibition.

The Exhibition is ongoing as I write this report. 107 items of art were received plus poetry and short stories. VAN-guard Groups, Art Society members, students from local art classes, as well as Church members, submitted items, e.g. David Jenkin's Love spoon carvings, Diane Moverley's glass work and paintings and Cathy Vernalls' needlepoint.

The Spoken Word Event and Awards' Ceremony is scheduled for the afternoon of Friday 24th November. We are grateful to Dr. Hefin David, Welsh Assembly Member for the Caerphilly Constituency for choosing the Art Awards and Mrs. Jackie Askey the Chair of VAN-guard for selecting the Literary Award winner. Both the main Art Award and the Literary Award are Memorial Awards in memory of David Hawthorn and George Askey, sadly missed members of our Management Committee. Thanks too are owed to all who helped to Meet and Greet visitors.

Sunday 26th November at 2.00p.m. Young Stars Perform their Christmas Concert for family and friends. Church and VAN-guard folk are always invited to come along and enjoy seeing the young artists performing. Over the years we have enjoyed the opportunity to witness the talent of many young people, to see them progressing and achieving so much as singers under the tuition of Angharad and David. As is the custom there is a small charge and a raffle and the mums provide the refreshments.

December Concerts

Monday 18th December at 7.00 p.m. Tickets £10.00 An evening performance of 'Cantare at Christmas'.

This has become a regular Christmas delight when David, Angharad and Ryan always provide a superb programme of festive music. This will be an evening not to miss.

Ticket orders are already being received for the Christmas Concert. Half of the seats have already been reserved. Please let me know if you wish to reserve any.

Saturday 30th December at 3.00 p.m.

The Caerphilly Community Chorus will be giving a concert with a choir of 25 / 12 and 13 year old school girls from Perth, Western Australia. This will be a lovely way to see out the old year and give a warm Welsh welcome to some visitors from Australia.

Forthcoming concerts 2018.

Next year is beginning to look busy all ready. Five concerts have been arranged to date.

January 2018 Advance notice

Wednesday 3rd January Visit by Saya Okada.

Many of you will remember the young Japanese pianist Saya Okada, who as a post graduate Student at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, gave a number of concerts, both lunchtime and evening at VAN-guard. She returned to Japan at the end of 2015, but has kept in touch. She is coming to Cardiff for a week and will be visiting us on 3rd January. She is eager to come to the church and play the piano that afternoon. She will not be giving a formal concert, but if you wish to come along about 3.00 p.m. and hear her playing for about half an hour and afterwards have a chat over tea and biscuits, then you are most welcome to join us. A small donation will be optional.

Thursday 4th January- an evening performance at 7.30 p.m.

The 'Chords' Choir from Cardiff will give its first recital at VAN-guard and it will be in aid of the Forget me Not Chorus Charity to provide support for sufferers of Alzheimer's Disease and their families. Some young artists will also be performing. The choir's Musical Director is Mrs. Eirlys Lamb. Tickets are £8 and £6 concession. It will be good to start the New Year on a musical note.

Wednesday 17th January - a lunchtime concert at 1.00 p.m.

Clare Eccles, a post graduate student at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, will be giving a recital. Clare was a member of the Champagne Quartet that performed for us in August 2017. She is a soprano and will also be joined by a violinist for this recital. This will be a filmed recital as part of Clare's Master's Degree Studies. It would be a great encouragement to Clare to have a good size audience for this concert. Tickets are £5.

Concerts for February and beyond will be publicised next month.

The next Management Committee meeting will be held on
Wednesday 31st January at 10.00 a.m.

The Management Committee of the VAN-guard Centre wish
all Church Members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New
Year.

Mair

CHURCH CHRISTMAS FAIR

**SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER
10am - 2pm**

**Please contribute the usual items and offer
help and support if you possibly can.**

Thank you!

A BIG THANK YOU!

to

**Mair and John and Vanguard for organising the art
and craft exhibition again this year. It was most
enjoyable. Thanks as well to all who contributed
works and those that stewarded over the 2 weeks.**

It is much appreciated.

February Edition of Inform

Contributions by 19th January please

Lectionary Readings



December

- 3rd Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;
 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37
- 10th Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8
- 17th Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126;
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24;
 John 1:6-8, 19-28
- 24th 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89;
 Luke 1:26-38, 46b-55, ; Romans 16:25-27
- 25th Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14;
 Luke 2:11-14 (15-20)
- 31st Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148;
 Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40
- January 6th Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14;
 Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12
- 7th Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29;
 Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11
- 14th 1 Samuel 3:1-10; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;
 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51
- 21st Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12;
 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20
- 27th Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111;
 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

YOUNG WIVES

December

Mondays 7.30pm

4th Carols and mince pies

11th Christmas Meal

January

1st No Meeting

8th No meeting

15th AGM

22nd Rob and Diane Moverley—Madagascar

29th Alan Thorne speaking on Joseph Parry



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Thanks to Jason Michael Szilbren (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-23-2000

AT LEAST WE CAN SAY THAT HE WAS BROUGHT UP IN A STABLE HOME

David Fox December 1984

Sing of a Girl in Nazareth Town

Sing of a girl in Nazareth town

frightened, misunderstood;

God in a small provincial town

works for the final good.

Sing of a man with doubts and with fears

thinking of neighbours words;

Comforting God, in a vision come down

strengthening faith to serve.

Sing of a king in imperial Rome

making his realm secure;

looking for gold but walking in clay

God will alone endure.

Sing of a king in Jerusalem's tower

ruling by fear and hate.

How can he see in the baby that's born

God whom all ages await.

Sing of a son in a bundle of straw

shivering, wet and tired.

Sing of the God who has just been born

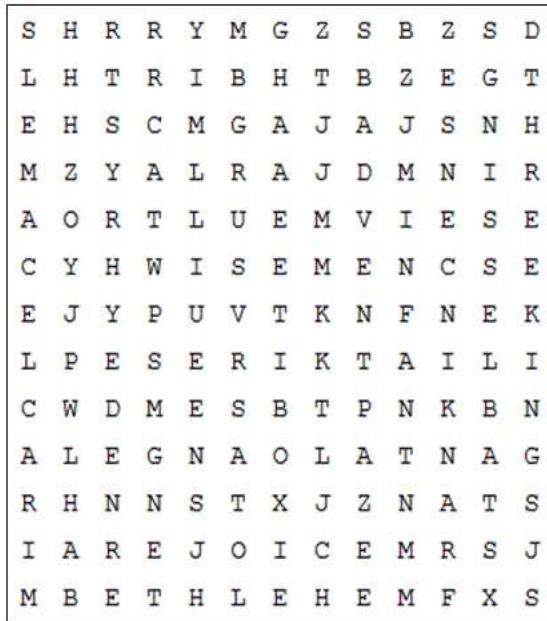
into this world of ours.

(Contributed by Mair)





Joy to the World



ADVENT
ANGEL
BETHLEHEM
BIRTH
BLESSINGS
CAMELS
FRANKINCENSE

INFANT
JESUS
JOSEPH
MAGI
MANGER
MARY
MIRACLE

MYRRH
NATIVITY
REJOICE
STABLE
STAR
THREE KINGS
WISE MEN



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Mon 27th-Fri Dec 1st | Christmas Unwrapped (707) |
| December | |
| Fri 1st, 2pm | Ecumenical Prayer Meeting |
| Sat 2nd, 10am-2pm | Church Fair
Christmas Tree Festival
St Martins |
| Wed 6th, 10.30am
7pm | Coffee with Enfys
Advent Service-St Andrews |
| Thurs 7th, 10.30am
5.30pm | Fellowship and Bible Study
Rainbows and Brownies
Christingle Service (All welcome) |
| Sat 9th, | Scripture Union Selfie Stall |
| Sun 10th, 2pm
6pm | Carol Walk organised by
Mount Carmel
Family Carol Service at
St Martins organised by
St Martins and Jesus Loves Caerphilly |
| Fri 15th, 10.30am | 'Coffee and Mince Pies' fund
raising for Christian Aid ,
at Rob and Diane's |
| Mon 18th, 7pm | Cantare Concert |
| Sat 23rd, TBA | Castle Court Carol Service |
| Sat 30th, 3pm | Concert with Caerphilly
Chorus and Australian Girls' Choir |

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

January

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Mon 1st, 10.30am | Walk, Lunch and Service |
| Wed 3rd, 10.30am
3pm | Coffee with Enfy's
Short 'concert' with the pianist
Saya Okada |
| Thurs 4th, 10.30am
7.30pm | Fellowship and Bible Study
Chords Choir Concert |
| Fri 5th, 2pm | Ecumenical Prayer Meeting |
| Sat 6th, 10.30am | Messy Church |
| Thurs 18th, 10.30am | Fellowship and Bible Study |
| Wed 17th, 1pm | Concert with soprano
Clare Eccles |
| Jan 18th –25th | Week of Prayer for Christian
Unity |
| Prayer Meetings | |
| Tues 18th, pm | Wesley |
| Tues 23rd am | St Martins |
| Times to be confirmed | |
| Sun 21st, 6pm | Street Pastors' Service |

Fabric and Safety Committee

Report to Church Meeting 19 November 2017

The F&S committee continues to work in the background monitoring safety, risk assessment and maintenance.

We met on 5 September and the main topics involved review of the recent projects.

The main issue this year has been the refurbishment of the toilet facilities which was completed eventually on 26 June 2017. The problem with continued water ingress in one cubicle seems to have been resolved and will be monitored further before repairing the decorations.

The refurbishment of the office is complete. Thanks to Mair for chasing the grant application and to John for supervising the work.

The building is now looking good and we now have no embarrassment in inviting groups to use our Church accommodation.

Following the office refurbishment, Clive our restoration builder, proceeded to complete the repair and renovation of the side retaining wall and the supports of the organ loft. The structural engineer has reviewed what has been done and is satisfied pending some further inspection. We must recognise Clive's kind arrangements for funding this piece of important work. We are very well supported by our contractors who considerably reduce their costs for the work they do for us

We have some concerns in meeting the modern standards in Disability Access and some small modifications may need to be made.

Our next problems are likely to arise with the impending Fire Risk assessment in the New Year. We have complied with the main risks identified at the last assessment but as regulations change we may have additional problems to consider.

I have expressed my concern that care of a listed building produces a significant demand on the income from our congregation. Without the significant grant support, we would not have been able to achieve this progress. It would be good if we could reach the stage when we can invest more of our resources in Christian outreach to further the spread of our Lord's message throughout our community.

David Jenkins

14 November 2017

Christmas Cringes!

Why was the snowman looking through the carrots?
He was picking his nose!

Why was the turkey in the pop group?
He was the only one with drumsticks!

What do snowmen wear on their heads?
Ice caps!

What did Adam say the day before Christmas?
It's Christmas, Eve!

ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE CHRISTMAS CAROL

(Sung to the tune 'The 12 Days of Christmas.')

Every year at Christmas the UK throws away:

12 million carrots

11 million roasties

10 million parsnips

9 million boats of gravy

8 million balls of stuffing

70 million mince pies

6 million jars of cranberry

Ooooooo...what...a..waste

4 million puddings

So many spouts

2 million turkeys

And they are all at the bottom of the bin!

**THE UK WILL BIN 23000 TONNES OF FOOD THIS
CHRISTMAS**

'Waste less. Save money. Save lives.

**(The UK government will match fund all donations to
Christian Aid this Christmas**

God of the Poor

God of the poor,
we long to meet you
yet almost miss you;
we strive to help you
yet only discover our need.

Interrupt our comfort
With your nakedness,
touch our possessiveness
with your poverty,
and surprise our guilt
with the grace of your welcome,

In Jesus Christ,
Amen!

cc Janet Morley

ROTAS

December	January
Stewards	Stewards
Margaret Baldwin	Carol Jones
Cathy Vernalis	Phyllis Frayling
Communion	Communion
Enfys Hawthorn	Lynda Jones
Margaret Craig	Margaret Baldwin

If unable to steward or serve
Please ask ANOTHER to cover

Flowers for December

3rd	Jan Holdsworth
10th	Barbara Lloyd
17th	VAN GUARD
24th	Christmas Eve
31st	New Year's Eve

Thank you to all who donate flowers for worship

CHURCH ELDERS

Mrs Margaret Baldwin	02920 867027
Mr Lewis Lewis-Head	02920 889958
Mrs Enfys Hawthorn	02920866840
Ms Lynda Jones	02920 884022
Mrs Diane Moverley	02920 866336
Mr Robert Moverley	02920 866336
Mrs Cathy Vernalls	02920 887112
Mrs Phyllis Frayling	02920862285

Any items for the next edition should be submitted by the 19th of the month

to -

Mrs Diane Moverley

dianemoverley60@gmail.com

(or if not on e mail then items can be left in the box at the back of the sanctuary)



We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him.