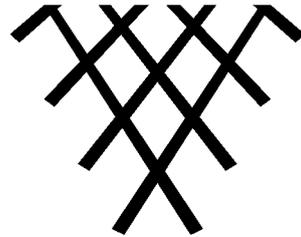
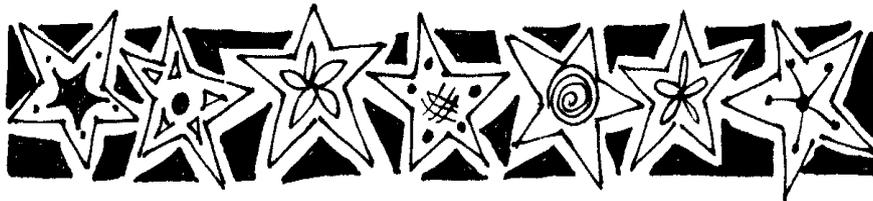


**ST PETER'S**  
CHURCH STANLEY



**Dec '21 / Jan '22**  
**Parish News**



**Free - please take a copy**

[www.stpeters-stanley.org.uk](http://www.stpeters-stanley.org.uk)

## **Caring Companions**

Are you a carer or relative in need of a break from your caring responsibilities?

I have 25 years experience of working with older people who suffer from Dementia, Alzheimers and other disabilities. I offer:

- a companionship service
- shopping service and
- cleaning service

Price per hour for any or all of these services.

For an initial free visit please call Jane on:



**T:** 01924 824 862

**M:** 07432 625452

**E:** [mrsjanedover@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mrsjanedover@yahoo.co.uk)

## **Garforth Panelbeaters**

Newhold Trading Estate, Aberford Road,  
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- Family run business—est. 40 yrs.
- Personal attention from the Carrigan family of Stanley.
- Specialists in car body work.
- No job too small or too large.
- Private, insurance and company repairs undertaken.
- Well equipped premises with all the latest innovations including 4 low bake ovens.
- Courtesy cars available.

Tel. James, Matt or Mike on the above numbers, Mon-Fri 7am—5:30pm and Sat 7am—1:30pm



## **Locksmith & Security Installer**



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**-Call for a free security assessment**

**Call Andy: 07721876571**

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**Covering Stanley & Nearby Areas**

## **Dear Friends,**

One of the things I have missed over the past couple of years has been the occasional trip to a campsite and then a walk in the local area. In the past, my son Sam and I have enjoyed the challenge of getting all the kit ready and then driving off on a camping adventure. Camping involves facing the challenges of the weather, the ground conditions, making sure you have remembered everything, and having an unsettled night's sleep. Alongside this though it is invigorating to be out of the nice protective vicarage, wonderful bed and the ease of switching on the kettle. One really enjoys being closer to nature and taking in the fresh air and viewing the night sky. Alongside this it is lovely to chat to those who are camping close by and hear about their lives and love of camping. Finally there's nothing better to return home and have a night's sleep in one's own bed.

As we draw closer to hearing again the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, the beginning of John's gospel literally reads that God came and pitched his tent amongst us; that the creator of all that we see and experience in this wonderful universe sent his son Jesus to be born and live a human life with all its joys and sorrows for a mere 33 years. Jesus gave up the glory of heaven to come down and share in our lives and in doing so pointed us to his Father and our Father. It's no wonder that it 'good news' is at the heart of Christmas when God took the initiative, sent his son Jesus to live a human life and through his life, death and resurrection offers us a glimpse of heaven and abundant life.

Several years ago I came upon this which tries to shed light on what it must have been like for Jesus to swap heaven and live on earth.....

### **The Greatest Love Story ever told....**

*Like your landlord becoming your lodger*

*Like your managing director up before you for an interview*

*Like Beethoven queuing up for a ticket to his own concert*

*Like a headmaster getting the cane*

*Like a good architect living in a slum built by a rival*

*Like Picasso painting by numbers*

*God lived among us.*

So dear friends, as we face another unsettling Christmas, take heart in the good news that God is with us in the midst of life. No matter how dark and challenging life gets, Jesus is the light of the world and through him God offers us comfort, strength and hope. Perhaps this Christmas make room for Jesus in your heart.

Take care, stay safe and God Bless this Christmas time and into 2022  
*Glenn*

## Christmas Fair — a review

Many thanks to everyone who organised and supported our Christmas Fair which was held at St Peter's church on Saturday 27th November. It was our first major fundraising event for two years and we were delighted that it raised £1,035.80. A sincere thank you to everyone for your generosity and for braving the snow and the gales! Despite the weather it was a very well attended event.

There were lots of stalls, including bottle stall, bric-a-brac, soft toys, children's tombola, cakes, books, tombola, handmade craft items, jigsaws, and a raffle. We also had some spectacular bacon butties, and refreshments including tea, coffee and Christmas cake.

Many thanks to the organisers, the stallholders and everyone who helped beforehand and on the day to make it such an enjoyable, happy and successful event. *(Please note all winners of raffle prizes have been notified).*



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## Mother Goose pantomime

We are absolutely delighted to be staging a pantomime after the disappointment of last year. Although there are no covid restrictions for places of worship or drama productions, we have taken some precautions, including reducing the capacity of the building. This means that we have fewer tickets available for each performance and the two afternoon matinees have sold out. However, at the time of writing, we do have some tickets left for the 7.15pm performances on Monday 6th, Tuesday 7th, Thursday 9th, Friday 10th and Saturday 11th December. Please contact us via our Facebook page or email [churchoffice@stpeters-stanley.org.uk](mailto:churchoffice@stpeters-stanley.org.uk) to book tickets.



Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard backstage and on-stage over the past few months to prepare the pantomime for our audiences. It will include all the terrible jokes, silly songs, great costumes and props that you've come to expect. We hope you enjoy the show! And we look forward to seeing you all again next year—hopefully when things will be even more 'normal'!

## **St Peter's Church Services**

*St Peter's Church, Lake Lock Road, Stanley, WF3 4HW*

### **10am on Sundays: Family Communion**

Congregational services take place every Sunday morning at St Peter's church. Please join us; we have plenty of space across our 3 rooms with screens on the wall to follow what's going on in the hall.

We don't stream our Sunday morning services but do show on Facebook online evening prayer services on four days of the week.

For up-to-date news and other information please see:

- Benefice website: [www.northwakefieldbenefice.org.uk](http://www.northwakefieldbenefice.org.uk)
- Church website: [www.stpeters-stanley.org.uk](http://www.stpeters-stanley.org.uk)
- Facebook: St Peter's Church, Stanley, Wakefield
- YouTube: St Peter's Church, Stanley

Our online evening prayer services use the Celtic Daily Prayer from the Northumbria Community and are led by Rev Glenn Coggins, Angela Coggins and Vicky Wilson.

Please visit our Facebook page to watch them at the times shown below. Once broadcast, the services can be watched as many times as you wish.

**Tuesday**      9pm Compline evening service

**Wednesday**      9pm Compline evening service

**Thursday**      9pm Compline evening service

**Friday**      9pm Compline evening service

## STANLEY LIBRARY

**Stanley Library** offers a wide selection of books, talking books, selected language tapes, newspapers (including the weekly Wakefield Express), selected magazines (including the monthly Which magazine), and an A4 colour photocopier; please enquire for the cost of using the machine. There are also public access computers, offering free internet access, and basic computer programmes (i.e. word processing). The computers are free to use; users just need to have a current library card.

### OPENING HOURS

Monday	9.30am—5pm
Tuesday	9.30am—5pm
Wednesday	Closed all day
Thursday	9.30am—7pm
Friday	9.30am—5pm
Saturday	10am—1pm
Sunday	Closed all day

**Activities for Children:** Tiny Tots Storytime for under 5's is from 11am-11.30am every Monday throughout the year. Other children's activities are organised in most school holidays; please ask for details.

**Crafts and Chat morning:** Every Tuesday from 10am-11.30am: bring your knitting, drawing, crocheting or any other activity and enjoy chat and refreshments.

**Coffee Morning:** There is a coffee morning every Thursday morning, 10am-12 noon. Come and relax with friends over a cuppa.

**Stanley Library contact details:** Lake Lock Road, Stanley, Wakefield, WF3 4HU, Telephone number: 01924 303130.

**Bingo at Stanley Library, every Monday 1pm-3pm**

Refreshments included! All welcome!  
Come along and have a brilliant bingo time!



**Stanley Readers Group, first Monday of the month 10am-11am**



Please come and join us in our discussions!  
Ask in the library for more information or

## DATES FOR DECEMBER & JANUARY

<b>Sun 5th Dec— Sat 11th Dec</b>	<u>Pantomime—'Mother Goose'</u> : See page 4 for performance and ticket information.
<b>Mon 6th Dec 1pm</b>	<u>Stanley Community Singers</u> : every Monday, new members always welcome. See page 9.
<b>Tues 7th Dec 10.30am-1pm</b>	<u>Tuesday lunch club</u> : with activities and a hot meal every Tuesday. See p16 for details.
<b>Weds 8th Dec 1.30pm-3.30pm</b>	<u>Knit &amp; Natter</u> every Wednesdays with crafts, chat and refreshments. See page 8.
<b>Weds 8th Dec 5pm-7pm</b>	<u>Santa comes to Stanley Community centre</u> with free gift, kids' rides, charity stalls etc. See p9.
<b>Sat 11th Dec 10.30-12.30pm</b>	<u>Coffee morning</u> with bacon butties, tombola, raffle, refreshments, jigsaws and more, see p8.
<b>Sun 12th Dec 10am</b>	<u>St Nicholas parade service</u> : bring a wrapped gift for a child in need this Christmas, see p15.
<b>Sun 12th Dec 3pm</b>	<u>Stanley Singers Christmas Concert</u> with festive songs and carols. See page 9 for details.
<b>Weds 15th Dec 7.30pm</b>	<u>PCC meeting</u> at St Peter's church.
<b>Sun 19th Dec 10am</b>	<u>Morning Carol Service</u> with your favourite carols and Bible readings, with refreshments.
<b>Sun 19th Dec 3pm</b>	<u>Outdoor Carol singing</u> : meet in the church car park for carol singing and refreshments, see p15
<b>Fri 24th Dec &amp; Sat 25th Dec</b>	<u>Christmas Eve and Christmas Day</u> : see centre pages for details of our Christmas services.
<b>Sun 9th Jan 10am</b>	<u>Family service for Epiphany</u> with drama & readings to tell the story the wise men.
<b>Sat 15th Jan 10.30-12.30pm</b>	<u>Coffee morning</u> with bacon butties, tombola, raffle, refreshments, jigsaws and more, see p8.

### **Mount Road Methodist Chapel—services this month:**

- Family Service at 10.30am on Sunday 5th December: the preacher will be Mr Gordon Kay.
- 10.30am on Sunday 12th December: the morning service will be a local arrangement.
- Family Service at 10.30am on Sunday 19th December: the preacher will be Mr David Hann.
- Please see page 10 for a review of the fair held last month.

### **Knit and Natter, Sew and Chatter!**

At St Peter's Church, every **Wednesday, 1.30pm-3.30pm**

*(Note earlier start and finish times for the winter months)*

Enjoy a cuppa, company and a 'crafty' afternoon!

Please come and join this established group as they knit, sew, compare ideas and patterns, learn new crafty skills, and share conversation, refreshments and friendship.

**Just turn up: you will be very warmly welcomed**

### **Coffee Morning thank you**

A huge thank you to everyone who came along to last month's coffee morning. It was a lovely morning and very well attended, raising £293.80 for church funds.

This month's coffee morning will be on **11th December from 10.30am-12.30pm** so please come along for bacon butties, refreshments, raffle, tombola, jigsaws, general chit-chat and socialising!



The first coffee morning in the New Year will be on **Saturday 15th January 10.30am-12.30pm** which is actually the 3rd Saturday in the month for a change!

Please join us at our next coffee morning events. We look forward to seeing you all again.



Stanley Community Singers



# Christmas Concert

**Sunday 12th December, 3pm**

St Peter's Church, Lake Lock Road, Stanley



With a varied programme of festive songs and singalong carols



Also with a raffle and refreshments

**Buy tickets on the door: £4 adults & 50p children**

*Wear something Christmassy if you want to!*

---

The Stanley Community Singers will be returning to rehearsals after the Christmas break on Monday 10th January 2022. Please think about joining us! We meet every Monday in term time with singing from 1pm-2pm. No experience required!

## Santa to visit Stanley Community Centre!

*Wednesday 8th December, 5pm-7pm*



Thanks to our fantastic local councillors, Santa will be coming to Stanley again this year! This wonderful community awareness and fundraising event at Stanley Community Centre will be happening on Wednesday 8th December. Santa will be arriving at 5pm with a free gift for every child, so there will be plenty of time to visit Santa during the evening. There will also be local charity and community group stalls so come and bag a Christmas bargain and find out more about what's going on locally. There will also be free kids' roundabout outside. Please come along and support your local groups and enjoy a special community event.

## Mount Road Chapel—an update

The Chapel would like to everyone for supporting our recent event on 20th November. It was gratifying to see so many people there, and an unexpected £481 was raised for which we are extremely grateful. It was good to meet old friends in such a friendly atmosphere, and also to greet new faces who had reached out to us. We were also delighted to welcome Councillor Matthew Morley.

Conversation was far ranging and highlighted common problems, such as the fear of venturing out since the pandemic, especially into crowded places. This has led to reduced congregations and fewer people offering their help; the situation faced by Stanley Methodist Chapel is not an isolated case but typical of that faced by all places of worship. Another issue raised was the lack of availability of premises for hire by organisations and individuals.

We had no idea how many people might come along, and so were prudent with our refreshment planning; as a result the cake stall sold out completely!

We hope to schedule a Candlelight carol service with a brass band in the run-up to Christmas. If the planning comes off, we will publicise it locally on noticeboards and on the Stanley Facebook page.



Regards, Tony Bell

### *From the Stanley Parish Register*

#### ***Funerals***

*Conducted by clergy from St Peter's church at the church, or the crematorium*

Harry Crook	6th October 2021
Sylvia Round	13th October 2021
Jean Spittle	16th November 2021

#### ***Baptisms***

Callum James Bielby	10th October 2021
Clara Jane Mary Bielby	10th October 2021
Cosmin Cole Tofei	10th October 2021
Phoebe Leia Williams	10th October 2021
Ellie Elizabeth Rose Fisher	17th October 2021

## **St Peter's Church is a Co-op 'Local Cause'**

St Peter's church is delighted to be selected by the Co-op stores as a 'Local Cause'. This means that over the next 11 months, the church will receive a penny for every £ spent by Co-op members in our local stores (Stanley, Outwood & Woodlesford).

The church is following in the footsteps of the Stanley Residents Group which was a Local Cause last year, and received £7,850 towards the excellent work they are doing to develop our local environment (see page 14 for more information about SRG).



We initially submitted an application to become a Local Cause to support our Community Pantomime, which we have been staging for over 15 years. We intend to use some of the money that we receive towards the expensive task of cleaning, repairing and maintaining our enormous store of costumes. The funds that we receive through the Co-op Community Fund will make a huge difference to our on-going work in our community: providing a church, community building and activities which are accessible to every member of our community.

Over the next 11 months we will be promoting our community activities in the local Co-op stores, with posters and displays. In the meantime, you can support our cause by becoming a Co-op member, and by selecting St Peter's church as your local cause.

If you shop regularly at the Stanley or Outwood Co-op stores, you can become a member by going to [www.coop.co.uk/membership](http://www.coop.co.uk/membership). Once you have set yourself up as a member, you can go to 'Choose a local cause': select St Peter's Church, Stanley as your local cause, and the church will immediately start to receive a penny for every £ you spend in the Co-op. The scheme will run until November 2022 so there is plenty of time.

We would like to thank the Co-op for selecting St Peter's Church as a local cause and for all their support and advice. We would also like to thank our local councillors Jacqui Williams, Matthew Morley and Jack Hemingway for their recent support in helping us secure a £500 grant from Wakefield Council to cover some of the costs of staging this year's Mother Goose pantomime.



# Christmas Events 2021

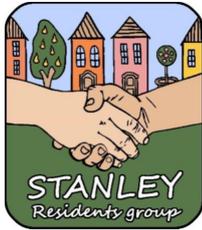
*At St Peter's Church, Lake Lock Road,  
Stanley, Wakefield*

<b>Sunday 5th— Saturday 11th December</b>	<p><u>Mother Goose pantomime</u>: some tickets are still available for our pantomime! Contact us via our Facebook page or email <a href="mailto:churchoffice@stpeters-stanley.org.uk">churchoffice@stpeters-stanley.org.uk</a></p> 
<b>Wednesday 8th December 5pm-7pm</b>	<p><u>Santa comes to Stanley</u> at Stanley Community centre, organised by our local councillors. With free kids' roudabout, local community group and charity stalls, refreshments, and free visit to see Santa who will be there from the start at 5pm.</p> 
<b>Saturday 11th December 10.30am-12.30pm</b>	<p><u>Coffee morning</u> at St Peter's Church with refreshments, bacon butties, raffle, tombola, jigsaws and more! Everyone welcome!</p> 
<b>Sunday 12th December 10am</b>	<p><u>St Nicholas Parade Service</u> at St Peter's Church. Bring a wrapped gift for a boy or a girl and label with the suggested age. Barnardos will distribute the gifts to children who might not receive much this Christmas.</p> 
<b>Sunday 12th December 3pm</b>	<p><u>Stanley Community Singers Christmas Concert</u> at St Peter's Church. Join our local choir for an enjoyable afternoon concert of festive songs and singalong carols, followed by refreshments. <i>Please buy your tickets on the door: £4 adults, 50p children.</i></p> 

<p><b>Sunday 19th December 10am</b></p>	<p><u>Morning Carol Service:</u> our Sunday morning service will be a carol service featuring traditional Bible readings and all your favourite carols.</p> 
<p><b>Sunday 19th December, 3pm</b></p> 	<p><u>Outdoor Carol Singing:</u> after the success of last year's outdoor carol singing, we have another opportunity to meet in the church car park and enjoy singing carols together, outside. Wrap up warm!</p>
<p><b>Friday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2pm</b></p>	<p><u>Christmas Eve Crib service:</u> a very popular service for all ages at St Peter's Church, with carols, dressing up, crafts and refreshments.</p> 
<p><b>Friday 24<sup>th</sup> December 11pm</b></p>	<p><u>Christmas Eve Communion Services:</u> join us at 11pm at St Peter's Church for a traditional communion service to welcome Christmas Day.</p>
<p><b>Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> December 10am</b></p>	<p><u>Christmas Day family service</u> to celebrate the birth of Jesus.</p> 
<p><b>Sunday 9th January 2022 10am</b></p>	<p><u>Family Service for Epiphany</u> with drama and readings about the visit of the wise men to Bethlehem.</p> 
<p><b>Saturday 15th January 2022 10.30am-12.30pm</b></p>	<p><u>Coffee morning</u> at St Peter's Church with refreshments, bacon butties, raffle, tombola, jigsaws and more! Everyone welcome!</p>

See our website for further details of these events, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter:

 <a href="https://facebook.com/stpeters.stanley">facebook.com/stpeters.stanley</a>	 <a href="http://www.stpeters-stanley.org.uk">www.stpeters-stanley.org.uk</a>	 <a href="https://twitter.com/stpeters">@stpeters</a>
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## Stanley Residents' Group update

The SRG was delighted to be selected as one of the local causes supported by the Co-op and its members in 2020-21. We put in a bid for funding to support local community gardening projects to bring the community together and improve our environment, and we are thrilled to have received over £7,850.

Some of the money has already been used to kick start the Community Orchard on Mount Road, where volunteers have planted apple, pear and plum trees and will soon dig in soft fruit canes. Stanley Grove Primary School and local people have sponsored some of the individual trees leaving more funds available for the wider plans to enhance this area, to bring to life its heritage as the old railway cutting passing under the bridge.

Plans are also afoot to refurbish the raised beds outside Cross Keys and to install new planters at the entrances to Stanley. The group has given away free spring bulbs and small tree whips to locals to plant in their own gardens. Plans are now being developed to implement these and other ideas arising from consultation with locals, and there is additional bonus prize money to add to the pot from the SRG Love Where You Live award for a Community Group. Everyone is welcome to contribute brains or brawn to all of these projects over the coming months.

The SRG was disappointed to learn that it is no longer permissible to place small lit Christmas trees in memory of loved ones on lamp posts throughout Stanley or the wider district. In its stead, the SRG has teamed up with Stanley Library to enable locals to place names of ones we have loved and lost on the Christmas tree in the library. Everyone is welcome to visit the library between December 6th and 24th to write a name on one of the tags decorated by local children.

The next Stanley Residents Group meeting is the AGM on Monday 10th January at 6.30pm at the Thatched House pub. Please come along, we would be delighted to welcome you.

**Stanley Residents Group**

## **Come and sing Christmas Carols!** **Sunday 19th December 10am & 3pm**

We all love the opportunity to sing Christmas carols with gusto, perhaps more so this year because we weren't allowed to sing at all last year because of the covid restrictions, or even stand next to each other.



However, thankfully things are different this year, and we are free to sing Christmas carols, together. On Sunday 19th December we are holding both a carol service and an outdoor carol singing event, and both are opportunities to join in with our most favourite and familiar Christmas carols.

There will be a Carol Service at 10am on Sunday 19th December with lots of carols and familiar Bible readings, followed by refreshments.

And also Outdoor Carol Singing at 3pm on Sunday 19th December. Meet in the church car park for half an hour of outdoor carol singing, also with some refreshments. Remember to wrap up warm and come prepared for all weathers!

## **St Nicholas Parade service, Sunday 12th December, 10am**

The St Nicholas family and parade service is an opportunity to donate a wrapped gift for a child who might otherwise not receive much this Christmas. The gifts will be given to the Barnados charity to be distributed. Please bring a wrapped gift, labelled with a suggested age and gender.



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## **Wine tasting evening thank you**



Thank you to everyone who organised and attended our wine tasting evening last month. We had a great time, sampling white and red wines and trying to decide which they were from some very interesting descriptions! Our wine auction at the end of the evening raised £162 for Children in Need.



## St Peter's Church Tuesday Lunch Club



At St Peter's Church, Lake Lock Road  
Every Tuesday, 10am—1.30pm

- Arrive from 10.30am and enjoy tea or coffee and a chat, followed by the activity of the day e.g. crafts, talks, films, games, quizzes.
- Lunch served from about 12:15pm: a freshly cooked hot meal followed by dessert, for just **£5** per person.
- Ideal for anyone wanting a bit of companionship and something to do! Please come and join our friendly group.

### Our plan for the next few weeks:

- Tues 7th Dec: Christmas crafts
- Tues 14th Dec: Christmas lunch when we will be welcoming year 6 children from Stanley St Peter's school to sing. Huge thanks to the Unite Union for giving us some funding towards providing the Christmas dinner.
- Tues 21st Dec: Christmas party with party food, Santa visit, games and singalong carols.
- Tues 28th Dec: Closed—no lunch club

**Phone the church office on 01924 835746 for more info.**



### The great work of St Columba

It was 1500 years ago, on 7th December 521, that St Columba, an Irish missionary who spread Christianity in Scotland and the North of England, was born in what is now County Donegal. He became a missionary after he and his 12 followers landed on Iona, a tiny island off the west coast of Scotland, built a Celtic church and established a monastic community. Iona quickly became known throughout Europe as a missionary centre and school, and is still a place of pilgrimage to this day. He and those associated with him spread the gospel more than any other religious pioneers in Britain. The name Columba is Latin for 'dove'.

## A Christmas Gift

*The Revd Canon Paul Hardingham considers the gifts of the Magi*

It's not easy getting the right Christmas present for others, especially in these uncertain times. However, the Magi's gifts were entirely appropriate and help us to understand God's gift of Jesus to us.

“On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.” (Matt 2:11). These were the expensive kind of gifts that visitors from the east would bring: gold, frankincense (a plant gum resin used in incense) and myrrh (another resin used in perfumes).

### Who is He?

Gold is a gift for a king. In Jesus, we see a king in baby clothes. The worship of the wise men was costly, not only in terms of their gifts but for their lives.

### Why did He come?

Frankincense was used by the priests in the temple in offering sacrifices. Jesus, as the ultimate priest, is the one who came to bring God and man together. He could do this because He is both divine and human.

### What did it cost Him?

Myrrh was used to embalm the dead. This gift reminds us that the baby of Bethlehem would die on the cross to give His life for us. The wood of the crib and the cross are the same wood!

What are we going to offer Him this Christmas? Jesus is Christ, the king who comes to rule our lives; He's Lord, the One who knows what it's like to be human as well as divine; and He's Saviour, who enables us to be friends of God.



*“At Christmas time, when we receive presents that we don't really need, God offers us a gift we cannot do without.”*

J John, Evangelist

## Old church site Memorial Garden

If you've been for a wander through the old churchyard recently you may have noticed some new benches which have been installed by our local councillors. One bench bears the inscription:



*This bench has been placed here by your local councillors—Jacqui Williams, Jack Hemingway and Matthew Morley—to commemorate all the hard work and friendship offered by the STANLEY MUTUAL AID GROUP during the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic, with grateful thanks to all involved.*

The councillors have also had a tree planted which has the inscription:

*In commemoration of the lives lost to Covid-19 and with thanks to the selfless commitment of all who have contributed to the response.*



It is very thoughtful of the councillors to install a permanent reminder of those we lost during the pandemic, and also those who contributed so much to support their neighbours and community during such a difficult time.

The old churchyard memorial garden is slowly taking shape, with the war memorial, miners' wheel, pathways and various benches now being in place. We can look forward to some spring flowers thanks to the bulb planting that has taken place this year, and some trees have also been planted. It is not too late to sign up to sponsor a tree in the memorial garden: please contact either Stanley Residents group or St Peter's church if you would like to sponsor a tree or get involved with any of the planting or maintenance.



Thank you to the local councillors, Stanley Residents group and the church for their ongoing efforts to develop the old church site into somewhere very special that we can all enjoy and be proud of.

## *Prayers for this month*

### **Your Gift of Life – at Christmas**

Creaking on the staircase -  
Noise outside my door -  
A rustle in the chimney –  
It's 'Santa-time' once more.  
St Nicholas is on his way  
With all his Christ-life gifts  
To fire every child-light with  
The loving Christ-mass kiss.

In some he'll place the gift of gold -  
In others frankincense -  
While others will be given myrrh -  
All signs of God's presence.

For in each earthly crib or bed  
In squalor, comfort, splendour -  
The Christ child has been placed again  
To call the world to wonder.

So come you kings, come one, come all,  
Come shepherds to the cradle stall  
And hear the angels sing a-new  
The heavenly song they sing for you.

Your God is in your gift of life -  
The life He gives with love –  
So take the gift and use it,  
Use it wisely,  
don't abuse it,  
Let the Christ-life  
fire your spirit  
That God in you  
may LIVE.

*By Sam Doubtfire*



### **Christmas Presence**

*Unto us a child is born  
To us a son is given...*

And you will call Him  
Immanuel, God with us.

Jesus, God actually with us.

God's greatest gift,  
Born into weakness  
and vulnerability,  
Sharing life's raw reality,  
Family rows, family rejoicing,  
Broken relationships,  
broken hearts,  
Grief and great suffering,  
Rejection and injustice,  
Despair and death.

Yet through it all  
Still the gift goes on  
Revealing God's  
grace and power  
And peace to overcome.  
This is a gift that  
cannot be wrapped,  
That will never break  
Or pass its sell-by date.  
This is Jesus,  
The greatest gift.

Receive God's  
Christmas presence  
And walk on with Him.  
*By Daphne Kitching*

*Please contact the editor, Eleanor Plant, with items for the next magazine on  
01924 835746, or by email: [churchoffice@stpeters-stanley.org.uk](mailto:churchoffice@stpeters-stanley.org.uk)*



## Was Jesus really born on 25th December?

Almost certainly not. But the story of how that date came to be chosen as Jesus's birthday is one that stretches back long before his birth. It seems to have started on the Greek island of Rhodes in 283 BC. That year the solstice fell on 25th December, and it was also the year that the Ancient World's largest Sun God statue, the 34 metre, 200 tonne Colossus of Rhodes, was consecrated. By 46 BC, Julius Caesar had made 25th December the official winter solstice. In AD 274, the Roman Emperor Aureilian chose the winter solstice to be the birthday of the Sun God. He also decreed that Sol Invictus (the unconquered sun) was 'Lord of the Roman Empire'.

50 years after that, Constantine became the first pro-Christian Roman Emperor. He wanted the Church to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on 25th December. Perhaps he felt that Jesus was more or less the same person as the mighty Sun God. Or perhaps he felt that the ancient Sun God's association with goodness, light, warmth and life would help ease the people's transition from paganism to Christianity.

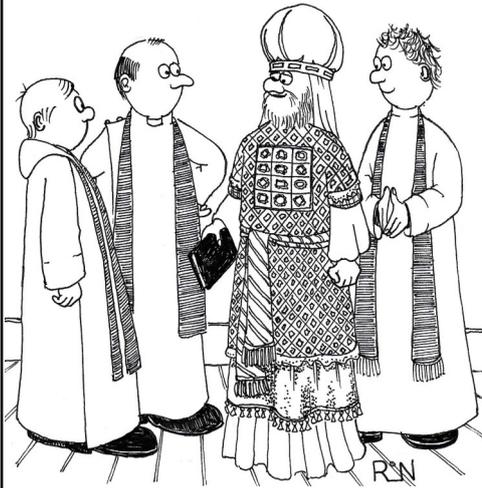
Whatever the reason, the Church went along with it, and chose 25th December to be the date of Christmas. And in an ancient mosaic in the crypt of St Peter's Cathedral, Jesus is portrayed as adorned with sun rays and riding in a chariot – just like Sol Invictus. As for the huge, bronze 200 tonne Sol Invictus? He fell over during an earthquake and was sold off for scrap metal in 654AD by an enterprising Arab scrap merchant. Meanwhile, Jesus lives on...

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## Look out for Wenceslas on 26th December

Many of us will recall JM Neale's well-known carol: "*Good King Wenceslas looked out, on the Feast of Stephen, when the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even*". But did you know that Wenceslas was a real person, a duke, and effectively king of Bohemia in the 10th century? In modern terms, he was Czechoslovakian. He was a generous and kind monarch, deeply Christian and given to good works. The enormously popular carol written by Victorian hymn-writer JM Neale describes the monarch braving the bitter weather to take food and fuel to a poor man living rough. Whilst the story was probably fictitious, it is at least in line with what is known about King Wenceslas' character. It also perfectly expressed the Victorian Christian ideals of benevolence and almsgiving.

## Cartoon Corner



Barry was secretly proud of his part in the Nativity play



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### Weddings and Baptisms

For information about weddings and baptisms please see the Vicar or Curate after any church service or telephone 01924 218484.

### Contact us:

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