



Highway



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Dec 2023 / Jan 2024

Free

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Babies do that to you

*After the lights and the kisses,
the visits and the visitors,
the presents and the promises,
only a Baby remains;*

*and parents who have never
been this way before.
After the dreams and the whispers,
the angels and the merrymakers,*

*comes the silence;
comes crying in the night,
a long, interrupted journey,
along a strange path.*

*Things will never be
as they were before
Babies do that to you;
Jesus does that to you.*

*But He comes with you all the way,
carrying love in His tiny hand,
holding heaven in His heart.*

by Tim Lenton



Dear Friends

by Canon Paul Hardingham

The Heart of Christmas

We're at that time of year again! But is Christmas just about the shopping, tree or presents? At its heart, Christmas is all about a God who has showed up on earth. The Creator of the universe, whose hands flung stars into space, cared enough to come to earth as a tiny baby. 'The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.' (John 1:14)

Every year we sing carols and retell the same story of the donkey, innkeeper, stable, angels, shepherds, star, wise men, gifts and Mary and Joseph with baby! Why do we do all this? It's to remind us that God deals with the mess of our world by sending His Son to die in our place. This makes it possible for us to have a relationship with Himself:



When the time came, He "did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)

Reflecting on Jesus in the manger is a great place to start understanding the heart of the Christmas message. However, it's so much more than simply a cute baby lying in the bed of straw:

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator;

If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist;

If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist;

If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer;

But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Saviour.

by the Revd Jo White

The Light of the World

During the month of December, people are 'counting down' to Christmas Day in an ever-increasing variety of ways.

In my childhood we had a simple card with a traditional picture of a manger scene with doors marked with the countdown numbers and a picture of the different characters behind each. If my parents had extra money to spend, they would buy one with shiny snow made of sparkles!

These days you can pay hundreds to have a gift for each day from toys to jewellery. And don't fret, your pets can have their own also!

Churches don't normally count the days, but they do note the four Sundays before Christmas Day. They give each of those four 'advent' Sundays a theme and light a candle each time. One for the first week, two for the second and so on.

Unlike the secular world, the church counts up, and not down. It increases the light as we get nearer to Christmas Day and then adds an extra light on that day. So, a total of five candles.

Churches vary in their use of colour in the candles. Some will use all white, whilst many only use white for the Christ-light on Christmas Day and 'colours' on the four Sundays.

There again they vary; some use all purple – originally the most expensive colour – as we prepare for The King. In a more modern style, some use blue – perhaps recalling the most associated colour for Jesus' mother Mary. But perhaps reminding us of creation and that we are surrounded by God's love as the earth is surrounded by the blue sky.

And again, others will change the colours for each Sunday, often giving the third Sunday to be pink as we are over half-way through Advent and it is known as Gaudete – Joyful – Sunday. Or there are those who make the fourth Sunday pink, as that one is often dedicated to Mary and it's a 'girly' colour.

This month
Have a look at the advent candles in your church,
or perhaps in your own home, and think about
what the colours mean to you. How do they
reflect your faith? Whatever the colour – Have a
Good Christmas!



May I wish so very many friends, friendships forged over the fifty years, a very happy Christmas and a healthy and safe 2024.
Ted



It's Christmas for sure.
The meaning is pure.
The birth of our Lord
We celebrate once more.
A present from God.
A child to adore.
God's blessing
for good health during
2024.

Diana Lyons

This year Robin and I are not sending Christmas Cards to all our Church friends. We will be making a donation to charity instead. We would like to wish you all a very Happy and Blessed Christmas.
From Robin and Diana (St David's)

St David's Notices

A huge **thank you** to all those who helped and supported St David's Christmas Fayre in any way at all. You helped to mark it a very successful and enjoyable event and enabled us to raised a large amount of money for St David's Restoration.

Get well wishes to Diana Bezant following her surgery from all your friends at St David's.

Birthdays

Happy 70 Birthday to Ken and Happy 90 Birthday to Eric from all your friends at St David's. They both celebrate their birthdays in December.

Dorothy



JUST IN TIME TO SAVE
THE SANITY OF
PARENTS WITH OVER-
EXCITED CHILDREN

CHAOTIC CRIB-TINGLE SERVICE

A CHRISTINGLE & CRIB
SERVICE ALL IN ONE

24 TH
DECEMBER
4 PM

CHRIST CHURCH
CYFARTHFA



Christmas Tree Festival

Christchurch Pant
8th - 10th December

Lighting up with carols - 5pm Friday December 8th

Saturday December 9th - open 10am - 3pm

Sunday 10th December 2pm - 4pm

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT WITH

CON VOCE

at st tydfils church

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER AT 6PM

FREE ENTRY

A festive Christmas-themed background with candles, oranges, and stars.

Carol Service

JOINED BY THE
CON VOCE CHOIR

17
DECEMBER
2023

3PM
Christ Church
Cyfarthfa

All Saints, Dowlais & Christchurch, Pant

The Christmas Diary



Merry Christmas



Monday 27th November at 5pm
Christmas Market at All Saints



Sunday 3rd December
St Nicholas Day Family Services



Tuesday 5th December at 2.30pm
Mothers' Union Christmas Service

Friday 8th December at 5pm in Christchurch
- Lighting up the Christmas Tree Festival with carols.

Saturday 9th December -

Christmas Tree Festival - open 10am - 3pm

Sunday 10th December - Christmas Tree Festival - open 2pm - 4pm



Sunday 11th December at 4pm in Christchurch
Girlguiding Carol Service



Sunday 17th December at 5pm - All Saints Church
Service of Lessons, Candles and Carols
with Cantorion Cyfarthfa



Christmas Eve

All Saints at 11am - Christmas Crib Family Service
- with songs, crafts, crackers and chocolate!

Christchurch at 11pm - Midnight Eucharist

Christmas Day

All Saints at 10am

- Holy Eucharist with Carols



December Services in Christ Church Cyfarthfa

3rd December	11am Informal Communion Service
10th December	11am Worship Service
17th December	3pm Carol Service (no service at 11am)
24th December	4pm a Chaotic Christingle Service (no service at 11am)
25th December	10am Christmas Communion Service
31st December	11am Café Style Communion Service in the Church Hall

Christmas services in Ss Peter & Paul Abercanaid

Regular 9:30am	Sunday services apply with the exception of the 24th
24th December	Not-Quite-Midnight Communion Service 8pm
31st December	Our Final Service in the Church... for now

St David's & St Tydfil's Christmas Services

Sunday December 10th 6pm
St Tydfil's "Carols with Con Voce".

Sunday December 17th 6pm
St. David's Church Carol Service.

Sunday December 24th
Sung Eucharist (Advent 4) St David's 9.30am
Holy Eucharist (Advent 4) St Tydfil's 11.00am
St. David's Church 1st Eucharist of Christmas 9pm

Sunday December 25th 10am
St. Tydfil's Church Family Eucharist

Is anyone listening out there?

Do you visit family, friends or neighbours, to make sure they are ok and have a good natter. You want to encourage and support them and help to show God cares for and loves them.

Would you like to share your experiences, improve your skills and understanding of issues we all grapple with as followers of Jesus?

I have organised four, one hour sessions, once a week for anyone who would like to respond to the above questions. I will be leading the sessions. They will include discussions, input from me and practising listening skills, all in a low key, informal way.

They start on Monday, January 22nd at 11.00am
at Christchurch Church Hall, Aberdare Road, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1DR

January 22nd Listening Skills

January 29th Suffering and God

February 2nd Grief and loss

February 9th Safeguarding, where we go from here, feedback

If you would like to come along, please let Fr Mark Prevett know, or you can contact me directly, or meet me in Tesco (other supermarkets are available!) on most Sunday lunchtimes after the morning services!

If you would like further information, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Email: micktaylor61@gmail.com

Phone: 07903 754 681

Many thanks

Rev Mick Taylor

St TYDFIL'S CHURCH, Merthyr Tydfil

SUNDAY 11.00am Holy Eucharist
6.00pm Healing Service (1st Sunday in the month only)

St DAVID'S CHURCH, Merthyr Tydfil

SUNDAY 9.30am Holy Eucharist
WEDNESDAY 10.30am Holy Eucharist

Ss PETER & PAUL'S CHURCH, Abercanaid

SUNDAY 9.30am Holy Eucharist

CHRIST CHURCH, Georgetown, Merthyr Tydfil

SUNDAY 11.00am Holy Eucharist

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, Dowlais

SUNDAY 11.00am Holy Eucharist

CHRISTCHURCH, Pant

SUNDAY 10.00am Holy Eucharist
WEDNESDAY 10.30am Holy Eucharist

ONLINE

SUNDAY 11.00am Dowlais & Pant Facebook and YouTube Service

St JOHN'S Troedryhiw

SUNDAY 11.00am Holy Communion

St MARY'S, Merthyr Vale

SUNDAY 9.30am Holy Communion
WEDNESDAY 10.15am Holy Communion

All services may be changed or added to especially on Saints' Days.

Please see the Ministry Area website for details

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy 80th Birthday to Cath Jones from all
your friends at Ss Peter & Paul Church. We
hope you have a great day!

MINISTRY AREA OFFICE

01685 388805

(10.00–13.00, Mon, Tue & Thur)

The office e mail address is:- lyndaattheoffice@btinternet.com

The readings for next Sunday and church news sheets can be seen and downloaded from the Publications page of the Ministry Area website at <https://www.merthytydfilministryarea.co.uk/publications>



QR Code for the
Ministry Area Website

Next issue

We don't publish in January.

Please let me have anything for February 2024
by Sunday 28 January 2024. Preferably earlier.

Next issue is due out 4 February 2024

Please e-mail your articles to

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All named articles are the work of that person. Publication does not imply agreement with the opinions expressed. Ken Lewis, Editor.