



## Advent Hope

There has been more talk this year about hope than almost any other year I can remember – hope that we'll be able to celebrate Christmas, hope that we'll be able to see family, hope that we'll be back in Church again, hope that we'll be singing carols together. It seems remarkable just how much of normal life has been put on hold. And one of my colleagues reminded me just this week that though Advent is a season of preparation, it is not a season of penitence, like Lent, but rather a season of hope – and we perhaps shouldn't confuse them by using the same purple colour for both. And that is a valuable thought – how do we prepare for our non-standard Christmas in hope?

Some readers of Connect may know TS Eliot's Four Quartets – Eliot has long been a favourite poet in some church circles (as well as being the original genius behind Cats) with poems like Ash Wednesday and The Coming of the Magi reaching deep into the Christian story and our human condition. In East Coker from the four quartets Eliot writes:

*"I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope  
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love  
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith  
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting."*



Crib prayers 2019



*(Continued from page 1)*

And in so writing, he poses the question – and what would be the right thing to hope for and how would we know and how would we know we had come to the end of our waiting? And that is also the question of Advent. Sometimes we hear people say “don’t get your hopes up,” or “don’t set your hopes too high,” which suggests we can hope wrongly, but it seems to me that the main effect is to diminish hope in an attempt to avoid disappointment. But our Christian faith, formed so much by the story of Christmas, suggests that our hopes are set way too low.

For some Christians the four Sundays in Advent are a time to reflect on the “four last things”, by which are meant death, judgment, hell and heaven – and not in a mood of morbid introspection, but of hope. These are well beyond the scope of our mundane hopes that the family will meet without a row and that everyone will behave, or even, this year, that the family will meet at all. They are “last things” because they are the things we all face at the end of our physical human life. One of my spiritual directors once described her role as helping me to prepare for my death. And it can sound morbid, but actually, what is morbid is a life lived in the fear of death and judgment and hell and from which the joy of heaven is absent. It is a reminder to us that our highest hope – our Christian hope – does not duck the challenge of life, but turns to face it – just as we see in Jesus turning to face the challenges of life at Christmas and taking the road to Calvary and the cross. And if we know anything about the Jesus story, we know it was not easy, even for him. Born away from home in makeshift circumstances, nonetheless Jesus is the ground for our hope – hope on a cosmic scale, the hope indeed of heaven.

As I write, I remember that this last week we remembered with thanks the contribution of the great hymn-writer Isaac Watts to our Christian faith and tradition. His hymns include “When I survey the wondrous cross” and also one of my favourite (but lesser known) Christmas hymns, which expresses something of our Christian hope in a way I can get my head and heart around:

*“Joy to the world! The Lord is come;  
let earth receive her king;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing.”*

Let every heart prepare him room – a great encouragement for this peculiar Advent and Christmas – we do not need the usual Christmas routines, the people, the presents and the parties, to do that. And perhaps in our homes as well as our hearts we can reflect on whether we are ready to receive him as the innkeeper did on that first Christmas.

Joy to the world – is there any better Advent hope than that?

**Mark**

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## Ramblings of an ancient Warden...

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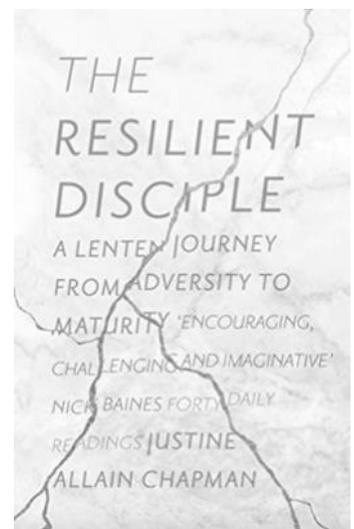
It’s mid November, windy and wet, and I am in my insulated and socially distanced Train Shed anticipating a ‘signal’ (a newly installed ‘doorbell’) to come in for tea. I am at peace...

In my isolation I have been tackling the foothills of a mountain of unread books. This



Image: [https://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/kintsugi\\_and\\_grace](https://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/kintsugi_and_grace)

week it is 'The Resilient Disciple – A Lenten Journey from Adversity to Maturity...' by Justine Allain Chapman, an Anglican priest, lecturer in practical theology, sometime Archdeacon of Boston, living near Lincoln with husband and four children. The topic for Tuesday of the fourth week of Lent is 'Kintsugi – the art of repairing with gold'. This is new to me and I am intrigued. She writes:



*'For five hundred years, kintsugi, 'joining with gold', has been practiced in Japan as the art of mending. The story is of a fifteenth-century military commander, Ashikaga Yoshimasa, who was disappointed with the repair of his favourite, but broken, Chinese tea bowls. He asked the craftsman to come up with some better method of repairing them and so a seam of lacquer and precious metal was used to restore them. These bowls are fragile and made of rigid pottery that cracks and breaks. The mending with lacquer mixed with powdered gold usually results in something more beautiful than the original. The philosophy behind this art of broken pieces is that nothing is ever truly broken. Using gold is an extravagance, you could argue, because it is cheaper to replace a piece of broken pottery than to mend it. The break, however, is an important part of the object's history and becomes more precious than it was before. Such an approach ... which, in contrast to Western values of perfection and symmetry, finds beauty in the damaged and imperfect... The art of kintsugi draws attention to the life of the pot, once broken, repaired and continuing its life more beautiful than before the break.'*

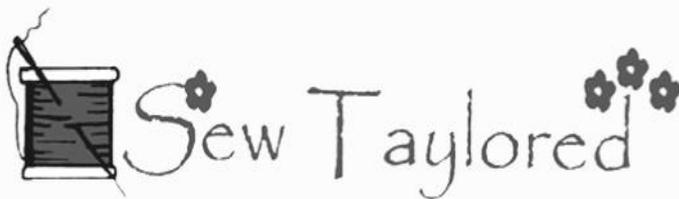
The author goes on to write about suffering and the value of healing. The art of kintsugi is a reminder that the healing that comes from brokenness of any sort is precious. She draws on the story of Peter, broken after the crucifixion, 'restored by Jesus, recalled to follow and given a new role – to feed Christ's sheep and tend his lambs. As someone who had fallen and suffered, Jesus could now place Peter in the pastoral role of shepherd and teacher'.

I am reminded of a favourite television programme 'The Repair Shop' where the theme is to restore treasured items, often of no real financial value but highly prized for childhood or family memories. Whilst the skills of the restorers bring a warm glow to the viewer the effect on the owner is often a release of emotion, perhaps even therapeutic when the item had been neglected or broken. This cathartic effect is

there to be shared by the viewer and we are relaxed in a peace that can come from memories and life experiences which follow a similar path.

Such peace is healing and, as 'kintsugi restores objects to functionality and makes them beautiful', we are ready to be used again. We can be 'ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, evermore his praise to sing'. Let us be ready for Jesus to restore us and affirm our role as we emerge ever hopeful from lockdown...

**CSJW Nov 2020**



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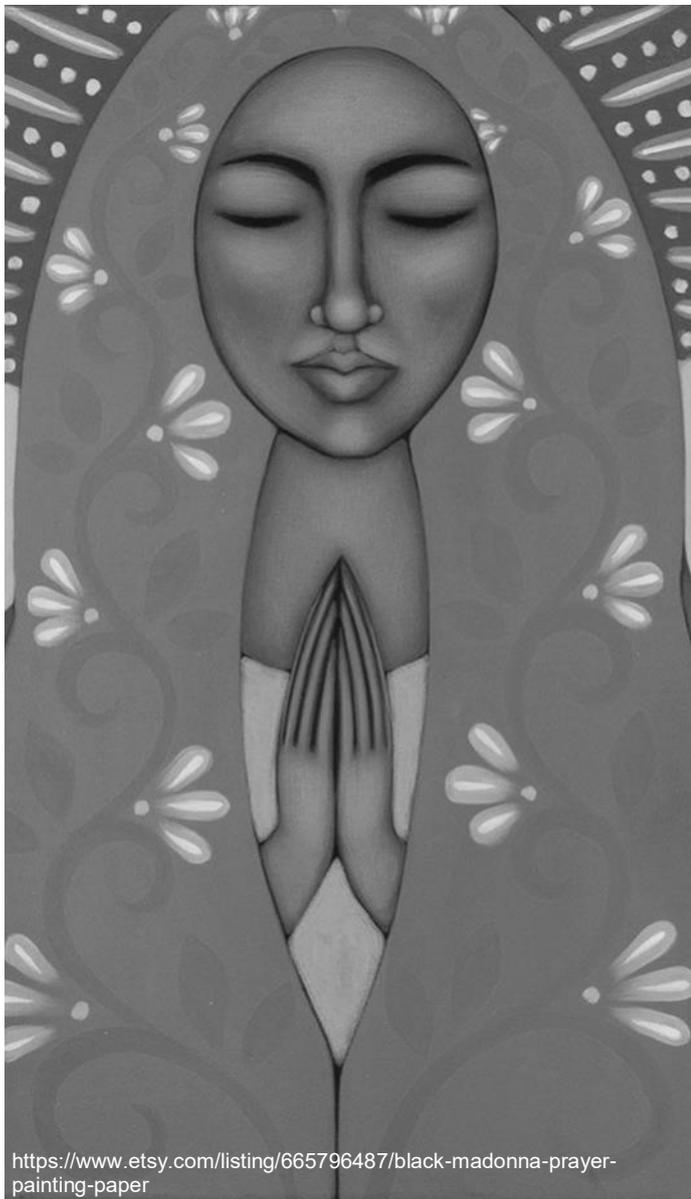
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## This months prayer...

### **Most Loving Heavenly Father, Hear our prayers for the church and the world.**

We pray for the work of the church, that by your Holy Spirit, it would speak of your saving power and love in every place. Bless all you have called in the specific ministries of preaching, teaching and evangelism. In these increasingly uncertain times when we have to 'do church' differently, we ask for wisdom and inspiration for our leaders as they manage the ever-changing landscape brought about by the Coronavirus which has prevented all the usual services from going ahead.. Christmas will be quite different this year Lord and we lift up to you anyone who cannot receive family or friends and will be spending this time of celebration on their own. May they know your abiding presence.

### *God of Wisdom, hear our prayer*

We pray for the world. With so much wrong, it's hard to know where to begin. We uphold the war-torn countries where peace is a distant and faded memory. For all refugees and those who risk their lives in pursuit of a better life for themselves and their families. We pray for those leaders of the nations who fight their neighbours. May they replace warfare with dialogue, guns with books and all hostility and hatred with love and mutual respect.



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We also think of our brothers and sisters around the world who do not have a NHS equivalent, all who are malnourished, all who have absolutely nothing.

*God of Peace, hear our prayer*

We pray that an effective vaccine will be produced and distributed. Be with all scientists and researchers as they seek to rid the world of this terrible pandemic that has claimed the lives of thousands and affected the livelihoods of many more.

*God of Healing, hear our prayer*

May we trust in your perfect timing to bring about wholeness, healing and peace. So often, we might try to rush and do things in our own way. Forgive us for our selfish and foolish ways and lead us, buy your Spirit and may our will align with yours.

Draw us closer to You as You draw closer to us.

*God of Patience, hear our prayer*

Loving Lord, as we celebrate the birth of Your Son and our Saviour this Christmas, our fervent prayer is that more and more people will appreciate the significance of this wonderful event. May this year be a turning point in people's lives and may they experience the Love of God for themselves through people who care. Come alongside all who dare to trust You, all who are perhaps nervous or fearful, all whose past experiences have led them to lose their trust in someone else. We entrust their lives into your protection and care.

*God of Compassion, hear our prayer*

We do not know what lies ahead and we might struggle with that. Remind us that You are the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and that you promised never to leave or forsake us. We thank and praise you for your incredible love that we simply don't deserve, Keep us in Your abiding presence.

*God of Love, hear our prayer*

**Amen**

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## Hello from Emmer Green!

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It's me, your fairly-used (as opposed to new) curate – Leonard, husband and best friend to Joanna, and daddy (or beachball) to our three nibbly-nobbles (now teenagers... unfortunately, and as you are all well aware).

As I enter the phase of transitioning from curate to incumbent, through Mark's generosity and the forethought of the Bishop and the Archdeacon, I started a placement this month at St Barnabas Church in Emmer Green, Reading. The placement is a good opportunity to further develop my leadership as it offers a step up in responsibilities whilst the incumbent vicar slowly recovers from a long lay-off due to ill health.



My first tasks are around getting the congregation back together as a worshipping community for the first time since the initial lockdown back in March. Simultaneously, we are completing a risk assessment so they can get back into their building after this lockdown, while also planning for the Christmas period. I have already put some of my learnings from Thatcham to good use as we successfully worshipped together via Zoom last Sunday (15th November). The standing committee then voted to do the same again for Christ the King, so it couldn't have been too bad. However, I hope that by the time you're reading this we would be on the verge of holding a worship service in the church building, as a community, and the first such service since March.

The congregation have been very generous and welcoming so far — one of them gave me a box of luxury chocolates on my first day, and with the vicar's blessings, they even installed me in his office as a day-to-day base in the parish. I have spent much of my time so far connecting with people and getting to understand the individuals and the benefice better—lots of phone calls and a number of socially-distanced face-to-face meetings.

The pace of work has definitely picked up for me, delivering the step-up and challenge that I was hoping for. I currently have three weddings to put together from scratch, two needing immediate attention, including all the legal elements that Chris and Ann Watts would have quietly taken care of in the background. I have one confirmation candidate to prepare, three Sunday services to put together and coordinate, and a pair of churchwardens who are 'delighted' at the prospect of all my brilliant new ways of doing things. Oh, and did I mention a ministry team and a pastoral care team to get back into a pattern of meeting and working together? The list simply goes on and on!!

Two things are clear to me at this point: First, that I will be in Emmer Green beyond Christmas; Second, I really am enjoying the experience and challenge. The pace is relentless at the moment, but I'm sure I'll miss it all when it's over.

Well, you all remain in our hearts. Kindly pray for us –Joanna, the nibbly-nobbles, the Emmer Green community, and me. Have a very happy Christmas, when we get there, and I look forward to seeing you all again in the new year!

With love and prayers.

**Leonard (Nov 2020)**



# the prayer course

Following on from Mark's lockdown reflections on prayer, we would like to build on this in the New Year and delve deeper into the subject of prayer.

The Prayer Course is written by Pete Greig, founder of the 24/7 prayer movement and author of several books on prayer.

This is an 8-week course, using the Lord's Prayer as a basis, which aims to help people grow and deepen their prayer lives.

The course is split into 8 sessions:

1. Why Pray?
2. Adoration
3. Petition
4. Intercession
5. Unanswered Prayer
6. Contemplation
7. Listening
8. Spiritual Warfare

Each session will be made up of a video, discussion questions and practical prayer activities. There is also a whole 'toolshed' of practical ideas, so it's not just theory!

We would meet in small groups (no more than 9 people), either online or in person, depending on restrictions and the preferences of the people who take part.

Please let Marcia know if you'd like to come along, and indicate whether you would prefer daytime or evening. [marcia.wadham@outlook.com](mailto:marcia.wadham@outlook.com)

More information on the course is available at <https://prayercourse.org/>

**Marcia Wadham and Sue Ball**

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## Who's Who in the Thatcham Team Ministry

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### Team Rector

Mark Bennet 867342

### Team Vicar - St. Barnabas

Nicola Hulks 864916

### Associate Clergy:

Marion Fontaine 861742

Brenda Harland 865064

Leonard Onugha 07415 042442

Angela Brennan 07498 801479

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### Parish Administrator

Ann Watts 862277

The Parish office is open Monday and Friday mornings, 9.30am to 1.00pm, answer phone at other times.

**Email:** admin.stmarysthattham@ntlbusiness.com

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### Churchwardens

Paul Bullock 07867 361559

Colin Waters 07484 774086

Chris Watts 864567

### Future copies

**Connect** is published ten times a year and is available from St. Mary's and St. Barnabas Churches, Thatcham, or by post from the Parish Office, tel. 862277.

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### Article Deadline

Please give articles for the **February** edition to Steve Rice (860431) or any of the clergy or churchwardens or email [julie@dunwell.org](mailto:julie@dunwell.org) by **15th January**.



## Services at St. Mary's Church

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### Sunday Services

9.30 am **Parish Communion**

(Mask required)

11.00 am **Parish Communion**

in Churchyard if weather allows - bring suitable seating and wear appropriate clothing - Service in St Mary's if weather is inclement (masks required if inside)

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(All other regular services on hold until further notice due to Covid 19 restrictions)

### 6.30 pm Sunday Evening Services

1st Sunday **Sung Evensong**

2nd Sunday **No service**

3rd Sunday **Healing Service**

### Wednesdays

9.45 am **Holy Communion**

10.30 am **'ABC'** (Adults, Babies, Children)

### Every Weekday

9.00 am **Morning Prayer** (In the chapel)



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## Services at St. Barnabas Church

(meeting in Thatcham Park School)

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### 10.00 am Sunday Services

1st Sunday **Worship Service**

2nd Sunday **Communion**

3rd Sunday **Worship Service**

4th Sunday **Communion**

5th Sunday **Worship Service**

Face coverings required - More details from Revd. Brenda Harland 01635 865064

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[www.stbarnabasthattham.weebly.com](http://www.stbarnabasthattham.weebly.com)

Serving to Build Community



## Dates for your diary

Sundays **Inside service** - 9.30 am from 6th December (TBC)  
Sun 29 Nov **Advent Sunday** - 9.30 am zoom meeting

For St Barnabas Podcast <https://anchor.fm/nicola-hulks>

For The Church of England services <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>

For the Diocesan live stream <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19/livestream/>



## For the Record...

### Baptism

None

### Weddings

None

### Funerals

17 Nov	Christine Bonner	73
19 Nov	Jill Wheeler	82
27 Nov	Shirley Allen	83



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## Goodbye to Glenn and Steph Peters

After a long and eventful journey Glenn and Steph finally moved at the end of November. Both Glenn and Steph have been regular and valued members of St Barnabas. Latterly Glenn was church warden and Steph our children's leader, both worked tirelessly and encouragingly in things like SOS and Café worship and have been an inspiration to us all. We will miss you! However, they have promised to keep in touch and pop in from time to time when they visit family in this area.

We wish them and their family all the best!

**Brenda**



## Our Churchyard Nativity Trail!

In a PCC meeting a few months ago the idea was hatched to create some kind of outdoor nativity scene for this Christmas. Even at that early stage we had begun to realise that having our usual joy filled festivities inside the church might not be possible this year and so the idea of creating some way to share the Christmas story, particularly with families in our area, seemed essential.

As you'll all know we have a wonderful relationship with Thatcham Park School so we approached them with the idea and, as expected, they tackled it with their usual enthusiasm and creativity. And so, as we speak, four giant nativity scenes are being painted by the children at the school ready to be put up in St Mary's Churchyard in December.

The trail will follow the nativity story and at each station there will be a QR code which, by the magic of the internet and a mobile phone, will play you a video of part of the nativity story. The videos will feature some of the children from our baby and toddler group, ABC, and will end with music recorded by St Mary's choir and the St Barnabas band. The trail will also end with a giant star which forms part of the trail of stars being set up by the council across Thatcham.

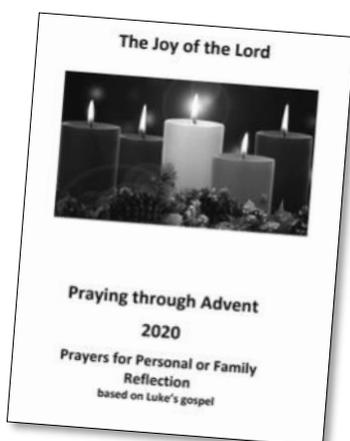
The trail will be up from early December – keep an eye on our weekly newsletter for more information – and do come down and spread the word so that we can continue to share the joy and hope of the Christmas message with our community.

**Rev Nicola**

...There will also be a Star resident in the Church Yard for families and Children to hang their hand made Stars on. The Schools are all busy making stars too. There will be four installations, Swings and Smiles, Thatcham Family Centre – Park Lane, Moorside Community Centre and finally St Marys Church Yard.

See Thatcham Town Council's 'Warming up or Christmas'

**Paul**



## Praying through Advent 2020

Marcia has produced some resources for living through the Advent Season

Contact Mark or

Marcia, [marcia.wadham@outlook.com](mailto:marcia.wadham@outlook.com) for a copy



## Warming up for Christmas - Thatcham 2020

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### “WE ARE ALL STARS”

Although Thatcham are not able to celebrate ‘Warming up for Christmas’ with their well-attended gatherings over the festive period. The Town Council supported by key Thatcham community groups are instead planning a series of four festive installations spread throughout Thatcham. Families are encouraged to make their own stars, which can then be displayed on a ‘Big Star Installation’ closest to them.

The idea is that ‘We are all Stars’ in our own way through the making of stars and showing a true collective community spirit this Christmas. Some local schools are already involved in the project which will start to be installed in Thatcham from December 11th

The four areas that will be hosting the ‘Big Star Installations’ and will be receiving your home-made stars are :

- **Thatcham Family Hub**
- **Swings and Smiles**
- **Thatcham Youth**
- **St Marys Church** (supported by Churches Together)

Events Manager John Sackett said, “We are encouraging all of Thatcham to be involved and we hope to have over 2,000 stars spread throughout the 4 installation areas, so if you are interested and want to make your own stars then get in touch with one of the following local area co-ordinators below. They can also provide you with an easy to make ‘Make your own star project sheet’ or you can download the project sheet at The Town Councils Facebook page @ThatchamTC”.

- **Thatcham Family Hub**, Park Lane Thatcham RG18 3PG,  
Contact: 07824 408456, email:  
Sharon.Pearce2@westberks.gov.uk
- **Swings and Smiles**, Lower Way, Thatcham, RG19 3RR  
Contact: 01635 285170, email: office@swingsandsmiles.co.uk
- **Thatcham Youth**, Moorside Community Centre, Urquhart Rd,  
RG19 4RE  
Contact: 07340 131 337, email:  
hannah.squires@thatchamyouth.org.uk
- **St Marys Church**, Church Gate, Thatcham

Contact: penny.judge@thatchambaptist.org.uk  
or nicola.hulks@hotmail.co.uk

The project is funded by Thatcham Town Council with support by Greenham Trust

In addition to the community installations, Thatcham Town Centre Christmas lights will be in place on the night of 4th December with a new addition of lights along Thatcham High Street and a special surprise festive animation (sponsored by McCarthy and Stone) next to the Christmas Tree (sponsored by Oakley Green Conservatories).

Thatcham Town Centre shops and businesses will also be decorating their windows with a festive display themed to fit in with the 'We are all Stars' community campaign. This year you can again vote for your favourite with thanks to Newbury Weekly News.

There will also be a 'Spirit of Christmas' trail where you can use your mobile phone to find 10 key spirits hidden in windows in the Town Centre. More about these events will appear in next weeks edition of Newbury News.

For further information please contact:  
John Sackett or Georgina Curtis-Read on  
[enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk)

or contact us at: **Thatcham Town Council  
Offices, Brownsfield Road, Thatcham,  
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Tel: **(01635) 863592**



## The Royal British Legion - Thatcham



The Royal British Legion was formed in 1921 to help veterans and their families who had suffered or lost family members during the First World War and chose the poppy as its symbol because the poppy was the only flower that bloomed in Flanders Field in aftermath. It set up its poppy factory in Richmond and created jobs for wounded ex-servicemen who could not find any other employment and helped to support their families, this appeal was originally called the Haig Appeal after Field Marshall Lord Haig. The poppy Organisation is now a charity in its own right and does sterling work every year helping disabled servicemen find employment. The Legion continued to be called the British Legion until the 1970's when it was given the prefix Royal. Thatcham Branch was formed in 1929.

The Royal British Legion is just not an organisation that appears for two weeks at the end of October each year. Throughout the year, the Legion answers many diverse needs of the older generation of veterans and their wives, as well as those men and women and their families that are currently serving or who have served in the post World War 2 era. The provision of welfare is run under the banner of the Branch Community Support Scheme. This means identifying veterans or serving families, living in the Thatcham Community and ensuring that they are not

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suffering hardship through lack of support in any way.

I was asked a few years ago whilst selling poppies if the need was still there today and had explained that the need gets greater every year. There has only been one year since WW2 that British Forces have not been involved in conflicts around the world.

Please find the contact numbers for Thatcham Branch or the Royal British Legion Helpline below.

**Brian**

**Helpline: 0808 802 8080**

**Thatcham Branch: 01635 867620**



## What no Crib Service?

### What does Christmas mean to you?

For Helen and Julie and their families, it means this:

*For us, Christmas starts with crib service. Meeting in church on Christmas Eve reminds us how our friendship started. We met, at St Mary's, just over 10 years ago, when our eldest children were christened on the same day. Since then Matthew & Sophie have remained best friends. In 2012, they were the youngest Mary & Joseph in St Mary's history at just 2 years old. They were so brave walking through the congregation to the front but together they supported each other.*

*We love that as parents we can also participate and over the years, we have been adult angels, shepherds and wise men!*

*2017 brought a proud moment when baby James was baby Jesus. By this time, we had covered most of the nativity roles between us; sheep, stars, wise men, angels, shepherds, even a cow and a reindeer but we didn't think one of us would have the opportunity as baby Jesus! This was closely followed in 2018 when Matilda took the reins. Back to back baby Jesus's must be another St Mary's record!*

*Christmas Eve crib service brings with it a sense of togetherness for the community. The sheer volume of people who attend demonstrate this.*

*It also allows children to be involved within the church environment in a fun way. Many times,*



*La Capanna*

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*we both have looked after a scared sheep or angsty angel for them to get to the front and wave at their parents. It's great for confidence building and the sense of achievement the children feel at the end is heart-warming to watch. Equally watching the proud parent!*

*When the lights are dimmed and the candles are lit, it brings with it a sense of excitement. The feeling around the church whilst the children sing is something really quite special to experience.*

*At the end we exchange gifts and good wishes for Christmas and leave to continue our Christmases with our families.*

*We shall miss crib service very much this year.*

Thank you so much for those memories and well done for creating those firsts. But what about in 2001 when Phillipa played the part of baby Jesus at only 3 days old! That record still stands.

Helen C says:

*...there is no doubt that we are all going to miss crib service so much this year. It is such an integral part of our Christmas celebrations and always starts things off with such a happy get together.*

Here are some happy memories from Fiona:

*I remember sitting packed in the balcony with friends and a baby on my knee watching the Crib*

*service. I remember the warm festive feeling of being very connected with the community as the church was brim full and it looked so pretty with the Christmas flowers, huge tree and sparkly lights. (2007)*

*I fondly remember Brenda letting Sam (age about 3) take part in the Crib service in his Gruffalo costume! He walked down the aisle holding the star of Bethlehem. I thought it reflected beautifully the welcoming nature of St Mary's that Sam was encouraged to take part just as he was (a Gruffallo!).*

*We will miss the Crib service; it always starts Christmas off perfectly. Thank you for planning a special Covid friendly 2020 offering.*

And some lovely memories and words from Sadie:

*We started attending the Crib Service really, as an extension of ABC. My girls had always enjoyed the Wednesday morning sessions and it seemed like a nice thing to do – plus they enjoyed the dressing up!*

*But over the years it has come to mean a great deal more to us. My children love all the excitement that Christmas brings and, whilst we embrace that with them, it is also important for us that they understand the true meaning of Christmas and what it's really about when you strip away all the baubles and presents.*

Crib service  
cast 2017  
having fun





2017 - Baby James as Jesus

*It's also lovely that the children are able to dress up and participate in the story itself. It engages them and makes them feel a part of the service and it's great for the parents to watch. Brenda and the team have never been precious or exclusive about the participation either – whether you're dressed as an angel or a Gruffalo*

*everyone is welcome to join in!*

*But the thing, above all, that stands out to me is a sense of community and togetherness which always resonates through the church that evening. We see friends and enjoy celebrating with them, we see people who we maybe haven't had a chance to meet with, but who we know will most probably be at the Crib Service on Christmas Eve! It's a time for catching up – and re-connecting.*

*Unfortunately, we won't be able to experience that unity in the most obvious way this year and the traditional Crib Service will be sorely missed by me and my family. But many of us have already embodied those sentiments with the small acts of kindness they have shown to friends and fellow residents during these difficult times – kindness which I'm sure will continue to be shown during the festive season.*

But nothing daunted! Yes, there will be a Crib service but not as we know it!!

By the wonders of technology and Thatcham's sense of community the Crib service will go on!

Have a wander around the church yard to see the wonderful artwork by Thatcham Park School and see the story come to life on your smart phone – making history again but socially distanced this time!

Thank you to ABC families, past and present for these memories, the lovely photos and helping Crib service to happen this year.

**Thatcham Court,  
your local Bupa  
care home**

If you're considering care for an elderly loved one, a warm, welcoming place close to family and friends means a lot. That's why our choice of long and short term dementia care options in your local area could be something for you to think about, whether you've got our insurance or not.

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See more details of Crib service 2020 elsewhere in this magazine.

And in Sadie's words again:

*I hope everyone is able to make the most of their Christmas this year and let's all look forward to Christmas Eve 2021 when, hopefully, we'll all be crammed into the church again!*

*Merry Christmas Thatcham!*

**Brenda and ABC Mum's past and present**

## What is a “reverse advent calendar”?

A reverse advent calendar is where you pick one item a day to donate to the Foodbank and put it in a box. Please feel free to decorate the box, the items below are just ideas, this is a great way to show children and grandchildren that Christmas is about giving as well as receiving. Your generosity will help to make someone's Christmas.

- ✓ Relieving Hunger
- ✓ Restoring Dignity
- ✓ Reviving Hope



 <p>1st</p> <p><b>Long Life Milk</b></p>	<p>2nd</p> <p><b>Jam</b></p> 	<p>3rd</p> <p><b>Coffee</b></p>	<p>4th</p> <p><b>Soup</b></p> 	<p>5th</p> <p><b>Cooking Oil</b></p>
<p>6th</p> <p><b>Cereal</b></p> 	<p>7th</p> <p><b>Christmas Pudding</b></p>	<p>8th</p> <p><b>Toilet Rolls</b></p> 	<p>9th</p> <p><b>Tinned Vegetables</b></p>	<p>10th</p> <p><b>Tea Bags</b></p> 
<p>11th</p> <p><b>Pasta Sauce</b></p> 	<p>12th</p> <p><b>Tinned Fish</b></p>	<p>13th</p> <p><b>Sponge Pudding</b></p> 	<p>14th</p> <p><b>Christmas Biscuits</b></p>	<p>15th</p> <p><b>Tinned Fruit</b></p>
<p>16th</p> <p><b>Mince Pies</b></p>	<p>17th</p> <p><b>Fruit Juice (Longlife)</b></p>	<p>18th</p> <p><b>Tinned Custard</b></p>	<p>19th</p> <p><b>Stuffing Mix</b></p> 	<p>20th</p> <p><b>Chocolate Treat</b></p>
<p>21st</p> <p><b>Gravy Granules</b></p>	<p>22nd</p> <p><b>Crackers</b></p> 	<p>23rd</p> <p><b>Your Choice</b></p>	<p>24th</p> <p><b>Your Choice</b></p>	<p><b>Thank You, You're Amazing!</b></p>

### What do I do with it when it is finished?

Please take it to our warehouse, 80 Greeham Business Park, RG19 6HW (Mon-Fri between 9am to 12pm) or Email FOYD@westberks.foodbank.org.uk, or call 07836 500610

**Must be received by Friday 18th December**

Thank you so much from all at West Berks Foodbank

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**