

ST. WILFRID'S & ST. MICHAEL'S
Meeting Needs, Bringing Hope, Sharing Love



Unto us a child is born

**DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER
& JANUARY 2023**

Churchwarden John Cox 02476.394802

Churchwarden Vic Murray X.D

MBE

Midland Brass Ensemble



IN CONCERT AT ST WILFRID'S CHURCH

OLD ARLEY

4TH DECEMBER 2022 6 pm

THEY WILL BE PERFORMING MUSIC

WITH A CHRISTMAS THEME

AS A PRELUDE TO THE FESTIVE SEASON

Retiring collection

**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS IN THE OLD BARN
HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US.**

Hiring the Old Barn



The Old Barn is a traditional building, refurbished to a high standard and is available to hire at competitive rates.

It is ideal for corporate events including conferences, meetings and team-building days or as a party venue for up to 40 guests.

FACILITIES

Parking area, Fully-fitted Kitchen, Lounge with tables and seating for 40, Toilet with baby changing.

There are 5 steps to the lounge and kitchen.

We are always happy to arrange visits to the Barn to view the facilities and to discuss your requirements.

For further details please contact Mrs Denise Whittle on 01676.541916

Say a Prayer for each day:

1	Jesus we focus on You at this special Holy time – The Son of God
2	Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift- too wonderful for words
3	Never give up praying – when you pray, keep alert and be thankful
4	In this world you will have trouble. Take heart! God has overcome the world
5	Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of Jesus
6	The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy
7	Make every day great by focusing on the wonderful blessings in your life
8	Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them
9	May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father (Colossians 1:11-12)
10	Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. (Philippians 4:6)
11	I will give thanks to the Lord because of His righteousness
12	Search for the Lord and for His strength; continually seek Him. (Psalm 105:4)
13	Shout for joy to God, all the earth. (Psalm 66:1)
14	Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice
15	You make me glad by your deeds, Lord; I sing for joy at what Your hands do
16	In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name. (Psalm 33:21 – 22)
17	Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5)
18	The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease.
19	Because you're my helper, I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings
20	God, our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.
21	Let us approach God's throne of grace – to help us in our time of need
22	We know God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them
23	Thank you Jesus for finding and loving us, and reaching out to us
24	On this special evening we prepare for the coming of the Saviour
25	Hallelujah - Christ the King is born today! Father, thank you for Your Son
26	Almighty Creator give us the opportunity daily to share your wisdom
27	Father of compassion, come near to me, hold me in your arms so I can rest
28	Teach us Lord to pray to you each day
29	Heavenly Father, give me perseverance to pray faithfully to You each day
30	Praying for all those still suffering with Covid
31	Bless all our families and friends at this very special time of year.

Children's Corner: An unlikely angel:

It was 1999. A few days after Christmas, a black dog with a little white around his mouth wandered onto the front porch and settled in as if he'd lived here all his life. Whenever anyone left the house to do chores or walk next door to my brother-in-law's house, the black dog followed. He'd patiently wait until we were done, follow us home and lie down on the porch. Inside, the house was full of sadness and quiet conversation. My 91-year-old father-in-law, Jim Cravens, was gravely ill. The family had gathered to see to his care, to cook and to welcome visitors. Jim and his wife, Dorothy, were beloved pillars of the community. This curious visitor gave us something new to talk about, a wonderful distraction. Whose dog was he? Did someone drop him off along the road? Did he intend to stay? Either way, it would be dark soon, and he would be cold. Jim sat in the rocking chair by the front window where he could watch the happy black dog's comings and goings. We called the radio station, animal shelter, newspaper, sheriff and several neighbouring farms about a lost dog. Meanwhile, we made him comfortable on the porch with food, water, and a blanket. The days leading up to New Year brought no news, and we were all just content that our companion had stayed around. My father-in-law said he wanted to live long enough to see the new millennium, and he did. He passed away Jan. 2. That was the day the black dog left. Then the weather turned cold, and snow fell every day for the rest of the winter, it seemed. **Was** Some time later we heard that the black dog was a rescued dog living with a family about a mile and a half from the farm. They named him Bogart. The following summer Bogart returned to see us again. When his owners came to pick him up, we told them about his angelic Christmas visit, how he had comforted our family with his cheerful companionship. We wanted them to know how much that meant. **threw a tree at us** During the hustle and bustle of Christmastime 1958, we told our children, ages 3 and 4, about the beautiful Christmas tree we would have in a few days. On Christmas Eve, at the bakery we had recently purchased, we counted the receipts, cleaned the shop and headed for home with our two sleepy children. Suddenly, we remembered we had not gotten a tree. We looked for a vendor who might have a tree left, to no avail. About a mile from home, we stopped for a red light. Suddenly, a gust of wind blew, and something hit the front of our truck. My husband went out to investigate. The next thing I knew, my husband was throwing a good-sized evergreen into the back of the truck. He said he wasn't selling Christmas trees that year. It was a Christmas miracle! it was the most beautiful tree we have ever had.

Services during January 2023:

**8th January White The first Sunday of Epiphany 10:30 Common
Worship St Wilfrid's**

**15th January White The Second Sunday of Epiphany 10:30
Common worship at St Michael's**

**22nd January White The Third Sunday of Epiphany 10:30
Common worship at St Wilfrid's**

**29th January White The fourth Sunday of Epiphany 10:30
Common worship at St Michael's**

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Thank you

A big thank you to Denise Whittle and Vic Murray for keeping our Churches In Old and New Arley open for services, also Jan Steane and Kim Atkins. We are so grateful for all your help.

This year has been quite difficult because of illness, and therefore have had to rely on the kindness and goodness of our Church family. Thank You to our congregations for your continuous support and we pray God will Bless You All.

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May our Church Families from St. Wilfrid's and St. Michael's wish you All a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

May you be blessed with peace of mind throughout this year.

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Father in heaven, help us to navigate our complex reality with faith, grace and humility so that we may bring blessing wherever we go.

Pear and Raspberry Crumble

**(Preparation time 10 mins. Cooking time 30mins. Serves 4.
Suitable for home freezing:**

This is healthier because this crumble uses unsaturated fat spread instead of butter to reduce the saturated fat content, while an oatly topping adds fibre.

For the filling

3 medium pears, peeled, cored and sliced.
1tsp almond extract
100g(4oz) fresh or frozen raspberries or blackberries

For the topping

50g(2oz) plain flour
50g(2oz) porridge oats
55g (2oz) Unsaturated fat spread(such as sunflower,olive,or other Plant based spread.
50g(2oz) Demerara sugar
10g(1/4 oz) flaked almonds

Method:

Preheat oven to 180deg C/ 160 C fan/Gas mark 4.
Place the pears in a small pan with 100ml(4fl.oz)cold water and Almond extract. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 5 mins. Remove from the heat and stir in the raspberries.
Sift the flour into a mixing bowl and stir in the oats. Rub in the Spread with your fingertips so the mixture resembles breadcrumbs,
then stir in the sugar.

Spoon the pear and raspberry mixture into an ovenproof dish and scatter the crumble mix over the top.
Sprinkle with flaked almonds and bake for 25 minutes until golden.
Serve as it is, or with low fat yoghurt or low fat custard.

The Little New Year.

One cold morning Maurice awoke from his dreams and sat up in bed and listened. He thought he heard a knock at his window; but though the moon was shining brightly, Jack Frost had been so busily at work that Maurice could not see through the thickly painted panes. So he crept sleepily out of bed, and opened the window, and whispered: "Who is there?" "I am," replied a tinkling voice. "I am the little New Year, ho! ho! And I've promised to bring a blessing to everyone. But I am such a little fellow I need somebody to help me distribute them. Won't you please come out and help?" "Oh, it's so cold!" said Maurice; "I'd rather go back to my warm bed;" and he shivered as Jack Frost, who was passing, tickled him under the chin with one of the frosty paint brushes. "Never mind the cold," urged the New Year; "please help me." So Maurice hurried into his clothes, and was soon out in the yard. There he found a rosy-cheeked boy a little smaller than himself, pulling a large cart which seemed to be loaded with good things. On one side of this cart was painted the word "Love," and on the other "Kindness." As soon as the New Year saw Maurice he said, "Now please take hold and help me pull;" and down the driveway and up the hill they travelled until they came to an old shanty. "Here is where I make my first call," said the New Year. Maurice looked wonderingly at him. "Why, nobody lives here but an old man who works for us; and he hasn't any children!" "He needs my help," said the New Year; "for grown people like to be thought of just as much as children do. You shovel out a path to his door, while I unload some of my blessings; and the little hands went busily at work, piling up warm clothing, wood, and a new year's dinner, the New Year singing as he worked: "Oh, I am the little New Year; ho! ho! Here I come tripping it over the snow, Shaking my bells with a merry din; So open your door and let me in." Old Joe, hearing some noise outside, came to the door, and when he saw all the nice gifts the tears ran down his cheeks for gladness; and as he carried them into the house, he whispered: "The dear Lord has been here tonight." "Where am we going now?" asked Maurice, as they ran down the hill. "To take some flowers to a poor sick girl," answered the New Year. Soon they came to a small white house, where the New Year stopped. "Why, Bessie lives here," said Maurice. "I didn't know she was sick." "See," said the New Year, "this window is open a little; let us throw this bunch of pinks into the room. They will please her when she wakes, and will make her happy for several days." Then they hurried to other places, leaving some blessing behind them. "What a wonderful cart you have," said Maurice; "though you have taken so much out, it never seems to get empty." "You are right, Maurice, there is never any end to love and kindness. As long as I find people to love and be kind to, my cart is full of blessings for them; and it will never grow empty until I can no longer find people to help. If you will go with me every day and help me scatter my blessings, you will see how happy you will be all the long year." "A happy New Year!" called some one; and Maurice found himself in bed, and his sister standing in the doorway smiling at him. "Have you had a pleasant dream, dear? Why, where is the little New Year?" said Maurice; "he was just here with me." "Come into Mamma's room and see what he has brought you," answered his sister.

There in a snowy white cradle he found a tiny baby brother, the gift of the New Year. How happy Maurice was then! But he did not forget his dream. Old Joe and Bessie had their gifts, too, and Maurice tried so hard to be helpful that he made all his friends glad because the happy New Year had come.

At the start of each day, help us to recognise you above all else. Enlighten the eyes of our heart that we might see you, and notice how you're at work through our lives. Give us the wisdom to make the best choices, fill us with a desire to seek after you more than anything else in this world. Let your Spirit and power breathe in us, through us, again, fresh and new. Thank you that you are greater than anything we may face in our day. Thank you that your presence goes with us and that your joy is never dependent on our circumstances, but it is our true and lasting strength, no matter what we're up against. We ask that your peace lead us, that it would guard our hearts and minds in you. We ask for your grace to cover our lives this day. We love you Lord...we need you. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

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A better and happier place.

**What does friendship mean to you? Does it lift and warm your heart?
Does it comfort you by night? Does it help the day to start?
Just a kindly word or deed, Now and then a cheerful smile,
An unexpected card or letter, to make life's journey so worthwhile.
Never underestimate – the friendship you have found,
And share the love, the hope and joy,
Then spread it all around.**

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You might have heard the notion that if we smile when we don't feel like it, it actually encourages the chemicals that cause us to feel better. I have tried it before, and whether it's from laughing with embarrassment at myself or something else entirely, it does seem to work. That is why I was intrigued to hear of an old Taoist practice of developing an 'inner smile'. From what I understand, it's a way of always being a friend to ourselves. It means having a part of ourselves set aside from the physical world. This part of ourselves is there to tell us things like 'well done', 'never mind', and 'you're still loved', no matter what is happening at that moment. I might not have the proper understanding of it, but I like what I do understand.

**A dependable reassuring, encouraging smile, from yourself.
To me, that sounds like something well worth developing – so why not give it a try?**

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'Sailors get their 'sea- legs' by learning how to walk with the rise and fall of the deck' This life is no fixed and stable path. It will have its ups and downs, but we will travel further and better by not planting our feet too firmly.

FISH PIE WITH CARROT & CAULIFLOWER TOPPING:

Filling:

1 pint of Skimmed milk.
2 Leeks trimmed and thinly sliced.
4oz Button mushrooms – sliced
1oz Cornflour.
1 tblspn Fresh Parsley – chopped
3oz Frozen Peas
9oz Fish Fillet; eg; Cod. Coley, Salmon – remove skin and chop into chunks.
5oz Peeled Prawns.

Topping:

3 medium Carrots, peeled and diced.
2oz reduced fat(light)soft cheese with garlic and herbs.

Method:

Preheat oven 180 deg C/Gasmark 4.

Pour 500ml of the milk into saucepan place on low to medium heat.

Add sliced leeks and mushrooms to milk and simmer 3 – 4 mins to soften.

Strain milk through sieve into another pan and bring back to simmer.

Mix remaining 2fl oz milk with cornflour to smooth paste. Whisk into pan of hot milk and cook stirring until you have a thickened sauce. Add chopped parsley. Cooked leeks and mushrooms along with peas, fish chunks and prawns.

Season with pepper. Spoon into ovenproof dish. Blitz cauliflower to fine crumbs In a food processor, if you don't have one, cut into florets and cook with carrots.

Mash together-with blitzed cauliflower and soft cheese. Spoon carrot and

Cauliflower on top of fish pie filling.

Bake in over 25 – 30 mins until beginning to brown and bubbling at edges.

Just a thought.....

May you find all you're looking for (and things you didn't know you were looking for) this year!

Happy New Year! Look how far you've come and don't forget to have fun!

It's here! A new year. A new chance to go after your goals. If not now, when? If not you, who?

As seasons change and years come and go, may your blessings always continue to grow! Happy New Year!

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Jobs in the Garden during January:

Check houseplants and pick off any yellowing or dying foliage, wipe large leaves with a damp cloth to remove dust. Mist with lukewarm water weekly also prevents the tips of the leaves browning.

Make sure secateurs are clean and sharp ready for spring pruning. A sharp blade makes a clean cut and is better for the plant.

After a cold spell remove any faded blooms on winter pansies, violas and primroses to encourage more buds to develop.

There is still time to take hardwood cuttings from many deciduous shrubs such as buddleia, willow and dogwood, select last year's stems and trim to around 8 inches cutting below a leaf joint at the base and above a bud at the top.

Insert halfway into pots of compost and stand it in a sheltered spot to root.

It's important to check any vegetables being stored in a cool shed regularly. Onions in particular can start to soften and sprout in January. If this happens make sure you use them up before they spoil.

Some more true stories from Anne about Whitacre Village:

It never seemed to rain on sports day. I can barely remember a sports day that wasn't rained off when my children were at school. It must be a sign of old age,

The memory blanks out the bad times so that Summer and especially the school holidays seem like endless days of blue skies and sunshine, but if we did have rainy days then I don't remember them. During Autumn Term the major events were Harvest Festival and the Christmas Carol concert and party. Mr. Conway was very good about the harvest and he showed us how to scrub large potatoes and arrange them with the carrots with their feathery tops in a shoe box and then polish the apples until they glowed and arrange these on top to make a nice little offering. In those days, of, especially in a village it would be mostly home grown produce so there were never any oranges or bananas or anything like them. The Church would be decorated with a sheath of corn at the very end of every pew and the boxes of fruit and vegetables would be arranged round the church. The church would look very cheerful and we would look round with mouths watering as we earnestly sang, 'We plough the fields and scatter' and 'Harvest Home'. I don't know who were the recipients of the bounty because most of the cottages would have gardens growing some sort of produce. I suppose the modern practice of donating tins etc, is much more practical and the old people who receive the gifts are very grateful for them, it certainly doesn't look as attractive in church. I bet some of the things like giant marrow eventually finished up on compost heaps, what would one old person do with a three foot long marrow? Some of the villagers would have a social evening in the village hall which they called, 'Harvest Home' and these were usually very enjoyable with children and adults alike playing games and partaking of a nice supper. At about November time we started to practice for the concert. A stage was set up in the largest classroom and we began to plan in earnest. Usually the tiny ones did a short play. When I was in the infants I was an Angora rabbit and I had a suit covered in cotton wool and a babies bonnet with two large ears stitched on. Then there would be a turn by the percussion band. I longed to play a drum or even a tambourine or perhaps a triangle, but I was only ever allowed to play the triangle. Possibly it was because I had never mastered how to read music and I could do least damage with the triangle. One year I was a fairy in the Junior play and I had to borrow a tutu from Susan Payne because my mother would never had been able to make a suitable costume and yet another year I was Judy in the Punch and Judy show. The main reason I had a major part in each years concert was because I had no difficulty in learning lines and in those early years a great deal of confidence and loved 'showing off' on stage. This confidence faded as I grew older and

by the time I reached Senior School nothing on earth could have persuaded me to perform on stage. Some members of my family have a natural acting ability, it must come from the McNair side of the family, my cousin Pat regularly appears in pantomime in her hometown and so does my brother David. Margaret McNair has a lovely singing voice and appears in light opera. I've always wished I had some form of accomplishment like playing a musical instrument or singing but I'm afraid it was not to be. My singing is only suitable for the bathroom and has I've said a sheet of music might as well be written in Arabic for all the understanding I have of it. Prior to the concert and subsequent Christmas party we had to make decorations. We spent hours cutting strips of paper to make paper chains and we made paper Christmas trees to stick in the windows. Every window had a Santa made with cardboard and red crepe paper or a snowman made of cotton wool. So, by the time the day of the concert came around we were all in a state of high excitement. On stage we did our best not to wave at Mums of little brothers and sisters but there was always one little one in the audience who bawled out, 'Jimmy, Jimmy, there's our Jimmy, 'Mum what's he got those clothes on for Mum' or words to that effect and Jimmy wouldn't be able to resist saying to his neighbour 'That's our Jimmy shouting, that is, and promptly wave at the little brother so excited in the audience. There was nearly always one who fell off the stage or missed his cue, but it all added to the fun of the occasion. For the Christmas party every parent would be asked to contribute something and most of them did, so we finished up with plenty of sandwiches and cakes and jugs of weak orange squash to drink. Once we were asked who could bring in some extra plates and I volunteered, much to my mothers chagrin because we hadn't enough plates for ourselves. I can't remember how she saved face on that one. As well as the school party, we also had a Sunday School Christmas party in the village hall. This was great fun and we had a prize for attendance. Rectoe and his wife came to smile benignly upon us and a good time was had by all. I had a fear of being out in musical chairs and games like that. I can remember the panic when I was running round and couldn't find a chair. It was even worse on one occasion I got to the end and there was only two of us and it was a great relief when it was all over and the other girl won. Even though I had this sort of fear of these party games, nothing on earth would have kept me from the party.

Dear Anne thank you once more for taking us on your journey along memory lane.

Maureen x

WORDSEARCH:

Name: _____

Date: _____



WINTER WORDS Word Search Puzzle



r h p x b k g m s n o w f l a k e s f f s d
v h f b w y r e i j u m t o n c w t z d h d
s k a t i n g k l t d c f e t h z e t s d c
z i i v k l a g f a t r v b f i f l b f r b
e h j c s j s l i p p e r y b l l k z k w o
t r a s o w a n s a a a n x s l u c e d i o
c v t w h v t v g d y i t s i y r g l n n t
r y h x x k f e b r u a r y m q r w r r t s
n t o b o g g a n o f s o u c c i t b s e s
z a l f n h r m m f h e r w s d e c a h r h
m p i f g l o v e s m j w p s n s o q o v o
i j d w w i w v f r e e z i n g k l i t s v
e l a d d r g k j a n u a r y a v d y c b e
x m y h b s r d w f t o h u f r o s t h e l
r u s x c d e c e m b e r s b t h s n o w a
c e s l e d d i n g c a h w a p p w f c n v
s c a r f r s n o w m a n a i a v x c o o u
r z r a m j x v k b j y k y t r j m e l o i
o a r i l y f i r e p l a c e k f x i a a c
y u r p n l q d s l u s h p m a a l f t z e
e i c i c l e t v f b t m w e h z v n e z f
i d h i b l i z z a r d w t z b a w x m k e



Find these words.

fireplace
snowflake
blizzard
icicle
boots
parka
sledding
gloves

hat
ice
cold
slippery
chilly
snowman
December
toboggan

hot chocolate
slush
January
freezing
skating
scarf
holidays
frost

mittens
shovel
snow
flurries
February
winter



(The words may be hidden vertically, horizontally or diagonally.)

RELEASING THE POWER WITHIN YOU:

The engine in your car is its power source, and its activated when you put the car in gear. Only then do you have the momentum you need to get where you need to go. One of the dangers in seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit , is that you can reduce it to an ‘experience’, rather than putting it in gear’, to accomplish great things for God. In the new testament when someone was filled with the Holy Spirit – things happened. People turned to Christ. Healings took place. On one occasion , they had a book burning in the town square(see Acts 19:19) They didn’t just celebrate in Church – they took it to the streets! (In Scripture the first picture we see of God is of Him in His creative role. He creates us in His image, breathes life into us, then tells us, ‘Go and become productive’(see Genesis 1:28) If you’re praying for someone with all the answers to come along and change your circumstances, it won’t happen. You’re not a helpless bystander. What God has placed inside you, will change what’s outside you – provided you put it to work! What’s within you is greater than the trouble you have been through, the situation you are in, or the obstacles that lie in your path. When everything around you is saying no, and something within you is saying yes, that’s God, working in you to make you willing and able to obey him! The ‘willing’ is your part, the able is His part. When you get those two things working in sync, your life will change.

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Recently I had a family holiday on the west coast of Scotland. Unfortunately we had one of those washed out weeks when it never stopped raining, everyone was grumpy and wanted to go home. But, there was one highlight, a daytrip to the Abbey on Iona, when, just as the ferry across to the island got underway, the sun came out. In those 3 hours, the world, and our week were transformed. Sea was a glorious deep blue, and life was good. Since then, I’ve thought much about the suddenness of beauty, how it catches us off-guard sometimes, as if you’re suddenly shown something in a new light. Those monks must have worked & prayed through the long, wet, dark hours of winter, only to look up sometimes and see, with new eyes, the radiance with which God had clothed the world around them.

God you know the weight in my heart and You graciously unburden me as I put my trust in You. Help me to offer care and compassion towards those in my life. Amen.

[LET US PRAY:](#)

The arrival of a new year brings a great opportunity to renew our faith and love for God and Jesus. It's also a wonderful time to renew the joy of salvation in our hearts as a new creation in Christ. "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come*" ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). Whether this past year brought you success, fulfillment, and joy or you faced grief, setbacks, and struggle, you can look ahead to the new year with hope. [Jeremiah 29:11](#) tells us "for I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Let's end this last year with a thankful heart and start the new year with peace and faith. Let us release the bitterness and frustrations of the past year. Let us move into the next year knowing that God loves us and wants the best for us. Let's pray that the new year will be focused on healing ourselves through repentance and renewing our minds. We were not meant to do life alone! We can bring the light of hope into our own hearts, home, and world.

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." ~ [Romans 12:2](#)

May these prayers for the new year bring you comfort and gratitude as you step into the next year! Share them with your friends and family to inspire the hearts of those you love most. God Bless!

Heavenly Father, thank You for making all things new! As another new year begins, help me live each day for You. May I continually have a new song in my heart to sing to You, no matter what comes my way. I trust in You because I know that Your mercies are new every morning, and nothing ahead of me will take You by surprise. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

A friend is someone we turn to - When our spirits need a lift.

A friend is someone we treasure - For our friendship is a gift.

A friend is someone who fills our lives, With beauty, joy, and grace

And makes the world we live in, A better and happier place.

SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU GET THROUGH 2023:

We shouldn't take health and wellness for granted, try optimising a better sleep routine. Perhaps you will be able to make healthier life style tweaks every day, to easy stress and anxiety. Use a planner if possible to help you stay on track.

Cook something new each week, variety is the spice of life!

Snuggle up to a new book and enjoy. Create a cleaning schedule

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I do wish I had faith,, someone said to me this week. They were polite and wistful, but further conversation revealed that they thought that believing in the Resurrection was really just floating off into some never never land of wishful thinking.

Actually, the message of the risen Jesus was very different. He told his friends to go back to their homes; to go back to Galilee where they had first met. They were to re-immense themselves in ordinary life, but to live in the light of Jesus' way of dying and living.

Jesus did not point the way to dropping out into another world. He immersed himself into this world with all its beauty and tragedy. He took flesh and lived among us, but by doing so did not leave this world as he found it. He was not 'otherwordly' or 'this wordly',but instead taught his friends how to live in a *next* wordly way.` so the eleven remaining disciples went to Galilee and met with the risen Christ in a mountainous place, and there, as Matthew says,they worshipped him, but some doubted.

Doubt is not the opposite of faith. We should respect our honest doubts, which often serve to move us forward from an immature, self serving understanding to a deeper trust in the self- sacrificing love of God.

The opposite of faith is a life locked up in itself, the disengaged and risk averse life which is in reality a living death.

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The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy.
(Psalm 126:3)

HAVE YOU
TALKED
TO GOD
TODAY?

God, show me that you're here. Help me to trust that you are listening, and find comfort in the words of other believers, in the Bible, in strengthening my faith. I know you are a merciful God. Please remind me of this, and remind me that you'll never leave me when I feel myself doubt.

Please help me to find strength in you. Please take this pain and show me how to let it go. Help me to forgive, to begin again, to trust that this brokenness is a part of your plan. God, help me to see new beginnings. Help me to heal. Help me to start over, because I know you have better plans for me. This is so hard, but I'm trusting in you. Save me from this feeling. Amen.

God, thank you. I know those words are never going to be enough, but *thank you*. Thank you for all the ways you have blessed me, for all wonderful people you've put in my life, for all the things you have given me, to strengthen me and bring light.

I know life won't always feel this wonderful, but thank you for right now. And please help me to lean on you in the good and bad. Help me to know in all things, and on all days, you are my God. Amen.



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***“No Gerald, it was NOT Willie Nelson
on the road to Damascus.”***

Treasured Prayer:

The Clark's Nutcracker is an amazing bird. Every year it prepares for winter by hiding tiny caches of four or five pine seeds, as many as five hundred seeds per hour. Then, months later, it returns to uncover the seed, even under heavy snow.

A Clark's Nutcracker may remember as many as 500 seeds per hour, Then, months later it returns to uncover the seeds, an astounding feat (especially when you consider the difficulty we humans can have remembering the location of our Car keys or glasses)

But even this incredible act of memory pales in comparison with God's ability to remember our prayers. He is able to keep track of every sincere prayer and remember and respond to them even years later. In the book of Revelation, the apostle John describes 'four living creatures' and 'twenty four elders' worshiping the Lord in heaven. Each one was, 'holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people'.

Just as incense was precious in the ancient world, our prayers are so precious to God that he keeps them before Him continually, treasured in golden bowls!. Our prayers matter to God because we matter to Him. Through His undeserved kindness to us in Jesus, He offers us, uninhibited access (Hebrews 4:14 -16) So pray boldly! And know that not a word will be forgotten or misplaced because of the amazing love of God.

Heavenly father, please give me the perseverance to pray faithfully and the faith to look for what you alone can do,

CHRISTMAS TREES ON DISPLAY AT ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH ANSLEY:

PLEASE GO ALONG TO ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH AT ANSLEY TO SEE THE LOVELY DECORATED CHRISTMAS TREES. JAN STEANE AND KIM ATKINS VERY KINDLY DECORATED A TREE ON BEHALF OF ST. WILFRID'S AND ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCHES.

THE THEME WAS ; 'FOLLOWING A STAR'

DO TRY TO POP IN AND SEE ALL THE OTHER CHRISTMAS TREES TOO – A GOOD START TO YOUR CHRISTMAS!

WHEN IT DOESN'T 'FEEL' LIKE CHRISTMAS.

(He sent me...to heal the heartbroken) Isaiah 61:1)

At this time of year, it's tempting to buy into the myth that everybody else is enjoying a picture – perfect Christmas. The truth is, there are thousands out there whose lives have been forever altered by death, divorce, sickness and financial problems. Tammy Hanson Maltby writes: 'It was December 20. There was no hint of Christmas around the house... Most years, our tree was up the day after Thanksgiving...Christmas music...and luscious aromas filled the air...Not this year...My 20 year marriage had just dissolved...my budget was stretched...and my spirit was strained even further. Some days I could barely manage to get out of bed. All my four kids were home on Christmas break. And there still was no tree. 'This was really depressing', I heard one of them grumble, and my heart broke again. 'I'll get a tree tomorrow,' I repeated. Even I didn't believe my words. That evening, I heard voices in the basement. There, near the piano, stood the scruffy little artificial conifer, I'd bought it years before, and I used it to hang (the kids) school ornaments, creation, that just didn't look right on my majestic, fragrant, decorated upstairs tree... The kids had set it up, draped it with lights, and hung their childhood ornaments. It was still scruffy, but it was beautiful, I was happy, and overcome with gratitude that they had gotten together to make it happen for me'. If you're having a tough Christmas, don't beat yourself up. Remember you can get through anything for one day (see Deuteronomy (33:25). Jesus understands. He came to 'heal the heartbroken', so turn to Him this Christmas and ask Him to restore your peace and joy.

REACHING OUT:

In a recent post, blogger Bonnie Gray recounted the moment when overwhelming sadness began to creep into her heart, 'Out of the blue', she stated, 'during the happiest chapter in my life, I suddenly started experiencing panic attacks and depression'. Gray to find different ways to address her pain, but she soon realised that she wasn't strong enough to handle it alone. 'I hadn't wanted anyone to question my faith, so I kept quiet and prayed that my depression would go away. But God wants to heal us, not shame us or make us hide from our pain'. Gray found healing in the solace of His presence; He was her anchor amid the waves that threatened to overwhelm her. When we are in a low place and filled with despair, God is there. In Psalm 18, David praised God for delivering him from the low place he was in. God reached down from on high, took hold of me, drew me out the deep waters 'Even in moments when despair consumes us, God loves us so much, he'll reach out and help us. He is our refuge by the challenges of life.

Children's Colouring Page

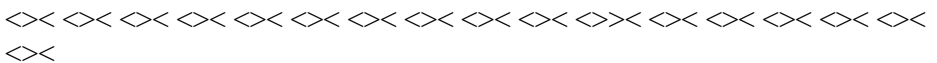
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NEVER FORGET THOSE WHO HELPED YOU:

(Every time I think of you I give my thanks to God)

Paul often acknowledged those who helped him. 'Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God... for you have been my partners spreading the Good News'(v3 – 5) 'You Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help...No other church did this. Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once. I don't say this because I want a gift from you. Rather I want you to receive a reward for your kindness.(Philippians 4:15-17) He writes to the believers in Thessalonica: 'We can't help but thank God for you because your faith is flourishing and your love for one another is growing. We proudly tell God's other churches about your endurance and faithfulness in all the persecutions and hardships you are suffering'(2 Thessalonians 1: 3 – 4) Author Barbara Glanz tells about a gentleman who remembered his eighth grade literature teacher. He wrote to her and received this reply. 'You will never know how much your letter meant. I am 83 years old, and, living all alone. My friends have all gone and yours is the first 'thank you' letter I have ever received from a student. Sometimes I wonder what I did with my life. I will read and re-read your letter until the day I die'. Ironically she was the teacher students talked about the most about at class reunions, but nobody ever *told* her. Showing appreciation costs so little in terms of time and money, but it can mean the world to somebody. So today, who do you need to express your appreciation to?



Lessons from the Christmas story: Have been thinking recently about the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who was given an extraordinary assignment. God gave Mary a special job, despite the fact that by human standards, she was too poor, too young, and from the worst part of town. God could have gone to palaces to find a 'suitable' mother for the Messiah, but instead he chose an unknown girl from a poor village. To me this is a reminder of our past, our background, or culture, is not a problem for God. We are all born with a God-given purpose, and God loves to take insignificant people (in the world's eyes) and birth significance into their lives. Let us encourage you today if you are waiting for God to fulfil your vision and dream, be faithful to what you believe God has shown you. Use the time to prepare spiritually and physically and surround yourself with people who will help keep you accountable. If God said it, it will come to pass.

JOSEPH'S LULLABY

Sleep now, little one,
I will watch while you and your mother sleep,
I wish I could do more.

This straw is not good enough for you.
Back in Nazareth I'll make a proper bed for you
Of seasoned wood, smooth, strong, well pegged.
A bed fit for a carpenter's son.

Just wait till be get back to Nazareth.
I'll teach you everything I know.
You'll learn to use the cedar-wood, eucalyptus and fir,
You'll learn to use the drawshave, axe and saw.
Your arms will grow strong, your hands rough,- like these,
You will wear the pungent smell of new wood
and wear shavings and sawdust in your hair.

You'll be a man whose life centres
On hammer and nails and wood.
But for now,
sleep, little Jesus, sleep.

Ron King

A star has risen in the heart, The sweet light flushes every part.
The shepherds of the body know, the rumour reached them long ago
Abiding in the field were they, When deity informed the clay.
The wise kings of the mind bow down, they yield the wiser king his
crown;

Before a cradle they unfold, The myrrh and frankincense and gold.

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If you wish to contact us for any reason, or to contribute a story or poem,  
Please get in touch by ringing 02476 – 394802. OR via our e-mail –  
[strowgerhouse@btinternet.com](mailto:strowgerhouse@btinternet.com). We would love to hear from you!  
Maureen & John.

To checkout our church website NB: [www.arleycofechurches.org.uk/](http://www.arleycofechurches.org.uk/)