

Challow News



December 23 / January 24



St. Nicholas Church

East Challow. OX12 9SH

Parish Eucharist

Sundays - 11.00 am

Weekday Eucharist

Thursdays - 10.00 am

(30 minute said service)

Vicar: Rev John Durant

01235 766484

**The Vicarage, Main Street,
Grove. OX12 7LQ**

Email: vicar@valebenefice.org.uk

Associate Vicar: Rev Alec Gill

07739 563894

Email: vicaralec@valebenefice.org.uk

Licensed Lay Minister: Sue Powditch

Email: llm@valebenefice.org.uk

Benefice Office: Grove Parish Church,

Main Street, Grove. OX12 7LQ

Open: Mon - Fri 10.00 - 12.00

Tel: 01235 771479

Email: office@valebenefice.org.uk

St. Nicholas Church

Churchwarden

Mrs Liz Belcher: 01235 763966

Deputy Churchwarden

Dr. Jeff Penfold: 01235 763173

Churches of the Vale Benefice

St. Johns - Grove

St. James - West Hanney

St. Nicholas - East Challow

St. James - Denchworth

Weddings ~ Baptisms

Blessing & Thanksgiving

For further information please contact:

Vale Benefice Office

Grove Parish Church, Main Street, Grove.
OX12 7LQ

Monday - Friday 10.00 - 12.00

01235 771479

Email: office@valebenefice.org



All Information / details are held as Public
Records within the Vale Benefice

~ Vicars Letter ~



Dear Friends

It is with mixed emotions that I write this letter. It will be my last as Vicar and I am writing to say goodbye and God bless.

I also want to say thank you for all the wonderful memories, your kindnesses, the pleasure in meeting you lovely people and the tremendous hard work so many of you have given in the St Nicholas church, St Nicholas school and Challow village. I remember the Barn dances, the Playmates Toddlers and events at the Legion and Cricket Club. It has been a privilege to contribute to this illustrious publication and you are blessed to live in such a thriving community.

Yes I have regrets, having 4 parishes to serve meant I had less time than I would have liked. Even so I have really enjoyed my last 10 years with you.

I hope I have been faithful in making Jesus' love known to you whether celebrating the birth of a child, rejoicing in the joy of a wedding or remembering with thanksgiving loved ones who have died within the comfort of Christ's peace.

St Nicholas has been my church in the sense that I have come to serve here but it is much more God's church and indeed your church where I pray you will find truth, meaning and refreshment when you come in for silent prayer and encouraging fellowship when you worship our Heavenly Father together.

I leave confident that Alec and the churchwardens will lead you as you appoint the next Vicar, knowing you are blessed with many gifted church members but ultimately assured that The Lord, the Good shepherd, will guide you when you trust in him.

As I write I am uncertain what my future will hold so I have to commend to myself as I do to you the words of Psalm 13 : 7 *trust in the LORD's unfailing love.*

For the last time God bless.

John



St. Nicholas Church

11.00 am Sunday Services Information

December 3 rd	Advent Sunday Purple	Rev Alec Gill	Isaiah 64: 1 - 9 * 1 Corinthians 1: 3 - 9 <i>Gospel Reading ~ Mark 13: 24 - 37</i>
December 10 th Patronal Festival	Advent 2 Purple	Rev John Durant Rev Alec Gill	Isaiah 61: 1 – 4 + 8 - 11 * 2 Peter 3: 8 – 15a <i>Gospel Reading ~ Mark 1: 1 - 8</i>
December 17 th	Advent 3 Purple	John Durant	~ Carol Service ~
Christmas Eve	Rev Alec Gill		~ Family Carols around the Crib ~ 4.00 pm
Christmas Eve Midnight Mass 11.15 pm	Advent 4 Purple	Rev John Durant	T B A
Christmas Day	Christmas Gold / White	Rev Alec Gill	T B A
December 31st			~ No Service ~
January 7 th	Baptism of Christ White	Rev Velma Oxley	Genesis 1: 1 - 5 * Acts 19: 1 - 7 <i>Gospel Reading ~ Mark 1: 4 - 11</i>
January 14 th	Epiphany 2 White	Rev Alec Gill	1 Samuel 3: 1 – 10 * Revelation 5: 1 - 10 <i>Gospel Reading ~ John 1: 43 - end</i>
January 21 st	Epiphany 3 White	Rev Velma Oxley	Genesis 14: 17 - 20 * Revelation 19: 6 - 10 <i>Gospel Reading ~ John 2: 1 - 11</i>
January 28 th Service of Memories	Epiphany 4 White	Rev Alec Gill	T B A

*Denotes alternative 1st Reading

St. Nicholas Church - Rotas

Date	Sides Person	Sacristan	Reader	Prayers	Organist
December 3 rd	Frances & Nigel	Philip	Alan / Ruth	Philip	Ruth
December 10 th	Linda & Noel	Mary	Graham	Mary	Ruth
December 17 th	Liz & Jeff	~ CAROL SERVICE ~			Graham
December 24 th	Frances & Tricia	Nigel	Nigel	Clergy	Graham
December 25 th	Liz & Jeff	Jenny	Clare	Mary	Ruth
January 7 th	Frances & Nigel	Philip	Alan / Ruth	Philip	Ruth
January 14 th	Linda & Noel	Mary	Graham	Mary	Ruth
January 21 st	Liz & Jeff	Jenny	Jeff	Jenny	Graham
January 28 th	Tricia & Sue	Nigel	Clare / Nigel	T B A	Graham

Date	Coffee	Flowers	Cleaning
December 3 rd	Mandy	Advent	Linda / Liz
December 10 th	Jan & Hillary	Advent	Linda / Liz
December 17 th	Val & Barbara	EVERYONE	Mandy
December 25 th	N / A	Christmas	Mandy
December 31 st	~ NO SERVICE ~		Sue / Tricia
January 7 th	Mandy	Heather	Linda / Liz
January 14 th	Jan & Hillary	Mary	Linda / Liz
January 21 st	Val & Barbara	Jenny	Mandy
January 28 th	Linda & Janet	Mandy	Mandy

Thursday Sacristan	
December 7 th	Mary
December 14 th	Jenny
December 21 st	T B A
December 28 th	Mandy

Thursday Sacristan	
January 4 th	Mary
January 11 th	Jenny
January 18 th	T B A
January 25 th	Mandy

~ If you are unable to attend please arrange cover for your week ~



Challows Royal British Legion

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Sunday 12.00 am - 10.30 pm

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Why King Charles never throws cake away

King Charles is on a mission to tackle food poverty and rising food waste.

It is said that he and the Queen eat daily slices from the same cake until it is finished, as part of a drive to curb their personal food waste.

As for the nation, the king has been increasingly concerned that in the UK, 12 million tons of food is thrown away each year - even though almost three quarters of it could still be eaten, according to experts. In contrast, an estimated 4.7million people are living in food poverty.

To combat this problem, King Charles has launched The Coronation Food Project, to coincide with this, his 75th year.

Up to eight new food hubs around the country will store food, prepare it, and package it, before redistributing it to organisations like food banks and community kitchens. The long-term goal is to circulate 200 million meals a year. In the meantime, King Charles is careful not to throw his cake away. Is there one simple thing you could do in your own kitchen this Christmas, to curb your personal food waste?

No more 'Postcode Lottery' recycling

Life is going to become simpler when it comes to recycling.

From 2026, the national recycling laws are to be standardised, with Councils across the UK all having to collect the same glass, metal, plastic, paper and card, food waste and garden waste. It is expected that the plans will lead to packaging that is clearly labelled 'recyclable' or not, without the need for households to check local provisions.

"Simpler recycling will help us all recycle more easily, doing our bit to help save the planet and make the best use of precious resources that we use every day," said Therese Coffey, the Environment Secretary.

"Alongside weekly food waste collections, we are ending the postcode lottery of what you can put in your bin, so that wherever you live in the country, you will be able to recycle the same products with confidence."



Dear members of
St Nicholas church.

By the time this is published we hope that we will be on our way moving to a new home in the North.

We just want to wish you all the very best in the future, it has been a huge privilege to live among you for the past seventeen years, and we will miss you all.

Thank you for your love and kindness over the years, and for the wonderful example of Christian Discipleship.

Thank you for your kind words and generous gift vouchers on Remembrance Sunday, and the delicious cakes and fizz that followed.

We promise we will keep in touch and visit from time to time.

With love and best wishes,

Juliet & Robert

What sort of a Christmas card person are you?

The time to send and receive Christmas cards has come round again – time for our annual gasp at the cost of cards, and sheer disbelief at what the Post Office charges to send them.

It seems there are three kinds of people when it comes to Christmas cards: the total abstainers, the total givers, and the selective givers.

Abstainers write 'Happy Christmas everyone' on Facebook, and consider the job well done. Total givers spend a fortune on cards and stamps and send them to everyone they know. Selective givers try to cut corners, but then cannot remember who sent who what, and as the cards pour through their door, spend time worrying...

However you decide to do it, it is good to stay in yearly touch with your widest circle of friends and family. Proverbs points out that: 'Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.' Proverbs 25:25. They will enjoy hearing from you!

Cold weather tips for Pet Owners

Check your dog's paws for road grit salt after every walk – the stuff may clear snow and ice, but it is toxic to dogs.

Protect your rabbit and guinea pig hutches from snow, winter rain and cold draughts, and check that their water bottles are not frozen.

Don't leave your dog outside a shop in extremely cold weather – it is very stressful for them.

Don't leave your cat outside all night in freezing weather.

Worried about your home being flooded?

The National Flood Forum has a range of good tips and advice on how to prepare for the worst. Go to:

<https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/about-flooding/preparing/emergency-flood-kit/>

Flag Pole Damaged during

"Storm Debbie"

We had the Flag of St. George flying for the Remembrance Weekend and as the winds associated with storm Debbie increased the pressure of the extra sail on the flag caused an unknown weakness at the top of the pole to break.

We were therefore not able to have our flag flying for the Kings Birthday

Service of Memories

To remember all those that we have lost as we celebrate their lives and our time together

Sunday

28th January

11.00 am

Everyone will be invited to light a candle during the service in memory of their loved ones





Challow Chatter

Correspondent for the Challow News

- Liz Belcher -



December is with us already with the start of Advent Sunday on the December 3rd. This gives us time to prepare for Christmas. It is a busy time for the Church. We will be having an Advent course as usual to which you are more than welcome to join us, just let me know if you are interested and I will let you have the details.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We will be celebrating our Saint Nicholas on 10th December at 11.00 am

this is our "Patronal Festival" and the other churches in the Benefice are invited to join us in a united service, so please come along if you want to. We will be having refreshments afterwards as usual.

Our Carol Service is on Sunday 17th December at 11.00 am

this is a service I always enjoy and I am sure that you will as well. It is always good to have a break from the hectic preparations and celebrate the true reason for the festival and have a sing song as well.



The traditional Family Carols around the Crib will be held as usual at

4.00 pm on Christmas Eve.



This annual event is always popular with the children and they can participate in the service as well. Everyone gets to enjoy themselves and it's handy for tiring out the little ones.

On Christmas Eve at 11.15pm we will be holding our Christmas Midnight Service

This will be Father John Durant's last service at St. Nicholas Church before he retires, so it will be Christmas joy, tinged with a touch of sadness for us as a congregation.

We of course wish John and his family much love, and all the best of blessings for the future.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Walking with Meg my dog, I noticed on the damp mornings what a variety of mushroom, toadstools and fungi in general there were. I'm afraid I know very little about them except that they are a vital part of our eco system sending out spores and underground networks that work to ensure a healthy environment for trees and other flora and inevitably the fauna of our world. God indeed works in mysterious ways, and ways that we are totally unaware of. Some years ago while out with my children, husband and our first dog Mitch, we collected a bagful of horse mushrooms, they are the very big white ones. We were looking forward to a Sunday morning breakfast of bacon, eggs and fried mushrooms. We put them in a dish and left them on the worktop overnight, in the morning I came down to a dish full of mushrooms at one end of the worktop, and an army of maggots marching down to the other end of the worktop. Needless to say, it was a bit off putting and we just had the bacon and eggs. We released the maggots and mushrooms into the wilds of the compost heap.

We haven't experienced many bright and frosty mornings this year so far, and the leaves have been a long time falling, but I'm sure by the time you read this it will have changed. It's been a funny year weather wise, not much scrunching through leaves as squelching through mud. I much prefer the hard frosty ground for walking and it's much better for dog walking, and easier on the kitchen floor.

Behind the door in the Church we have lots of ladybirds massing. I presume they are hibernating so I hope nobody disturbs them. They overwinter until February. There were some there last winter so they must like it in there. They are really good for keeping garden aphids down. The name ladybird originated in Britain in the middle ages. They were known as Our Lady's beetle or Lady beetle because Mary was often depicted as wearing a red cloak. Gradually it was shortened to ladybird.

I must say a huge thank you to Helen Sherwood who has once again made our Church look so wonderful for our Remembrance Sunday Service. It looked amazing and I hope you had the chance to admire the displays that Helen created. I feel it is so important to honour our service personnel and others who died in conflict, and of course those serving now. This is not to glorify war, but try our utmost and pray for a peaceful world. It's nice to have had other people in the village join us in the Act of Remembrance. There was a good attendance both at the Lych gate and in Church. It was really good to have our Cubs and Beavers playing their part as well, and presenting their own wreath.



Father Robert Teare and his wonderful wife Juliet will be leaving the area soon and we had a small presentation to them both to show our appreciation for all they have done for us in St Nicholas Church.

They are both selfless and amazing people, and will be greatly missed.

We wish them both well and a peaceful retirement. (not sure there is such a word).

On January 28th we are holding our Service of Memories for people to remember their friends and relatives who have recently died or indeed anyone you wish to recall that has departed. All are welcome. It is a lovely service, so please do come and join us.

Do not forget that it is "Carols on the Green" at 7 pm on Monday 19th December

This is a village project that is an East Challow tradition being revived. Last years very soggy weather didn't deter people, it was fun and is purely for our enjoyment, so turn up with torches and be prepared to enjoy yourselves whatever the weather.

The next Challow News will be in February so I hope that you all have a Wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

I also hope that you can find the time to join us at some of our planned events in Church.

- As always stay safe for yourself and others -

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[£100 additional prize in December]

Contact Tricia Shand

01235 764222

the.shandies@btinternet.com

St. Nicholas Church

200 Club - Monthly Draw

November Results

£50 - N° 26 - Mrs F. Webb

£20 - N° 69 - Mr & Mrs Ilott

£10 - N° 56 - Mrs G. Gordon

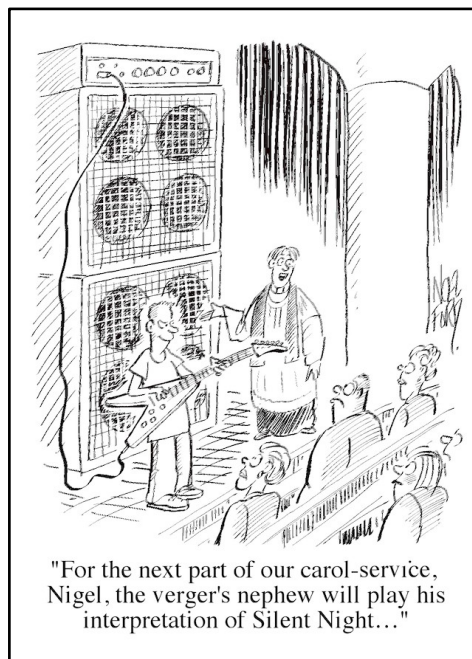
Would you like to join?

For further information please contact

Tricia Shand - 01235 764222



the.shandies@btinternet.com



"For the next part of our carol-service,
Nigel, the verger's nephew will play his
interpretation of Silent Night..."

The story of the Christingle

The word 'Christingle' actually means 'Christ Light', and celebrates the light of Jesus coming into the world. Stories of how the Christingle began look back to the Moravian Church, which is found in the Czech Republic. The Moravians have held Christingle services for more than 200 years.

The Children's Society first introduced the Christingle Service to The Church of England in 1968, and it has since become a popular event in the church calendar.

The Christingle orange is round, like the world; the candle gives us light in the dark, like the love of God;



the red ribbon goes round the 'world', as a symbol of Christ's blood, given for everyone; the four sticks point in all directions,

and symbolise that God is over all: North, South, East and West; and the fruit and nuts remind us of God's blessings.

Christmas Eve

How do you celebrate Christmas Eve? It has its own customs, the most popular of which is going to Midnight Mass, or the Christ-Mass. This is the only Mass of the year that is allowed to start after sunset. In Catholic countries such as Spain, Italy and Poland, Midnight Mass is in fact the most important church service of the entire Christmas season, and many people traditionally fast beforehand. In other countries, such as Belgium and Denmark, people dine during the evening, and then go on to the Midnight Service.

The British are behind some countries when it comes to exchanging presents: in Germany, Sweden and Portugal the custom is to exchange on Christmas Eve. But the British are ahead of Serbia and Slovakia, where the Christmas tree is not even brought into the house and decorated until Christmas Eve.

Yule logs are not so popular since the decline of the fireplace, but traditionally it was lit on Christmas Eve from a bit of the previous year's log, and then would be burned non-stop until 12th Night (6th January). Tradition also decreed that any greenery such as holly, ivy or mistletoe must wait until Christmas Eve until being brought into the house.

Why the world was ready for Christmas

Ever wonder why Jesus was born when He was? The Bible tells us that "when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son..." The Jewish people had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. Why did God send Him precisely when He did?

Many biblical scholars believe that the 'time had fully come' for Jesus because of the politics of the time. The Roman Empire's sheer size and dominance had achieved something unique in world history: the opportunity for travel from Bethlehem to Berwick on Tweed without ever crossing into 'enemy territory' or needing a 'passport'.

For the first time ever, it was possible for 'common' people to travel wide and far, and quickly spread news and ideas. And all you needed were two languages - Greek to the east of Rome, and Latin to the west and north. You could set sail from Joppa (Tel Aviv) and head for any port on the Med. And the Roman roads ran straight and true throughout the empire.

So, the Roman Empire achieved something it never intended: it helped spread news of Christianity far and wide for 400 years. After that, the Empire crumbled, and the borders shut down. Not until the 19th century would people again roam so freely. The time for Jesus to be born, and for news of Him to be able to travel, had indeed 'fully come'.



Why begin at midnight with Holy Communion?

The hour was first chosen at Rome in the fifth century to symbolise the idea that Christ was

born at midnight – a mystical

idea in no way hindered by historical evidence! No one knows the real hour of His birth.

Certainly, in recent times, Holy Communion at midnight on Christmas morning has proved popular with modern families. One British writer pointed out its "domestic convenience" in 1947: "for where there are children and no servants, husband and wife may be unable to communicate at any other time."

(So things don't change, then!)



On Remembrance Sunday there was the usual press getting into Church and a man directly in front of me asked his neighbour 'why the press?' Apart from everything else, they're saying goodbye to Juliet and Fr Robert' his companion replied. 'What again? The first exclaimed. 'This must be the third time!' 'Perhaps he'll take the hint this time!'

The first time it was because he'd been holding the fort for 'three weeks as priest in charge' while Father Tony was in South Africa and that drifted into a temporary priest in charge while the Diocese wondered what should be done about, the Hanneys, Denchworth, Grove and East Challow.

What is nicest about this is how so many totally impossible things have come to be achieved. As people have realised why they go to Church week by week.

To meet Christ in each other; to meet Christ in his Word and to receive Christ in the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist, and suddenly our faith becomes what we share in love, week by week.

We have been deeply blessed by a truly brilliant Parish Priest in John Durrant and there will be opportunities to say thank you to him and Sally in the coming month. And John is supported by an amazing team.

Shortly after Alec arrived here and before I had met him, I was asked to address a Synod which included the parish from which Alec had just come. After I had spoken I was mobbed by the group from his parish complaining that he had been taken from them and that it was not fair.

So being with you and them has been a blessing and the most amazing end - well evening for my ministry.

Thank you and God bless you.

You will remain day by day in our prayers.

Robert and Juliet



Book of the Month



The Christmas Swallow

By Ben Harris

A classic retelling of the Christmas story from a bird's eye viewpoint. This picture book has a narrative that uses repetitive phrases to engage young readers, introducing biblical truths about the birth of Jesus, as rescuer and born from God. The excitement of the shepherds and the heart-warming visit of the wise men are brought to life with vibrantly coloured illustrations by Estelle Corke

This would be ideal for sharing with young children aged 3+ years during the Christmas season.

Drink tea or coffee each day and keep old age weakness away!

Recent research has found that drinking coffee or tea in midlife may help keep you stronger in later life.

A study at the National University of Singapore concluded that higher caffeine intake is associated with lower odds of physical frailty in old age, regardless of the source of the caffeine.

Physical frailty in old age was defined as having at least two of the following: weight loss, exhaustion, slowness and weakness. The scientists also measured handgrip strength and the time taken to complete a timed up-and-go (TUG) test.

In addition to caffeine, coffee and tea contain rich bioactive polyphenols, which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. These have been associated with reduced risk for diseases that increase frailty, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, obesity and neurodegenerative disease.

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Thank You

The amazing Poppy Displays in church for our Remembrance Service this year were once again created by the very talented

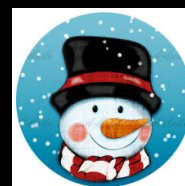
Helen Sherwood

We would like to extend our thanks to Helen for her time and creativity in producing some amazing displays



Thank You

To all of our Advertisers and Supporters of the Challow News and especially to the loyal band of volunteer villagers who deliver this newsletter through the letter boxes of everyones home throughout the village and parish of East Challow each month



Happy Christmas



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All entries for the **FEBRUARY 2024**

Issue of the Challow News

Must be submitted by **15th January 2024**

Email: nigel.langford@me.com

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Photographs of Saint Nicholas Church

Whilst tidying the vestry in Church, some of the photographs of the church from long ago were unearthed. They are really interesting and I was wondering if anyone else has any pictures of the Church in bygone ages. It has undergone many changes over the years and it would be lovely to keep a documented record of its history. I am sure we could copy any photographs or even take them off your hands if you are at a loss as to what to do with such things. It would be a pity to lose them.

Please let me know if you have any, lizbelcher@live.com

or phone me on 01235 763933

Or you can drop them into Church with your details.

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The man who married Mary

The traditional Nativity scene on our Christmas cards has Mary with the Holy Babe. Around her are the shepherds and Magi. We may also see stable animals, angels and a star! While Joseph is often included, his presence seems to be of minor importance.

After all, we praise God for Jesus with our familiar Christmas carols, mentioning angels, shepherds, Wise Men and Mary but the name of Joseph is absent! Why is Joseph given a low profile? For he is a man to be remembered.



Joseph was a resident of Nazareth. He worked as a carpenter and his skills would have included making furniture, repairing buildings, and crafting agricultural tools. Although Joseph had an honourable profession, he would not have been a man of great wealth.

The gospel writers Matthew and Luke give Joseph a few brief mentions. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary go to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate the Baby to God. Afterwards, they flee into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod and much later return to Nazareth.

12 years later, Mary and Joseph go with Jesus to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Here they lose Jesus, only to find Him in the Temple talking with religious leaders!

Apart from these verses, the New Testament is silent about the rest of Joseph’s life. However, we do know that Joseph was father to other children by Mary. His four sons are named, and they had at least two daughters. (See Matthew 13:55)

And we also know that Joseph was someone who quietly and humbly took on the awesome role in caring for the early life of the Son of God. Joseph would have taught Jesus many things – not just the skills of a labourer, but the lore of the countryside which was evident in our Lord’s teaching. Jesus grew up within a loving family and described God as ‘Father’, knowing also the good fatherly qualities of Joseph.

In the Christmas story, Joseph is placed into a situation that brought him misunderstanding and suspicion. But Joseph remained faithful in the knowledge that as long as God had spoken, the opinion of others mattered little. Before Jesus began His ministry, it is believed that Joseph died. It is likely Jesus took on many of His father’s responsibilities before He left home.

In the eyes of the world, Joseph was a nobody. He was not a man of valour, fame, and fortune. But he was the one who had parental responsibility for the greatest person who has ever lived!

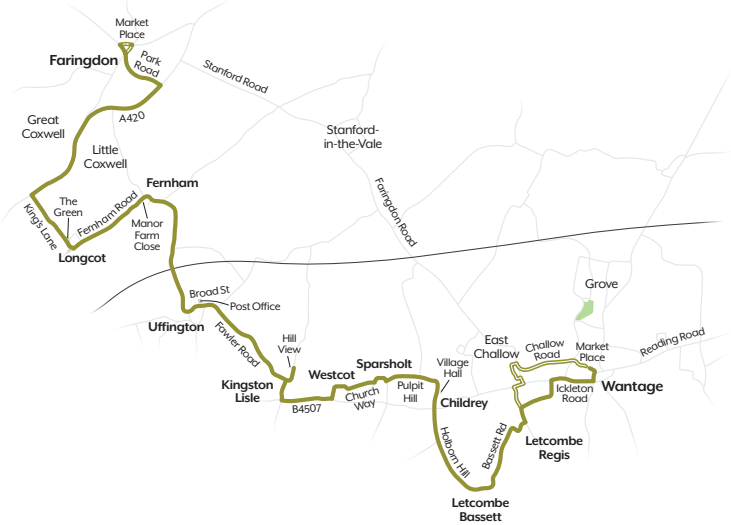
It is sad that we often equate ordinariness with ineffectiveness. Down the ages, God has used many ordinary people to accomplish great things. God continues to use ordinary people. Like Joseph, we need to know that doing God’s will is the most important thing in life.

May we, this Christmas, respond to God’s call to us and please Him in all that we do.

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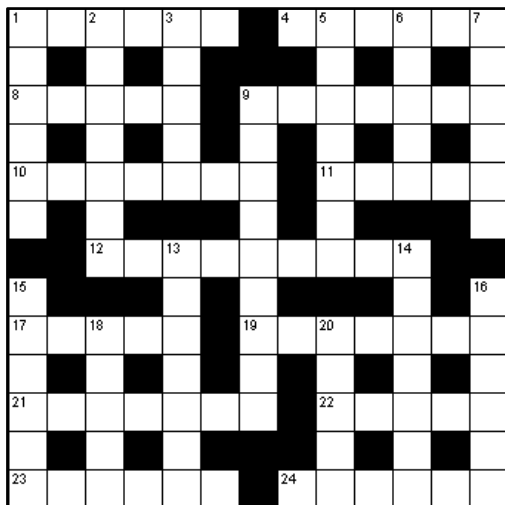
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between Faringdon and Wantage via Longcot, Uffington, Childrey & The Letcombes					68		
Mondays to Saturdays except Public Holidays					Mondays to Saturdays except Public Holidays		
Faringdon Market Place	0740	0930	1130	1430	Wantage Market Place	1230	1530
Longcot Green	0750	0940	1140	1440	East Challow Sarjac Avenue	1235	1535
Fernham Manor Farm Close	0754	0944	1144	1444	Letcombe Regis Church	1239	1539
Uffington Post Office	0801	0951	1151	1451	Letcombe Bassett Gramps Hill	1242	1542
Kingston Lisle Hill View	0806	0956	1156	1456	Childrey Village Hall	1248	1548
Kingston Lisle Telephone Box	0807	0957	1157	1457	Sparsholt Bus Shelter	1252	1552
Westcot Letter Box	0811	1001	1201	1501	Westcot Letter Box	1254	1554
Sparsholt Bus Shelter	0813	1003	1203	1503	Kingston Lisle Telephone Box	1258	1558
Childrey Village Hall	0817	1007	1207	1507	Kingston Lisle Hill View	1259	1559
Letcombe Bassett Gramps Hill	0823	1013	1213	1513	Uffington Post Office	0900	1304
Letcombe Regis Church	0825	1015	1215	1515	Fernham Manor Farm Close	0907	1311
East Challow Sarjac Avenue	1019	1219			Longcot Green	0911	1315
Wantage Market Place	0833	1024	1224	1523	Faringdon Market Place	0921	1325
No service on Sundays & Public Holidays					No service on Sundays & Public Holidays		



This is a **STOP & HAIL** Service

On route to and from Sarjac Avenue



Crossword Solution on page 26

Across

- 1 Vanquish (6)
- 4 Explode (4,2)
- 8 Grieve over (5)
- 9 US state (7)
- 10 Small fish (7)
- 11 Boadicea's people (5)
- 12 Intrepid (9)
- 17 Made known publicly (5)
- 19 One who settles disputes (7)
- 21 Heartfelt (7)
- 22 Very pale (5)
- 23 Sleepy (6)
- 24 Brooms made of twigs (6)

Down

- 1 Reduce in rank (6)
- 2 Established (7)
- 3 Invalidate (5)
- 5 Like a lion (7)
- 6 Forgo (5)
- 7 Serene, unruffled (6)
- 9 Excellent (5-4)
- 13 Disrobe (7)
- 14 Louis Armstrong nickname (7)
- 15 Stopped briefly (6)
- 16 One of the planets (6)
- 18 One of the Beatles (5)
- 20 Burn fiercely (5)



The Robin on my Christmas Card

The Robin on my Christmas Card
Upon a postbox, red –
He fixed me with a gaze quite hard
And this is what he said:

“O, viewer of this Christmas card
“I bet that you don’t know
“Why I upon this card am here
“To bring a yuletide glow?”

I said to him, “O birdie, do
“Reveal your secret deep
“I see you all the yearlong through
“And hear your joyful cheep!”

“So why, O Robin, tell me why
“When you’re around all year
“On lawn, or branch, or in the sky
“Why now this Christmas cheer?”

He said to me that long ago
The postmen you would see
Their jackets vivid red would glow –
“In fact, they looked like me!”

“From then till now my bright red breast
“And cheery trilling tweet
“Has come upon the Christmas fest
“To bring a Christmas treat!”

By Nigel Beeton



Open Doors and the persecuted church

Correspondent for
the Challow News
- Clare Page -

*“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
that you may be children of your Father in heaven.” -
Matthew 5:44-5*

In a few weeks’ time, we’ll be celebrating the birth of Jesus. I always look forward to the carols. I love the fact that they were originally created as songs to dance to – it makes me smile when I try to imagine that happening in an Anglican service! Although we may not expect to reach for a partner and begin to dance - if we’re English! - we do expect to sing songs together. We expect to share the joy of Jesus’ birth with others. We don’t expect to come under attack.

But that’s what happens to churches in some parts of the world.

It happened in southern Ethiopia, where Fasil* and Ezana’s family worship. Fasil and Ezana are twin brothers: seven-year-olds. They’re quite shy, love playing football, and have a special bond with one another, as twins. They also live in a community where Christians are a persecuted minority. Pastor Yohannes* is the leader of their church. “There is huge oppression targeting Christians in the area,” he says. “When a person converts from another religion to follow Jesus Christ, there is intimidation and threats of killing.” Recalling a previous Christmas, he says, “As we gathered to celebrate the birth of Christ, extremists were sent. They started throwing stones at the church’s roof.” Another time, he remembers, “People from the community came at us at once, some with weapons in their hands, and surrounded us.” The men were beaten. The women were dragged to the ground by their hair – and worse. After a horrifying assault, some of the Christians were so afraid that they hid in the forest for three days before they were able to finally get home.

I wonder how we would respond as a church if we were attacked like that? Despite the pain of their experience, in the twins’ village, the Christian community wanted to reach out to groups who had persecuted them and to find points of connection. So, they worked with Open Doors partners to create a ‘bridging’ project: a school. And that’s where the twins go. The schooling is secular, rather than faith-based, but believers see the provision as a way to show God’s love. “It has created a platform for us to show Jesus is a Saviour,” says the pastor. And the result? “The families who used to throw stones at the church have now started sending their children to this school.”

There’s much more to this story, of course. And peace on earth can sound like an impossible dream on your Christmas wish list, but persecuted Christians show us where it starts – by reaching for a partner and beginning to dance.

***All names changed to protect identities.**

You can find out more about this story and the work of Open Doors at opendoorsuk.org, including new resource for children: *Herod’s Secret Policeman*.



www.opendoorsuk.org



OUR WINTER OFFERING

Bar opening times through this period will generally be

Monday	CLOSED
Tuesday	CLOSED
Wednesday	4pm – 8pm
Thursday	4pm – 8pm (10pm when Darts match is on)
Friday	4pm – 8pm
Saturday	CLOSED
Sunday	11am – 3pm

The clubhouse is available to hire for a range of events through the 'Close Season' either during the day or in the evening, and makes a superb setting for your Birthday, Anniversary, Christening or Wake. Please contact us to discuss your function requirements, we will always look to do whatever we can to make your event a success.

If you would like to join the club as a member it's just £20 for the year, you can do so via our website.

We also require bar staff to cover some of our bar openings both during the weekday evenings and occasional outside events when the clubhouse has been hired on weekend evenings.

For full details and rate of pay please e-mail us in first instance.

Remember that everyone is welcome at Challow, membership is not required to enjoy the facilities, although it does mean we can keep you up to date with news and events at the Club.

www.challowcricket.co.uk

admin@challowcricket.co.uk

01235 763335

JOB VACANCY: Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

This is an exciting opportunity to work with East Challow Parish Councillors and members of the public. The RFO will be responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council. This will include management of the accounts and keep all accounts of the Council in a proper manner.

To prepare financial reports; assist with budgeting preparation and to keep sound financial control in preparation for the annual audit.

To maintain the bank accounts, bank reconciliations, payments, and keep VAT records and complete VAT returns. The RFO will prepare reports for the monthly Council meetings. This is a varied role and would suit someone who understands financial accounting systems and likes working with figures.

For more information please contact the Chair of East Challow Parish Council

Telephone 07976 546826

Email: vanessa.lawson.ecpc@gmail.com

- Cornerstone News -

In the Cafe it's getting busier in the run up to Christmas. We are now taking bookings for a full Christmas lunch on 14th December but we also welcome bookings for other days in December when we will be offering Christmas specials like Brie and Cranberry Quiche and Roasted Vegetable Nut loaf.

We will be closed from 24th December to 1st January inclusive.

Make and Bake for the under 5s is back up and running every Tuesday, just £2 per child.

The last session before Christmas will be 12th December.



In the shop we have lots of Christmas Cards, Advent Candles, Calendars and lots of gift ideas for Christmas.

**Find us on Savile Way in Grove
along from the Laundrette and Co Op**

Cornerstone Christian Centre
Christian Resources Together Bookshop of the Year 2023
10 Savile Way, Grove, OX12 0PT
Tel: 01235 772280
www.cornerstonegrove.org.uk
www.facebook.com/pages/Cornerstone-Christian-Centre-Grove/125696620782712

<https://www.instagram.com/cornerstonegrove>



East Challow Community/Warm Space

This group is thriving and going from strength to strength. On November 10th we had 25 members turn up for tea/coffee, cakes and chat! It takes place 11am-1pm every other week. The next few dates will be December 8th, 22nd, January 5th and every two weeks from then onwards. Post-Christmas and New Year blues? Why not join us?

Community Bus service route 68.

This will I am sure be mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter. All I will say is Yippee!!

Seriously, the money for this lasts until March 2025. We will monitor use because the chair of Stanford in the Vale parish council and I have some ideas for its continuation after this date.

Airband Telegraph Poles

Airband have been erecting telegraph poles on Hedgehill Rd., Reynolds Way, Sarajac Avenue and Field Gardens, in some cases in totally inappropriate positions. I and the parish council clerk have been on to the Vale and this has been taken forward as an enforcement issue as they were not notified of this activity. The County Council have also been informed. We are uncertain of the outcome as I write. Given that all land lines on that part of the estate are delivered underground there seems no reason why Broadband should not use the same route!

Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

The Vale and South Oxfordshire DC have secured government levelling up money. This is administered as the REPF. The Vale will support rural businesses and farmers to diversify, improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and communities.

Childrey Way repair

Walkers and riders will have seen that Childrey Bridleway has been repaired but the work is, in fact, unfinished. The contractors have told me that it will be surfaced properly once the weather improves (no timeline given!)

Flooding

The awful flooding on the A417 is now being addressed seriously by the county council highways department. As with all these things it is a lack of regular maintenance and with the projected increases in rainfall this problem needs to be addressed properly – and regularly! I will hopefully be able to update you in January.

Oxford Christmas Lunch will again be providing a free lunch and companionship on Christmas Day this year. The guests generally include the elderly, the homeless, those with mental health issues, those in food poverty, refugees and those who simply want to celebrate Christmas with others. A special feature of the lunch is that volunteers collect the guests, drive them to the lunch, eat with them and take them home, thus providing companionship as well as food. Families are also welcome as there will be lots of fun things for children to do.

This will take place at King's Centre in Osney Mead, Oxford. Numbers are limited, so they need to take bookings on a first-come first-served basis. The main limiting factor is the number of volunteer drivers they have – if people can transport guests, and potentially host them on a table, that will allow them to take more. They always need more minibuses and licensed drivers. To book a place for someone you think would benefit from it, email Sarah at sara@oxfordchristmaslunch.org.

I would like to wish all residents a peaceful and Happy Christmas. I am sure that we will all be thinking of those less fortunate than us especially those currently living in war zones which turns lives upside down and is frequently the result of poor political leadership. We ordinary people are the same everywhere and have the same concerns – money, work, relationships, children. It is always ordinary people who suffer!

Cllr Dr Paul Barrow

If you have any issues/problems please feel free to contact me

Paul.barrow@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Mob: 07557 953862

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Cllr-Dr-Paul-Barrow-104943001583284>

Instagram: [Dr Paul Barrow](#)

Challows and Childrey Hedge Group



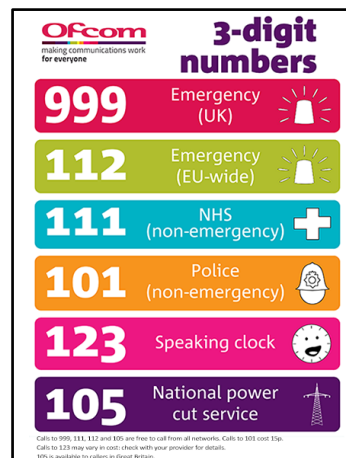
The Challows and Childrey Hedgerow Group are looking for volunteers to help with planting a new hedge along Silver Lane, West Challow on

January 13th 2024

Please contact me if you are interested

paulbarrow@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

07557 953862



Please Join Us.....

"Christmas Carols on the Green"
Monday 18th December at 7pm

*Meet up on the Village Green
next to the old Red Telephone Box*

Carol Sheets will be supplied



Please remember to bring your own torch or a lantern



On how to make the most of carol singing

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

Carol singing is not what it used to be. My fond memories of a group of choristers, muffled in scarves and overcoats, carrying lanterns, and walking from door to door in the snow, as they sang 'While shepherds watched ...' had to be suddenly revised when I saw your own music group, in T-shirts inscribed with 'Jesus loves You', singing 'Little donkey', in your shopping centre. I suspect any money you raised would just about have paid for the electricity used to power your banks of electronic equipment. Singing in the main square of the Centre next to the fountain may have looked good, but it seemed to mean that the choir men were obliged to make constant trips to the lavatory.



Here at St James the Least of All, carol singing is regarded as a staff perk for the choir; the year when the Boys' Brigade tried to break their monopoly was suppressed with a ruthlessness that would have impressed Genghis Kahn.

Our annual carol-singing route involves months of meticulous planning. We find that a transparent collection box is vital, so that donors can see what earlier patrons have given. This means that those who are bound to put in notes must be visited first – 'pour encourager les autres'. It also needs a detachable base, so that if coppers are given, they can be removed from sight before the next call.

Those homes that contain several children are visited just after bedtime, so that parents will give generously simply to get the choir to go somewhere else. Veiled threats to stay and sing more carols (unless they give generously) are usually very effective. Getting whoever looks the most innocent and photogenic to ring the bell and ask for money is a far more subtle way of ensuring a donation than planting any number of mafia lookalikes (such as our church treasurer) on the doorstep.

The choir always finishes its evening at the local pub – but again, the timing must be carefully managed. Too early and there will only be the landlord, his wife, and their Labrador to listen; too late and people will be so full of Christmas cheer that any carols will be hi-jacked and become the equivalent of back-of-the bus rugby songs.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



~ Christmas Services ~

Christmas Eve

4.00 pm - Family Carols round the Crib

11.15 pm - Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

11.00 am - Christmas Communion



Have your Advertising Flyers or Leaflets Inserted and delivered
along with the Challow News for only £15

Advertising space is also available

for more information please email nigel.langford@me.com



EAST CHALLOW ~ PARISH COUNCIL

www.eastchallowpc.co.uk

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Parish Council send their best wishes to all residents for a very
Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Responsible parking....

Please park responsibly around the village. Please avoid parking on tight corners as it impairs visibility. Parking on the pavement causes problems for wheelchair users and pushchairs. Parking on the grass verges restricts the ground maintenance contractor from cutting the grass.

Parking on the narrow roads can lead to congestion with Cars, Lorries and Busses, having difficulty passing each other.

Christmas Tree Recycling....

Please take your old Christmas tree to East Challow Village Hall car park for recycling by

Monday 15th January.

Trees larger than 6ft must to be cut down to size.



**~ Bank Holiday ~
Christmas & New Year
Waste Collection Changes**



Normal Collection Day	Revised Collection Day	Which Bin
Tuesday 26 th December	Thursday 28 th December	Black + Food
Tuesday 2 nd January	Thursday 4 th January	Green + Food
Tuesday 9 th January	Wednesday 10 th January	Black + Food

Please ensure your Waste & Recycling Bins are placed on the kerbside before 06.00 am to ensure your bins are emptied

Please return your bins to your property ASAP after collection to ensure they are not blown onto the road causing an obstruction or damage to other vehicles

Allotment....

We have a vacant allotment plot, should anyone be interested please contact Cllr Webb f.webb@eastchallowpc.co.uk as it will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Vacancy....

We have a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. The Parish Council represents and serves the whole community of East Challow and is responsible for maintaining the local environment and amenities.

If you are interested in joining the team please contact the clerk for more information.

clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk

Tennis Courts....

The tennis courts will be locked for the winter season this year to comply with health and safety advice.

They will reopen again next spring.

Parish Council Meeting

will take place in the Village Hall on

Wednesday 13th December at 7.30pm

Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 7.30pm

All villagers are invited to attend Parish Council meetings as observers and there is a 10 minute public discussion time early in the meeting when you can raise any matter you wish with the council.

The minutes of each meeting are available on the website.

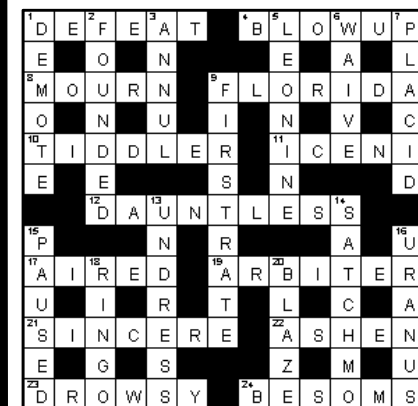


Parish Councillors

Paul Barrow, Vanessa Bosley,
Andy Gregson, Trevor Hayes,
Bryan Miller, Frances Webb

Clerk to the council - Jane Smith

clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk



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- Collection & Delivery Service available



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Tel: 01235 763103 www.ljcannings.co.uk

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