



Dear friends

On census day, 21 March 2021, **46.2% of people identified themselves as Christians**, compared with 59.3% of the population in the 2011 census. And the explanation? The significant rise in people identifying as of no particular faith at all. However, faith is not just about numerical growth. People find solace in faith. It contributes to better wellbeing.

At Christmas time we are once again reminded that our faith is ultimately about the person of Jesus Christ. At Christmas, we tell again the story of the incarnation, of God coming to the world in human form as a tiny, vulnerable baby and we are reminded that faith is about the opportunity of a relationship with this person of Jesus Christ. We are offered to join him in his work of establishing God's kingdom on earth and it's from this that flows the wellbeing and peace that society longs for.

But of course, our faith is for many too radical and countercultural because it is about God's plan rather than ours. It is about loving those who hate us and praying for those who wish us ill. It is about forgiving people who have wronged us rather than wanting revenge.

In Matthew 16, Jesus calls his followers to "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." God wants to reach into everyone's lives and offer them unconditional love: a love "so amazing, so divine" that it "demands my soul, my life, my all".

Many people are still searching for purpose and meaning in their lives. This will be a difficult winter for many, here and abroad, and we can demonstrate our faith practically through loving them, supporting them, living in such a way that they might just ask us why we do what we do. And often simple things suffice; a smile, a cup of tea may be all that is needed.



*"What can I give him, poor as I am,
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a
lamb
If I were a rich man I would play my
part
But what I can I give him, give my
heart."*

Thank you for who you are and for all you do to support your communities and your churches. Thank you for all your cards and good wishes. From the staff team, we hope you have a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and joyful New Year.

Ann, Rector

Upcoming Services

Sunday 18th December

10.00am **Holy Communion Service** at St James Church, South Wraxall. *Tim/Gerry.*

10.30am **Carol Service** at Christ Church, Bradford-on-Avon. *Ann/Richard T/Tricia and the music group.* The collection for this service will support Wiltshire Mind.

6.00pm **Carol Service** at St Peter's Church, Monkton Farleigh. *Tessa/Gerry.* The collection for this service will support St Peter's mission and ministry in the community.

6.30pm **Carol Service** at St Nicholas Church, Winsley. *Ann/Keith B/Pippa & the music group, IT:Geoff.* The collection for this service will support the charity St Mungo's - ending homelessness, rebuilding lives.

Wednesday 21st December

6.00pm Compline Service at St James Church, South Wraxall. *Revd. Tessa Mann.*

Saturday 24th December

10.00am **Crib Service** at St James Church, South Wraxall. *Revd. Tessa Mann/Keith B.* The collection for this service will support Whizz Kidz - a charity that empowers young wheelchair users.

3.00pm **Nativity Service** at St Nicholas Church, Winsley. *Revd. Tessa Mann/Keith B.*

4.00pm **Nativity Service** at Christ Church, Bradford-on-Avon. *Revd. Ann Keating/Gerry.*

4.00pm **Procession* and Crib Service**, St Peter's Church, Monkton Farleigh. *Zoe Yeomans/Harold.* The collection for this service will support Church of England Children's Society.

*For all our Crib and Nativity services we invite children to come dressed up in simple costumes depicting shepherds, kings, angels, Mary, Joseph etc. If needed, some costumes/props will be available on the day. *The lantern procession starts at 3.45pm from Monkton Farleigh village hall and processes to the church.*

11.15pm **Midnight Communion**, Christ Church, Bradford-on-Avon. *Revd. Keith Charnley/Richard T.*

11.15pm **Midnight Communion**, St Nicholas Church, Winsley. *Revd. Ann Keating/Gerry.*

11.15pm **Midnight Communion**, St Peter's Church, Monkton Farleigh (joint service with South Wraxall). *Revd. Tessa Mann/Keith B.*

Sunday 25th December

10.00am **Family Holy Communion**, St. Nicholas Church, Winsley. *Revd. Ann Keating/Gerry/IT: Geoff/Richard*

10.00am **Holy Communion**, St James Church, South Wraxall, (joint service with Monkton Farleigh). *Revd. Tessa Mann/Keith B*

10.30am **Holy Communion**, Christ Church, Bradford-on-Avon. *Revd. Tim Hawkings/Richard T*

Sunday 1st January 2023

10.00am **Benefice Service with Holy Communion** at St Peter's Church, Monkton Farleigh. *Revd. Ann Keating/Keith B*

Ministry Team:

Rector Rev Ann Keating
Rev.ann.keating@btinternet.com (722230)
Rev Tessa Mann (309374)
LLM: Rachel Pound (862223)

Benefice Office:

Bridge Duncombe (865046),
nboabenefice@gmail.com
Website www.nboachurches.co.uk

Church Wardens:

Winsley: Roy Ludlow (868779) Linds
Batson (720069)
Christ Church: Hilary and Stephen Pike (782537)
South Wraxall: Dave Wyper (865384)
Valentine Thornhill (862552)
Monkton Farleigh: Rachel and Colin Exley: (851485)
Lay Pastoral Assistants:
Stephen Pike (782537), Denise Davies (863678)
Gill Fairhurst (867560), Daphne Cox (868224)
Elizabeth Bush (866624), James
Middleton (920564)
Children's and Families Worker:
Zoe Yeomans
zyeomans3@gmail.com

New helpers are sought to provide projection and PA support for worship at

St Nicholas Church

St Nicholas' services benefit from the projection of slides for our hymns, prayers, liturgy and notices.

This depends on a small band of volunteers to set up and operate the tech.

We would now like to grow the team.

If this is an aspect of church life that you might like to support then please do get in touch for an initial conversation:

Geoff Parker: geoff.heather@talktalk.net Tel: 866340

Village Carol Service

**St Nicholas Church,
Winsley**



**Sunday 18th
December at 6.30pm
Everyone welcome**

Carol Service

**Christ Church,
Bradford-on-Avon**

**Sunday 18th
December at
10.30am**

Everyone welcome

**Service followed by
mulled wine
& mince pies**

**Winsley Carol Service 18th
December 6.30pm**

Calling all bakers! If you are able to provide mince pies to serve with mulled wine after the Carol Service at St Nicholas Church, Winsley on Sunday 18th December at 6.30pm, please let **Alison Wells** know.



A very big thank you from Christ Church to Steve Stanford of Wiltshire Wood Art for the beautiful slate plaque he has made for the tree we planted in the churchyard last May to commemorate Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee.

Stephen Pike, Church Warden, Christ Church

Funeral

Joan Howell

The funeral of Joan Howell was held at St. Nicholas Church on 15th December 2022. Service led by Revd. Ann.

NewsLink

The next edition of NewsLink will be on **Sunday 8th January 2023**. Please email any relevant contributions to the Benefice Office at nboabenefice@gmail.com by **9.30am Tuesday 3rd January 2023**.

Children and Families

News

Advent Tea

Everyone enjoyed a fun and busy afternoon at the Advent Activity Tea making reindeer crispy cakes, a pocket-sized nativity, streamers for the children's corner in St Peter's Church and stained glass windows. Not to mention the quiz and delicious tea! Grown ups could enjoy mince pies and a glass of mulled wine too. A huge thanks to those who came on the day to help and also to those who contributed to the tea and helped to make it a success.

Zoe Yeomans, Children & Families worker



Refresh at St Nicholas Church, Winsley

Zoe led Refresh at St Nicholas. She showed us how we could pack into a wee box a manger, baby Jesus on the straw, a star, an angel, Mary, Joseph and a Shepherd, not forgetting a tiny sheep. You can see it illustrated in this picture. We discovered the first manger was probably in 1223 when Francis of Assisi set up a manger in a cave in Greccio in Italy. The clementine put in Christmas stockings represents the gold that St Nicholas gave on his day the 6th December. We also discovered more about Saint Nicholas and who he was. We have a stained glass window in church. In the window we see the bags of gold coins, he was a Bishop and carried a staff to help him care for his sheep. (He was born in 27AD, and his relics were moved in the 11th century.) It was a great morning.

Daphne Cox



South Wraxall Church Christmas Toy Appeal

St James, again this year, organised a collection to support the Salvation Army's Christmas Toy Appeal for new, unwrapped toys. The Salvation Army in Trowbridge were overwhelmed by the quantity and quality of the donations and promised they would all find homes where they would be both needed and appreciated. Many thanks to all who donated!

David Wyper



Julian House Christmas Appeal - Homelessness doesn't take a break, especially during the festive season

For the people that Julian House supports, things have always been tough. There are many issues which can lead to homelessness and addressing these complex issues, even at the best of times, is a challenge. More worryingly the challenges that are making things so difficult today are set to continue in 2023.

Perfect storm is an often over used description but right now that is how the immediate future looks for Julian House and the individuals that they support: a chronic shortage of affordable move on accommodation; rising rents; more people ending up on the streets; crippling rises in the cost of life's most basic commodities (for their clients, their staff and the charity) and a squeeze on benefits, when beneficiaries need them most.

For their Christmas Appeal the charity wants to raise awareness that the people they support are often ordinary people who have fallen into difficult circumstances. These can include domestic abuse, mental health issues, family breakdown, childhood trauma and addiction.

Julian House is very grateful to [Agency UK](#), who have produced a short animation to help generate vital donations this year. It demonstrates a common story in which financial struggles and problems at home can all too easily see someone fall into homelessness. You can watch it here: [Please help Julian House to rebuild lives this Christmas | Julian House](#)

Fundraising to update and restore Christ Church, Bradford-on-Avon as a community hub fit for the 21st century!

Your donation will help add essential toilets and a kitchen, create flexible open spaces, restore our spire clock and magnificent nave and rare wall paintings, and install new energy efficient and flexible lighting.

If you would like to give a donation in memory or celebration of someone, a special occasion, or something memorable to you, please email: discovercc@gmail.com

To donate, scan the QR Code or use this link: <https://tinyurl.com/mrt6dn3x>

Thank you so much for your contribution to the Future for Christ Church community project.

