

ST ANDREW'S  
SHOTTERY

# SEARCHLIGHT



St. Andrew's Web: <http://www.saintandrewsshottery.org>



**Sundays:** 8.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Parish Eucharist\*

6.30pm Evensong

1st Sunday: 10.00am All-Age Family Service (without Communion)

3rd Sunday: 5.30pm Atrium.

Tuesdays: 7.30pm Holy Communion

Thursdays: 10.00am Holy Communion.

\*This Service will also be on zoom. Do check out our website and on Facebook for links.



10th 4.00pm: Christingle service.

17th 6.30pm: Carol Service followed by mulled wine & mince pies

22nd: [St Andrew's School Carol Service in church](#)

24th 4.00pm: Crib service.

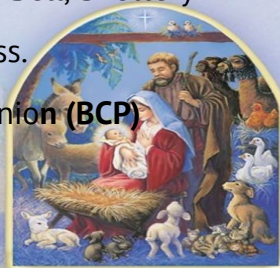
6.30pm: Carols at The Bell, Shottonery

11.15pm: Midnight Mass.

25th 8.00am: Holy Communion **(BCP)**

10.00am:

Parish Communion Service





## Merry Xmas!

I wonder how the above makes you feel?  
Xmas!

I've been one of those who for years have hated seeing 'Xmas' instead Christmas. I'm not the only one – American evangelist Franklin

Graham (son of Billy) said once that the term Xmas is “a war against the name of Jesus Christ.”

Well, I personally wouldn't go that far but I'm still not keen on the term it to be honest but the more I've looked into it, “Xmas” is not inherently a blasphemous as perhaps we might think. Contrary to popular Christian belief, the symbol “x” does not take Christ out of Christmas.

The early church actually formulated “x” as a symbol for Christ. The Chi-Rho symbol (on the right) combines two Greek letters into a symbol that looks like the letter X placed over the stem of the letter P. The Greek letters chi and rho are found at the beginning of the Greek word 'Χριστός', which translates to “Christ” in English. This symbol gained popularity representing the name of Christ during the time of Emperor Constantine in the fourth century AD and is often seen today on clergy vestments and in stained glass windows.



So, technically, we Christians can use “Xmas” and be correct without committing heresy!

What is really important is that we Christians keep Jesus as the centre of the season. The birth of Jesus Christ is the greatest news the world has ever heard. Surely our goal during this amazing season in the church's year is to 'come and adore Him', to worship Him with every part of our lives and to bring others to know Him as we do. Using or avoiding “Xmas” isn't really the issue, what matters most is the intentions of the heart.

May God richly bless you all this Christmas.

**Reverend Craig**





## Thankfulness

As you look back over 2023, I wonder what your thoughts and feelings are, as you step over the threshold into 2024.

Perhaps your year has been one of (as our late Queen would say, Annus Horribilus) or perhaps it has been one of pure delight. Maybe it has been a bag of dolly mixtures, some ups, some downs.

Whatever 2023 has brought for you, I think we understand as we journey through life, that it is just part of being human that we have some wonderful joyful times that bring us deep peace and comfort, then there are those times which disquiet us and bring us a level of angst. We know the world around us in 2023 has been suffering deeply challenging situations with so many nations in conflict, families in poverty with no homes or very little food, and very little warmth. We have collectively held these nations in prayer and in hope.

Whatever our journey, it's really comforting to know that God was with us. God in the suffering and ruins and God in the many moments of happiness and Joy – that we emerge once again. Things that bring us Joy. God brings us Joy and hope. Sometimes it happens in the waiting. What things are we thankful for? Perhaps:-

- Our faith – God in our lives
- Prayer
- Each other
- Nature and the seasons
- Peace of heart and mind
- Music
- Theatre productions
- Our pets
- Our homes (where others in the world have none)
- Food we are fortunate to eat
- Our gardens
- Our families



Our friends  
Our health where possible  
Our worship  
A smile  
Kind words  
A good night's sleep or rest

The above is just a short list of many things we might be thankful for. I know that my 2023 has been quite a year of difficulty as it may have been for many of us. Nonetheless, when I look outside - particularly during the warmer months - I see how beautiful the blooms on my fuchsias' are, and all the many flowers and the birds singing, someone smiling and waving at me, and just waking up each day. I know I have much to thank God for. I also know that God is in the challenges also.

You may want to sit with this and ponder your year of 2023 and think of the things amongst the more challenging times, that you have been and are thankful for.

Hopefully 2024 will begin for you with much joy and the deep peace and love of God in your hearts. I hope that you will be able to begin 2024 with just one thing that you wish to give thanks to God for.

I do wish you all a hopeful time at Christmas and God's peace into the New Year. May God's blessings be with you.

### **Rev Sarah**







### ***How should a King come?***

Even a child knows the answer of course,  
In a coach of gold with a pure white horse.  
In the beautiful city in the prime of the day,  
And the trumpets should cry  
And the crowds make way.

And the flags fly high in the morning sun,  
And the people all cheer for the sovereign one.  
And everyone knows that's the way that it's done.  
That's the way that a King should come.

### ***How should a King come?***

Even a commoner understands,  
He should come for His treasures,  
And His houses and lands.  
He should dine upon summer strawberries and milk,  
And sleep upon bedclothes of satin and silk.  
And high on a hill His castle should glow,  
With the lights of the city like jewels below.  
And everyone knows that's the way that it's done,  
That's the way that a King should come.

### ***How should a King come?***

On a star filled night into Bethlehem,  
Rode a weary woman and a worried man.  
And the only sound in the cobblestone street,  
Was the shuffle and the ring of their donkey's feet.  
And a King lay hid in a virgin's womb,  
And there were no crowds to see Him come.  
At last in a barn in a manger of hay,  
He came and God incarnate lay.





Our meeting on 13th November began with our usual session of prayers led by Hilary Capron. She welcomed the Revd. Joy Hance who had come to talk about the Northumbrian saints, St. Aidan, St. Cuthbert and St. Oswald. Joy explained that her talk was the result of a week's stay on Holy Island (Lindisfarne) with her husband during a sabbatical. The island is cut off by the tide twice a day and the small population relies on the income from the many tourists.

She and Nick attended the daily services at St. Mary's Church (of Saxon origin) and visited the old Priory (set up by St. Aidan in AD 635) and St. Cuthbert's Island where the saint lived for many years. They also travelled the Pilgrims' Path to Heavenfield. This was the cradle of Christianity until the Viking raids of AD 875 when the monks fled from the Priory.

St. Aidan came from Iona as a missionary and was bishop for 17 years. He and St. Oswald, who was a soldier and ruled Northumbria for eight years and became a Christian, were friends and converted people into the Christian faith until the Viking raids. St. Oswald was killed in battle and his remains from Banburgh Castle and St. Cuthbert's from Lindisfarne are in Durham Cathedral. St. Cuthbert was a monk at the Priory at Melrose and then at Lindisfarne after the death of St. Aidan. There are, of course, the famously illustrated Lindisfarne Gospels.



There was plenty more to hear about these three remarkable saints and their influence on Christianity in Northumbria, and Joy's talk and picture of this lovely place were much appreciated.

**Notes:** Hilary reported on:

**The planter** which was now in position and planted up.

**Thanks** to all who helped with tea after the Time to Remember Service.

**25th November – 10th December** – MU Campaign against Domestic Abuse. It is hoped to have posters to display for this.

2nd December—Church Christmas Coffee Morning. MU table will be selling small cakes, biscuits, etc.

There were cards available for signature for the **Christmas Cards for Prisoners' scheme**.

Reminder from Fiona that subs are due by the next meeting—either by direct debit, cheque, cash OR Bank transfer.

**Next meeting—11th December** –Christmas afternoon. Please bring any favorite readings, stories, etc. to enjoy with our tea.

*Daphne Jones.*



**December Fair Trade opportunity.**

In recognition of a glorious revival of Fair Trade activity at St Andrews\*, a “WILLY WONKA” style competition for a year's supply\*\* of Fair Trade drinking chocolate sponsored by the Christine Foundation. Tickets will be on sale at the December Fair Trade stall (17th) and for the remainder of 2023 at £5 each and the winner, will be drawn at the January church lunch on Thursday 11th January, 2024.

\*supplementing the original campaigning of Mary, Hilary, and Kay,

\*\* 1 packet (400gms) per month for 12 months (aggregate value £60).

Next dates for **FAIR TRADE** sales will be 17th December and 21st January.

*Rodney Grinnell.*

## Christmas Rose

Virgin Lady , Rose so sweet,  
Mother Divine with your holy child.  
A birth so humble and yet so pure  
With a message so simple, and yet so sure  
That this holy child from a virgin birth  
Came to save sinners here on this earth.

Would we but let him.

Oh give up this strife  
For this plot of land and that piece of earth  
For power and greed , destruction and death.

Walk nearer to Jesus

Who shows us the way

If only we look, and only we pray.

Make us humble like Mary , and remember his birth  
That he came to spread love on this troubled earth.

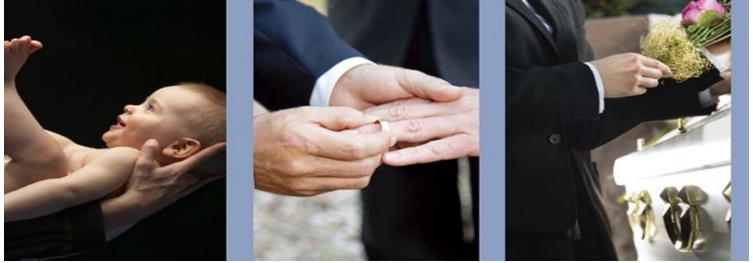
If only we let him , if only we let him .

**Win Smith**





## PARISH REGISTERS



### Funerals in November:

16<sup>th</sup> Judy Jones

21<sup>st</sup> Pat Johnson

30<sup>th</sup> David Cole



Our new Noticeboard

## SHOTTERY WAR MEMORIAL WORLD WAR ONE *(continued)*

**The late Bill Cooper was working on this research when he tragically died. His daughter, Michaela, has completed the job.**

**Private Charles Kemp** Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Private Kemp was a native of Stratford. He had previously been wounded in 1916 and sent back to the UK, once he had recovered he returned to the front and on 25/09/1917 he died as a result of wounds sustained at Polygon Wood. Charles left a widow and one child and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium.

**Private George Henry Bridges** 21848 2nd Bn, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, brother of Fred. George lived at 8 New Row, Shottery with his Annie and worked as a tree propagator at the Warwick Road Nurseries. He was conscripted in 1916, his employer, John Butcher appealed to the local tribunal, arguing that his role was essential to the nursery. The exemption was refused and George was sent to France in 1917. George was admitted to a military hospital in France and from there to St George's Hospital, London where he died aged 39 after a "serious operation" on 27th September 1917. A long way from his brother Fred in Iraq, he was brought home and buried in Stratford-upon-Avon Cemetery. As previously noted he had married Annie Berry in 1910, the couple had two children

**Private Ernest Charles Berry** 15585 1st/5th Bn, Royal Warwickshire Regiment. As already noted, Charles was the son of Annie Berry of 6 The Barracks, (now Hathaway Hamlet) Shottery and the late Charles Berry. Charles was born and raised in Shottery and worked for the Great Western Railway Company before he enlisted soon after the outbreak of war. He was involved in many engagements and was wounded at the Battle of the Somme in 1916. His platoon officer wrote to his mother to inform her of his death aged 19 on 4th October 1917 (Broodseinde). He was killed instantly and "died a true soldier, gallantly attacking the enemy to help us to win a great victory on that day." Charles is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium.

**Lance Corporal Frank Walter Fincher** 203600 2nd Bn Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Eldest son of John and Catherine Fincher of Ely Street, Frank was manager of the Wellesbourne branch of his father's building firm. Both Frank

and his father were Freemasons and members of the Swan of Avon Lodge. John Fincher was a Churchwarden at St Andrew's and was instrumental in the building of the war memorial. Frank had only been in the army for 6 months and had been in France for 3 months when he died from wounds received in "recent engagements" at the French front on 10/10/1917 aged 33. He left a widow Georgina and a little boy. The Stratford Herald reported that he had "many excellent qualities". He lies in the Menin Road South Military Cemetery.

**Private George Salmon** PLY/2104(S) 2nd RM Bn, RN Div Royal Marine LI was employed by Mr J Lewis of Chapel Street, as a Pork Butcher's Manager. Mr Lewis had argued for an exemption as George's job was essential in the national interest, this was refused. George left a widow, Rose aged 37. He was 39 when he was killed on 26/10/1917 and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium.

**Rifleman Ernest Gillett** 374695 London Regiment - Post Office Rifles. Lived at 40 Shottery Road, employed as a postman. Ernest was Killed at Zonnebek, Belgium on 30/10/1917 aged 34 and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

**Private Alfred Winspear** 57317, 3rd Bn Worcestershire Regiment. Born in Woolwich the son of Doris Ann and the late Ernest Alfred Winspear, 81a West Street. "Teddy" had worked for Flowers and Son for 4 years. He enlisted in February 1917 and was attached to the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars as a signaller. Teddy completed his training in Ireland, qualifying with a first class certificate and transferred to the Worcestershire Rgt. He had only been with them about a week when he was killed on 26/04/1918 aged 19. Lieutenant Pertwee of the Oxfordshire Hussars wrote to Teddy's mother to tell her that "her boy was universally liked and had a bright smile for everyone." His death was instantaneous, a bullet passing right through his head. Teddy is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

**Private Harold Timms** 24675 2nd/7th Bn Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Son of William and Emma Timms of Shottery, married Nellie Print in 1914 and lived at 30 Evesham Road. Harold enlisted in April 1917 and was sent to the Isle of Wight for training. He left for France in July and was present at the Battle of Ypres. On 12th April he suffered abdominal wounds and was removed to

hospital at Calais where he died on 02/05/1918 aged 29. Harold was a well known local Congregationalist lay preacher and Sunday School teacher. He is buried at Les Barraques Military Cemetery, Sangatte, Pas de Calais, France.

**Private Arthur Steel** 26302 2nd/5th Bn Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding). Son of Mr E and Mrs A M Steel, The Bungalow, Shottery. Arthur was killed on 22/05/1918 aged 21 and is buried in Bienvillers Military Cemetery, France.

**Private Henry William Bennett** 58004 1st Battalion Worcestershire Regiment (St Andrew's Role of Honour states Royal Warwickshire) enlisted in Stratford-upon-Avon. He was the son of Elizabeth Bennett of Brooklands Cottage, 1 The Barracks (now Hathaway Hamlet). Elizabeth received a letter written by a Nursing Sister from the 23rd Casualty Clearing Station, France to inform her of Henry's death on 27th September 1918. He had been admitted on 24th September after suffering a gunshot wound to his back which had penetrated his abdomen. Surgery was performed but this was in vain. Henry is buried in Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun, Pas de Calais.

A Shottery War Memorial Committee was formed after the Armistice and notices were placed in the Stratford Herald asking for subscriptions as well details of those who fell to be sent to either Rev C E Payton or George Evans (Hon Treasurer). An invitation was given to anyone living in the parish who would like their loved one to be remembered on the memorial to contact Mr Evans. The committee were happy to include those from other parishes but with a Shottery connection which perhaps explains why not all the servicemen in this article appear on our Role of Honour created not long after the Armistice. The dedication and unveiling ceremony of our war memorial took place on Sunday 3rd April 1921 in glorious sunshine. The cross takes the form of an old wheel cross of cotswold stone and is 10ft 6 in height. It was deliberately placed on high ground and with its four steps at the base, can still be seen by passers-by. It is a copy of an ancient wayside cross in a Berkshire village from the time of the first Queen Elizabeth. A number of beautiful floral tributes were left at the service including a large chaplet of laurel from the committee, placed by Geoffrey Ernest Gillett, little son of the late Rifleman Ernest Gillett. The card read, "Lest we forget, in grateful memory of the men of Shottery."

I hope you've found this glimpse into the lives of the brave young men who left our tiny Warwickshire village over a century ago, interesting. When we are gathered together on Remembrance Sunday this year and hear their names, we will all know a little more about them and the sacrifice they made to keep us free.

I'm planning to upload Dad's article to the new Commonwealth War Grave Commission database. If anyone has any further information about any of the men mentioned here, do let me know and I'll be happy to add it.

### **Michaela**

*Michaela has her father's notes for the 2nd WW names. She will be completing these as her father intended for the November 2024 issue of Searchlight.. If anyone has any information on the names please to let her know and these can be Included. (you can email her via me—Clodagh)*



### **St Andrews Thursday Lunch**

The next lunch (Christmas Lunch) is on 14th December in St Andrew's Parish Centre at 12.30pm

The cost is £10 for a two course meal and coffee/tea, but please bring your own drink if you want to (other than water!). January date will be the 11th.

### **Anyone and Everyone welcome.**

Please reserve your place in advance by adding your name to the sheet in the church foyer (available about 2 weeks before the event) or phone Fran on 07906355064, and let us know of any dietary requirements, or if you have difficulty getting there.





ST ANDREW'S  
SHOTTERY

# Christmas Coffee Morning

SATURDAY 2nd DECEMBER



10am till 2pm

In PARISH CENTRE



CHRISTMAS GIFT STALL

TOMBOLA: RAFFLE: RNLI STALL:

Coffee and mince pies.

Soup and sandwich  
lunches.



Our own **STAMP** CHOIR  
will be  
entertaining us.





## Posada

This Advent we will be sharing in 'Posada' where the tradition of the figures of Joseph, Mary and the Donkey travel from home to home in the parish throughout the four weeks of the Advent Season; heading out to the first house after the 10am Advent Sunday Service on 3rd December and finally arriving back to the Crib Service at 4pm on 24th December. I do hope many families will have signed up on the list in the Welcome Area to host Mary, Joseph and their donkey for a night as they travel towards Bethlehem. *Clodagh*



*PS Thanks to Cerise Jones who knitted Mary and Joseph for us. I made the mule about 70 years ago!*

# Thank You



A record total of 457 **Shoe Boxes for families**

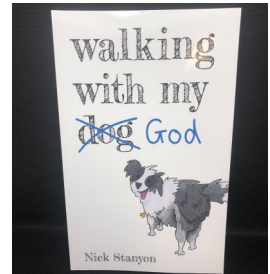


**in Romania** was collected from the Stratford area. Many thanks to all the individuals and groups who have supported us this year.

*Bob Macvie*



In *Walking with my dog God*, URC Minister Nick Stanyon invites you to join him on his daily walk with Nina, his border collie. He uses incidences involving his rescued border collie Nina to reflect on our relationship with God. For instance Nina's fears with Gods telling us not to be afraid. The book is delightfully illustrated throughout with sketches of Nina.



Along the way, Nick encounters all sorts of things that prompt thought, reflection and prayer. The walks become a deep and meaningful journey with God.

*Janet Insoll.*

## COFFEE MORNINGS IN DECEMBER

**Dates for your diaries: 2nd—Christmas Coffee Morning. (See page 16)**

For this we would welcome donations of Christmassy items suitable for gifts.

**16th—last one before Christmas break.**

Nativity / Crib Festival. We are planning to have a display of special or unusual Cribs / Nativity sets in the Church this morning. Each exhibit will have a little explanation so that people visiting can understand where each one comes from, what it is made of and perhaps if there was any special meaning for you..... it would be really lovely to have your special ones there.

Please bring your crib/Nativity set to the church on the Saturday morning from 9.30am ready for display. *Clodagh*



# NEWS FROM SHOTTERY ST ANDREW'S COFE PRIMARY SCHOOL



*Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16*

The first couple of weeks back after the half term holiday have certainly been busy! As a school, we have been thinking about how to mark the Remembrance Day celebrations and the children, with a little help from the staff, developed an incredible poppy trail throughout the school. The children created incredibly poignant art work, whilst learning about Armistice Day, a time to honour and show respect to all the people that have been involved in war and conflict. If you pass the school, please do take the time to look at the beautiful artwork on the railings, created by our wonderful artists in Year 5 and 6 class. Staff have taught the children that Remembrance is a time to reflect and think about the past generations of people, like grandparents and great-grandparents, and the sacrifices they made for us and also to think about the men and women who are currently serving to keep us safe such as the Army, Police, Firefighters, Air Force and Navy. We ended the week with our whole school Remembrance assembly and the children sat and listened to the important messages and took part respectfully in a two minute silence. This year was the first time the school took part in the Stratford town Remembrance Day celebrations, where we laid a wreath on behalf of the school at the WWII monument. We are really enjoying taking part in more community events and meeting new people.



Since joining Shottery St Andrew's, I have been really interested in finding out about the history of the school and have loved trawling through the past school log books. I am particularly interested though to find out if any past pupils served in WWI or WWII, so if anyone from the village or wider community has any knowledge of this, please do contact the school - I would love to meet you and find out more!

**Mrs Withers**

'If we are to create peace in our world, we must begin with our children.'







## St Macrina, St Melania and St Eustochium



I have a terrible memory, and it's only getting worse. I have always said that I would have achieved an 'A' in GCSE History if only I could remember who did it and when!

Luckily for me there are no exams on my course as I am assessed entirely on extended essays. My first assignment was due just six weeks after I began the course so there had been no opportunity to ease myself gently back into education.

We had a week of intensive teaching on Church History – 2000 years in 4 days – and then we were given a booklist and an essay title and off we were sent!

My essay was about the beginnings of monasticism, and I chose to write about the influence of women. It is difficult to discern accurately the role of women in history because often their lives were not recorded in the way that men's lives were. Even when some record of their words or deeds has been made it is usually written by a man, who will have their own agenda in what they write, however good willed that agenda might be.

Even discounting any parts of the available documents which historians are suspicious of, it is evident that the church owes a great deal to these, and other, women of learning, wisdom and bravery who devoted themselves to Jesus and the fledgling Church.

Therefore I'm making an extra special effort to **remember** at least a few of their names so I can do my part in recognising the great debt of thanks they are owed. I'll share just three with you now, and I encourage you to search out more – you won't be disappointed!

**St Macrina** was the elder sister of two of the 'Cappadocian Fathers', Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, who were highly influential in the early centuries of the Church. When her fiancé died Macrina refused to marry anyone else, considering herself a widow, and with her mother founded a monastery on the family's country estate. Under her guidance, and

thanks to her teaching, Basil, Gregory and their friend Gregory of Naziansus (the other of the Cappadocian Fathers) learned the value of monastic life and practices of prayer, which were very influential on their later work.

**St Melania** the Younger was born in Rome, the daughter of a Senator. Although forced to marry at a young age to a young man from another influential family she was determined to live an exemplary Christian life and eventually convinced her husband to agree to live in chastity and to sell their property to found monasteries as they travelled; first across North Africa and then in the Holy Land. As well as financing Christian communities, they also funded at least one Bishop, and Melania was in correspondence with St Augustine.

**St Eustochium** was also born in Rome and was a woman of considerable learning – able to speak in Latin and Greek, and read Hebrew. Together with her mother, Paula, she travelled with St Jerome to Bethlehem where she founded four monasteries and a hospice. There she worked with Jerome on his many writings including being instrumental in the translation of the Bible into Latin (Jerome's most famous achievement: the Vulgate) and his many commentaries.

I hope these three have whetted an appetite in you to find out more – and I really hope that my memory won't fail Macrina, Melania and Eustochium!



An Icon of St  
Melania the  
Elder... one to  
look up for your-  
self!

*Isaac Alun Jones*





**Our charity collection on 10th December will be for**

**Embrace the Middle East  
The Christian Development Charity Tackling  
Poverty & Injustice in the Middle East**

### **Who are We?**

As a Christian development charity, we partner with Christians in the Middle East, as they work to transform lives and restore the dignity of the most excluded and marginalised communities. Where there is a need – for refuge, a home, for health care, for education, for justice and human rights – we, with our partners, respond. Our goal is to contribute to a culture of human flourishing in a troubled region.

**Ours is a vision of love in action. It is rooted in, and inspired by, Christ's invitation to care for those most in need.**

We support, enable and partner with Christians in the Middle East as they work to transform lives and restore the dignity of the most excluded and marginalised in their communities.

The people of Gaza are living through an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Israel's response to the terrible events of 7th October has led to indiscriminate civilian suffering, with residents forced to move from place to place in search of safety. Food and medical supplies have all but run out; water, electricity, and fuel have been cut off.

The people of Gaza were already on their knees with 80% of residents reliant on humanitarian aid to survive. Please, can you make a donation to help them in their hour of need?

**Your gift will support Embrace's Christian partners in the immediate aftermath of this humanitarian crisis and to help to heal the wounds it's caused.**



**God of justice and compassion,** As the violence rages, we turn to you. As divisions widen and hatred deepens, we cry out to you. As families are torn apart, as hostages live in fear, as civilians are killed and injured, we lift up our souls to you.

**How long, O Lord? In this day of trouble, we call upon you: incline your ear and listen to us.**

**We plead with you for an end to the violence, for this war to cease.** Against all the odds, we pray that you would cause those in leadership in Gaza and Israel to agree to an immediate ceasefire.

Our hearts break for the civilians of Gaza. In the midst of fear and destruction, may they find refuge under the wings of the Most High. May you open the way for full and immediate humanitarian access – for food, water and medicine to reach all in need. We pray too for the protection of all who have been taken hostage by Hamas, and for their safe release.

O Lord, you alone are merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. **Do not be far off; come to our aid.**

In Jesus' name, Amen.

The cash collection and donations via the card reader in church on that day will go to the charity. If you would like to make a donation and are unable to be in church on the day please make cheques payable to : Shottery St. Andrew PCC, and send to Anne Challis at 259 Alcester Road, Stratford-upon-Avon. CV37 9JG, or if you prefer to do a bank transfer, within 5 days of the charity Sunday, the details are as follows:-  
Shottery St. Andrew PCC Sort Code 40-43-19 Account number 80739758 using the charity name as your reference.  
Thank you.





## PROUD TO DECLARE

A few weeks ago I felt rather besieged. In our cul-de-sac I was suddenly aware of ghosts, skeletons, spiders, bats, cobwebs, and demon faces carved into pumpkins at a number of houses. Yes. It was Hallowe'en once more.

At three of the houses reside young children and at a fourth two very young children are regular visitors which set me wondering that, no doubt, these youngsters are very much 'into' the celebration of this particular event, encouraged I am sure by parents and family but how many of those involved actually know what is being celebrated - or to be more precise, what has been corrupted ?

The word 'Hallowe'en' is a corruption of the name All Hallows Eve, the evening before All Saints Day which is then followed by the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls Day) both festivals which our Church Lectionary invites us to celebrate. But, of course, these Christian festivals have nothing to do with what has now been commonly adopted by to-day's society at large and which has become a multi-million pound business.

The origins of a non-Christian celebration at this time of year go back 1,900 years to the time of the Druids when it was taught that demons, evil spirits and witches had 'free reign' for one night - the night of November 1st - but this dark and harmful teaching was superseded by the Christian Gospel of the light and love of Christ.

However, it is now December and the glorious light of Advent and Christmas is with us putting the shadows of Hallowe'en behind us for another year. Sadly, many families do not choose to celebrate an authentic Christmas but opt for what some commentators have described as a 'Victorian' substitute of reindeer, Santa Clause, sleighs, fir trees, robins, snow, baubles and mistletoe leaving very little, if any, room for the birth of the child who would change human understanding of the nature and essence of life.

Or to put it another way - a birthday celebration where the principal guest is so often not invited. But for those who do invite this guest into our hearts, life is forever changed. It is never the same again.

The Church with all its human faults and frailties is still the 'vehicle' through which lives can be changed by God's Holy Spirit through the written Word, the Holy Sacraments and the fellowship of fellow pilgrims. The journey of The Church began with the birth of a very special baby - Divinity becoming a human- being and sharing a life here on earth, revealing God to us and offering the greatest of Christmas gifts - a loving and everlasting relationship with the Author of life.

With the angels of the first Christmas night let us then proudly declare - *"Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on earth to people He favours"*.

As we move into, and through, the new year of 2024 may that peace be with each one of us and gently grow throughout the whole of God's Creation.

**Alan Minchin.**





**Our charity collection on 14th January will be for**

**Welcome Here – Stratford-upon-Avon**

**Stratford Welcome Here** is a local charity helping refugees to rebuild their lives and achieve their full potential in safety and dignity. It welcomes and supports refugees who arrive to reside in Stratford-upon-Avon and the surrounding area. The charity is continuing to help families arriving through the Afghan and UK Resettlement Schemes.

The charity has a Facebook page called [Welcome Here: Stratford-upon-Avon](#) .

Around 180 people are on **Stratford Welcome Here's** mailing list and many of those volunteers who have helped make Syrian families feel welcome in the district over the past few years, are now helping those coming from Afghanistan.

An annual picnic for local refugees was held on Bank Holiday Monday at The Dell by the river near Holy Trinity Church. There are now about 16 families living locally – mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, Palestine and Sudan. Volunteers continue to meet with those here to practice English or just for a chat. **Welcome Here** is also providing lifts for hospital appointments as well as helping occasionally with a range of issues.

A cooking session takes place on the first Monday of the month 1.00 – 5.00 at Stratford Methodist Church Centre to provide an alternative to hotel food.

**Welcome Here** volunteers are also running a weekly badminton session for young people from the Grosvenor Hotel and other local organisations, such as escape Arts and Stratford Sports Club have also been offering activities.

**Welcome Here** is looking for help to raise money. For the past six years, it has been able to provide a wide range of assistance to local refugees through the generosity of its supporters. In the past few months it



has part-funded ten laptops for local refugees as well as helping with the costs of clothing for people at the hotel. So, let us at St. Andrew's show our generosity and reach out to help these people rebuild their lives in our town.

The cash collection and donations via the card reader in church on that day will go to the charity. If you would like to make a donation and are unable to be in church on the day please make cheques payable to : Shottery St. Andrew PCC, and send to Anne Challis at 259 Alcester Road, Stratford-upon-Avon. CV37 9JG, or if you prefer to do a bank transfer, within 5 days of the charity Sunday, the details are as follows:-  
Shottery St. Andrew PCC Sort Code 40-43-19 Account number 80739758 using the charity name as your reference.  
Thank you.

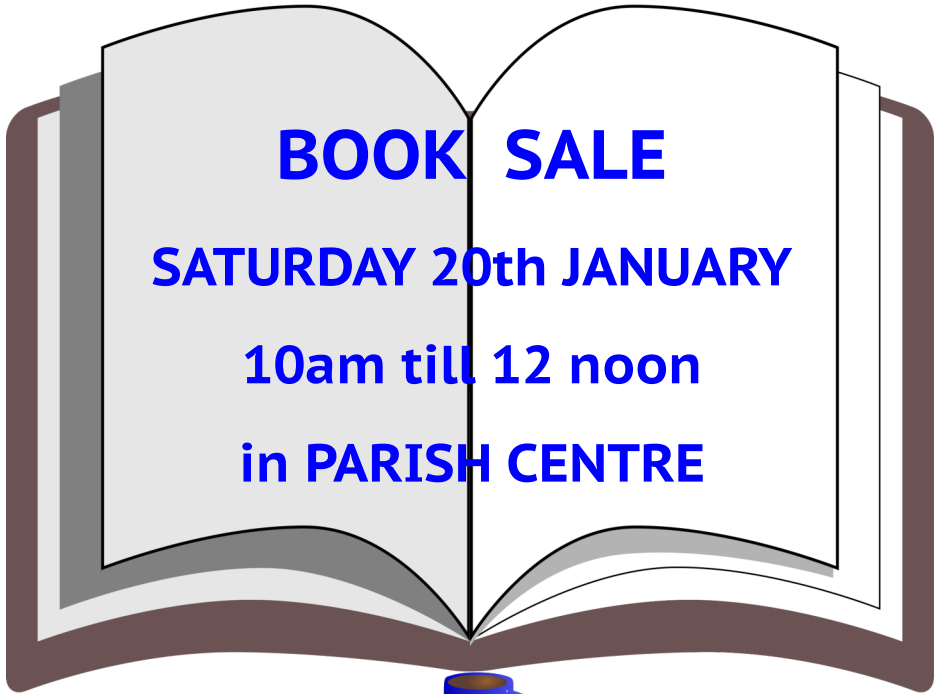


In Ireland it was a custom, at Christmas to keep a lit candle in the window to signal to Mary and Joseph that they were welcome at this home and also that any stranger in need of warmth and sustenance would not be turned away. In the Penal days it was illegal and dangerous to practice the Catholic faith in Ireland but candles seen in the windows of Irish homes at Christmas they signalled to traveling priests that this was a home where they would be welcome and where they could safely conduct the traditional Irish Christmas Mass. The words from the “Kerry Christmas Carol” give a sense of the roots of this old Irish tradition.

Don't blow the tall white candle out  
But leave it burning bright,  
So that they'll know they're welcome here  
This holy Christmas night!

A candle was lit in Aras an Uachtarain when President Mary Robinson re-adopted this custom during her term of office, to remember all of the emigrants that had left Ireland and let them know the candle in the window would always be lit up to remember them and guide their way back to Ireland and to a welcoming home.





# **BOOK SALE**

**SATURDAY 20th JANUARY**

**10am till 12 noon**

**in PARISH CENTRE**



**Jigsaws  
for sale**

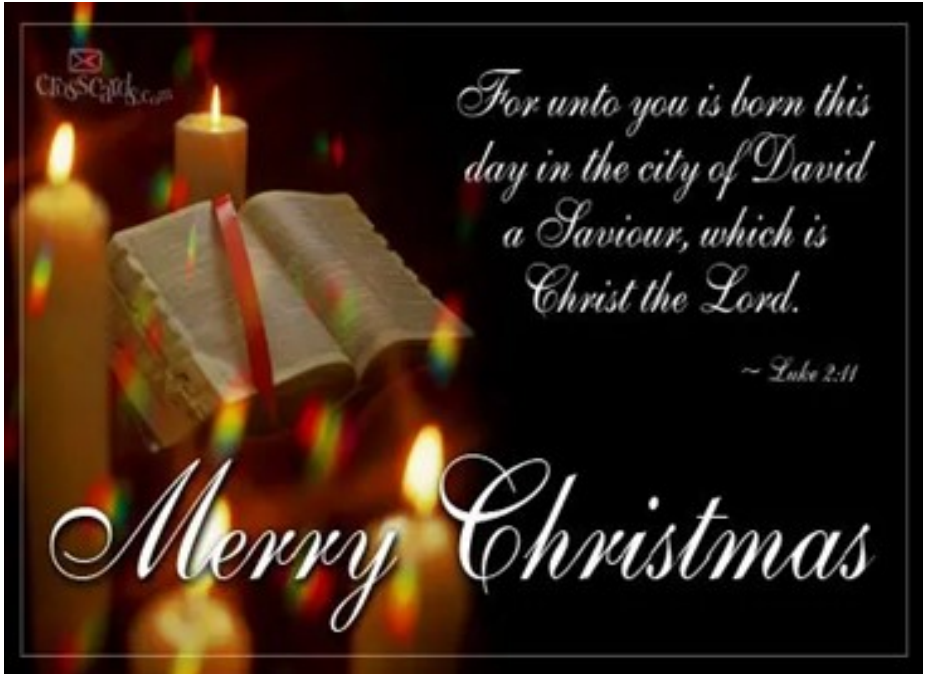


**COFFEE/TEA  
with TEA-  
CAKES**



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**Donations of books (paper back only)  
and jigsaws appreciated, which can be  
left in the Parish Office.**



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**Diary of a cross in the pocket.**

**Reminder to check out our Facebook  
page and our website  
(weekdays) short  
meditations by  
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**Associate Ministers** Revd. Dr. Paul Edmondson.. prosperohal@gmail.com  
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### **Honorary Clergy with Permission from the Bishop to Officiate:**

Revd. Mary Crameri and Revd. Joy Hance.

**Preacher:** Revd. Joan Whyman

**Reader:** Jan Walker

**Churchwardens:** Bob Macvie 551767 ragmacvie@hotmail.com  
Orion Johnson 550825 orionj@hotmail.co.uk

**Parish Office.** (Mondays: 1.30pm - 4.30pm; Tuesdays: 9.30 am- 12.30pm;  
Thursdays: 9.30am - 1.30pm)

**Sally Sleath 293381** Email: parishoffice@saintandrewsshottery.org

**PCC Secretary:** David Millington 269598 dmillington3@outlook.com

**Treasurer:** Carole Taylor 295132 carole.taylor7280@gmail.com

**Baptisms:** Parish Office—293381 or parishoffice@saintandrewsshottery.org

**Book Group:** Revd. Craig Grocock (as above)

**Cell Group:** Becks Bartlett - rebecca@rockstile.co.uk 07971161717

**Choir: Director of Music:** Rosemary Robson—296134 or  
therobsonfamily@hotmail.com

**Choir Conductor:** Larry Robson (as above)

**Housegroup:** Revd. Joy Hance—414603 or joysmail@talk21.com

**Children & Family + Illumin8** (Sunday School) Caroline Penn—07595883948

**Listening and Prayer Team:** Susie Fletcher – 01789 298738

**Mothers' Union:** Hilary Capron—hilary@caprons.co.uk 762904.

**Organist:** Matt Penn

**Parish Centre bookings:** Parish Office

**Parish Safeguarding:** David Millington 269598 or dmillington3@hotmail.com  
and Liz Talbot: liztalbot3@gmail.com