



# OVERVIEW

Depicting the life and witness of the church.

The United Reformed Church Swanlow Lane, Over, Winsford CW7 1JE

[www.winsford.urc.org.uk](http://www.winsford.urc.org.uk)

## Christmas

All Services start at 10.30am

10<sup>th</sup> Dec **Nativity & Gift Service**

Rev Garry Wareham with the Brownies

17<sup>th</sup> Dec **Lessons & Carols** Mrs Simone Burrows

24<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.30am Service, Rev Dr Jan Berry

25<sup>th</sup> Dec No Service



## New Year

### Contact Information

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**Things beyond our seeing, things beyond our hearing, things beyond our imagining, have all been prepared by God for those who love him.**  
**1 Corinthians 2:9**

Tis the season of The Nativity! When my daughter was about 4, she was very excited at the prospect of being an angel in the Sunday school production of the Christmas Story. Her favourite song at the time was 'Little Donkey' ..... unfortunately for us, the two-word title were the only words that she could remember from the song that she bellowed out whenever she was reminded of her upcoming stage role. Since then, there have been nearly 35 nativity seasons, and as I prepare Christmas messages, I am paralysed by the challenge to present the same familiar story in a new and dynamic way. I, like many, are guilty of going into autopilot when we think of the Christmas Story, or indeed when we think about our faith in Jesus. We have seen or read it so many times that we are convinced that there is nothing new for us to discover.

A simple example of what I am trying to say is illustrated at the top of this article, the donkey illustrating the story about my daughter. But did you notice the seal? (If you didn't see the seal, look first to the bottom left of the picture and think 'seal face'.) We can walk around never noticing things are there in plain sight, truths 'beyond our seeing'.

What if we were to read the Christmas story in the Gospel of Luke and let the details of the narrative unfold with fresh eyes. Consider the journey of the shepherds, their simple and humble occupation, and the glorious announcement made to them by the heavenly hosts. Reflect on the significance of the star guiding the wise men, leading them to the newborn King. To imagine the familiar figures of Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus but taking notice of the humility in Mary's eyes and the awe in Joseph's expression. Imagine the miracle of the incarnation, the divine becoming human to dwell among us. Love that came down at Christmas.

As we notice God who is love in the familiar, perhaps we can have our eyes opened to the opportunities that God gives us to share 'Good News' and to be 'Good News'? Take a moment to notice the people around you, those who may be feeling lonely or forgotten during this season. Reach out with kindness and compassion, embodying the spirit of love that Christmas represents. In these moments, you may find yourself saying, "I never noticed the depth of human connection and the power of simple acts of kindness until now."

Amid exchanging gifts and savouring festive meals, let us not overlook the greatest gift of all, the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Let us notice again or perhaps for the first time, this extraordinary gift, realizing that it is not just a historical event but a personal invitation to experience God's love and redemption.

Let this season be a time of reflection, revelation, and renewal as we embrace the true meaning of Christmas.

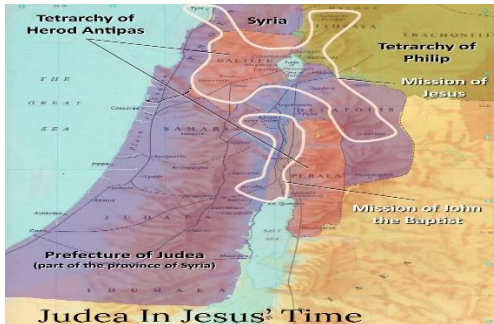
Wishing you a blessed and meaningful Christmas,

Garry

**Palestine – an area/territory in the Middle East which has never been a recognised country or a self-governing state.**

In response to a question raised by somebody in church, I thought that it would be worth exploring what Palestine is or isn't – peoples conceptions vary considerably.

Map 1 below - Judea in Jesus time.



After the Jewish revolt in AD71 the Roman Emperor, Titus destroyed the Jewish Temple, destroyed the Jewish genealogical records, and completely flattened Jerusalem. In a further attempt to wipe out any trace/memory of the State of Judea – the Romans renamed the area “Palestine” – meaning land of the Philistines.

For the next 1400 years the area designated Palestine was taken over and ruled by various empires – it was never an independent or self-governing state. In 1517, Palestine became part of the Ottoman empire.

The Ottomans chose to raise monies by putting a tax on live trees, so throughout their 400-year rule of Palestine the area became virtually a wasteland: 90% of the area was uninhabitable – desert & swampland. The American author Mark Twain visited Palestine in the 1830's and described the desolation in letters home to his friends.

In the 1840's – Jews across Europe started to yearn for their own homeland. European Jews emigrated to Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. Jews purchased land from the Arabs – land that was totally unproductive - and the new owners set about draining swamps and planting trees.

Other Jews established manufacturing industries – mostly around Tel Aviv.

Arabs from all over the Middle East came to work in these factories and established their own communities around these manufacturing hubs.

In 1917 the Turks (who had allied with Germany) were defeated, and Britain took over the mandate for the whole of Palestine.

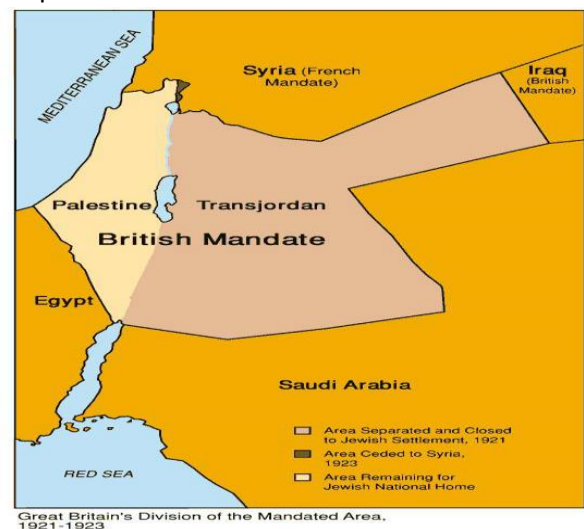
Map 2 (top right) shows the whole area of Palestine.



After WW1 in 1921, The league of Nations passed a resolution to create a Jewish state in Palestine. This is 28 years before the start of WW2 and 33 years before the unfolding of the Holocaust.

In response to this resolution, in 1922 the British ceded 72% of the Palestine territory to Jordan: They renamed that 72% of Palestine - Transjordan.

Map 3 below



All Jews living in the newly designated “Transjordan” were forcibly moved to the “Jewish” area – which still retained the name Palestine. Arabs were encouraged to move into the designated Jewish area too. Since 1948, the area of Transjordan is simply part of the one country map for Jordan.

Hamas and other Islamic groups, choose to use map 3 to support the idea that the modern State of Israel is historically “Palestine” whereas in reality, the State of Israel covers less than a third of the territory that for 1,900 years was identified as Palestine.

Jordan has never been under any pressure to create a Palestinian state within the 70% of the territory ceded to them in 1922.

SB



Joan Dowling was a former member of Cantate Ladies Choir who sadly died last year. She was a very talented woman who was a keen writer and poet. Her poem Taxi was read by a member of Cantate at the Tea and Chat event at URC 18 September. We print it here by permission of her family, who are pleased and proud to share it with the wider community.

### A Taxi

Usually just for weddings and funerals.  
My two best friends waiting at the dance Hall,  
solemn faces suppressing nervous giggles.  
coats discarded in the cloakroom,  
each admired the other's finery -  
but secretly thought their own choice best.  
We hovered breathless in the doorway,  
then, last minute cries of panic -  
Don't leave me on my own! Never.  
Holding hands, we pledged allegiance  
and crossed the threshold to our first grown-up dance.  
  
Was that really fifty years ago?  
It feels like yesterday.

Joan Dowling Won 1st prize in the 2013 Swanwick Summer School Annual Poetry Competition

**MAY CHRIST BE WITH YOU THIS  
CHRISTMAS –  
AND ALWAYS - STEPHANIE**



Chris & Christine McKie  
Wish friends & Church  
family a happy & peaceful  
Christmas & New Year



Every good  
wish for  
Christmas  
and the New  
Year, from  
Ros



How quickly Christmas comes upon us - no sooner do we finish with harvest than the shops are full of sequins and tinsel. For us it comes as a real surprise. This shut-in life of ours tends to make us more than a little forgetful. But we do not forget you – all of you. So, we say to you, we hope you have a very HAPPY and BLESSED CHRISTMAS, with much love from Philip and Betty

## FROM THE SECRETARY

Our recent application for a mission grant from Mersey Synod for our Christmas Gift bags was successful and in December we will be hanging the bags on the gates to the graveyard for visitors to take home. There are bags for both children and adults. We know that parents from the local school use the car park when dropping off children and collecting them and a number of people visit the graveyard to lay flowers on relative's graves at this time of year. It is mainly these people who take the bags but if you know of someone who may appreciate the offer, please take a bag for them. We hang these bags to encourage people to remember the true message of Christmas. Please pray that these bags may help people to think more deeply about the gift of Jesus.

The mission grant has also provided funding for us to buy the Bible Society children's booklet about the Christmas story. These will be handed out to the Brownies after the nativity. Unfortunately, the Beavers and Cubs are unable to join us this year, but we will be passing spare copies on to them. **The Nativity and Gift Service will be held on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December**, and we will be collecting gifts for children and young people who are spending their first Christmas in their own home. These will be passed on to the Salvation Army for distribution to families around Winsford and the local area. The Salvation Army also makes hampers for distribution at Christmas time and are always grateful for gifts of food, especially Christmas food and confectionery, to include in them. If you wish to donate food, you can take it to the Salvation Army in Gladstone Street on Friday mornings between 9.30am and 3.00pm.

Our other Christmas services are the Lessons & Carols service on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December which will be led by Mrs Simone Burrows and the Christmas Eve service on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December led by Rev Dr Jan Berry. All services start at 10.30am.

Garry is leading four **Advent Fellowship Groups on Wednesdays commencing on 29<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm** in the Lecture Room. We will be looking at the Songs of Advent, Zachariah, Angels, Mary and Simeon.

Lesley, Sandra and Fiona will be organising a **Beetle Drive on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December commencing at 2.00pm**. This will be a chance to meet together socially before Christmas and enjoy fellowship. Whilst not an activity which concerns many people, High Street School will be visiting us for their Christmas services during the first week of December. This year for the first time they will be holding 3 services with three different classes each taking the lead. Garry will be attending each service and a group of people have offered to help with this to operate the sound desk and welcome the school for both the services and the rehearsals. The services are always well supported by the families and friends of the children. Please pray that those attending the services will take time to think about the birth of Jesus and what we are truly celebrating at Christmas.

Thank you very much to all those giving time and helping to organise all these different Christmas activities. They do not happen without individuals being prepared to step up and support the work of providing such activities.

Wishing you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas

Ros

Merry Christmas & a Happy  
New Year to everyone.  
Simone & Philip



"Christmas  
Greetings  
from Jeff  
and Ann"



## The Very Green Grocery

Did you know that here in Winsford we are privileged to have our very own Community Grocery? One of its aims is to prevent food waste going into landfill thereby producing methane.

Many supermarkets pay to dispose of food – some of it with sell by dates in 2024 – because they need the shelves for the next seasonal produce. Of course, they also need to dispose of produce with very close sell by dates – this food would be unacceptable at a food bank.

As with many new ventures, it is only able to function because of the time given by volunteers many of them pensioners. Housed at the old job centre near the library the Grocery is open twice a week, but the building holds many other community-help groups which are open every weekday. A daily cafe is opening some time in November.

I don't know all the ins and outs of the system but gather it is now run by Changing Lives Together.

### Practicalities of using the Grocery:

Nearby parking is often full.

You must take a ticket and wait for your number to be called (often over 10 minutes)

Everyone qualifies and is made welcome.

You pay £5 – I think you must register on the first visit. There are about 6 different people who tell you what you can take - one item from this shelf / 4 from this shelf / one item from this chest freezer etc. You can't go with a shopping list as each week there are different donations therefore different items on offer.

I have been offered 4 large bunches of bananas / 30 eggs / 2 packets of Weetabix / several loaves on different visits. You must be quick to think “what can I use /share with neighbours “and to say “no, thank you, I can't use that this week”. Depending on what you accept the total value of goods is probably £30+ but the main aims are to prevent useable food going into landfill and to help those that need food to obtain it at a bargain price.

I have had Waitrose small potatoes; Greggs tuna panini (eat by today); large tin of grapefruit segments; Morrisons yoghurt; frozen mince; coconut water; beautiful mushrooms – well in date; parsnips; apples and oranges; chocolate dated 2024; frozen venison liver; frozen smoked

mackerel; large pot of single cream; beautiful pastries.....and on exit you can often choose a lovely bunch of flowers – mine lasted for 10 days. Jeff says that we are widening our food horizons (easy to do as having a pizza is different for us!)

Look it up on the computer and if you know people who need this facility then tell them or take them; if you bake for church events then go and get your eggs (seem to be available every week); go yourself and help prevent landfill – if you feel diffident about it then “pay it forward” so someone else does not have to pay the £5 or you could give the money you have saved to a food bank or you could go and volunteer a couple of hours a week. This is OUR local community and Over URC's mission statement includes the words “we are here ....to. love and serve the community.....”

Ann Kilshaw

## Cantate Choir Recital

The Saturday of the 21st of October dawned bright and sunny and sped us to our Church for the anticipated choir recital by "Cantate" and we were met by greeters handing out the programmes, inside the music was welcoming and we were able to catch up meeting other friends who had come along.

The choir entered and the ladies were elegantly dressed in dark outfits with a lovely large pink rose each pinned to their tops - the choir mistress in gorgeous black lace - all very professional and set the tone for the music that followed: American folk ballads, English traditional, classical AND Abba! We were also treated to two beautiful solos by a baritone and two duets by him and the choir mistress....

music that uplifted and showed us that we did not need the Albert Hall, our church acoustic rose to the occasion to more than compliment the polished performance of the choir!

At the end of the concert, we had the further treat of a hot drink and biscuits and more time to discuss the lovely music, served by our stalwarts in the church - thank you to them too for enhancing the afternoon.

The names of the songs and the individual performers have been withheld on purpose to stimulate your curiosity so that you will attend the next concert and share our elation...



The U.R.C Over Players Panto present:-

# Beauty and the Beast

Written by  
Lynn  
Hughes

Directed  
by  
Jan  
Bason

Wednesday

31st Jan –

Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb

7.30pm

The United  
Reformed Church,  
Over, Winsford  
CW7 1JE,  
Winsford.

In the Church Hall

**Wed-** All tickets £6

**Thurs, Fri, Sat** – Adults £8 – Child/Concessions £6

**Uniformed Organisation** (with £1 tuck bag) £6

**Family Ticket** (family of 4, including 1 adult) - £24

Raffle, Refreshments & Snack Shop

To Book Tickets - [overplayerspantotickets@gmail.com](mailto:overplayerspantotickets@gmail.com)

For General Enquiries - [overplayerspanto@gmail.com](mailto:overplayerspanto@gmail.com)

Supporting The Salvation Army Dementia Café Winsford.

## SYNOD REPORT

Mersey Synod met on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at Heswall URC. For those readers who are uncertain about the role of Synod, I thought I would provide some background information. Church House in London is the Headquarters of the United Reformed Church and the central office. England, Scotland and Wales are divided into 13 Synods, and we are part of the Mersey Synod. The ministers and local churches are all part of Synod and the office which organises the day-to-day administration for our area is based in Liverpool. Mersey Synod is the smallest Synod in the UK and has a selection of full time and part time staff. It is headed by the Moderator, Rev Geoff Felton who chairs the Synod meetings and some of the Committee meetings as well. In other words, Synod is the link between the head office and the local churches. There are two main meetings a year, one in March and one in October, and anyone can attend these meetings. Synod have a website which includes many helpful leaflets and documents offering guidance on running a church, everything from buildings and maintenance to membership and the role of Elders, and many other aspects of church life.

The Synod theme this year and next is Talking Faith and this was the focus of the October meeting. A small group of us from Over attended; Garry, Simone, Lesley, and myself. Simone has this year completed the URC Stepwise training course for Lay Preaching and was presented with flowers for her achievement. Congratulations Simone. Rev Mike Walsh from Northwestern Synod presented the Bible study explaining by reference to Jesus meeting with the woman at the well (John 4) how he ministers in the community without a church in which to base his mission. In other words, his work relates wholly to “talking church” every day in the community. The focus of the day was four workshop sessions and each participant had chance to attend two. Sue Richardson gave an excellent presentation about the work the Church Action for Tax Justice explaining how the inequalities in the tax system in this country exaggerate poverty. Another workshop discussed the use of small groups in churches and the opportunities they provide to deepen our faith and support each other. Other workshops included Talking Friendships and Talking Wellbeing. The aim of the workshops was to enable us to think about being church seven days a week and not just on Sunday.



The picture is obviously of Simone. The other person is the Moderator of the Mersey Synod congratulating Simone on becoming a local lay preacher.

We heard reports of various activities being carried out in the Synod including the new Synod website and community projects. A summary of the annual safeguarding returns was also presented. During the meeting there was mention of the Synod Mission Grants available which we have benefitted from

last year and this. Synod meetings have changed recently, whereas they used to be focussed on the agenda there is now more emphasis on welcoming all regular worshippers to participate in the meetings, connect with the wider church, share ideas and benefit from each other's experiences. Reports are still considered in the meetings and business conducted however my favourite time is the opening worship, always inspirational and enlightening. The next Synod meeting will be Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March at Trinity URC Wigan and I would encourage people to think about attending.

Ros Ellison





Joanie and I went Nantwich this morning and went to St Mary's Church where they have their Christmas Tree display in aid of St Luke's.

The tree submitted by Winsford Vets is in memory of Fiona.

The decorations are all photographs of her patients, their clients' pets.

The topper is a photo of Fiona with one of her dogs.

Lesley.



### **Winsford Veterinary Surgery**

A Christmas tribute featuring our beautiful patients in memory of our wonderful friend and colleague, Fiona Hughes.







**Best  
wishes to  
all for  
Christmas  
and New  
Year.**  
**Eileen**



Sally and  
Robert would  
like to wish  
everyone a  
peaceful and  
delightful  
Christmas and  
New Year.

### Photograph Acknowledgements

Cards- Annie Spratt.  
New Year fireworks- Andreas Rasmussen  
Birth of Jesus (front page) -Ch P  
Joy to the World – Ch P  
Candle Lamp – Mariana B  
Christmas Baubles- Kelly Sikkema  
Stars & Holy Family- Debby Hudson  
Holly on a box- Tijana Drndarski  
Bells – Sebastian Spindler  
Christmas Star – Aaron Burden  
Christmas Dog – Tamara Bellis  
Dog in Costume – Alondra Pavon  
Dog in a coat – Flouffy  
Christmas Window – K. Mitch Hodge.  
Mary – British Library.

**All from unsplash.com**

Lesley and Colin would  
like to wish everyone here  
ay Over A Very Merry  
Christmas and a Happy  
New Year.

May you all have Peace  
as well as merriment and  
festivities



Joan & Syd Hulse  
Wish all their friends at  
Over a Happy & Merry  
Christmas & New Year



The New Year lies before you  
Like a spotless tract of snow;  
Be careful how you tread on it  
For every mark will show

From “church bulletin bits”#1  
– George W Knight compiler

May Christmas time mean more to you  
Than gifts on Christmas morn;  
May you feel the peace the whole world knew  
When Christ the Lord was born!

May you know the special gladness  
And hope that came to men;  
And may it thrill your heart just now  
As Christmas comes again!

From “church bulletin bits”#1 – George W Knight compiler

Thank you to everyone who has supplied articles for this  
edition of the Overview. With your each individual efforts  
you have created a news letter!

### On behalf of Churches Together

Simone would like to thank folk who gave her cakes for the Winsford' Lights On' event on 24<sup>th</sup> November.

The CTW hospitality marquee was fully occupied throughout the evening as people enjoyed listening to 3 choirs and the U3A Ukelele group!

### Joint Churches Together Advent service

St Chads Church  
Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup>

December at 4pm

Please come along to St Chads for this service.

St Chads will be open all afternoon on Sunday for their annual Christmas tree event – the service begins at 4pm

To all my friends at Over U.R.C I wish you a Happy and Peaceful Christmas, plus, Health and all good wishes for the New Year 2024.  
Hilda Johnson,



## Anniversary Art at the Arm

Richard Haffenden  
Virginia Hunt

**M**ARSHALL'S ARM'S FLAGSHIP event of its 25th anniversary year was held in September.

Fifty people were present for the bats' fly-past. A dry, windless and warm Friday evening made for perfect conditions; common pipistrelles, soprano pipistrelles, noctules and a rare Daubenton's bat put on a magnificent show. Saturday saw the mammal release of many fat and healthy mice and bank voles. This was followed by pond dipping, "shake a tree" to reveal the insects lurking in the old oak and searching for galls before printing with the gall ink. The Hapa Zome activity involved

Virginia Hunt with  
artist Sally Bebbington

[facebook.com/hartfordparishcoun](https://facebook.com/hartfordparishcoun)



printing with leaves and flowers on to canvas. While people picnicked, the Marshall's Arm Choir sang songs based on local history. Highlight of the day was the unveiling of the new art installation.

Over fifty submissions were received for *Art from the Arm*, the exhibition which was held in the Visual Arts Cheshire (VAC) gallery at Barons Quay in August and September.

Sally Bebbington won the competition to produce the best artwork, with her acrylic painting *Explore the Depths*. Sally was inspired to create her painting after taking part in the Wildflower Walk at Marshall's Arm in May. "I had never visited the nature reserve before," said Sally, "but I was overwhelmed by the carpets of wildflowers and the soaring trees by the stream. In fact, there was so much to inspire my future paintings. I'll definitely be visiting again."

[marshallsarm.org](https://marshallsarm.org)

### Recycling scheme – on hold pending discussion!

The Sorooptimists have been very grateful for our contributions to their recycling scheme.

However, it is taking them a lot of time to clean and split the foil crisp packets to send on to the makers of emergency blankets – and time to clean the bottle tops! They've asked us to make sure all plastic bottle tops have been washed and they've asked us too if we are collecting foiled crisp/snack packaging – that each one is opened up (i.e., the 2 sides cut), and it is washed and dried. If folk are prepared to do that – then in the new year we can put the collection boxes out again.

Please let Moira or Simone know whether you want to keep on collecting!

Thank you.



## Duty Rota and Diary dates December 2023 & January 2024

Date 2023/2024	Vestry Elder	Welcomer/steward	Preacher	Media desk	Preparation media
3 Dec	Mrs Ros Ellison	Mrs Fiona Worthington	Rev David Spence Service includes Communion 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent	Stephanie	Stephanie
3 Dec 4pm	Churches Together Advent Service	@ St Chad's Church – also enjoy their tree festival			
10 Dec	Mr Maurice Boughey	Mrs Jean Challinor	Rev Garry Wareham with the Brownies Nativity & Gift service	Stephanie	Stephanie
17 Dec	Mrs Stephanie Smith	Mr Len Moss & Mrs Barbara Moss	Mrs Simone Burrows Lessons & Carols	Sally	Simone
24 Dec	Mr Philip Burrows	Mr Ian Tabernacle	Rev Dr Jan Berry	Simone	Simone
Mon 25 Dec	No service				
31 Dec	Mr Philip Burrows	Ms Moira McLachlan	Mr Peter Drew	Simone	Simone
7 Jan 2024	Mrs Simone Burrows	Mrs Pam Bird	Rev David Spence Service includes Communion	Sally	Sally/Simone
14 Jan	Mrs Lesley Clarke	Mrs Fiona Worthington	Rev Garry Wareham	Maurice	Stephanie
21 Jan	Mrs Stephanie Smith	Mr Ian Tabernacle	Mrs Sue Moulton	Simone	Sally/Simone
28 Jan	Mrs Ros Ellison	Mr Len Moss & Mrs Barbara Moss	Rev Jennie Wakefield	Stephanie	Stephanie
4 Feb 2024	Mrs Gwen Bushill	Ms Moira McLachlan	Rev Dr Jan Berry Service includes Communion	Sally	Simone

### Craft & Chat

#### Overview 2024

**Jan/Feb** – Last Sunday for articles 28<sup>th</sup> Jan  
Out - Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> Feb

**March/ April** – Last Sunday for articles 18<sup>th</sup> Feb  
Out - Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> Feb

**May/June** – Last Sunday for articles 21<sup>st</sup> April.  
Out- Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April

**July/Aug** – Last Sunday for articles 23<sup>rd</sup> June  
Out- Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in the month at 2pm

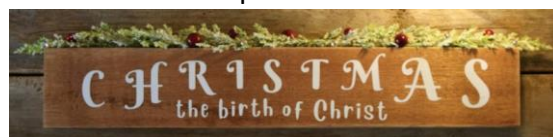
**December 19<sup>th</sup> 2023 & 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**6<sup>th</sup> Dec** – Advent Group 7.30. In the lecture room.

**9<sup>th</sup> Dec** – Beetle Drive. 2.00pm At the Church.

**13<sup>th</sup> Dec** – Advent Group 7.30. In the lecture room.

**20<sup>th</sup> Dec** – Advent Group 7.30. In the lecture room.



'Michael and Elizabeth (Liz and Mike) Jackson wish all their friends at Over a peaceful and joyous Christmas, and a very happy and healthy New Year.