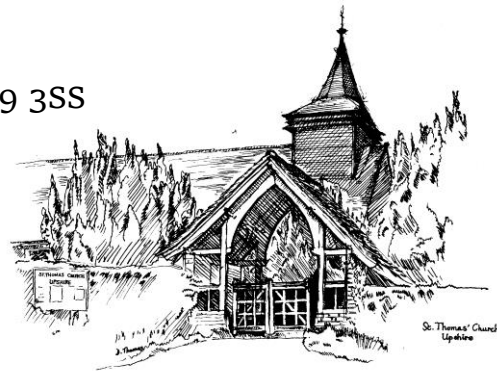


St Thomas' Church, Upshire EN9 3SS

Newsletter

December 2022



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Team Vicar: Revd Jane Yeadon, 07960 604416. email janeyeadon@gmail.com
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This Newsletter is free: donations to Lyn Wackett. Copy date for January 2023: 14th December

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. The PCC has adopted the Church of England's policies and best practice on safeguarding which may be found on the Church of England website and also on the Diocese of Chelmsford website.

SERVICES AND DIARY FOR DECEMBER

Saturday 3 rd	3-4pm SEEDLINGS meet in the church
Sunday 4 th	Second Sunday of Advent 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 11;1-10 Matthew 3;1-12 3.30pm FESTIVE BRASS Christmas Concert with Enfield Brass Band
Wednesday 7 th	11.30am for 12noon-2pm TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH in the church – 07899 846711 to book – please let us know if you have to cancel. Thank you.
Saturday 10 th	11am-3pm CHRISTMAS FAYRE in the church
Sunday 11 th	Third Sunday of Advent 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 35;1-10 Matthew 11;2-11
Wednesday 14 th	2.15pm Mothers' Union Corporate Communion in church – all welcome
Sunday 18 th	Fourth Sunday of Advent 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 7;10-16 Matthew 1;18-end 4.30pm SERVICE OF 9 LESSONS AND CAROLS
Saturday 24 th	CHRISTMAS EVE 11.30pm MIDNIGHT COMMUNION in church
Sunday 25 th	CHRISTMAS DAY 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 57;7-10 John 1;1-14
Sunday 1st January	NEW YEAR'S DAY The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus 9.15am SERVICE OF FAVOURITE CAROLS AND READINGS

The church will be open every Monday and Thursday from 11.30am to 12.30pm for private prayer only.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS

THE VICAR WRITES:

This month I want to tell you the story of my friend [Woof.I.am](#) and in case you wondered about his strange name this is because he is a dog!

He is very excited about Christmas because he loves presents, loves them, not just getting them but giving them. [Woof.I.am](#) heard the Christmas story about Jesus being born and that he was a very special baby, a baby that God had sent because he loved the world and wanted to save it.

He wanted to respond to God's generosity so he thought he should give Jesus a present.

But what?

He decided to join the angels as he thought if he was an angel, his present to Jesus could be a wonderful song of praise, letting everyone know the good news.

But, there is just one problem – he is a dog! And dogs can't sing, because when they try to sing, they just end up howling.

Well never mind, he thought, I could be a shepherd instead. I can go with them to visit Jesus and bring a sheep or a lamb as my present.

But, there is just one problem – he is a Dog! And dogs love sheep, but not for the right reasons. [Woof.I.am](#) loves chasing sheep and scaring them. So his present to Jesus can't be a lamb, [Woof.I.am](#) can't be a shepherd.

But he wasn't going to give up, I could be a king, he thought. They took really special gifts to the baby Jesus. So he thought he could be a king and take some gold chocolate coins to make Jesus feel special. But, there is just one problem – he is a Dog! And dogs love chocolate, and just eat it all. So his present to Jesus can't be gold coins, he couldn't be a king.

So he couldn't be an angel, or a shepherd, or a king. But he really wanted to take a present to Jesus. So he set off for the stable with his head and his tail down! Maybe he would get an idea on the way? When he got there, he sneaked in, hoping no one would notice that he had no present for the baby.

[Woof.I.am](#) was really worried that he didn't have a present but he so wanted to come before Jesus and give him something so with a big sigh he did the only thing he thought he could. He walked up to the baby and climbed in next to him and he lay down and kept the baby warm.

Because he is a dog, and being cuddly and warm for people is what dogs do best.

That was the best present of all, The most generous present of all the gift of himself, going into the stable and offering himself, just as he is, and the little thing he could do.

And that's the thing about the Christmas Story... angels just had to be angels, the shepherds just had to be shepherds, the kings just had to be kings, Mary was just Mary, Joseph was just Joseph - and [Woof.I.am](#) was just cuddly, warm [Woof.I.am](#).

That's what each of us can do this Christmas when we think of the baby Jesus and wonder what it's all about.

Remember that he didn't stay a baby, remember that he came as the ultimate display of God's love & generosity and the call to humanity to come back to him.

Come before him, as ourselves, whether we are old and bring all our memories and our wisdom, or whether we are young and bring our energy and excitement.

The nativity story is an old story, a story that doesn't change, but a story that is part of a bigger truth, the story of a God who created us as individuals, loves us just as we are and calls us back to him.

The baby in the manger is the story of the most generous love that invites us to join in and respond to Jesus just as we are.

Philip Brook wrote the carol "in the bleak midwinter" - he writes

What can I bring him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb,

if I were a wise man I would play my part.

Yet what I can I give him, Give my heart.

Have a happy and blessed Christmas everyone. Blessings, Jane

PRAYER REQUESTS

You are invited to offer names to be added to our prayer diary to remember those who are unwell or unhappy.

First names only are required as God will know who we are praying for.

Contact Lyn Wackett on 01992 711573 or email lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk

This month we pray for Glenis, Laura, Alan & Pam, Lesley, Charlie & John, Anne, Pam & John, Barbara, Vernon, Mal, Louise, Sue, Ann & Cyril, Rosalind, Doreen, Barry, Maureen, Carol & George, Beverly, Dave P, Terry, June, Rose, Peggy, Shirley, Sheila, Jackie, Jean, Andrea and her Mum and Dad, Nina, Carmel & the Price family, James, Tim, Dave, Pat, Christine, Kathrine & Paul and Nigel.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Our mailing list to receive the electronic version is now in excess of 70 participants so if you are not one of those and wish to be included please send your email address to : marionne.locke@btinternet.com. We are looking to reduce our 'paper footprint' for climate change by printing fewer copies – your contribution will help.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Thank you to the people who have sent in articles to be included in the Newsletter. Please keep them coming! Anything: maybe a poem you have written, what you have been doing in the garden, childhood memories, something that happened to make you smile etc, it all makes for interesting reading.

Events still to come at St Thomas'

Sunday 4 th December	3.30pm Enfield Brass Band Concert
Wednesday 7 th December	11.30am for 12noon start Traditional Christmas Lunch
Saturday 10 th December	11am-3pm Christmas Fayre
Sunday 18 th December	4.30pm Carol Service
Saturday 24 th December	11.30pm Midnight Communion
Sunday 25 th December	9.15am Christmas Day Service

ANAGRAM

Unscramble this 10 letter anagram – ORDERSBATH. The answer will be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

CHURCH FLOWERS

DECEMBER - the time of celebration is here and we will aim to fill the church with festive arrangements.

Dedications this month : 7th Dec - Lyn Wackett.

Memorial dedications, wedding, anniversary or special occasion flowers can be arranged for any week – contact Marion Locke 07789 643147 or email marionne.locke@btinternet.com to discuss.

MAKE YOUR OWN FESTIVE DOOR HANGING

A suggestion to make something for your home:

Find some long curving branches of ivy or other foliage type and bend to a half moon shape to the size you desire – these can then be wired together at the centre and part way round as securely as you can – several pieces can gradually be wired on additionally to bulk up and form your shape. To this you can then wire on pine cones, baubles, bells, ribbon, led lights – whatever you find to give that festive look. Finally you need to add a piece of wire at centre back which needs to be made as a loop to form a hook for hanging. This would also work by using a metal coat-hanger (the type you get with your dry cleaning) and this could be stretched to form a circle shape with the foliage wired round – this means you then have a ready-made hook with which to hang it. Get creative and have a go.

STAMPS!

Please continue to save your postage stamps and foreign or out of circulation coins – many charities can use them to raise funds.

We collect the coins for Essex and Herts Air Ambulance and I have recently been told the British Legion collect them too.

The Air Ambulance no longer take the stamps so I made contact with St Clare's Hospice and took two large bags of stamps weighing over 3kg to them – they were delighted so I will continue to save the stamps for them.

Stamps and coins can be left with Lyn and Dave at 94 Upshire Road and left in the porch. Note: please remember to leave about ½" of envelope around the stamp. Thank you.

ST THOMAS' CHURCH COMMUNITY LUNCHES 2022

WEDNESDAY 7 DECEMBER : TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH

PLEASE BOOK YOUR PLACE TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE : 07899 846711

If, after booking you are unable to come, please phone to cancel,
we can then offer a place to people on the waiting list. Thank you.



ST THOMAS' SEEDLINGS

1st Saturdays of each month (unless otherwise stated)

A free Stay and Play church group for children and those who care for them
Join us Saturdays 3-4pm for messy craft, play, songs and stories along with a welcome cuppa
St Thomas' Church, Horseshoe Hill, Upshire, EN9 3SS



St Thomas Church, Upshire Bank details

St Thomas Church Upshire PCC

HSBC Bank Sort Code 40 45 20 Account number 00724505

Any queries regarding setting up a Standing Order, giving a donation to the church, Gift Aid
or about joining the Parish Giving Scheme please contact our Treasurer, Ruth Moore on 07852 668633

Ruth4366@gmail.com

If you are able to Gift Aid donations this increases your gift without any extra cost to yourself.

CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS

Thank you to everyone who bought one (or more) of our Christmas Puddings, we hope you enjoy them. It would be very helpful to us if you feel able to return the pudding basin (also any basins from other puddings that have been bought elsewhere) as it helps keep the cost down and is a great way to recycle them. Return them either to the church or to Lyn & Dave at 94 Upshire Road. Thank you.

CHURCHWARDEN'S CHATTER

This month will be a very busy one at St Thomas' Church

3rd Seedlings

4th Brass Band Concert

7th Christmas Community Lunch

10th Christmas Fayre

18th Nine Lessons & Carol Service

24th Midnight Holy Communion

25th Christmas Day Service

Details elsewhere in the Newsletter.

In November we had our Festival of Light Service on 27th with coloured lights and full choir with seasonal refreshments at the end of the service.

Please note our January Community Lunch will be a hot roast winter warmer lunch on 18th. Doors open at 11.30am with service at noon. Book with Pauline on 07899 846711 and please let us know if you have to cancel after booking. Thank you.

Our January PCC Meeting will be on 27th January at 2.30pm at the Olive Branch.

The Home Groups are meeting on a regular basis, contact Ruth or Gwen for up to date times and venues if you wish to join in. Each meeting subject matter is self-contained.

To all – have a wonderful Christmas and a healthy New Year. Stephen

GARDENERS NOTE Free bagged compost ready for collection: ring 07960 809799.

Any donation to the church fabric fund would be appreciated. Thank you.

GROWERS CORNER

This month you need to be in the dry – glasshouse, poly-tunnel or conservatory, shed or garage, you must check on all the plants you are over-wintering, they may need watering. Check that mice have not moved in due to the cold weather.

Take your Christmas flowering bulbs out of the dark so that they can green up and flower in time.

Having attended to all your outside work afternoon is the time to retire indoors to have a hot drink and to consult your plant & seed catalogues to plan your 2023 season of flowers and vegetables.

If you have not planted new trees, shrubs or canes yet pick a dry day and plant them as soon as possible while these plants are still dormant.

Steve.

ANAGRAM

The answer to the anagram is **SHORTBREAD**.

COPPER JAR

Thank you to the people who donated their coppers and small change to Water Aid via the copper jar, raising £31.50 in the last two months.

Charities supported by St Thomas' Church

Save the Children

The collection from the Christmas Nine Lessons and Carols service at St Thomas has for many years been donated to Save the Children, and this will happen again this year.

The charity was founded in 1919 by two sisters, Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton, in order to save the lives of children left to starve in the ruins of post-war Europe. Dorothy Buxton was the daughter-in-law of Sir Thomas Buxton. They brought an entirely fresh perspective to children's situation and created new possibilities to support them.

In 1921 Save the Children raised considerable funds for refugee children in desperate need. Single donations ranged from two shillings to £10,000. It gave the money to organisations working to feed and educate children in Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, Hungary, the Balkans and for Armenian refugees in Turkey. Later, famine in Russia saw children struggling in dire conditions. Films showing the conditions children were facing, screened in cinemas up and down the country, were unlike anything else seen at the time.

With the funds raised, Jebb and her colleagues filled a ship with 600 tons of aid bound for Russia. From winter 1921 through much of 1922, daily meals provided by Save the Children helped keep 300,000 children and more than 350,000 adults alive - for just a shilling per person per week.

Save the Children had not been set up as a permanent organisation, but it soon became one after it was called on to deal with emergency after emergency.

As Buxton moved to focus on political campaigning, the charismatic Eglantyne Jebb, as honorary secretary, became a force to be reckoned with. Persuasive and committed, Jebb quickly established Save the Children as a highly effective relief agency, able to provide food, clothing and money quickly and inexpensively.

Armed with ideas ahead of her time, Eglantyne Jebb wanted to make the rights and welfare of children something that everyone took responsibility for. Her 'Declaration of the Rights of the Child' was adopted by The League of Nations, a forerunner to the UN, and it inspired today's UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. After 1923, with fewer emergencies to deal with, Save the Children focused on research and children's rights projects.

Since then the charity has continued to expand, and now works alongside children in 118 countries, helping them to get the medicine, food and education they require. In 2016 they reached 22.1 million children through their work on the ground. They continue to respond to disasters including the Syrian conflict, Ebola outbreaks and famines in Africa. When COVID-19 hit the UK, their emergency response plan made sure 10,000 children were well-fed, safe and able to keep learning. They provided shelter and support for children affected by the August explosion in Beirut.

The following is just one example of the ways Save the Children can help children. When drought hit Amina's home in Somalia, she lost her livestock and her means of providing food for her children. Just like that, life changed. At just nine months old, severe malnutrition left her baby Fatima too weak to stand. That's when Amina found the Save the Children treatment centre. Fatima was given nutritional milk, therapeutic food and antibiotics. After 10 days of treatment, Fatima had started to recover and had visibly put on weight. Five months on, Fatima is thriving and enjoying playing with her big sister.

If you come to the Nine Lessons and Carols service, please give generously to enable us to help this charity to continue to meet the needs of children. Thank you.

SHOE BOX APPEAL

Thank you to everyone who donated to the shoe box appeal this year. We were able to send 134 filled boxes to Blythswood Care who will be delivering the boxes to needy people in Ukraine and the neighbouring countries who are supporting the refugees from Ukraine. Don't forget – if you treat yourself to a new pair of shoes for Christmas don't throw the box away, we are happy to receive boxes throughout the year, also any items to go in them ready for next year's appeal. Thanks again, Lyn and Dave at 94 Upshire Road, 01992 711573.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

In the church

SATURDAY 10th DECEMBER, 11am to 3pm

Cakes, jams, chutney & pickles, Christmas puddings, eggs, honey, Christmas stall, cards, jewellery, tombola, raffle. Plus a wide variety of other stalls

Light refreshments

Admission free

Trees of St. Thomas' Church – The Holly and the Ivy



Holly is found throughout N.W. Europe but true holly woods, like Epping Forest, are a British speciality. We are used to seeing large bushes amongst pollarded hornbeams and oaks but holly can grow into trees 20 metres high. In the ancient wood pasture at Staverton in Suffolk, there is a holly tree which is over 74 feet tall and 7 feet in girth. In Sussex and Herefordshire, holly was allowed to grow into standards in hedges to prevent witches from running over their tops.

Despite the prickly leaves, holly can still be grazed by livestock and deer and in the past was cut for fodder. To most of us, holly is the symbol of Christmas. Only female trees have berries but it is the little white four-petalled flowers of the males which have a lovely scent.

While the tradition of cutting branches to decorate the house has been with us for ages, cutting down a holly tree was considered unlucky. The superstition probably resulted from its evergreen leaves and long-lasting berries, associating it with eternity and the power to ward off evil spirits.

Holly is extremely inflammable in leaf so it is odd that it was often planted to ward off fire and lightning strikes and branches of holly were used to sweep chimneys. Once the wood is no longer green, it is scarcely cracked by heat so was sometimes used for teapot lids and handles or beams above a fireplace. At Suntrap, the children use leafless old holly twigs as spears for their marshmallows over the camp fire!

The tradition of taking down Christmas decorations has shifted from Candlemas to Twelfth Night but in some places, a sprig of holly had to be left in place until Shrove Tuesday, then put on the fire where the first pancake was cooked.

The wood of holly is white, sometimes with a greenish streak, very dense, hard and heavy. It takes dye well and has been used in inlay work when it is called English Ebony.

Humans have a love-hate relationship with **Ivy**. Because of its ability to smother grapevines, early herbalists believed its berries could overcome the effects of alcohol. Goblets were sometimes made from ivy wood and in medieval times, ivy-covered poles were used to advertise taverns. In the 18th Century, during the fashion for the Picturesque, it was a sign of melancholy, draped over ruins but at the same time it was used in festival garlands at Christmas. The Victorians loved ivies and grew them over summer houses and bowers. They trained them up walls and through windows into their houses. The young Queen Victoria wore a wreath of ivy in her hair intertwined with diamonds.

There is certainly no shortage of ivy in St. Thomas' Churchyard. It is an excellent wildlife habitat, on the ground or up a tree and doesn't usually cause a problem unless the ivy grows very vigorously around the trunk or branches of a tree which is already not robust. The other issue we need to bear in mind in our wind-exposed site is ivy which forms a heavy shroud in the top of a tree and acts as a sail to the wind, destabilising the tree. In general, healthy trees will grow out through the ivy and the nectar and pollen in late September is so important to bees for topping up their winter stores and for butterflies and moths, that ivy should be enjoyed as much as possible.

Ivy's heartwood is cream and glossy, looking like ivory. It was once used for rolling pins as the pastry didn't stick to the smooth surface.

In places where holly wasn't easily available, like the Fens, Ivy was sometimes cut for Christmas decoration, then the berries painted red. The Northamptonshire poet John Clare, who was born in 1793, wrote in his journal, "...hasten to the woods to get ivy branches with their chocolate berries which our parents used to colour with whiting and the bluebag, sticking the branches behind the pictures on the walls." (if you don't know what a bluebag was, try asking one of the older members of St. Thomas'!)

Lovely as it is to have holly and ivy in the house at Christmas, we do need to remember how important the berries are to birds, especially blackbirds and the thrush family. Cutting holly in the Forest is not allowed – stick to the cultivated kind! Happy Christmas.

Sue McKinley

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH

In the church

Wednesday 7th December 12noon

Booking essential – phone 07899 846711

please let us know if you are unable to make it after booking. Thank you.

UPSHIRE MOTHERS' UNION

In October our speaker was Anne Smith, who gave us a very interesting talk about her working life at the BBC. Anne started working for the BBC in December 1989, working in the Radio Documentaries Department. She has had different job titles over the years, doing more or less the same sort of work; her job title now is Programme Co-ordinator. She works on documentaries for Radio 3, Radio 4, World Service, BBC Sounds and Podcasts. Most productions are recorded about 1 year in advance, but they also do reactive productions with what is currently happening in the news, i.e., Politics. Some of Anne's tasks for all productions are organising contractors, organising travel, health and safety, risk assessments, registering all details for all programmes. Anne also played clips of some of the productions she had worked on, one of which was Chris Packham and the life of the Monarch Butterfly. Another was from a series called My Story, which was about a person or thing. This clip was about a Chinook Helicopter and during the making Anne got to go up in the Chinook to do an interview, she was a little concerned as the back of the helicopter was open whilst they were up in the air. Anne also displayed paper cuttings, from many of her productions, for everyone to look at. Anne finished the talk saying, 'Radio should take you on a journey and entertain you', then answered questions. Thank you, Anne.

Our next meeting will be on 14th December at 2.15pm in St Thomas' Church, which will be our Corporate Communion and Carol service followed by Tea and Cake in church. Tea Hostesses: all members. Everyone is welcome. Further information from Ann Smith on 01992 767809.

AT HIGH BEACH CHURCH

Christmas Stories and Songs Join us in the grounds of High Beach Church at 3pm on Sunday 4th December for some festive stories and Christmas carols. In true carol singing tradition we will be outside unless it is pouring with rain, so wrap up warm! The singing will last about an hour. There is no charge but donations to HB Church funds will be gratefully received. Bring a torch!

A Concert of Christmas Music by the Woodford Singers Sunday 11th December at 2pm. With hot chocolate on arrival and seasonal refreshments

Informal Carol Singing in the Church on a Forest theme Wednesday 14th December 7pm-9pm Come and join us in singing your favourite carols and learn about some of the Christmas traditions of the forest.

Carol Singing at the Plough Thursday 15th December at 7.45pm

Carol Singing at the Owl Wednesday 21st December at 7.30pm

Christingle Services in church with retiring collection for the Children's Society – 4pm and 5.30pm

50/50 CLUB

Congratulations to the winners of the 50/50 Club Draw in October, who were:

1 st : £35	No. 76	Barbara Jones of Upshire
2 nd : £25	No. 41	Michael Hall of Waltham Abbey
3 rd : £15	No. 69	Gina Smith of Enfield

Our thanks to all our members for their support of St Thomas' Church.

It is now time to begin Draw 11 of St Thomas' 50/50 Club.

There will still be monthly draws and the entry fee is £12.00 every six months (or £2 for every month of membership). Each member is entitled to a maximum of two entries, couples can have four. Please complete the form below and return it to me; payment by Bank Transfer is preferred to the church's account St Thomas Church Upshire PCC, Sort code 404520, Account number 00724505, HSBC Bank or alternatively you may pay by cheque or cash to the address stated. Please let me know if you pay by Bank Transfer so I can include your number in the Draw (email lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk or phone 01992 711573). Good luck to everyone who enters.

St Thomas' Church 50/50 Club Draw 11

January to June 2023

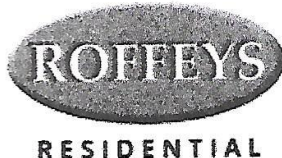
I wish to become a member of St Thomas' 50/50 Club and have paid by Bank Transfer to HSBC Bank, A/c St Thomas Church Upshire PCC, Sort Code 404520, A/c No: 00724505.

OR I enclose cash/cheque of £12 per entry (maximum 2 per person). Please make cheques payable to **St Thomas' Church** and return your entries to Lyn Wackett, 94 Upshire Road, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3PA.

Name:

Address:

Telephone:



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1/8 page advertisement £5 a month or £50 per year
1/4 page advertisement £10 a month or £100 per year
1/2 page advertisement £20 a month or £200 per year
Full page advertisement £40 a month or £400 per year

Cheques payable to 'St Thomas Church Upshire PCC'

Enquiries to Lyn Wackett, 94 Upshire Road,
Waltham Abbey EN9 3PA 01992 711573

Flowers by Danielle

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www.flowersbydanielle.co.uk info@flowersbydanielle.co.uk

***Min spend £25**

We are grateful to all those who, by advertising, help to finance the production of the Newsletter. However, the PCC and members of St Thomas' Church accept no individual or joint liability for the veracity of any of the advertisements contained in the Newsletter nor for the quality of any of the work or services offered.

CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH

All the words in the list are hidden in the diagram below. Words are printed across, up, down or diagonally, but always in straight lines. Letters may be used more than once.

ANGELS		MARY
ANNUALS	BABY	MINCE PIES
BALLOONS		MUSIC
BAUBLES		MYRRH
BETHLEHEM		NATIVITY
CANDLES	CAKE	NIGHT
CANDY CANES		NOEL
CARDS	CAROLS	NO ROOM IN/THE INN
CATTLE		ORGAN
CHESTNUTS		PANTOMIME
CHOIR		PARSNIPS
CHRISTMAS		PART
CHURCH		PEACE ON EARTH
CUDDLES		PRAISE
DECORATIONS		REINDEER
DONKEY		REMOTE
EAST	ELVES	REST
FAMILY		SANTA
FRANKINCENSE		SHEEP
GLORY	GOLD	SHEPHERDS
GOODWILL		SNOWMAN
GREETINGS		SON OF GOD
HEARTH		SPROUTS
HEAVENLY/HOST		STABLE
HOT CHOCOLATE		STAR
JESUS	JOSEPH	TINSEL
JOURNEY	JOY	TREE
JUMPER		TURKEY
KING'S SPEECH		WINE
LAUGHTER	LOVE	WONDER
MAGI		WORSHIP
MANGER		YULE LOG

B A U B L E S R C C C H R N A M W O N S
H E A R T H E S A H O H P E I N D I O H
M B T O E E W N L T R E E N T E G N N E
Y P M H D L D A C O A I C S C H O E C E
R E A N L Y B H R C R E S O T F G H L P
R Y I R C E O A E T P A R T G N U U N S
H E T A S C H O T I S A C O M R U I A E
R E N I O N N E E S T D D A C A M T M L
E E A L V E I S M I J J R H R O S U S D
S M A V A I E P O J O Y C E O D S R A N
N T A R E S T N S U S E J R H I S K T A
E E T N I N S A R M E G O T C P G E N C
C H M A G L L N N P P N N A H O E Y A W
N U R I A E E Y S E H Y K I O E L H S O
I P D U M Y R S U R T E E D T O I P S R
K N N D L O G E I L R I W K V E R N S S
N N A I L N T O D A E I N E N O E E N H
A O M G I E H N T N L L A S U O V R O I
R A E K R C S S A L O S O T E L D S G P
F B A L L O O N S P T W S G E L T T A C

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

What do leaping lords, French hens, swimming swans, and especially the partridge in the pear tree have to do with Christmas? From 1558 until 1829 Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly.

Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning – the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church.

Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

1. The partridge in the pear tree was Jesus Christ.
2. Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
3. Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.
4. The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
5. The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
6. The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
7. Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit – Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership and Mercy.
8. The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
9. Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit – Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control.
10. The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.
11. The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
12. The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles Creed.

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