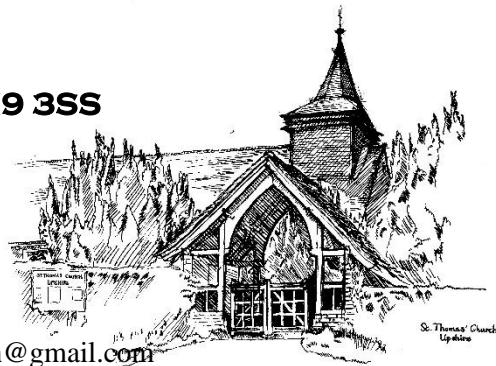


ST THOMAS' CHURCH, UPSHIRE EN9 3SS

NEWSLETTER

December 2023



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This Newsletter is free; donations to Lyn Wackett. Copy date for January 2024 Newsletter: 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 2 nd	3-4pm SEEDLINGS meet in the church	
Sunday 3 rd	First Sunday of Advent 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 64:1-9	Mark 13:24-end
Wednesday 6 th	11.30am for 12noon-2pm CHRISTMAS LUNCH in the church – 07899 846711 to book – please let us know if you have to cancel. Thank you.	
Sunday 10 th	Second Sunday of Advent 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11	Mark 1:1-8
	3.30pm FESTIVE BRASS CONCERT by Enfield Brass Band in the church 01992 711573 to book £10 adults, £5 under 16s	
Wednesday 13 th	2.15pm Upshire Mothers' Union Carol Service in the church followed by refreshments. All welcome.	
Sunday 17 th	Third Sunday of Advent 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-end	John 1:6-8, 19-28
	4.30pm SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS	
Sunday 24 th	Fourth Sunday of Advent – Christmas Eve 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Luke 1:26-38
	23.30 MIDNIGHT COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 9:1-7	John 1:1-14
Monday 25 th	CHRISTMAS DAY 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 52:7-10	John 1:1-14
Sunday 31st	First Sunday of Christmas 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3	Matthew 21:23-32

A HAPPY & PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS TO EVERYONE

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER:

Our mailing list to receive the electronic version is now in excess of 100 participants so if you are not one of those and wish to be included please send your email address to : lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk 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, it all makes for interesting reading.

THE VICAR WRITES:

Once again this Christmas the Church of England is inviting us to "Follow the Star" and journey to the manger, joining the millions of people worldwide who will come into the presence of Jesus Christ this festive season. The invitation echoes one of the most important of the Christmas stories, that of the Magi, who followed a bright star to find the newborn Jesus in Bethlehem. This story has inspired people throughout the generations, serving as a symbol of hope, faith, and the power of seeking something greater than oneself.

The story of the Magi, or wise men, is found in the Gospel of Matthew. According to the story, these scholars from the East saw a star rise in the sky, signalling the birth of a great King. Intrigued and guided by this celestial phenomenon, they embarked on a long and arduous journey to find the newborn Messiah.

The star is much more than a primitive GPS though. It holds profound symbolic significance. It represents guidance, light, and the promise of a new beginning. In a world often fraught with uncertainty and darkness, the star's brilliance serves as a beacon of hope, leading the way to a source of profound spiritual significance.

The journey the Magi made teaches us valuable lessons in faith and perseverance. Despite the challenges and obstacles they faced, they remained steadfast in their quest, undeterred by the difficulties of the long journey. Their unwavering belief in the significance of the star's appearance underscores the power of faith to propel us forward, even when the path ahead seems uncertain.

The Magi's journey also speaks to the universal human longing for purpose and meaning. It encourages us to look beyond our immediate circumstances and seek something greater than ourselves. In doing so, we may discover a deeper connection to the world around us and a sense of belonging to a larger, more profound narrative.

While the original story took place over two thousand years ago, its message remains as relevant today as it was then. In our fast-paced, technologically-driven world, the idea of seeking something greater than ourselves and finding guidance in unexpected places resonates deeply. The star's light continues to inspire individuals to embark on journey of self-discovery, faith, and purpose.

Following the star at Christmas is more than a marketing strapline; it is a timeless and powerful metaphor for the human journey towards purpose, meaning, and faith. The story of the Magi reminds us that, even in the face of uncertainty, we can find guidance and hope in unexpected places. As we celebrate this festive season, let us remember the enduring significance of the star and the profound message it imparts to all who seek something greater in the own lives.

May you have a wonderful and blessed Christmas everyone.

Revd Jane Yeadon

Team Vicar St Thomas, Upshire and Holy Innocents, High Beech

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, Maureen, Carol & George, Beverly, Terry, Jackie, Jean, Andrea & her Mum & Dad, Nina, Carmel & the Price family, Tim, Dave, Pat, Kathrine & Paul, Nigel, Lola, Steve, Val, Gina & Bill, Joseph, Derek, Reg & Jane.



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



GARDENERS NOTE

Free bagged compost ready for collection in the churchyard. Any donation to the church fabric fund would be appreciated. Thank you.

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.

ST THOMAS' CHURCH COMMUNITY LUNCHES 2023

CHRISTMAS LUNCH – WEDNESDAY 6th DECEMBER

NO LUNCH IN JANUARY 2024

NEXT LUNCH IS FEBRUARY 21st 2024

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.

GROWERS CORNER

It is hoped you have planted all your bare root stock by now, if not you will have to pick the day or days when the weather will allow you to do so and you should work on boards or similar so as not to compact the surrounding soil.

After heavy rain and gales please check all your plants you are protecting in your garden against rain, snow and frost. Also check your greenhouse and cold frame for lost or slipped glass and repair/replace as soon as possible. You should also check for rodent damage and repair as needed.

Any watering should be done on a non-frosty day before lunch as required, best not to over-water.

Your prepared bulbs should come out of their dark warm place and be potted up into your presentation containers for home use or Christmas presents and they will flower for the great day.

This month's challenge

For this you will require protection in the form of a dust sheet, an apron, shears, wire cutters(not shears), a small amount of wire netting or similar. Also from the florist supplier a pack of round wreath (wire) frames and two rolls of green plastic coated soft wire.

This challenge is best carried out in the warm on a flat surface covered with the dust sheet on your own as once you have obtained the following materials you are going to be creative and you will not want any interruptions. Gather any evergreen foliage you can: bay, laurel, ivy, Christmas tree trimmings, wear gloves if using holly. Red ribbon, tinsel, berries, rose hips, crab apples, dried fruits, nuts, etc. With apron and gloves on, tools to hand, you are ready to start.

Place the first round frame flat on the dust sheet in front of you. Furthest point of the frame we will call the top, tie your evergreen trims growing tip to top middle and the stalks down towards you and wire to both sides of the frame so you can't see the wire underneath, overlay the next layer if required to cover the stalks of the first layer and so on. To cover the bottom stalks a nice red bow should do the trick.

Then apply your fruits, berries and tinsel in a way which will give you a visual and balanced appearance. You can make as many wreaths as you feel happy to do, they could make great advent presents. With the leftover foliage you could make a Christmas table centre: a shallow container filled with scrunched up wire netting, trim the stems of the foliage and be creative. Remember to fill with water when complete.

Good luck! Happy Christmas and a good growing New Year to you all.

Steve

ANAGRAM

Unscramble this 9 letter anagram: ITSCHARMS. The answer will be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

STAMPS Please continue to save your postage stamps and foreign or out of circulation coins as the charities we support can use them to raise funds. At present we collect the coins for Essex and Herts Air Ambulance and The British Legion and stamps for St Clare Hospice. Stamps and coins can be left with Lyn & Dave at 94 Upshire Road – please leave in the porch if no reply. Please leave about ½“ of envelope around the stamps. Thank you.

CHURCH EVENTS COMING UP

1st December: 6.30-10.30pm CHRISTMAS JINGLE PARTY in the Village Hall (not church event)

6th December: 11.30 for 12 noon start – Community Christmas Lunch £12 per person

10th December – 3.30pm CHRISTMAS CONCERT by Enfield Brass Band

17th December – 4.30pm Service of Nine Lessons & Carols

Every month Community Lunches – see separate article

CHURCH FLOWERS

We will start the festive arrangements at the beginning of the month to celebrate this time of year. Any foliage contributions would be most welcome.

If anyone would like to come along and help, we will be in church and 4th December and 15th December from 10am.

Each month we can create memorial dedications, wedding, anniversary or special occasion flowers – contact Kate Dale: email dalek16@btinternet.com

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

The Christmas Fayre on 18th November raised £1,690. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this event a success – those who helped set up the tables, manned the stalls, served refreshments, donated items for the stalls and refreshments and cleared away at the end. Also thank you to everyone who attended. We hope that you enjoyed your visit.

ANAGRAM

The answer to the anagram is CHRISTMAS.

SHOEBOXES

Our sincere thanks to everyone who donated filled shoe boxes, items to go into shoe boxes or donations to help pay for transporting the shoe boxes to Ukraine. Special thanks to the members and friends of St Thomas' Church and Holy Innocents Church, Jane Begley's Brownies and Lauren and her mum Heather for exceeding expectations. With your help we exceeded last year's total by 10 so 144 boxes were collected from us along with 3 sacks of spare items, some of which were too big to fit in the shoebox but will still be distributed to needy people. Well done to all, and don't forget to keep saving your shoeboxes for next year! Lyn & Dave x

50/50 CLUB

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

1 st :	£35	No. 64	Angela McGowan of Gravesend
2 nd :	£25	No. 96	Gill Torrance of Upshire
3 rd :	£15	No. 81	Bill Bennett of Enfield

It is now time to begin Draw 13 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 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).

St Thomas' Church 50/50 Club Draw 13

January to June 2024

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 Upshire PCC and return your entries to Lyn Wackett, 94 Upshire Road, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3PA.

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Our thanks to all our members for their support of St Thomas' Church. Good luck to everyone who enters. It's not too late to become a member of the 50/50 Club, for further information phone Lyn on 01992 711573

ST THOMAS' CHURCH, EN9 3SS

CHRISTMAS CONCERT with ENFIELD BRASS BAND

Sunday 10th December 3pm for 3.30pm start

Adults £10, under 16s £5, book with Lyn on 01992 711573
Seasonal refreshments, raffle

NEWS & NOTES

BEWARE!

The rutting season is still in full swing and the deer are everywhere.

In the next three months our local roads can be very dangerous:

1. The deer are everywhere
2. Wet leaves and surface water on the roads
3. Black ice (surface water and frost)
4. Snow
5. Melting snow (slush)
6. Poor lighting
7. Walkers and cyclists wearing dark clothing

All reducing your braking distance. Please drive slowly when driving locally, well below our local speed limit. It could save you injury and expense and time in the long run. Please start your journeys that little bit earlier, it might save lots of problems later.

Have a Happy Christmas and a safe New Year.

Steve (who speaks from experience, having had his garden fence demolished on more than one occasion!)

UPSHIRE MOTHERS' UNION

One of the commitments of the Mothers' Union this year is the RISE UP campaign, mentioned in last month's Newsletter, which is MU's aim to raise awareness and help end domestic abuse 365 day of the year not just 16 days, (UN's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence between 25th November and 10th December). The statistics are staggering. In 2018, two church studies show that in Britain and Ireland figures are equally high in a church setting, with 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men reporting that they had personally experienced or witnessed domestic abuse.

Below is a poem taken from the Mothers' Union website:

Please be aware, this poem contains reference to sexual abuse and rape.

If it were between countries, we'd call it a war;

If it were a disease, we'd call it an epidemic.

If it were an oil spill, we'd call it a disaster.

But it is happening to women, and it's just an everyday affair.

It is violence against women.

It is sexual harassment at work and sexual abuse of the young.

It is the beating or the blow that millions of women suffer each and every day.

It is rape at home or on a date.

It is murder.

There's no secret enemy pulling the trigger.

No unseen virus that leads to death.

It is only men.

Not all men, but far too many men.

Michael Kaufman – White Ribbon Campaign 1991

Local abuse helpline 03033337444. Refuge 24 hour helpline 08082000247

In October we held a Just Desserts afternoon in the Village Hall. It was an enjoyable afternoon. Thank you everyone who came along and supported it.

Our next meeting is our Christmas Carol Service and Corporate Communion in the church on Wednesday 13th December at 2.15pm. Followed by refreshments in church. Everyone is welcome to come along and join us.

PUDDING BASINS

If you have a Christmas Pudding this Christmas (or any other pudding at any time of the year) and don't want to keep the basin, I would be grateful if you would save them for me ready for Christmas Puddings for next year. Also thank you to everyone who bought a pudding from the Bazaar or direct from Lyn and Dave, we hope you enjoy them. All basins, whether Pyrex, china or plastic are all acceptable in any size – we were a bit short this year and had to use larger basins for smaller puddings making them look a bit short on contents! Leave them in the church or in the porch at 94 Upshire Road or phone 01992 711573. Thank you.

The Rhythm of Life

I have a confession! In the past most poetry left me 'cold' as I did not understand it. Studying Shakespeare, Spenser and Chaucer for A level English Lit did not help and I flunked the exam! Have you seen 'Poems on the Underground'? When I was a regular user of the network, I read them whenever there was one displayed in the carriage. Quite frankly, I could not make head nor tail of most of them as they did not seem to bear any relation to proper syntax, nor did most make much sense but perhaps that's just me! Obviously some poetry does reach the parts that others cannot reach, for instance when I was a youngster I had to learn The Charge of the Light Brigade by Alfred Tennyson although all I can remember now is: *Into the valley of Death/ Rode the six hundred./ Cannon to right of them,/ Cannon to left of them,/ Cannon in front of them/ Then they rode back, but not/ Not the six hundred./ Cannon to right of them,/ Cannon to left of them,/ Cannon behind them/ Back from the mouth of Hell,/ All that was left of them,/ Left of six hundred.* Being a youngster, I obviously did not understand the carnage that could be inflicted from cannon fire or grape shot, read any of the Hornblower books, though, and you will get a pretty good idea! Reading the poem now brings home the power of Tennyson's writing. Tennyson, of course, spent time here in Epping Forest and is believed to have written a poem to commemorate the bells of the Abbey Church: 'Ring Out, Wild Bells'.

Do you remember the Morse detective series? In the very last episode, 'The Remorseful Day', Morse, played by that wonderful actor John Thaw, recited the last verse of A E Houseman's poem 'How Clear, How Lovely Bright': *Ensanguining the skies/ How heavily it dies/ Into the west away;/ Past touch and sight and sound/ Not further to be found,/ How hopeless under ground/ Falls the remorseful day.* The complete poem is well worth a read. Talking about well worth a read, I'm in the process of reading the poems of Denys Watkins-Pitchford who is probably best known for his children's book 'The Little Grey Men' but was also a prolific author who apart from his poetry wrote many books and also regularly for the Shooting Times magazine under the pseudonym of 'BB' with articles centred around his life on the saltmarsh and his efforts to repopulate his local wood with the very rare Purple Emperor butterfly. He prefaced all his many books with a text taken from an old Cumbrian gravestone which although is not a poem in the true sense of the word holds great resonance: *The wonder of the world/The beauty and the power/The shapes of things, Their colours, light and shades/ These I saw,/ Look ye also while life lasts.* If you get the chance, read his poem 'Tides Ending' – in which one is transported onto the saltmarsh where nature is raw and the tide waits for no one.

Going through some papers one day I came across the following poem. I have no idea who wrote it or how it came into my possession but it is written with Christmas in mind and, to me, it encapsulates what Christmas should be all about. I make no apology in reproducing it here in full – with that can I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful, healthy New Year.

Adrian J Liddle

I have a list of people I know
All written in a book
And every year at Christmas time
I go and take a look
And that is when I realise
That those names are a part
Not of the book they are written in
But in my very heart
For those names stand for someone
Who has crossed my path sometime
And in that meeting they became
A treasured friend of mine
And once you've met some people
The years cannot erase
The memory of a pleasant word
Or of a friendly face

So when I send this Christmas card
That is addressed to you
It is because you are on that list
Of folk I'm indebted to
And you are one of many folk
Who in times past I have met
And happens to be one of those
I don't want to forget
And whether I have known you
For many years or few
In some way you have a part
In shaping things I do
This is the spirit of Christmas time
Forever and ever endures
May it leave its richest blessing
In the hearts of you and yours.

Exhibition - Epping Forest District Museum, Waltham Abbey

23rd September - 22nd December 2023 Admission Free "Greater in Spirit, Larger in Outlook"

A community partnership exhibition exploring the world culture collections from Saffron Walden and Epping Forest District Museums. Epping Forest District Museum has a collection of around 300 ethnographic objects connected with the Buxton family, some of which will be included in this exhibition. The family were of course 20th century social reformers descended from abolitionist Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton. The Buxton family built St Thomas' Church.

The aim of the project is to ensure the museums and their collections reflect their diverse communities by working directly with cultural groups to research different objects and tell their stories.

There are items from New Zealand, Ethiopia, India, West Africa, and the Pacific Islands. One of the items for the exhibition is a Māori Feather Box (Waka huia). These would have stored a high-ranking person's most valuable items such as Feathers, Combs, and Amulets. The containers were considered a cultural treasure and were valued for their sacredness. The museum has been working closely with the London Māori Society, Ngāti Rānana, to identify this object and learn more about its history.

The collection also contains a selection of Ethiopian baskets. These were common in Harar, a city in the East of the country, to be displayed on wall of homes in a decorative manor. However, some were used for the transportation of foods such as Injera (bread). The museum has worked alongside the Ethiopian History Society UK to understand more about these items and their significance to Ethiopia.

The title, 'Greater in Spirit, Larger in Outlook' is inspired by Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 to 1974. We hope you will make time to visit this intriguing exhibition.

ABBEYFIELD SOCIETY – WALTHAM ABBEY

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WALTHAM ABBEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MONTHLY TALKS - JANUARY TO MAY 2024

19th January Dead Man's Vision - The Murder of a Police officer at Stapleford Abbotts, in 1927, that shocked the nation. Speaker: Martyn Lockwood

16th February Pilgrimage for Queen Elizabeth II - An unplanned 50 mile walk to experience the sights and sounds from the Queen's death until the funeral cortege left London. Speaker: The Revd John Merrill

15th March Annual General Meeting and President's Address President: Tony O'Connor

19th April The Puddephatt Lecture – This England – Where did it come from? An exploration into the great Upheavals in society that fed into what was to become England and eventually Great Britain
Speaker: Revd Dr Nicholas Henderson

17th May The role of a Verderer past and present, and research, findings and speculation about Loughton camps being much larger than initially considered Speaker: Paul Morris, Verderer

All Friday evenings at 7.30pm at the Baptist Church, Paradise Road, Waltham Abbey, EN9 1RL

Visitors welcome: donation of £2 per person requested.

A PRAYER AT CHRISTMAS

God, give us eyes this Christmas to see the Christmas star
And give us ears to hear the song of angels from afar...
And with our eyes and ears attuned for a message from above
Let Christmas angels speak to us of hope and faith and love -
Hope to light our pathway when the way ahead is dark,
Hope to sing through stormy days with the sweetness of a lark,
Faith to trust in things unseen and know beyond all seeing
That it is in our Father's love we live and have our being
And love to break down barriers of colour, race and creed
Love to see and understand and help all those in need.

THE DONKEY

I am only a donkey but I feel special today,
Aware of a great blessing with the sweet smell of hay
In this manger, this stable, where I am honoured to share
The joy of this couple, with their wonderful air
Of such heartfelt thanksgiving. A donkey can't understand;
But I like being close to this baby Boy's hand.
Though I'm only a donkey, this precious little One's birth
Seems important to me: will it bless all the Earth
Throughout history's passing of human strife, hopes and fears
A light in the dark world for, perhaps, donkey's years?

MAY YOU HAVE

the spirit of Christmas which is peace, the gladness of Christmas which is hope and the heart of Christmas which is love.