

Sunday Worship

8.00am.	Holy Communion	1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays
10.30am.	All Age Worship	1st Sunday
	Mattins	2nd Sunday
	Parish Communion	3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays
4.00pm	Holy Communion	2nd Sunday
6.30pm	Evensong Arley Chapel	3rd Sunday

Week-day and other activities

Holy Communion on 1st Wednesday in month at 10.30am
Celtic Evening prayer 1st Thursday in month 7.00pm in the Lady chapel

Vicar:	The Revd. Alec Brown, The Vicarage, Great Budworth	Tel: 01606 891324
Associate Minister:	The Revd Christina Westwell 42, Runcorn Road Barnton	01606 782743
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The Parish Magazine of

Price £1.00p

December 2024



St Mary & All Saints Great Budworth

Serving Arley, Aston-by-Budworth, Comberbach, Crowley, Great Budworth,
Lower Wincham, Marbury, Marston, and Pickmere.

December

Sunday 1st 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

10.30 All Age Paddington Themed Toy Service

Wed 4th 10.30am Holy Communion Common Worship followed by coffee
2.00pm Christmas Wreath Workshop with Maggie Earl, in church.

Thur 5th 7.00pm Compline in the Lady Chapel

Sunday 8th 10.30am Matins BCP
4.00pm Holy Communion Common Worship

Wed 11th 7.00pm Compline in the Lady Chapel

Thur 12th 1.30pm Play and Praise in church
7.30pm Festive Cheese & Wine in church

Sunday 15th 8.00am Holy Communion BCP
10.30am Parish Communion Common worship
6.30pm Nine Lessons & Carols at Arley Chapel

Tues 17th 7.30pm Equali Choir Concert in church

Thurs 19th AM Cransley Senior School in church
6.00pm Great Budworth & Antrobus schools joint Carol Service in church
7.30pm Compline in church

Sunday 22nd 10.30am Parish Communion Common Worship
4.00pm Nine Lessons & Carols at St. Mary's

Christmas Eve 4.00pm Crib and Christingle Service

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

10.30am Family Communion Common Worship

Sunday 29th 10.30am Parish Communion Common Worship (No 8am service today)

**Rota for Readers, Intercessors
& Eucharistic Ministers
December 2024 Year C**

F I R S T S U N	<p>1st December 1st Sunday of Advent (Purple) 8.00am HC BCP Jer. 33. 14 – 16 L 755 SL673 1 Thess. 3.9 – end LL756 SL674 Luke 21. 25 – 36 LL757 SL674 10.30am All Age Toy Service Special Service Sheet</p>	No Evening Service
S E C O N D S U N	<p>8th December 2nd Sunday of Advent (Purple) 10.30am Mattins Psalm 80 Mal. 3. 1 – 4 LL759 SL676 M Cross Luke 3. 1 – 6 LL761 SL678</p>	<p>4pm Holy Communion CW Baruch ch 5 1-9 LL758 SL675 Phil. 1. 3 – 11 LL760 SL677 Luke 3. 1 – 6 LL761 SL678</p>
T H I R D S U N	<p>15th December 3rd Sunday of Advent (Purple) 8.00am HC BCP 10.30am HC CW Zeph. 3. 14 – end LL762 SL679 J Martin Phil. 4. 4 – 7 LL763 SL680 S Evans Luke 3. 7 – 18 LL764 SL681 INT M Cross EM S Ollier</p>	<p>6.30pm Arley Hall Chapel Service of Nine Lessons and Carols</p>
F O U R T H S U N	<p>22nd December 4th Sunday of Advent (Purple) 10.30 HC CW Mic. 5. 2 – 5a LL765 SL682 M Cross Heb. 10. 5 – 10 LL767 SL684 J Martin Luke 1. 39 – 45 LL768 SL684 INT Vicar EM S Evans</p>	<p>4.00pm Great Budworth Service of Nine Lessons and Carols</p>
	<p>24th December Christmas Eve (Purple) 4.00pm Crib and Christingle Service Special Service Sheet</p>	<p>11.30pm HC CW (White) Midnight Mass Isa. 52. 7-10 LL23 SL20 Heb. 1. 1-4 LL24 SL21 John 1. 1 – 14 LL26 SL22 INT Vicar EM S Gray</p>
	<p>25th December Christmas Day (White) 8.00am HC BCP 10.30 am HC CW Isa. 9. 2 – 7 LL15 SL13 M Cross Titus 2. 11- 14 LL17 SL15 S Evans Luke 2. 1 – 14 LL17 SL15 INT Vicar EM S Ollier</p>	No Evening Service
F I F T H S U N	<p>29th December The First Sunday of Christmas (White) 10.30am HC CW 1 Sam. 2. 18 – 20, 26 LL 769 SL686 S Gray Col. 3. 12 – 17 LL 771 SL687 J Martin Luke 2. 41 – end LL 771 SL688 INT Vicar EM S Ollier</p>	No 8am or Evening Service

Sides persons' Rota – December 2024

1st Sunday 1st December Advent 1 – Year C begins

8.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Pat Hart
10.30am	All Age Worship Paddington themed Toy Service	Anne O'May Rebecca Brierley

2nd Sunday 8th December Advent 2

10.30am	Matins	Geoff Taylor Hazel Taylor
4.00pm	Holy Communion CW	Shirley Humphrey

3rd Sunday 15th December Advent 3 – Gaudete Sunday

8.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Robert Steele Marian Steele
10.30am	Parish Communion CW	Robert Cross Anne O'May
6.30pm	Carol Service at Arley Chapel	xxxxxxx

4th Sunday 22nd December Advent 4

10.30am	Parish Communion & Baptism	Maggie Earl Robert Cross
4.00pm	Carol Service at Great Budworth	Robert Cross Anne O'May

Christmas Eve 24th December

4.00pm	Crib & Christingle	Maggie Earl Robert Cross
11.30pm	Midnight Mass	Robert Cross Volunteer

Christmas Day 25th December

8.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Pat Hart
10.30am	Family Communion CW	Robert Cross Anne O'May

5th Sunday 29th December NOTE NO 8AM SERVICE TODAY

10.30am	Parish Communion CW	Geoff Taylor Hazel Taylor
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Dear friends

I don't know if you have ever missed the boat? Have you ever got so wrapped up in things that you have missed out on something amazing? We live in a very busy, fast paced world. We are encouraged that whatever we are planning we need to hurry up. This time of year life gets busier and sometimes we forget what it is all about.

Take the year 1809. The international scene was tumultuous. Napoleon was sweeping through Austria; blood was flowing freely. Nobody then cared about babies, but the world was overlooking some terribly significant births – William Gladstone, Alfred Tennyson, Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln.

Similarly, everyone thought taxation was the big news when Jesus was born but a young Jewish woman cradled the biggest news of all.

As we approach December 25th again, it gives us another opportunity to pause, and consider again the events of Christmas and the person whose birth we celebrate. There is someone who missed the boat on the first Christmas.

In those days, Caesar Augustus decreed that all the world (or the known Roman Empire) should be taxed. At this point, Mary and Joseph began the trip to Bethlehem. They had to go to Bethlehem because that was where Joseph came from. They had to go home to pay the tax. So they arrived in Bethlehem, with the baby about ready to be born. Can you imagine the timing of this?

You have the town of Bethlehem that is now crowded with people. Everyone is hustling and bustling, trying to get their taxes paid. Visiting families. In fact, by the time that Mary and Joseph arrive, there is no room in the inn.

Continued over

And this is where we meet the person who missed the boat - the innkeeper. The Bible doesn't tell us anything about him at all. All we know is that there was no room in the inn. Mary and Joseph were relegated to the stable, to live among the camels, donkeys, horses, and their feeding troughs. They would have used their own robes and extra blankets to shield themselves from the cold.

But let's get back to the innkeeper. Can we really fault him? I mean, it wasn't his fault that there was no room—he was just a business man. He did allow them to stay in the stable.

And he never knew the significance of the baby inside Mary, how he wasn't just another baby, but the actual son of God.

The innkeeper was so close to the truth, yet so far away.

Over 2000 years ago, a baby was born who changed the world. He was the perfect embodiment of love, both fully God and man, and he came that one night, born in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn.

So this Christmas remember the innkeeper. He missed Christmas in the hustle and bustle of what was going on - let's not make the same mistake.

There is an unattributed poem about the inn keeper; it says

“And how were men to know?

There was a sign they say a heavenly light

Resplendent, but I had no time for stars.”

This Christmas make time for stars.

Wishing you all a peaceful and blessed Christmas from all @ St Mary's

Christina

Your feedback and snippets you send are important, if there are any comments on the parish magazine or if you would like anything particular in the issue then please let me know.

The views of our contributors are, of course, entirely their own, and do not necessarily represent those of the P.C.C., the Editor, members of the congregation or parishioners in general.

*Articles for January 2025 edition send to Rob Cross:
robcross43@gmail.com by **13th December** please*

We are available by phone or email if you want to talk to us. We can offer a chat or prayer or both. If you have Facebook, have a look at the church page, @greatbudworthchurch where Christina posts prayers and reflections
We keep you all in our prayers. Stay well.

The Rev Alec Brown (Vicar) 01606 891324
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All phone calls etc. will be treated with confidence, but may need to be shared with somebody else on the team.

If you don't wish this to happen, please let the person you speak to know at the time of first contact.

Creation Care

How can we be better at caring for creation and each other through healthy, eco-friendly and sustainable choices at Christmas? The ideas below could make a world of difference, and a difference to the world. Take time to pray, reflect, and consider acting on one or two, or however many you like! You may find the change is for life and not just for Christmas.

Start with your advent calendar. Support overseas farmers by ensuring that your advent calendar, and any Christmas chocolate, is [Fairtrade](#). You'll be helping those farmers to make a decent living, and encouraging them to farm in a more ecologically sustainable way with every bite.

Dress up a living tree in your garden – add lots of bird feeders and fat balls, and some outdoor fairy lights to make a feast for your eyes and the birds. Or, visit the [British Christmas Tree Growers Association](#) to find out about buying an organic, FSC-certified, or locally grown Christmas tree.

Go for a natural wreath and decorations. Holly sprigs, ivy trails, pinecones, rose hips... Take a bag, go for a walk, and see what you can find! Make sure that you have permission from the land-owner before you start snipping. Don't take too much and do leave some berries for the birds. Source as much as you can from what's already dropped. Then get creative and make a beautiful wreath and Christmas decorations from natural materials.

Re-use cards and wrapping. Help reduce the huge amount of trees that go into making Christmas tags by re-using old Christmas cards. Recycle the section that carries the greeting, cut out the picture and use that as a tag. You could use fabric remnants and ribbons to make simple, drawstring gift bags in various sizes. Use these for your family and close friends and they could be reused for years to come. Recycled brown paper has a much lower ecological footprint than Christmas wrapping paper. Young children might enjoy decorating it and that might buy you five minutes to get all those other Christmas jobs done!

Create homemade gifts. Baked goods for example, or buy gifts from a charity shop – you'll be amazed at what can be found. You could buy an attractive glass or vase and fill it with chocolates or flowers. Kilner jars, and other glass jars, filled with small items also make attractive gifts.

Continued on page 17

Christmas Services

1st December 10.30 All Age Paddington Themed Toy Service

15th December 6.30 Carol Service at St Mary's Chapel Arley

22nd December 4.00 Carol Service at St Mary's Great Budworth

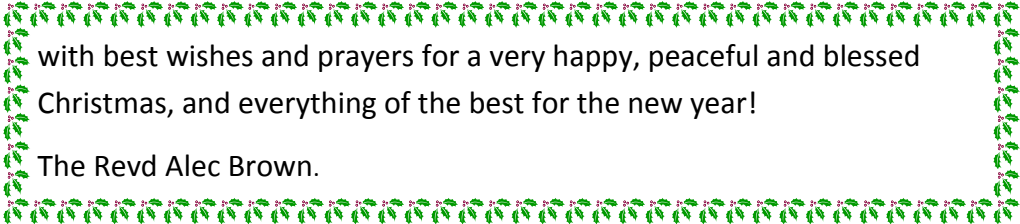
24th December 4.00 Crib and Christingle Service

11.30 Midnight Communion

25th December 8.00 Holy Communion

10.30 Parish Communion

This Year we are supporting the Children's Society. They are endeavouring to raise £142,000 by the end of the year to fund support workers and counsellors for children who need support with their mental health. There will be envelopes at the back of church for this.



with best wishes and prayers for a very happy, peaceful and blessed Christmas, and everything of the best for the new year!

The Revd Alec Brown.

From the Registers

Marriage – congratulations to Bethany Austin and Thomas Lloyd whose marriage was blessed at St Mary's Chapel, Arley Hall on 9th November.

Funerals – rest in peace Steven and Rachel Hornby, whose cremated remains were interred in the Lower Churchyard on 16th November, and Sylvia Millington and Vernice Mylan, whose cremated remains were interred in Barnton Cemetery and the Upper Churchyard on 18th and 19th November respectively, and Tom Pearce whose funeral and burial took place on 2nd December.



THE BISHOP OF CHESTER

A letter to the Diocese of Chester

Tuesday, 12th November, 2024

Dear friends,

I am writing to you in the wake of the publication of the Makin review into the abuse perpetrated by John Smyth and today's resignation announcement from the Archbishop of Canterbury. I know that there are many questions, quite a lot of which remain unanswered. Like you, I am listening to the media coverage with all manner of mixed feelings, mainly grief over the failings of our church. You will know what a focus this kind of work has been in this diocese following the Pearl Review four years ago: there is no place for cover-up or complicity with abuse in any part of society, least of all in the church.

I do want to say a number of things as we seek to respond in the Diocese of Chester.

First and foremost; if the report raises concerns for you in any way at all, please do reach out for support. You can either talk with our safeguarding team or Safe Spaces and contact details are available overleaf. These conversations can trigger all manner of emotions in us, and support is available.

Secondly, please keep victims and survivors in your prayers. This is a very hard time for those who have journeyed through the kind of horrific experiences Makin outlines. Our aim to be 'survivor centred and trauma informed' can never just be a strapline. Please be kind to each other, and please pray.

Thirdly, may I thank all who are working to make our parishes, chaplaincies, and church schools safer spaces. I appreciate all that you do to enable this; there is always more work needed, but we can be grateful.

Fourthly, alongside my deep regret and concern about the failings of the church, I want to express gratitude for the good things that Archbishop Justin has done in this role.

As we have found in Chester Diocese, safeguarding is always a shared responsibility, and I am thankful for all who partner in this vital part of the life of the church.

Friends, please pray. Please care for each other. Please reach out for support if you need it. I will write further in due time.

*With my ongoing prayers
+ Bless*

Mark Tanner
Bishop of Chester

The Rt Revd Dr Mark Tanner, Bishop's House, Abbey Square, Chester, CH1 2JD
01244 350864 | bpchester@chester.anglican.org | www.chester.anglican.org
The Diocese of Chester is the Church of England in the former County Palatine of Cheshire

The story of the Christingle

The word 'Christingle' actually means 'Christ Light', and celebrates the light of Jesus coming into the world. Stories of how the Christingle began look back to the Moravian Church, which is found in the Czech Republic. The Moravians have held Christingle services for more than 200 years, and according to them, this is how the first Christingle might have been made:

Many years ago the children in a village were asked to bring a Christmas gift to put beside the crib in the church. One family was very poor, and had no money for gifts, but the three children were still determined to take something. The only nice thing they had was an orange, so they decided to give the Christ-child that.

But then they discovered the top was going green, so the eldest cut it out, and put a candle in the hole. To add some colour, one of the girls took a red ribbon from her hair and tied it around the middle of the orange. It was hard to make the ribbon stay still, so they fastened it in place with toothpicks. The toothpicks looked a bit bare, so the youngest child added some raisins to them.

The children took their decorated orange lantern to the church for the Christmas Mass. The other children sneered at their meagre gift, but the priest seized upon it with joy. He held it up as an example of the true understanding of the meaning of Christmas, for the following reasons: the orange is round, like the world; the candle gives us light in the dark, like the love of God; the red ribbon goes round the 'world', as a symbol of Christ's blood, given for everyone; the four sticks point in all directions, and symbolise that God is over all: North, South, East and West; and the fruit and nuts remind us of God's blessings.

The Children's Society first introduced the Christingle Service to The Church of England in 1968, and it has since become a popular event in the church calendar. This candlelit celebration is an ideal way to share the key messages of the Christian faith, while helping to raise vital funds to help vulnerable children across the country. Visit: www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Thank you!

On 24th November, the church choir and organist, plus a couple more of us sat down for a fantastic early Christmas meal hosted and prepared by Sue and Rob Ollier.

This came about as we were planning to raise some money for funding the flower festival in 2025. Sue said 'I could do a lunch, we could have our choir Christmas meal at our house and the money they would have paid for a meal out can go towards the flower festival fund'. It would have been hard to find a better meal anywhere!

So, a huge thank you to Sue and Rob for getting the ball rolling in such a great way for the flower festival fundraising.

RIP – Geoff Ridgway 1951 – 2024

If you're reading this while sitting in a nicely warm Church.....then please say a prayer and give thanks for Geoff, who died in the early hours of Monday 25th November, 2024 after a prolonged and debilitating illness, which he bore bravely and throughout which he was supported lovingly by Pauline and all members of the family (who are extremely grateful for all the sympathy, kindness and support from everyone over these last few very difficult years) and all his many friends in and beyond Church. Since their arrival at Great Budworth Church in 2009 Geoff and Pauline have involved themselves with enthusiasm in almost all aspects of Church life, and for Geoff this included The Friends of Great Budworth Church (Chairman and reporter for a number of years), the PCC, the Churchyard Committee and the Restoration Committee. He was a tireless worker and, as a result of his previous working life, he was extremely well placed to take charge of many aspects of the practical work that needed doing in and around the Church – from the testing of Churchyard memorials (to the occasional concern of some members of the Churchyard Committee!) to the installation of new boilers for the Church's central heating system. Geoff brought enthusiasm, experience, concern and interest to everything that he undertook and his overall contribution to the life and work of the Church has, over the years, been considerable, and will not be forgotten.

For my part, it has been a great pleasure, and a real privilege, to have known, worshipped and worked with Geoff over many years, and I'm sure I speak for all associated with St Mary and All Saints Church in Great Budworth when I say that Geoff will be very sadly missed.

May he rest in peace, and rise in glory.

The Revd Alec Brown.



Christmas Eve 4.00pm Crib and Christingle Service



Great Budworth C of E Aided School News



The second half of Autumn term sees us planning for our many Christmas activities and some exciting fundraising events organised by our Friends of the School and School council. Charity fundraising this half term includes: The Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal, Children in Need, Save the children's - Christmas Jumper Day, The Children's Society - Christingle, Operation Christmas Child – shoebox appeal. It is wonderful that the children and our school families have been so generous in supporting these child-centered charities.

Our pupils acknowledge that there are children less fortunate than themselves and we encourage them to show care following the words of Jesus **'Love one another as I have loved you' John 13:34**. This bible verse is core to our school ethos and we encourage our pupils to live out the Christian values in their lives irrespective of their faith commitment. Our core school values are:

Faith, Hope, Love, Trust, Dignity, Community, Forgiveness, Wisdom and Joy

Collective worship, this half term, is based on the Fruits of the Spirit. In the Bible, we learn about the kind of fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in Christian lives as they follow Jesus' teachings.

Galatians 5:22-23 says: "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!"



We shall be talking to the children about the importance of these fruits and how they can enhance the lives of everyone whether they are believers or not. Come December we will be looking at Advent, exploring what it means in the lead-up to Christmas.

So how can you help support Britain's farming and rural communities. When you're scouting your weekly shop buy British, double check and read the labels. You can also click buy British or best of British on all online supermarket platforms now!!!

STAND WITH A FARMER NOT STARMER!! Otherwise within a generation we will be gone!!!

We are also fighting for other small businesses which will be harmed by the budget's tax increases. Remember kick a farmer and 10 other businesses limp!!!

If you have a mate in the farming community, take them out for a beer and for a little bit of cheer.

Till next time. Remember you can't have a Christmas tree without a farmer!!

Season's Greetings

Creation care Continued from page20

Give the gift of time. Too many unwanted gifts end up in landfill. Here's an idea. What about a gift of cooking for someone once a month for a year, taking them for a coffee, babysitting, house cleaning... or whatever. Just make a 'gift of time gift voucher' and put it in a card for them.

Remember the reason for the season. Practising generosity and hospitality is a great way to show Christ's love at Christmas. Invite someone who'd otherwise be on their own, to join you on Christmas Day. It's also a way of reducing energy consumption as they'll share your heating and cooking!

If you do eat meat, make sure it's free-range or organic, and buy it from a **local farmer or independent retailer**.

Recycle right. More waste ends up in landfill over Christmas than during the rest of the year, so it's a great time to review your recycling set up. Different local authorities offer different recycling provisions, so find out exactly what you can recycle at home. *Don't forget – most wrapping paper is not recyclable. You can test it by doing the 'scrunch' test. If it springs back, it isn't recyclable. And always remove the sellotape before recycling.*

Paul Gerrards Farming Diary

Hello again from Gerrard Farming HQ

So after an upbeat write up last month this last month has certainly been a long slog. I had a slight mishap with a silage trailer on a very wet field which meant it had a lie down. A few panic favour phone calls and a man in a mask came to the rescue to do an infield repair a big thank you to you.

I'll let you guess who it is from the picture but he's a very recommended gentleman.

So as many of you will remember we have been doing a lot of building work in the sheds this summer to enhance cow welfare and environment the final instalment has arrived. You may have also seen it on instagram.



This is Colin. Colin is our first piece of robotics farm equipment. This new piece of kit now cleans the sheds up to 8 times a day instead of the tractor system which was twice a day. Colin should also help with the staff shortage all farms are finding themselves in. Happy cow and life.



Well, that's what we thought until Starmer dropped his budget bombshell on British Agriculture.

The attack on APR and BPR is a personal attack on family farms which will decimate the farming platform within the UK. This will ultimately put the UK's food security at a significant high risk. So, on the 19th we went to London to protest against the budget plan. 45000 farmers descended on Whitehall which drove the facts home that Labour has lied. Farmers are fighting for their future, and it is truly truly heart-breaking.



We will be holding our **Christingle service on the 6th December at 1.30pm in church**. Come and join us where we think about Jesus, Light of the World and how we too can be that light in the world as we live out our Christian values.

We have held a faith week where we have considered the theme of light over darkness. We have looked at different world faiths and how they use light in their celebrations. We

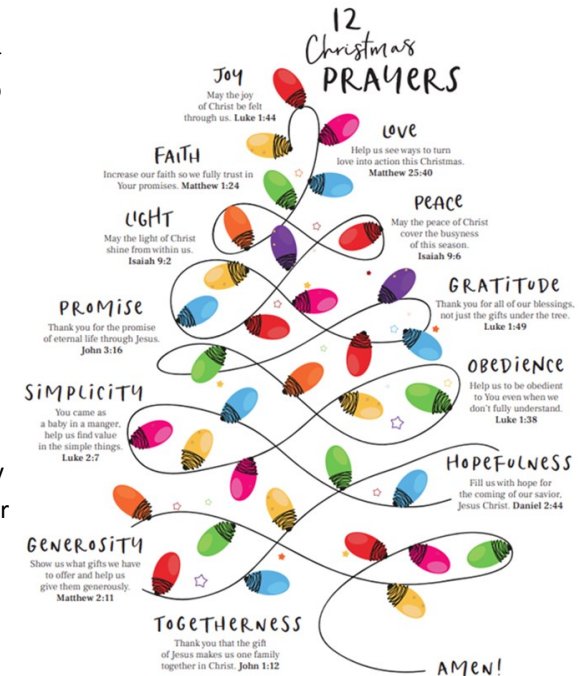
have looked at the Jewish Faith and the festival of Chanukah, Hindu and Sikh faiths and the festival of Diwali and the Christian Faith.

The next Open morning is on **Monday 9th December from 9am until 12noon** & has a Christmas theme with some circus skills fun included. At Great Budworth, every day is an Open Day, just contact the office to arrange an individual visit.

In December, we will be taking part in the Arley Christmas Tree challenge. The children have been busy making decorations on a 'hedgehogs' theme. Please do go along to the event at Arley Hall & vote for our tree.

Amongst other fun activities, the children are looking forward to a performance about the Christmas message by the B Tales touring company.

The Federation of Antrobus St Marks & Great Budworth CofE Primary schools Carol Service will be at 6pm on Thursday 19th December 2024 again in church. Our FOTS will be providing mulled wine & mince pies afterwards, all are very welcome.





St Mary & All Saints

Invite you to a

Festive

Cheese and wine

In church

Thursday 12th December

7.30pm – 10.00pm

Raffle

Tickets £20 / person

Available from Margaret 07732324001

Maggie 07970927161

Pauline 01565 733494

Raising funds for the day to day running of the church

All three of these processes are driven forward by the movement of cells, the connections between them, and the signals they pass to each other. Jeff studies a sort of cellular glue which is involved in joining cells together. Making and breaking these adhesions can affect how cells move and signal to each other, their identity in the body, how they are organised as groups, and ultimately their survival. This glue is found on the surface of cells throughout the animal kingdom, including the small worms Jeff's lab studies.

For Jeff, peering down a microscope at tiny worm embryos can be an act of worship. It is also an exercise in art appreciation, as he learns to appreciate the created order. Understanding the complexities of development, while also being aware that God knows that process intimately both as Creator and created, fills Jeff with a profound sense of awe, wonder and worship.

Does the minute scale of our early development, compared to the incomprehensibly vast and ancient universe, give us a sense of insignificance? Psalm 8 says, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"

For Jeff and the Psalmist, such feelings can be a positive experience if they serve as a reminder to be humble in the face of a universe that is vastly complicated but also deeply meaningful, made by a God who loves each one of us.

25 December

Why the world was ready for Christmas

Ever wonder why Jesus was born when He was? The Bible tells us that "when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son..." The Jewish people had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. Why did God send Him precisely when He did?

Many biblical scholars believe that the 'time had fully come' for Jesus because of the politics of the time. The Roman Empire's sheer size and dominance had achieved something unique in world history: the opportunity for travel from Bethlehem to Berwick on Tweed without ever crossing into 'enemy territory' or needing a 'passport'. For the first time ever, it was possible for 'common' people to travel wide and far, and quickly spread news and ideas. And all you needed were two languages - Greek to the east of Rome, and Latin to the west and north. You could set sail from Joppa (Tel Aviv) and head for any port on the Med. And the Roman roads ran straight and true throughout the empire.

So the Roman Empire achieved something it never intended: it helped spread news of Christianity far and wide for 400 years. After that, the Empire crumbled, and the borders shut down. Not until the 19th century would people again roam so freely. The time for Jesus to be born, and for news of Him to be able to travel, had indeed 'fully come'

God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

Meditation on the Incarnation

After the bright beam of annunciation

fused heaven with dark earth

His searing sharply-focused light

went out for a while

eclipsed in amniotic gloom:

His cool immensity of splendour

His universal grace

small-folded in a warm dim

female space

This extract from Luci Shaw's poem *Made Flesh* captures something of the wonder of the moment when the second person of the Trinity became an embryo.

How does a single cell turn into an infant, and what does that process say about us – and God? These are the questions that Professor Jeff Hardin, a developmental biologist, asks himself. Having studied theology as well as science, he has a unique perspective on embryonic development.

A new-born baby is made of around five trillion cells. These cells come in hundreds of different types, each of which must be in the correct place for the child's body to function properly. Every new life is the result of intricate and highly ordered processes. Three things must happen as an embryo develops.

The first important process is for cells to take on their identity as types of muscle, bone, nerves, and so on. The second is when each cell learns which part of the body it belongs to. Third, those cells are moved around to form the different tissues and organs. These three are not discrete stages, but they all happen at around the same time, building up gradually like the different aspects of a picture coming into focus.

John L. Snyder

After my last article, several people have asked about John L. Snyder and his interest in our church.

At this distance in time, and with only a few facts, it is difficult to construct a detailed biography or even give a complete picture of the man.

In 1962, U.S. Industries Inc. bought Sandicroft, the house at the end of Cock Lane opposite to Brownslow. It is believed that it was to be used as a residence for visiting executives, and it also provided some office space.

U.S. Industries Inc. was a huge engineering conglomerate with a wide range of holdings. John L. Snyder was the President and Chief Executive.

It is possible that the purchase of Sandicroft was linked to the U.S. Army base at Burtonwood. Burtonwood was a huge logistics centre and although it was past its height in 1959, it still had 18000 men stationed there in 1962 and employed hundreds of local workers. The base contained hundreds of vehicles, thousands of supply items, entire field hospitals with everything from safety pins to operating theatres, vehicle spares, clothing, food and everything else to keep an army in the field.

U.S. Industries' specialty and big seller in the 1960s was automation systems for administration and manufacturing. It is interesting to note Snyder's concern about this technology which he knew was going to make many jobs redundant. The New York Times in April 1965 said of him: "no American industrialist showed greater sensitivity to the enormous human problems engendered by automation than John L. Snyder Jnr, Chairman and President of U.S. Industries Inc. His company pioneered in making equipment to be used in automating factories, and he never wavered in his conviction that this country had to avail itself fully and swiftly of new technology to raise living standards and maintain its competitive position in world markets." Snyder established a national working party to find the best ways to deal with the social impact of the new technology. It seems that the technological issues we face today with A.I. are not new.

He was appointed to the National Science Board and was on the National Commission on technology, automation and economic progress.

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During his residences at Sandicroft, he attended services at St Mary's and loved the village and surrounding countryside. Peoples' memories of him are of a pleasant, unassuming gentleman.

For whatever reason, he decided to fund the restoration of the Lady Chapel: not only the windows, but a new roof and the lowering of the crypt entrance covers into the crypts so the floor was level. Plans were also gathered for new furniture.

Until this restoration the Lady Chapel was unsuitable for services of any kind and kept locked.

Also, Snyder sponsored the 1964 Church Fete, basing it at Sandicroft. The swimming pool was open to visitors, the maypole was danced, soldiers from Burtonwood roasted a whole ox (this took several days) and the raffle top price, donated by Snyder, was a brand new Mini. Most memorably, a marquee was erected on the field and the world premiere of the movie "Murder Most Foul" starring Margaret Rutherford was shown. MGM was under the control of U.S. Industries.

Miss Rutherford also opened the Fete and signed autographs, after arriving by helicopter.



John L Snyder and Margaret Rutherford at the opening of the fete .

Unfortunately, later that year, Snyder died suddenly and work on the Lady Chapel ceased as the funding ended

His generosity gave us the beautiful Lady Chapel as a place of regular worship and a real asset to our church.

John L. Snyder stands in a long line of benefactors of the church stretching back to the Norman times and to them all we must be grateful that their generosity has cherished this beautiful place of worship.

Robert Steele