**ACTIVITIES IN CHURCH**

**Sunday 11.00am Family Church Service/Communion monthly**

**Curling after Sunday service (twice monthly)**

**Monday 9.45am U3A Bridge Class**

**1.30pm U3A Scottish Dancing**

**2.00pm Monday Fellowship (twice monthly)**

**6.30pm St John’s Ambulance**

**Tuesday 10.00am Zumba Gold exercise class**

**12.30pm Pulmonary Rehab Clinic**

**1.45pm Sequence Dance**

**2.00pm HopeafterStroke (2nd in month)**

**7.30pm Huddersfield Miniatures (2nd in month)**

**6.00pm Huddersfield Choral Society (rehearsals)**

**Wednesday 9.00am Tumble Tots**

**10.00am Drop-In Coffee morning**

**10.00am Knit & Natter - Lunch 12noon**

**7.30pm Friendship Club Dance**

**Thursday 10.00am U3A Mahjong**

**12.30pm Pulmonary Rehab Clinic**

**12.30pm Pulmonary Fibrosis Support Group**

**(1st in the month)**

**2.00pm U3A Social Bridge**

**Friday 10.30am Living Well with Dementia (weekly)**

**1.30pm Latin Class**

**2.00pm Shared Harmonies**

**Saturday 10.00am-11.30am Coffee Morning**

**9.00am Tumble Tots**

**Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals by arrangement.**

**Contact: Church Office 01484 430556 email - office@moldgreenurc.org.uk**

**Enquiries for room hire – email -** [**bookingsformurc@outlook.com**](mailto:bookingsformurc@outlook.com)

**Activities are weekly unless otherwise stated.**

***UNITED REFORMED CHURCH***

***MOLDGREEN HUDDERSFIELD***

***WORKING FOR CHRIST AND THE COMMUNITY***

***DECEMBER/JANUARY 2024/25***

***Moldgreen is part of the Huddersfield.***

***Pastorate of United Reformed Churches***

A close-up of a branch with leaves

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**Mission Statement**

**“WORKING FOR CHRIST AND**

**THE COMMUNITY”**

**What we believe**

**We believe in God, source, and sustainer of creation.**

**We believe in God, revealed in Jesus Christ, the eternal**

**Word of God made flesh.**

**We believe in God, ever present in the Holy Spirit who**

**Brings the Gospel to fruition.**

**How we achieve our mission**

**We are a fellowship of people who seek to worship God**

**through our lives and witness to other people.**

**We take seriously our responsibility to share our faith and**

**Love with others and are seeking avenues of service and mission in our church, homes, community, and places of work.**

**We seek to prepare ourselves for this mission to others**

**through our prayers and obedience to God’s will.**



**UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

**MOLDGREEN**

[**www.moldgreenurc.org.uk**](http://www.moldgreenurc.org.uk)

**Church office: tel. 01484 430556**

**Email:** [**office@moldgreenurc.org.uk**](mailto:office@moldgreenurc.org.uk)

[**bookingsformurc@outlook.com**](mailto:bookingsformurc@outlook.com)

**Old Wakefield Road, Moldgreen, Huddersfield HD5 8AA**

***“WORKING FOR CHRIST AND THE COMMUNITY”***

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***and Sacrament***  *Helen Snashall*

*Revd Sarah Fitton helensnashall21@gmail.com*

[*revsarahfitton20@yahoo.com*](mailto:revsarahfitton20@yahoo.com)

***Community Worker***

*Sue Cockcroft*

*Sue@s2r.org.uk*

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*Mrs Christine Hall Mrs Jean North*

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*Mrs Jean Whitehead John Startin*

*office@moldgreenurc.org.uk Stephen Taylor*

*Jean Whitehead*

**page 1**

**December/January 2024/25**

**Good News Celebrations to you all at this year’s**

**Advent and Christmas Season!**

Dear Friends,

The Advent season begins for us on the 1st December, the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. Advent is such an exciting time of anticipation for so many at this time of year, children and adults alike. It is also a time to do lists, but God wants to offer you in between the things you feel you must do – all the things you want to do to mark the season. The best way to release stress and really celebrate is to come to God over Advent and make that time so enjoyable with traditions that really express and center your inner faith.

**Moldgreen are offering worship exploring the theme of**

**‘Christmas traditions’**

We will be finding out why we have the Hope of Advent Candles, the Peace of Christmas food, the Joy of Presents and Cards, the Love of Carols and the Nativity of Christmas Day. Come and get to know more about Jesus and the events leading up to his birth in Bethlehem. Everyone in the Pastorate is invited to come to our **Advent Refresh and Renew sessions on Zoom – Every Saturday of Advent – 30th November and 7th, 14th, 21st December at**

**3.00pm-4.00pm.**

**Zoom details: Meeting ID: 775 6331 5040 Passcode: cxE834**

We are discovering the hidden stories behind our best loved Christmas Carols – Once in Royal David’s City, The Twelve Days of Christmas, Silent Night and the Holly and the Ivy.

We look forward to seeing you there.

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**Christmas Greetings**

Dear all at Moldgreen URC

I would like to wish you a peaceful, healing and comforting

Christmas and New Year!!

Christ is born, Emmanuel!

All my prayers, Rev Sarah Fitton



**News of the church family**

We hope you are all keeping well, it is lovely to see our regular congregation on a Sunday and those from our pastorate who join us and not forgetting our ‘zoomers’ at home, plus new people who we have welcomed as well. We also welcome our regular groups and new groups who hire space during the week.

We do hope you will continue to pray for all our church fellowship, friends and family, our local community, and the wider world.

Please continue to remember our members and friends. Margaret Hines, Audrey Greenwood, those who are in residential homes and those who live at home and are not able to come to church. If you are able, please do keep in touch with people, a telephone call and a chat are always welcome.

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Please remember Alan Atkinson, who is now out of hospital and currently in Ings Grove House in Mirfield but hopes to be coming home shortly. We send both Alan and June our love and prayers.

It is with great sadness to announce the death of Pat Hollier.

Pat was a faithful member at church for many years until her health deteriorated and was not able to attend church. She managed in her cottage for a long time until she needed more care and had been In Scissett Mount Care Home for about the last four years. She never lost her sense of humour despite her illness and was always keen to keep up with what was happening at church. Her funeral is on December 11th at Huddersfield Crematorium at 11.15am. We send our love and prayers to her family and friends at this difficult time.

We have also to announce the sudden death of Margaret Pickup on Sunday 24th November. Margaret had been attending Moldgreen as a young child and then later as a church member and she taught for many years in Sunday School and was very much involved in church events. She was Brown Owl at St. Michael and St. Helen’s Church Brownie Pack for many years and her family were deeply involved with St John’s Ambulance here in church. Margaret’s health deteriorated a number of years ago and unable to come to church was cared for at home by her family and carers, and she always liked to keep up with what was happening at church. We do not know any funeral details yet. We send our love and prayers to Josephine and Emma and their family and friends at this sad time.

Please continue to remember many others in our fellowship who are going through serious health problems, and we send our love and prayers to them all. We ask you to remember and pray for all these people mentioned and others known to you who are unwell or experiencing difficulties. As well as those who are caring for their loved ones and those of our fellowship, pastorate, family, and friends who have been bereaved.

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**GIFT DAY 2024**

A very big THANKS TO YOU ALL for making Gift Day such a success on 2nd November. The fellowship, the lunch and the film show. Many thanks to Susan, Janet, George and Mark for the delicious lunch. A wonderful day.

The figure now stands at £15,246 and the individual figures are as follows:

Personal donations £4,685

Saturday Coffee Morning £1,052

Tuesday Dance £5,399

Monday Fellowship £ 400

Sunday Curling £ 200

Living Well with Dementia Group £2,030

Proceeds from Gift Day Lunch £ 130

Wednesday Knit and Natter Lunch £1,350

**Ian K Whitehead Church Treasurer**

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY IN DECEMBER**

Dec 1st  1st Sunday in Advent, Family Church Service 11.00am

Dec 4th Wednesday Drop In 10.00am - 12.00noon

Knit & Natter / Lunch at 12noon

Dec 6th Living Well with Dementia 10.30am-2.30pm

Dec 7th Saturday Coffee Morning 10.00am-11.30am

Dec 7th Little Lights Switch On 4.00pm – 6.00pm

Dec 8th 2nd Sunday in Advent, Family Church Service 11.00am

Dec 8th Fellowship Christmas Lunch from12.30pm

Dec11th Wednesday Drop In 10.00am - 12.00noon

Knit & Natter / Lunch at 12noon – Film Club 1.30pm

Dec13th Living Well with Dementia 10.30am-2.30pm

Dec14th Saturday Coffee Morning 10.00am-11.30am

Dec15th 3rd Sunday in Advent Family Church Service 11.00am

Dec15th HCS Community Choir 7.00pm at Moldgreen URC

Tickets from Mark Binns.

Dec20th Living Well with Dementia 10.30am-2.30pm

Dec21st Saturday Coffee Morning 10.00am-11.30am

Dec22nd 4th Sunday in Advent, Family Church Service 11.00am

with a play about Good King Wenceslas with carols.

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Dec22nd Joint Christmas Carol Service **6.30pm** at Moldgreen

Dec25th Christmas Day Service **10.30am**

Dec29th Joint Pastorate Service at Waverley URC followed

by a lunch.

**Note: after the church service on 8th December there will be**

**our Annual Christmas Lunch.**

**Check the back of the magazine for more information of what’s happening in the church** **and on the notice** **board.**

**Please make a note of the dates in your diary.**

A drawing of candles and holly

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**Christmas messages**

As well as writing a card to everyone we’d like to compile a sheet of Christmas greetings to be distributed to those who are part of the church. It’s a nice way to share greetings without writing and sending lots of cards. If you’d like to contribute a message either write it in your card, pop it on a bit of paper and give it to Helen or pop it in the internal postbox or you can e-mail your greeting to

[helensnashall21@gmail.com](mailto:helensnashall21@gmail.com).

**The Middle East**

If you would like to make a donation in lieu of the money you have saved on Christmas cards, the funds will be sent to **I**nternational Rescue

Committee (IRC), together with the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)

to help the many millions displaced in Gaza and Lebanon. Donations can be placed in the white, wall mounted collection box in the church entrance. Loose collection collected on the **morning** **of 22nd December** and the

**Carol Service** **in the evening** will also be sent to the appeal.

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**SUNDAY SERVICES IN DECEMBER/JANUARY**

All services start at **11.00am** unless otherwise indicated.

Dec 1st - 1st Sunday in Advent Family Church Service

Dec 8th - 2nd Sunday in Advent Family Church Service

Dec 15th - 3rd Sunday in Advent Family Church Service

Dec 22nd – 4th Sunday in Advent Morning Family Carol Service

Dec 22nd – Joint Pastorate Carol Service at Moldgreen 6.30pm

Dec 29th - Joint Pastorate Service at Waverley URC 11am

Jan 5th - Family Church Service

Jan 12th - Family Church Service

Jan 19th Family Church Service

Jan 26th - Family Church Service

**DUTY ELDERS IN DECEMBER/JANUARY**

Dec 1st  – Jean Whitehead

Dec 8th  - Julie Johnston

Dec 15th – Christine Hall

Dec 22nd – Janet Straughan

Dec 29th - Joint Pastorate Service at Waverley URC

Jan 5th - John North

Jan 12th - Kevan Shuttleworth

Jan 19th - Mark Binns

Jan 26th - Jean Whitehead

**FLOWERS IN CHURCH FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY**

The flowers in church on Sundays are taken out to those who are ill or in need of pastoral care. We are grateful to all in our fellowship who give money for flowers throughout the year. If you are not

already on our ‘flower list’ but would like give flowers, please speak to Jean Whitehead, call 01484 430556 or email to

[office@moldgreenurc.org.uk](mailto:office@moldgreenurc.org.uk) to arrange this.

Dec 1st - Steven & Pauline Taylor

Dec 8th **-** John & Jean North

Dec 15th – Margaret Hines

Dec 22nd – In Memory of Margaret Pickup

Dec 29th – No service at Moldgreen URC **page 7**

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY IN JANUARY**

Jan 3rd – Living well with Dementia 10.30am-2.30pm

Jan 4th - Saturday Coffee Morning 10.00am-11.30am

Jan 5th - Family Church Service 11.00am + Curling

Jan 6th - Monday Fellowship 2.00pm

Jan 8th - Wednesday Drop In 10.00am - 12.00noon

Knit & Natter / Lunch at 12noon

Jan10th - Living Well with Dementia 10.30am-2.30pm

Jan11th - Saturday Coffee Morning 10.00am-11.30am

Jan12th - Family Church Service 11.00am

Jan15th - Wednesday Drop In 10.00am - 12.00noon

Knit & Natter / Lunch at 12noon + Film Club 1.30pm

Jan17th - Living well with Dementia 10.30am-2.30pm

Jan18th - Saturday Coffee Morning 10.00am-11.30am

Jan19th -  Family Church Service 11.00am+ Curling

Jan 20th - Monday Fellowship 2.00pm

Jan22nd - Wednesday Drop In 10.00am - 12.00noon

Knit & Natter / Lunch at 12noon

Jan24th - Living well with Dementia 10.30am-2.30pm

Jan25th - Saturday Coffee Morning 10.00am-11.30am

Jan26th - Family Church Service 11.00am

Jan 29th - Wednesday Drop In 10.00am - 12.00noon

Knit & Natter / Lunch at 12noon

Jan31st - Living well with Dementia 10.30am-2.30pm

**It was on a Starry Night**

Poets, sculptors, artists and composers over many centuries have used their skills and talents to help us picture the scene in the stable in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago when Jesus, our Saviour, was born. Well, to the great names of Leonardo da Vinci, George Frideric Handel, Christina Rossetti and Michelangelo we can add the names of our church maintenance group! Over the last few months, they have been busy building a nativity scene for display outside Moldgreen school and

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the church. Please take time to enjoy it as you come to worship throughout December. I am not sure it will find a place in the Sistine Chapel or the Louvre in Paris, but it will certainly brighten up the streets in Moldgreen, sharing the Christmas message for all who pass by. Thank you to all who have been involved.

**C’était une Nuit Étoilée**

"Whilst holidaying in France earlier this year, we visited a beautiful abbey in Gordes.  On display in the gift shop was a delightful nativity scene which instantly brought a smile to my face as I imagined how my mum, Pat Tyas, would have loved it!  We agreed that the purchase of the set would be an appropriate use of some of the money bequeathed by her in 2021.

We hope that the church community takes pleasure from this Christmas tribute which will be on display in the sanctuary and that it brings a smile to all visitors during the festive season!

Please take time to enjoy the display and remember something about mum (Pat) in particular her love of children and music."

**Susan Binns**

A cartoon of a manger with a baby person

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**Father Christmas**

Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable that my son would begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas. Sure enough, one day near Christmas he suddenly said: “Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy.” Taking a deep breath, I asked him what that might be. “Easy,” he said, “They are all nocturnal.”

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**O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree!**

We are very happy to share with you the details for our Christmas tree welcoming event on **Saturday December 7th**. Running from 16.00 – 18.00 there will be warm drinks and festive biscuits available, a small selection

of stalls in the Church Hall, including one from LS2Y sharing helpful information around energy saving, a couple of simple craft activities, and

a raffle to raise funds to support the Living Well with Dementia group led by Jo Mawdsley. We are also delighted to announce that we will have the opportunity for everyone to join in with some joyful carol singing outside led by local choir members! Rev Sarah will be switching on the lights at approximately 17.00 🎄If anyone would like to help out on the day

(either getting ready or at the event) you would be hugely appreciated – please let Helen or Sue know! We look forward to welcoming everyone

to this happy celebration of Christmas in the community.

Helen and Sue x

**Christmas is Coming and …………...**

It does seem very early to be talking about Christmas, but our Minister, Sarah and Community workers, Helen and Sue are busy planning several events so here’s a chance to put the dates in your diary, then watch out

for further details on the church notice board.

**11th December**: Film Club Christmas special – Miracle on 34th Street

at 1.30pm

**Christingle service** with Moldgreen Community Primary School

On Friday 13th December at 3.15pm staff, pupils and parents from Moldgreen school will be joining us for a short Christingle service in the community garden. The young people will parade from the school to the garden with the Christingles they have made where we will sing some carols. Please come along and join with the young people if you can. Arrive early for a parking space – refreshments will be served inside before the service.

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**Warm Welcomes -** Come and join us every month for some friendly faces and a place to connect. There will be FREE warm drinks and biscuits, crafty and creative activities to take part in, and advice and support available too. Everyone is welcome! No need to book, just drop in. For more information, email: [contact@s2r.org.uk](mailto:contact@s2r.org.uk). Children are welcome but anyone under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Next session **Monday 16th December,** and after that it will be the **3rd Monday in the month**. Drop in any time between 9am and 11.30am at Moldgreen URC, Old Wakefield Road HD5 8AA.

**Joint service** **with Waverley URC** on Sunday 29th December at 11.00am we will be joining with Waverley URC at the FOCAL Centre on New Hey Road. Instead of a traditional service we will be watching a Christmas film ‘The Fourth Wiseman’ and then following the film everyone is invited to stay for lunch. There will be hot pork or beef baps or a vegetarian alternative. If you intend coming and staying for lunch sign up on the list on the notice board as soon as possible.

**Christmas play**

The Sunday School Christmas play was in full swing when the teacher prompted: "And what was it that guided the Wise Men from the East?" Right on cue, the pre-schoolers turned their large white letters to face the audience. However, the last four children in the lineup had somehow reversed their sequence, and so the answer was: C H R I S T M A S    R A T S.

**Nativity scene**

"Here's a king!" announced the five-year-old as he unwrapped a figurine from the Christmas decorations box. “Here's a donkey!" he added a moment later. Then he removed the tissue from another figure, finding

the infant Jesus moulded permanently into the little manger. The child exclaimed, "And here's Baby Jesus in his car seat!"

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**Christmas Magic Appeal**

We are supporting the HD5 appeal again this year. Last year 224 children received toys and gifts and treats were given to families in need. If you would like to donate a toy, game or sweets, biscuits, chocolates, or a savoury snack e.g pringles, please hand in your gift at church by **8th December.** Monetary gifts can also be handed to Sue Binns or Sue Carter,

If you would like to help the team in packing the gift bags this will take place on **10th and 11th December.**

**Fellowship Lunch**

Our three course Christmas Lunch will take place on **Sunday 8th December** after the morning service. Watch out for details on the church notice board. Don’t forget to sign up for this one! The church meeting scheduled for this date will now take place in January.

**15th December –** A Christmas Concertby Huddersfield Choral Society Community Choir at Moldgreen URC - 7.00pm.

Tickets £10.00 from Mark Binns.

**A Wandering nativity**

Our maintenance team have made a splendid nativity scene for display at Moldgreen school and outside the church. Watch out for it as it moves from place to place.

**Advent Refresh and Renew sessions on Zoom**

Sarah and Angela will be running the sessions every Saturday from

November 30th, December 7th, 14th, 21st at 3.00pm-4.00pm. Come and discover the hidden stories behind our best loved Christmas Carols.

Meeting ID: 775 6331 5040 Passcode: cxE834

**25th December** – Guess what? Christmas Day! Join us for morning worship at 10.30am

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**CHRISTMAS TIME AND A BRAND-NEW YEAR**

The Christmas season is now almost upon us, a time for us to think of Jesus, his life and, hopefully, good times ahead. From our Monday Fellowship’s point of view, we celebrated on the 25th November with

our Christmas party, a chance to come together in fellowship and enjoy seasonal entertainment when John Startin and George Binns headed proceedings with assistance from Julie Johnston. Barbara Brook provided the musical part of the afternoon with two of her seasonal favourites, singing unaccompanied, I might add. A glass of mulled wine and a few mince pies finished the afternoon off. A schedule of meetings for the whole of 2025 was distributed to members. **George Binns**

6th Jan George Binns – Picture Quiz.

20th Jan Stephen Taylor – It’s Screen Time.

3rd Feb John and Jean North – Video.

17th Feb Margaret Newman – Memories are made of this.

Meetings are all on Monday afternoons in the small meeting room at 2pm.

**The Christmas Geese**

*Canon Paul Hardingham gives thanks to the God who comes among us…*

The story is told of a farmer who didn't believe in Jesus. One snowy Christmas Eve, his wife was taking their children to a service at their local church. He refused to come saying: *‘Why would God lower Himself to come to Earth as a man? That's ridiculous!’* So, they left him at home.

During the evening the winds grew stronger, and the snow turned to a blizzard. He heard a series of loud thumps on the window. In the field near his house, he saw a flock of wild geese. They had been migrating south when they got caught in the snowstorm. They were lost and stranded on his farm, with no food or shelter.

The man wanted to help the geese and so he opened the doors of the barn, hoping they would go inside for shelter. But the geese didn’t do anything, despite the man’s efforts to move them. He made a breadcrumb trail leading to the barn and tried to shoo them toward the barn, but they only got more scared and scattered.

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Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn: *‘Why don't they follow me?!’* Then he realised: *‘If only I were a goose and become one of them, then I could save them.’* Finally, he understood the heart of the Christmas message. God has become one of us in Jesus. The eternal creator God has entered time and space as a baby, to show us who God is and how we can know Him. This Christmas let’s celebrate again this amazing truth that we have a God who knows and can meet our needs in Jesus. *‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means ‘God with us’’.* Matthew 1:23. SOURCE: THE PARISH PUMP

**No Room? On the Contrary**

All over the world, doors are being slammed shut this Christmas. As the wars in the Middle East, in Ukraine and in Sudan rage on, millions are losing their homes and places of safety. Elsewhere, hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers and would-be immigrants are on the road, seeking refuge anywhere they can find it.   
Meanwhile, in recent years vast numbers of Christians have been forced to flee from their ancient homelands in Syria and Iraq. They mirror the Holy Family’s escape into Egypt. Every time yet another infant dies violently, it is a reminder of the first century massacre of babies in the Bethlehem region.

So perhaps this year, one carol will be sung with particular poignancy. It retells the message of angels, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests” and continues:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife,*

*The world has suffered long,*

*Beneath the angel strain have rolled,*

*Two thousand years of wrong,*

*And man, at war with man, hears not*

*The love song which they bring:*

*O hush the noise, you men of strife,*

*And hear the angels sing.*

The angels’ goodwill message will persist despite our clamour, for it proclaims God’s all-embracing and eternal welcome. Whatever is happening on earth, Heaven’s doors are ever open: it is home for

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everyone. The final biblical vision is of an all-encompassing city:

“On no day will its gates ever be shut… the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it.” Jesus, for whom there had been no room at the inn, taught that God’s kingdom is home for every race: “I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” He reassured those anxious about the future: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms… ” No room in heaven? Don’t you believe it!”

SOURCE: THE PARISH PUMP

**The Challenges of Christmas** *by the Revd Paul Hardingham.*

Christmas is a great time of year, but it’s not without its challenges! After one family had put up 250,000 Christmas lights outside, they didn’t dare boil a kettle for fear of blowing the system!

*The challenge of over-indulging*

We all remember the episode of the Vicar of Dibley, where she had to consume four Christmas dinners! Christmas is a time when we usually eat and drink far too much, the average person gaining six pounds in weight. But Christmas is not simply about gaining weight but losing what weighs us down. *‘Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.’* (1 Peter 5:7). Whatever your concerns or worries this Christmas, bring them to God.

*The challenge of overspending*

In the rush to buy Christmas cards, a woman bought a pack of 50 identical cards. Without reading the verse, she hastily signed and sent them off, but for one. A few days later she read the message: *‘This card is just to say a little gift is on the way.’* Christmas is not about getting into debt, but God getting us out of debt. He spent exactly what was needed on the first Christmas night: *‘You are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.’* (Matthew 1:21).

*The challenge is over too quickly*

Christmas doesn’t last very long, yet the effect of the first Christmas is

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long-lasting. *‘For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only*

*Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.’* (John 3:16).Jesus has come to bring us life in all its fullness, both for

now and all eternity. How do we face the challenges of Christmas?

*‘Yet what I can, I give Him - give my heart’*.

SOURCE: THE PARISH PUMP

**SIX LITTLE STORIES WITH LOTS OF MEANINGS**

1. Once all the villagers decided to pray for rain.

On the day of prayer, all the people gathered,

but only one boy came with an umbrella. That is faith.

2. When you throw babies in the air, they laugh because

they know you will catch them. That is trust.

3. Every night we go to bed without any assurance

of being alive the next morning, but we still set the alarm

to wake up. That is hope.

4. We plan big things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge

of the future. That is confidence.

5. We see the world suffering, but we still get married and have

children. That is love.

6. On an old man’s shirt was written a sentence.

“I am not 80 years old, I am sweet sixteen with 64 years of experience”.

That is attitude.

Have a happy day and live your life like these six stories.

Remember- good friends are the rare jewels of life, difficult to find and

impossible to replace!

**SATURDAY COFFEE MORNING**

Saturday Coffee dates in December & January

December 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th/January 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th

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**What sort of Christmas card person are you?**

The time to send and receive Christmas cards has come round again – time for our annual shock at the cost of a coloured card, and disbelief at what the Post Office intends to charge us to deliver them.

It seems there are three kinds of people when it comes to Christmas cards: the total abstainers, the total givers and the selective givers.

Abstainers write “Happy Christmas Everyone” on Facebook, and consider the job well done. Total givers spend a fortune on cards and stamps and send them to everyone they know. Selective givers try to cut corners, but then cannot remember who sent who what, and as the cards pour through their door, spend time worrying…

However you do it, it is good to stay in yearly touch with your widest circle of friends and family. Proverbs points out that: ‘Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.’ Prov 25:25. Your loved ones will enjoy hearing from you! SOURCE: THE PARISH PUMP

**A Prayer for December 2024** *By Daphne Kitching*

Father, the days are short; darkness deepens in December and this year it seems to reflect the darkness in so many parts of the world. We think especially of the land You came to, all those years ago, and other nearby lands where so many are suffering.

Father, thank you that Jesus came into the world as Your Light; that He shines today as brightly and powerfully as He did then, and will do forever.

Help us to open our hearts and minds to allow His light to fill us with the assurance that, no matter what is going on, we are safe in Him.

Thank you that, in Jesus, you have conquered death and darkness; that one day, everyone will bow before Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, whose Kingdom shall never end.

Help us, in thankfulness and love, to share Your Christmas Light and Hope and Joy. Hallelujah! In Jesus’ name. Amen.

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**A crossword puzzle with numbers and crosses

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**ACROSS**

1 ‘The blind receive sight, the — walk’ (Luke 7:22) (4)

3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)

8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)

9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)

11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)

14 ‘Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made’ (Genesis 3:1) (6)

15 ‘Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God’ (Romans 8:8) (6)

17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)

20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel

described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)

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21 Rite (anag.) (4)

22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)

23 ‘The eye cannot say to the — , “I don’t need you”’

(1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

**DOWN**

1 ‘Flee for your lives! Don’t — — , and don’t stop anywhere in the plain!’ (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)

2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)

4 ‘The tax collector... beat his — and said, “God have mercy on me, a sinner”’ (Luke 18:13) (6)

5 ‘The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this’ (2 Kings 19:31) (10)

6 ‘The day of the Lord is — for all nations’ (Obadiah 15) (4)

7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)

10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)

12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)

13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)

16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as ‘powerful in speech and — ’ (Acts 7:22) (6)

18 ‘Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life’ (1 Kings 15:14) (4)

19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)

**ANSWERS ON PAGE 24**

**Snow**

One snowman said sadly to the other, "All our friends are flakes."

**Santa**

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh? Nothing. It was on the house.

**Christmas gifts**

Grandfather was talking to his grand-daughter, “When I was a child all we got for Christmas was an apple and an orange.” The little girl clapped her hands in joy. “Brilliant! I’d love a new computer and a mobile!”

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**Remembering the Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004**

*Tim Lenton looks back to a major disaster that shocked the world…*

Twenty years ago, on 26th December 2004, the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami (also called the Boxing Day Tsunami) took place. A massive undersea earthquake near Sumatra caused a devastating tsunami that swamped coastal areas in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and East Africa. It was one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history, killing more than 230,000 people in 14 countries.

Waves generated by the earthquake and travelling at up to 500mph were believed to have been up to 50ft high in places, and the cost in lives and damage was so extensive because detection and warning systems were relatively primitive, as this was not a prime area for such events. Scientific monitoring and warning plans, led by Australia, have since been considerably improved, but the unpredictability of tsunamis remains a major problem.

The massive surges of water in 2004 swept away buildings and people, and some effects were felt as far away as Somalia on the east coast of Africa, nearly 2,800 miles (and seven hours for the waves) west of the epicentre. Nearer coastlines were hit in as little as 15 minutes.

Aftershocks continued to shake the region daily for up to four months after the original earthquake. The raising of the seafloor reduced the capacity of the Indian Ocean, resulting in a permanent rise in sea level globally by an estimated 0.1 mm. Since 1900, only two earthquakes have been recorded with a greater magnitude than the Sumatra Boxing Day event. One was in 1960 at Valdivia, Chile (magnitude 9.5) and the other in 1964 in Prince William Sound, Alaska (9.2). Both spawned tsunamis in the Pacific, but the death toll (1655 and 131) was sharply less, because of much lower population density where they came ashore.

**You can tell**

You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

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*Nigel Beeton writes: What is also quite terrifying is the amount of work that has to go through so many kitchens in preparation for Christmas! Spare a thought (and lend a hand) to those who work so hard to prepare our festive fare!*

**The Christmas Kitchen**

The kitchen is, at Christmas

A very busy room!

Lots of work in such a rush

Or Christmas Day will loom.

First there is the cake to bake

And many pastries too,

Mince pies and biscuits, festive fare

There is so much to do

Then comes the day, the kitchen fills

With wondrous cooking smells,

As turkey roasts and parsnip toasts

The cooks must work their spells.

The dinner’s on the table

We gather round and eat,

But someone has to wash the pots

And make the kitchen neat.

So have a happy Christmas,

Enjoy the festive fare,

But grab a towel and help the cook,

And show them that you care!

A cartoon of a christmas pudding

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**page 21**

**Moldgreen Food Cupboard**

Most users of the cupboard adhere to the notice – ‘Give what you Can, Take what you Need’ and many stop to thank us when we are about. One or two might not be quite so fair and friendly but they are in a minority.

So, once again thank you all who give to this project. We appreciate donations twice a week from Tesco down Long Lane for the Food Bank, and also those from the local community who put donations into the cupboard and our members at church who donate regularly.

Thank you.

**The first-ever nativity scene**

This Christmas, thousands of Nativity plays will be held around the UK. Ever wonder who staged the very first one?

It was St Francis of Assisi, and it was 800 years ago, in Greccio, Italy, on 25th December 1223.

Back in Italy, in November of 1223, Francis was in Rome, and he had an idea. Why not share something of the inspiration of the Holy Land with his people here in Italy?

Barely 50 miles to the north, in Greccio, he knew many people to whom he had been ministering for years. He could at least show them something of the simplicity of the birth of Jesus. And so it was that two weeks before Christmas, Francis asked his friend, the Lord of Greccio, Giovanni Velita, to prepare a nearby cave with live animals and a hay-filled manger.

That cave, beside some rocky crags, became the venue of the very first ever Nativity scene. On Christmas 1223, when the people of Greccio attended Christmas Mass as usual, they were invited to ‘come and see’

the simple scene. All in all, the Nativity scene was an instant success, and soon other communities were staging their own. Today, you can still visit the cave and rocks where the first Nativity was staged. It is now a Franciscan hermitage and sanctuary. Every year at Christmas, the people

of Greccio stage a live, historical re-enactment of St Francis and the first Nativity scene.

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**The Light of the World**

During the month of December people are ‘counting down’ to Christmas Day in an ever- increasing variety of ways. In my childhood we had a simple card with a traditional picture of a manger scene with doors marked with the countdown numbers and a picture of the different characters behind each.  If my parents had extra money to spend, they would buy one with shiny snow made of sparkles! These days you can pay hundreds to have a gift for each day from toys to jewellery. And don’t fret, your pets can have their own also! Churches don’t normally count the days, but they do note the four Sundays before Christmas Day. They give each of those four ‘advent’ Sundays a theme and light a candle each time. One for the first week, two for the second and so on. Unlike the secular world, the church counts up, and not down. It increases the light as we get nearer to Christmas Day and then adds an extra light on that day. So, a total of five candles.

Churches vary in their use of colour in the candles. Some will use all white, whilst many only use white for the Christ-light on Christmas Day and ‘colours’ on the four Sundays. There again they vary; some use all purple – originally the most expensive colour - as we prepare for The King. In a more modern style, some use blue – perhaps recalling the most associated colour for Jesus’ mother Mary.  But perhaps reminding us of creation and that we are surrounded by God’s love as the earth is surrounded by the blue sky. Have a look at the advent candles in your church and think about what the colours mean to you. How do they reflect your faith? Whatever the colour – Have a Good Christmas

**Season’s Greetings**

**On behalf of everyone at Moldgreen URC**

**May we wish our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year.**

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**MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS 2025**

Don’t forget your magazine subscription for 2025 are due.

Whether you receive your magazine by email or paper copy the cost is £10.00. Yvonne will be collecting each Sunday morning by cash or cheque payable to United Reformed Church Moldgreen or you may pay by Bank Transfer to sort code: 30-94-43 a/c no. 00260324 quoting the reference

Moldgreen URC.

**If you have any material or news of the church family you would like including in the FEBRUARY magazine, please give material to Jean Whitehead by hand, post or email to** [**office@moldgreenurc.org.uk**](mailto:office@moldgreenurc.org.uk) **on or before SUNDAY 19TH JANUARY for the magazine deadline.**

**RECYCLING**

There is a basket in the church entrance where you may deposit any old Christmas cards/Birthday cards etc. Plus, a box to put used postage stamps in. Also, there is a bin in the kitchen where you can recycle plastic bags which have a green label on indicating recycle at supermarkets.

**ANSWERS TO THE CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**: 1, Lame. 3, Obtained. 8, Omit. 9, Merchant. 11, Burdensome.

14, Crafty. 15, Please. 17, Blacksmith. 20, Splendid. 21, Tier. 22, Singeing. 23, Hand.

**DOWN:** 1, Look back. 2, Main road. 4, Breast. 5, Accomplish. 6, Near.

7, Date. 10, Pestilence. 12, Basilica. 13, Tethered. 16, Action. 18, Asa’s.

19, Clan.

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A gift box with a red ribbon and a tag

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