

Issue 7

Winter 2024

# Spotlight

St. Mary's with St. Francis



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## Hello!

Welcome to the seventh edition of Spotlight, the quarterly magazine from St Mary's Church, Hinckley.

We hope you enjoy the variety of regular and one-off features, news, activities and information we've put together for you.

For this winter edition, we have a theme of light as we look towards Advent and Christmas.

If you would like to get in touch our email address is [spotlightstmarys@gmail.com](mailto:spotlightstmarys@gmail.com)

Happy reading!  
Sarah Hill & Elisabeth Emmett-Pace.

## Contacts ...

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### Sunday Services:

<b>8am</b>	BCP Communion
<b>10.15am</b>	All Age Service with Sunday School (2nd & 4th with communion, 1st, 3rd & 5th without)
<b>6pm</b>	Evening Service (1st and 3rd with communion, 2nd, 4th & 5th without)

### Tuesday Communion 10.30am:

2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month in the Lady Chapel in church

### Tuesday Prayer Meeting 10.30am:

1st, 3rd and 5th Tuesday of each month in the Lady Chapel in church

### Wednesday 1.30-2.45pm - Allsorts Baby & Toddler Group :

In the church hall, term time only, £1 Donation - contact Bev Frettsome

## Dates For Your Diary ...

**St Mary's Sunday School - During 10.15am Sunday Service:**

(Not 1st Sunday as all age service with uniformed groups).

**St Mary's Choir Practice - Fridays 7-8pm:**

In church, new members always welcome - Contact Peter Harris

**Lego Swap & HDPP Photo Scanning - 3rd Sat Monthly 10-12pm:**

In church - See newsletter for more details

**Allsorts Baby & Toddler Group - Wednesdays 1.30-2.45pm:**

In church hall - Term time only - Book with Bev Frettsome

**St Mary's Christmas Shop - Open until Saturday 14th December**

**Christmas Tree Festival - 28th November to 2 December:**

In church (See pages 5 and 10 for more details)

**Smarts Concert - 4th December 1-1.45pm:**

In church - Tickets available on the door

**Remembering With Love Service - Thursday 5th December 7pm:**

Come and remember a loved one at this special service in church

**Jersey Boys Tribute Night - 7th December 8.15pm (doors 7pm):**

Tickets available from church coffee bar or online - See church website

**St Francis Festive Tea and Bingo - 9th December 12-3pm:**

At St Francis Centre - £5 per ticket (see page 27 for more details)

**Sing Christmas - Monday 16th December 7pm:**

New Plough Inn, Leicester Road (See page 10 for more details)

**Social Stroll - New Years Day 1pm:**

Meet at church (See page 10 for more details)

**Cake and Sing - Saturday 25th January 2025 3-5pm:**

In church with Sing Loud Be Proud Community Choir (see page 10 for more details)

**History Tours - Saturday 8th February 2025 with tours at 10.30am, 12pm & 1.30pm:** (See page 10 for more details)

**Coffee Bar Volunteers always needed -  
Please speak to Kerrie in the church office.**

**See weekly church newsletter, church website and  
church Facebook page for more information on  
'What's Going on'!**

## **St Mary's Advent & Christmas Services**

**Sunday 1st December at 10.15am:** All Age Christingle Service

**Sunday 1st December at 6pm:** Advent Carol Service

**Thursday 5th December at 7pm:** Remembering With Love Service

**Sunday 22nd December at 6pm:** 9 Lessons And Carols Service

**Tuesday 24th December at 5pm:** Crib Service

**Tuesday 24th December at 11.30pm:** Midnight Communion Service

**Wednesday 25th December at 8am:** BCP Communion Service

**Wednesday 25th December at 10.15am:** All Age Communion Service

## **St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival**

**At our Christmas Tree Festival this year  
we have lots of wonderful entertainment to offer you!  
(See page 10 for even more information)**

### **Thursday 28th November - Opening Night:**

Music from St Mary's Band and Choir along with the official opening.

### **Friday 29th November:**

11am: Our popular Coffee, Cake & Carols

7pm: Tuxedo Junction will be performing

### **Saturday 30th November:**

11.30am: Sing Loud Be Proud Community Choir sing Christmas songs

1.30pm: Sally-Ann & Simon Veasey bring us Christmas music

2.30pm: Hinckley Choral Union sing Christmas carols

7pm: The Drama Academy perform - this is a ticketed event (£5 from coffee bar or on the door)

### **Sunday 1st December:**

1.30pm Hinckley Rock Choir sing for us

## Getting To Know You: Joy Allman ... Elisabeth Emmett-Pace

### **Who are you and where are you from?**

I'm Joy Allman or should I say Christine Joy Allman. My name probably reflects the fact I was born just before Christmas. I was born in Stafford and moved to Nuneaton when I was 4.



### **What did you do before you retired?**

I was Vice Principal of a 6<sup>th</sup> Form College in Leicester, having worked at Nuneaton College, Leicester College and Henley College in Coventry.

### **What makes you 'you'?**

With a name like Joy I can't be anything but a glass half full person.

### **Why did you decide to become a teacher?**

Initially for the long holidays, although in Further Education they're no longer as generous as school holidays! I also taught evening classes and I found that I enjoyed working with 16-19 year olds and adults.

### **What brought you to Hinckley?**

In 1990 the houses were less expensive and the rates were cheaper, so buying a house here made more sense!

### **What is your hope for St Mary's?**

To be a full, fully-inclusive church with lots of outreach. I am particularly pleased that we now offer regular monthly services at Hinckley Park, Hinckley House and Ashton Care Homes. We also now have a regular drop in Prayer Group in Church every 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday morning at 10.30am. It just shows that as a church our outreach is growing and this is a real positive.

### **What makes you happy?**

Most things make me happy. My husband, my children and grandchildren, my tri-pawd cat Eddie, my friends, Moseley rugby and socialising, to name just some!

### **What makes you angry?**

I try not to get angry, but to stay calm. However, if I had to say

something it would probably be injustice.

**What's on your un-bucket list?**

Jumping out of a plane. I mean why would you?

**What piece of music and book would you take to a desert island?**

It's difficult to choose one so could I take my paints and sketch pad please?

**What hobbies do you have?**

Art, knitting, sewing, swimming, reading and walking.

**I understand you are involved with Cursillo?**

I attended a Cursillo weekend in 2009 at Launde Abbey. It is offered in many dioceses around the country. The weekend is for practising Christians who want to explore how prayer, study and action enriches our faith.

**What impact did it have on you?**

It makes you think about your faith and how you share it with others. As a result, I joined the Wholeness and Healing team, which led to me leading the Pastoral Team. I talk openly about my faith to others and offer to pray for people. I liaise with other Cursillo groups around the UK and the world and I'm part of the Leicester Anglican Cursillo Secretariat. We have a monthly Group Reunion in church on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday morning at 10.15am for those people from St Mary's who have been on a weekend.

**Who would you like to be locked in a church with?**

Well, I did think of someone with blue eyes and a nice smile, possibly Paul Newman, but it may be best to be locked in on my own so I spend time with God and be still. My favourite hymn is Be Still for the Presence of the Lord.

**Who are your bible heroes?**

Martha and Mary. Martha was busy doing while Mary sat listening. It shows that we need to sometimes be still and listen to God and pray as well. Often, we lead busy lives. We all have different skills and talents to share.

**Who do you think we should interview next?**

Bob Stephen.

## **St Mary's Coffee Bar**

### **St Mary's Most Valuable Asset - Coffee Bar Volunteers**

As we come to the end of another year the Parish Church Council (PCC) would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude for the hard work put in by the team of volunteers who run the coffee bar six days a week 51 weeks of the year. This is one of the main outreaches for St Mary's Church in Hinckley and has been a very important part of our ministry to the town for over 25 years.

As many of you know, it is run by a team of volunteers made up a wide range of people, whether they worship with us on a Sunday or not. We are deeply grateful for your loyalty and support in continuing this vital outreach.

As some of you may have already heard we are keen to have a meeting with all of the volunteers to celebrate their hard work and to get their view on ways in which we can enhance and build on their hard work over so many years. The plan had been to do that before the end of this year but that will now happen in January, so please look out for an invite proposing a date when that will take place. We are keen to pool all ideas and draw upon the vast experience of all the volunteers to make sure what we plan to do is sensible and sustainable.

Once again, many thanks for your loyalty and hard work in this vital outreach in such a unique space right in the middle of Hinckley town centre. We wish you a Happy Christmas and a healthy, peaceful new year.

## **St Mary's Church Organ Update ... Peter Harris**

As you may be aware, the organ in St Mary's Church is unplayable. Back in May we had a leak in the roof which flooded the keyboards, but once they had dried out the organ was somewhat playable again. In June of this year the transmission system between the keyboards and the organ failed and despite attempts to repair this, the organ became completely unplayable again. The failure of the transmission system was in no way connected to the ingress of water on the keyboards. We have also known for some time that the leather motors underneath each pipe in the organ were failing.



The total estimate to repair all of the above amounts to between £80k and £90k. It is felt that St Mary's are currently unable to take on the challenge of raising this kind of money, so the proposal passed by PCC is to mothball the present organ in case future generations wish to rebuild it.

It is proposed to put in an electronic organ mirroring the sound of Hereford Cathedral, and it is estimated that the cost of this will be somewhere around £13,000. We currently have around £10,000 in the organ fund, so will need to raise the other £3,000.

All of the above requires permission from the Leicestershire Diocese and we have had their Organ Advisor visit and she is in agreement with our proposals, although there is discussion going on about placement of speakers for the new organ and any associated wiring. Once all of the details have been sorted out with the Diocese then we will be able to apply for a formal Faculty, and once granted we can proceed.

Hopefully, soon, wonderful organ music will once again fill St Mary's.

## **St Mary's Peregrines ... Steve Townson**

**So, another year passes. "Where are our birds?" people ask, or "I saw a Peregrine yesterday, is it one of ours?"**

The Peregrines are still around - one was spotted a few weeks ago keeping an eye on the "all you can eat" buffet from the church. Another favourite location is the Cadent tower, so keep your eyes peeled when shopping at Lidl! Unless you see them flying in, sighting them when they are settled can be difficult as they have become experts at blending in against the metalwork of the tower. Up to three peregrines have been seen over the town on occasion.

So, what happens now? In November we will go up to the scrape, primarily to clear up the remnants of this year's feeds, which will be three times last year's remains! While we are up there the scrape will be inspected and any repairs carried out. We will also be liaising with other sites to see if we can improve, subject to budget of course, the pictures going forward. Hopefully we can offer a live stream option next year! Keep your eyes peeled and watch out for 'Pere-Cam 25'!

## St Mary's Social News ... Liz Seal

As we approach the colder and darker months, we're planning some activities to bring light and warmth to our church family and beyond.

The main focus as I write is the **Christmas Tree Festival**, when the church will be filled with lights, decorations and visitors. It takes quite a team to pull the Festival together, and we love to offer a warm welcome to everyone who visits, enjoys the entertainment, votes for their favourite trees and enjoys drinks and cake in the coffee bar. We are always looking for willing volunteers to help make the festival go smoothly- please sign up in church or speak to Liz, Elisabeth or Kerry if you have a little free time and can help. The Festival runs from Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November with doors open at 6.30pm. We are open Friday 10am - 8pm, Saturday 10am - 4pm, with a ticketed concert in the evening, Sunday 12pm - 4pm, and Monday 10am - 1pm. Events and services will run throughout the weekend - for more information please see page 5, watch for posters, look on Facebook and see the church website. Monday we have kept as a quiet session that is more accessible for people with sensory needs to enjoy the trees.

On Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm, we will be gathering at the New Plough Inn, Leicester Road, to '**Sing Christmas**'. Seats are always at a premium, so be there by 6.30pm and prepare to hear the Christmas story and sing your heart out!

**A New Year's Day Social Stroll:** meeting at church at 1pm and sharing leftover lunch afterwards weather permitting. If the weather is inclement, we will still meet to share time and food.

**Cake and Sing**, with Sing Loud Be Proud community choir is in the diary on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January from 3-5pm. Come and enjoy an afternoon of music, with cake and drinks.

We are running our **History Tours** again on Saturday 8th February. There will be three tour times at 10.30am, 12pm and 1.30pm. Enjoy a guided tour of our wonderful church and find out some history.

Our annual **Skittles Night** at the Greyhound is being planned for February - look out for further details!

We are always open to suggestions for future social events and welcome offers of help!

## Music Is Magic Poem ... Elisabeth Emmett-Pace

Music speaks from deep within  
Whispers what your soul wants to say  
What your lips don't have words for  
It speaks from the heart

Music plays the heartstrings  
Plucks the tune like the strings of a guitar  
Tinkles the ivories of our eardrums  
The cymbals crash our heartbeats in real time.

Music gives rise to life's meaning  
Song lyrics speak where spoken words fail  
Their rhythmic cadence like waves crashing  
The comfort of rhyme in memories.

Music brings light into life's darkness  
It can reach the dark parts the light can miss  
Musical gold dust and lyrical sparkle  
Even when our eyes are closed, light for the soul.

Music is an individual experience  
So open to nuance and interpretation  
Heard by each in their own unique and touching way  
Bridging a gap and feeding a need.

Music is the tuneful healer  
Calming and distracting for the troubled mind  
Uplifting for the tired and weary heart  
Inspirational for the lost soul  
It is whatever you need it to be.



**music is magic**  
**music is love**  
**music is heart**  
**music is soul**  
**music is peace**  
**music is sweet**  
**music is true**  
**music is electric**  
**music is essence**  
**music is beautiful**



## Seeing The Light ... Suzanne Thorpe

Summer is full of light. Long days, the dappled shade cast by sunlight through trees, blue skies, sparkling seas and gorgeous sunrises and sunsets, reminding us of holidays and leisure time. It's feel good time! Sunlight transforms a wet day, when the clouds break and a rainbow appears; so it's no wonder in these short days of winter that we crave light. We take comfort in the cosiness of open fires, Advent candles, fireworks and fairy lights - they all lift our spirits.

But light in winter can be magical too. A couple of years ago I travelled to the Yukon in the heart of the Canadian Wilderness. So remote is this territory, that it is possible to completely escape the light pollution of the city and stare up into beautiful, endless darkness. When the conditions are just right, in winter, you can catch a glimpse of the Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights, fleetingly dancing across the skies with wisps of green and purple. It's well worth the disrupted night's sleep to take a foray out into the cold wintry night for the chance to see this rare phenomenon. We had a warm teepee with hot chocolate waiting for us between our viewings and that was very welcome, as were the marshmallows we toasted on the fire while we were waiting for the skies to put on their show.

During the same trip I was lucky enough to take a scenic flight across the glaciers of the Kluane National Park. The reflected light from the icefields was incredible and the contrast of the two experiences left me in awe of the beauty of the natural world. Winter time, when our expectation of the world looking its best seems so much lower, was a real revelation to me. And it made me reflect that maybe it's not so much a case of seeing the light, but appreciating the light - whatever the time of year.

## He Is Gone - A Poem ... David Harkins (b.1958)

You can shed tears that he is gone  
Or you can smile because he has lived

You can close your eyes and pray that he'll come back  
Or you can open your eyes and see all that he's left

Your heart can be empty because you can't see him  
Or you can be full of the love you shared

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday  
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday

You can remember him and only that he's gone  
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on

You can cry and close your mind  
Be empty and turn your back

Or you can do what he'd want,  
Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

Contributed by Alistair Crooks.

## On The Right Track Poem ... Brian Chapman

Life often seems very stop and go,  
Sometimes speeding along, then stuck unable to move.  
It is difficult to see where we are going to.  
Those around cross in front, even pull out in front and block.  
We get distracted by bright things around, always supposed to be  
bigger and better than what's in hand.  
What to do for the best, to feel secure and purposeful?  
I move along a track which guides me, leading me onwards,  
Not always obvious, it is well grounded and dependable.  
I know where I am going - I am signed at my head,  
telling me my destination.  
My driver has been there before, so I trust in Him.  
We are still stop/go and even have to go on without  
some of those around us, but we still move purposefully.  
My power comes from above,  
my arm reaches up and I can keep in touch  
in spite of the stop/go and twists and turns my life leads.  
My power drives me on, fills me with light inside,  
it lights my way pointing me down the track.  
Worry less about where life is going?  
I have my power, direction and light,  
I'm kept on a track so let it take me there.

I am a tram.

## Chocolate Olive Oil Cake Recipe ... Nicky Barber

This cake is ideal for anyone with a wheat and/or dairy intolerance - or not, this cake is delicious! Warning: contains almonds!

The mixture makes two 9 inch cakes, which can either be eaten separately or you can put them on top of each other with a filling and decoration to make a delicious and moist cake for a special occasion. Fresh blueberries go well with this cake. Yummy with ice cream too!

### Ingredients:

150ml Regular Olive Oil (I use Light Olive Oil)  
150g Ground Almonds  
200g Caster Sugar  
3 large Eggs  
2 teaspoons Vanilla Extract  
½ teaspoon Bicarbonate of Soda  
1 pinch of Salt  
50g Cocoa Powder  
125ml Boiling Water



### Method:

Preheat oven to 170C / 150C Fan / Gas Mark 3 / 325F.

Grease two 9 inch cake tins and put them on a baking tray.

In a large bowl mix together the olive oil, ground almonds, caster sugar, eggs, vanilla extract, bicarbonate of soda and salt. Ensure that the mixture is smooth.

In a separate cup or small bowl put your cocoa powder and add the boiling water. Mix thoroughly to make a chocolatey runny mixture.

Add the melted chocolate mixture to the large bowl mixture and stir thoroughly with a spatula. Divide the mixture equally between the two cake tins.

Place in the preheated oven on a tray just below the middle of the oven and bake for 20 minutes or until the middle is just cooked, but the edges are not burnt! Leave the cake tins to cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack.

When cooled, remove from the cake tin, either eat as it is with ice-cream or cream, add fruit or decorate with flavoured icing as a double layer cake as per the photo. Enjoy!

### **Let It Slow by Stephen Cottrell (previously published as Do Nothing Christmas Is Coming).**



Christmas is one of the most joyful times of year, and it can also be one of the most stressful. It comes laden with expectations and, for many, overshadowed by difficult memories and emotions. If every other day of the year has us running in different directions, driven by the bleeping demands of our phones and devices, Christmas makes us run faster still.

This understanding and uplifting book offers another way to approach Christmas and to discover how its joys and promises can restore our lives, not add to their burdens.

You are invited to take a few minutes each day during December to join in a conversation with the bestselling author, Stephen Cottrell, who offers simple reflections and practical suggestions for making your Christmas the celebration it is meant to be.

### Christmas Tree Word Game



How many words of 3 letters  
or more  
Can you make out of the  
words

**‘CHRISTMAS TREE’?**

When you have finished your  
list email us with your total  
number of words and we'll see  
just what is possible!

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

### Why is Christmas in December?

Many years ago, I sat on the sofa on a dark, cold, wintry day, feeling the worst of times, and wondered why Christmas was celebrated in December, a time of gloom and harsh conditions. You see, I was born in Malaysia and have lived my 24 years of life in a summer-only season, and the Christmas that I experienced was carefree, with no trials and temptations from nature, just me and my will. My childhood Christmas was happy and memorable, not because we received presents from anyone, but because we could go carolling in the nights before Christmas with accordion music played by our pastor. We went on a minibus to all our church friend's houses, and food and drink were often there to welcome us as we arrived. On Christmas day, we put on the nativity show, with singing and dancing, all to the backdrop of a warm sunny day.

Back then, I was a Christian who had never experienced winter and had no idea about the challenges it brings to people. Since I set foot in England, the reality of winter daunted me every time it came around. I asked myself, "Why do we celebrate Christmas in this awful condition where joy is hard to find?" But then, in my anguish, I felt a light bulb moment - we must focus on Jesus and not on our surroundings. Like the poem "Footprints in the Sand", there is only one set of footprints at the lowest point of the man's life: the footprint of God that carried him to the other side. Without celebrating Christmas, we will be in an even worse state. This moment of realisation has helped me every winter since, as I know, Christmas is not Christmas if it is not meant for our darkest hour in life, whatever time of year that comes.

Indeed, how we feel about Christmas varies from continent to continent. In Australia, Christmas falls in the summer and Easter in the autumn. That means we all have different experiences when we celebrate Christmas, and the most precious experience one could have is that of having Jesus carrying you in His arms and leading you safely to the other side during the most challenging, darkest hour of your life.





## Spotlight On Health - Shining A Light On ADHD ...

Sarah Hill

Our understanding of neurodiversity is expanding at a fast pace. Rather like being left-handed in the Victorian era was seen as 'wrong' and something that needed to be cured, neurodiversity (Autism, Attention Deficit & Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia etc) have been viewed as something in need of correction until recently. Just as left-handers can think a little differently and bring creativity and light and shade into our communities and is seen as a normal variant these days, so, I hope, those neurodivergent members of our communities will be enabled to flourish in the future.

ADHD is perhaps one of the most misunderstood conditions because it conjures up images of naughty, disruptive school boys who just need to learn how to behave! In reality it is a long way from this stereotype and we need to educate ourselves to reap the benefits of people whose brains are wired differently to 'normal' (whatever that is!). Inattention, Impulsivity and Hyperactivity are the three main elements of ADHD. More often in young boys the hyperactivity and impulsivity elements of ADHD are more prominent (hence the stereotype) but it can affect girls (and adults) very differently. Often the hyperactivity is inside their head rather than expressed physically. Having a thousand thoughts in your head at any one moment, noticing every detail and struggling to sift through all that information to find the piece you need takes a lot of effort, so it's no wonder they can get distracted easily and exhausted. Trying to hold onto it all, whilst maintaining the outward appearance of calmness, can sometimes become overwhelming and this can trigger an overload or meltdown. This is not a tantrum - it's not in their control, but an involuntary overloading of the system. For some this will look like they've zoned out, for others they may shake, swear, cry or show some other signs of distress. If we see this we need to back off, allow them to self-regulate and get back 'online' again. How we handle these situations can have a huge impact on those who have experienced an overload episode. Anyone can be pushed to the point of overload, and it is a very uncomfortable experience, but because of the way their brains are wired, the neurodiverse are far more likely to reach this point than neurotypicals.

If ADHD affects a large proportion of our population, then there must be an evolutionary advantage to it. Personally, I believe every team needs at least one neurodiverse person in it. From living with two

neurodiverse people, I have seen how they see a situation from a different perspective. They can often see past the social masks that we all wear to present our best side to society, they can see the bigger picture and see where the gaps are, they don't get caught up in 'Group Think.' Did you ever look at the 2020 Olympics logo and think "that looks like Lisa Simpson vomiting into a toilet!?" Once you see it you can't unsee it, and maybe having that pointed out before it was revealed could have led to a few tweaks to the design!

Despite the overall inattention, they can also hyperfocus on particular topics. This is a huge benefit if it can be harnessed to benefit the team. The ability to really dig down into a particular issue is incredible, as long as you find the right person for the right deep dive! Harnessing this superpower should be the aim of every team!

ADHD is the one neurodiversity that we have treatments for, but this is not to cure it. Medication enables focus, which in a school situation (very rigid and difficult to navigate with ADHD) can make the difference between constant overwhelm and the ability to reach closer to one's intellectual potential. Once in the adult world many of those with ADHD have developed coping strategies to help navigate society and have also found jobs that work to their strengths rather than amplify the difficulties, but medication can still make a huge difference and there is no way of knowing without trying it. Unfortunately, the current state of our NHS means that there is a long waiting list for anyone considering assessment but the difference correct diagnosis, and treatment if needed, can make is life-changing.

So, next time you meet someone with ADHD, or one of the other neurodiversities, remember it's not a disease, it's not related to IQ and it brings something different, positive and enhancing to the party. Many of the discoveries that have pushed the human race forward have come from people who were almost certainly neurodiverse!

## **The Meaning Of Candles ... Catherine Hamilton**

Candles and Spirituality: Across various cultures, candles serve as mediums for meditation, prayer, and reflection. In many practices, the flame of a candle represents the presence of the divine or the inner light of the soul. In Christianity candles can symbolize many things: life, God, the Spirit, Christ, repentance, our prayer requests, what God has done, what God will do, and more.

*Jesus Christ said: "I am the Light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have light and life" (John 8:12)*

### **Lighting a candle symbolises Christ, the Light of the world.**

While the Bible does not mention the use of candles explicitly in the same way modern context might, several passages indirectly allude to their symbolic significance through references to light and lamps.

### **Symbolism of Light in the Bible**

In the passage from Luke 8:16, Jesus speaks about the purpose of lighting a candle: *No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light.*

Matthew 5:15 conveys an important message about the nature of faith. *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house.*

**Visibility of Truth and Faith:** By using the analogy of a candle this suggests that one's faith should not be concealed but rather openly shared. Just as a light guides and provides clarity, so too should believers demonstrate their faith through their actions and witness. This aligns with the biblical principle that one's light - representing righteousness and truth - should shine for others to see and benefit from.

**Spiritual Enlightenment:** Light often symbolizes spiritual truth and enlightenment in biblical contexts. By addressing how light should not be hidden, these verses highlight the importance of allowing divine light to shine through believers' lives. This metaphorical light helps guide others on their spiritual journeys, illustrating how faith can transform lives and communities.

**Community Influence:** The imagery of light illuminating a house emphasizes the communal aspect of faith. When individuals engage in good works and express their beliefs openly, they contribute positively to their community. This idea reinforces the notion that each person's actions can inspire others and create a ripple effect of goodness.

**Role of Candles in Worship:** While candles themselves might not be explicitly mentioned, their representation of worship and reverence is significant. The light produced by a candle can symbolise the presence of God, acts of devotion, and the sanctity of prayer. In this context, lighting a candle can be seen as a physical manifestation of a

believer's inner light and connection to the divine.

The biblical references to light, particularly through the metaphor of a candle, serve to inspire believers to live transparently and positively impact the lives of others. By being visible carriers of faith, individuals can embody the light of divine truth, guiding others in their spiritual walks while fostering a community grounded in moral and ethical values. This rich symbolism emphasizes that faith is not merely a personal journey, but a collective responsibility to shine brightly in the world.

**Symbol of Hope and Remembrance:** Candles, particularly during mourning rituals or memorials, symbolize remembrance and hope for the deceased. They create a sacred space for reflection and honour the memories of loved ones who have passed.

**Modern Interpretations:** Today, candles are commonly used to create ambiance in homes, serve as decorative items, and function as tools for relaxation and aromatherapy. The resurgence of interest in natural and handmade candles has further highlighted their significance in contemporary living.

**Cultural and Seasonal Significance:** Different cultures celebrate festivals with candles, such as Diwali in Hinduism, where they symbolize the victory of light over darkness, or Hanukkah in Judaism, where the menorah's lights represent miracles and dedication.

In summary, the candle's historical journey reflects its evolving role in human culture, from sacred symbols to modern-day décor, while maintaining its intrinsic ties to warmth, community, and spirituality. Exploring these various facets can deepen our appreciation for this simple yet profound object.

## Embracing The Light Of Community ... Mat Cobb

### Sustainable Practices for a Brighter Winter

As winter casts its gentle cloak of white across our landscapes, we are reminded of the beauty that surrounds us, even in the coldest of months. This season invites us to reflect on our values, come together as a community, and illuminate our lives with acts of kindness and sustainability that honour our environment. In a time when environmental concerns grow ever more pressing, our collective commitment to sustainability can shine as brightly as the winter sun on

fresh snow, guiding us toward a more harmonious existence with nature.

### **The Spirit of Community Sharing**

As members of our church, we are called to cultivate a spirit of sharing and interconnectedness, mirroring the warmth of the light that brightens our darkest days. Community sharing can take many forms and these acts of generosity not only support those in need but also foster connections among us. They can be as varied as a potluck meal with locally sourced ingredients to craft nights or tip-sharing groups.

The essence of community sharing aligns perfectly with sustainable practices, as it encourages us to reduce waste and promote the use of natural resources. When we pool our resources, we can access and share items that might otherwise sit unused, reducing the need for overconsumption. Sharing tools for winter gardening or hosting a seed exchange can help us all grow our own produce in a sustainable manner, even in the winter months when fresh vegetables can be hard to come by.

### **Lighting the Path with Sustainable Practices**

Sustainability is about more than just individual choices; it's about how we can influence our community through collective action. As our church community gathers in the spirit of togetherness, we can implement sustainable practices that not only benefit our congregation but inspire others as well. Here are a few ideas to consider as we head into winter:

1. **Winter Warm-Up Campaign:** Organize a clothing drive for warm winter apparel, encouraging members to donate gently used coats, hats, and gloves. Consider partnering with local shelters to ensure the items reach those who need them most.
2. **Eco-Friendly Holiday Décor:** Host workshops to create decorations from natural materials like pinecones, branches, and dried fruit. This not only supports sustainability but also fosters creativity and connection within the community.
3. **Energy Efficiency Initiatives:** Educate one another about energy-efficient practices during the winter months. Simple actions, like using LED lights for holiday displays can lead to a significant collective reduction in energy usage.
4. **Community Garden Planning:** Although winter may seem like a

dormant time in gardening, it's the perfect season to plan and incorporate sustainable practices into spring gardening. Sharing ideas for a communal garden can foster enthusiasm for eco-friendly practices as we welcome the spring.

5. Light Up the Night: Consider hosting a community gathering or service that celebrates the beauty of light during this darkest time of year. Lighting candles made from beeswax or soy can highlight our commitment to using sustainable materials while reflecting on themes of hope, sharing, and overcoming darkness together.

This winter season, let us be the light that guides ourselves and others toward more sustainable practices. When we come together to share our resources, knowledge, and compassion, we create a ripple effect that extends beyond our church community, inspiring others to take tangible steps toward sustainability. As we embrace the warmth of community sharing, we not only uplift those around us but also honour the gift of creation, ensuring that our environment flourishes for generations to come.

Let us remember that even in the thickest winter chill, the light of our collective efforts can shine brightly - illuminating a path toward a sustainable future rooted in love, care, and community. Together, we can make this winter not just a season of survival, but a time of thriving, creating a lasting impact that echoes in the hearts of all we encounter.

## **Music & Religion In The Medieval Period ...**

### **Eddie Adey**

Religion had an overriding influence on the music of the medieval period: the first musical notation was for the church, and for well over two centuries sacred works were the only ones written down. Little or nothing is known about the origins of plainchant, but it is clear that from the earliest times music was used as part of Christian worship. With the founding of the great monastic orders, music became an integral part of the liturgy, used around the clock in the chanting of the Hours and in the Mass.

Sacred music was not always associated with the liturgy and the Eucharist, however. Dramatic works are found in some of the earliest sources of monophony, and miracle plays were an important part of lay celebrations of religious feasts in the Middle Ages. Among these were English dramas such as the Chester miracle plays (c 1375). Also

in the vernacular were sacred songs such as the Spanish *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (Songs of Saint Mary, c 1250-80), *Laude Spirituali* (spiritual songs) written in Italy from the fourteenth century, and English Carols.

### **Too Worldly for Worship**

The church sometimes commented on the part that music played in worship. Theologians, such as Albertus Magnus and Thomas, wrote about the way it influences a worshipper's mind. Less benignly, from time to time the authorities issued edicts rebuking composers for works that were deemed too worldly for worship. One such Papal Bull was that of Pope John XXII, the *Docta Sanctorum* (1325), in which he spoke out against the use of any kind of mensural (polyphonic) music in the church. Thankfully for us, his edict was defied by many.

Many composers of the medieval period were at least partly dependent on the church for their income. Some, like Du Fay, were actually priests themselves; others were often lay singers in cathedrals; still others, including Machaut, were awarded secular canonicates for services rendered to their royal patrons. Although the papacy often acted as an enemy of the developing musical art, the popes of the medieval period had vast courts which played host to many gifted musicians, resulting in some of the greatest music of the late 14th and 15th centuries.

### **Cathedral Music**

In the years that followed Henry VIII's break with the Roman Church, the traditional religious order was overturned, ancient monasteries dissolved, choirs disbanded and services in Latin were gradually replaced with a new English Liturgy. Nevertheless, by the time the first Book of Common Prayer was adopted in 1549, the reformed church could still boast around 40 significant choirs active in its cathedrals, churches and chapels. These choral foundations, including the choirs of Winchester Cathedral and King's College Cambridge, have served to add musical lustre to the Anglican Church.

### **Gregorian Chants**

Gregorian Chant, or plainchant, is the music we associate with the medieval Christian Church, sung during the re-enactment of the Last Supper or Mass. The text is taken from the scriptures and is sung without instrumental accompaniment by one or more people, that is, the priest and the choir, either in unison or alternating with each other, but always singing the same melody.

When one note corresponds to one syllable it is known as syllabic chant, when more notes are allocated to one syllable it is called melismatic chant. The first Christians expressed their faith in the manner which typified their ethnic provenance, so the burgeoning Christian Church embraced the cultural influences brought by the Greeks, the Jews and Byzantines and it was only much later, towards the end of the 4th century, that Latin was superimposed. The Music of the Church, or Roman Chant, was handed down orally and was gradually refined to suit the wider cultural following. During the office of Pope Gregory I (590-604 AD) these melodies were collected and catalogued, but were only referred to as 'Gregorian' a century later. Around 3000 melodies make up the repertoire of Gregorian Chants.

## Going Deeper ... Ian Hill



### Light in the darkness.

Sometimes people wonder how much the Bible, written so long ago, can truly be relevant to us today. I suggest that the following words of Jesus taken from John chapter 3 speak directly to us in our modern British culture:

“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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.”

People love darkness and will hide from the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. When I worked in the Civil Service a lot was said about the ‘shadow side’ of an organisation’s culture. This is the informal way in which a lot of issues are discussed, opinions formed, and decisions made outside the official structures. It’s the discussions at the water cooler, in the vaping shed, or down the pub; and it



describes the way that those who are not a part of this 'shadow side' can be sidelined and how the organisations priorities and aims can be subverted by those who disagree.

We all operate in the shadows to a certain extent, a lot of politics happens in the shadows, business gets done in the shadows; and this needn't be a problem. Working things out behind closed doors before going public can often be productive and constructive. The problem comes when what is presented is not the whole truth, the problem comes when there is skullduggery which is never acknowledged. We need to worry if, as Jesus suggested, we try to keep our deeds secret because they are not good.

I believe that this is a serious issue in our modern British culture. The more we talk about openness and accountability, the more things also get covered up. The Post Office scandal has happened because the Post Office and Fujitsu did not want the documented problems with the Horizon Computer System highlighted. The more we hide from the light, the more darkness can flourish, and so the Post Office wrongly prosecuted many innocent people as they continued their cover up. Those wrongful prosecutions were successful because the truth of the Horizon computer system was kept hidden from the courts. To date, none of those responsible for this scandal have been prosecuted.

Evil flourishes when we hide the truth. It is suggested that over 400,000 mothers in the UK have signed Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) following discrimination, bullying and harassment at work. NDAs have become normal for far too many organisations.

I believe that Jesus' words speak very powerfully to our culture, and even to our church. We need to heed them more closely:

"Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God."

This Christmas, remember that Jesus came into the world to bring light, to expose evil deeds done in darkness, so that the truth might become plainly seen.

We all have a part to play in this, we should do nothing that we wouldn't want exposed publicly, and we should never try to silence others from exposing what is wrong and bringing it into the light.

**\* ROOMS \*  
for rent**

The Centre has a fully functioning kitchen and a beautiful large hall recently refurbished and a private garden area. Dates and spaces are available for one off or regular groups at competitive prices.

**WE  
NEED  
YOU**

**Your centre needs you!**

We are in need of more volunteers. Particularly for one-off events at weekends and in the evenings. If you could spare a few hours please let Lisa know.

Grants from H&BBC and Arnold Clarke will enable the Centre to upgrade the kitchen, including a new cooker and dishwasher.

**St Francis  
Friendship  
cafe**  
**Every Thursday**  
10am until 12pm  
**Everyone  
welcome**  
  
Tudor Rd, Hinckley, LE100EQ

**10am - 1pm**  
**Wednesday's  
Lunch Club  
Social**  
Two course meal  
**£6**  
Unlimited drinks



Food Bank have settled in well and operate from the Centre every Friday morning.

We are in need of raffle prize donations. If you have an unwanted new gift, please let Lisa know.



Jean, a volunteer and friend, did a sponsored zip wire and raised over £500!  
Thank you!



Lunch club members having a go at seated Zumba.



**Festive Tea & Bingo**  
**December 9th**  
**12pm-3pm**  
**£5**

Our pre-loved sale went very well, and we have held onto the best stuff for a further event – watch this space. Our biannual fashion show was also an excellent evening with lots of bargains being bought.



Please check our Facebook page & posters for 2025 events and fundraisers.

All enquiries, including bookings to:  
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Tel: 01455 617185 Centre Mobile: 07789743846  
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Office Hours: Mon, Tue, Wed & Thurs 9am - 1pm

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*Whoever lives by the  
truth comes into the light.  
John 3: 21*

**Thank you for reading this edition!  
We hope you've enjoyed it.**