

THE LINK

*With St Leonard's in Swithland
in December 2020
& January 2021*



*'Silent Night' by Annabella Gray, Year 2 pupil at
St Leonard's C of E Primary School, Swithland*

Revd. Colin Resch

Priest in charge of the Mountsorrel Benefice

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Do not be afraid, I bring you good news!
 (said the angel to the shepherds -Luke2-10)

When our children were somewhat younger than they are now, it was quite common in our house for the phrase, "That's it! Christmas is cancelled" to be shouted out. That's not a phrase that has been used much over recent years although we have spotted that the press have been using the headline "Christmas in Cancelled" because of the coronavirus pandemic. Meanwhile, our Prime Minister has been advising us to follow the rules during the second lockdown in an attempt to "Save Christmas".

But why does Christmas need saving? Yes, we do value our family gatherings at this time of year, many of us will miss out on the usual office parties and other social gatherings. In the Church, we are disappointed not to be able to bring the community together in the same way as we usually do for the singing of carols and sharing of festive greetings.

But the Prime Minister has it wrong. When the shout of "Christmas is cancelled" echoed around our house all those years ago, it was followed by another cry of "You can't cancel Christmas - it will happen anyway". It is not Christmas that needs saving through out efforts, as our Prime Minister suggested; but rather that we are saved because of God's gift given on that first Christmas night.

The birth of the Son of God, which we celebrate during this season, brings God's saving grace to all who will put their trust in him. OK, we may not be able to gather in our churches this Christmas time and we may not be able to welcome friends and family to join us around our tables for Christmas lunch; but we can welcome Jesus Christ to be with us this Christmas time and, if we let him, for all eternity.

Merry Christmas to you all and let's look forward to a fabulous 2021 and whatever it brings.

With love and blessings, Colin Resch.

NEWS FROM ST LEONARD'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

2020 Christmas Card Competition

Once again the children have taken part in designing St Leonard's Church Christmas card, this year being asked to depict the carol 'Silent Night'. From a great many delightful entries the design of James Harwood was chosen as the Key Stage 1 winner, and the card of Evelyn White as the Key Stage 2 winner. The overall winner was Annabella Gray, whose card has been printed for distribution to everyone in the Parish and all other members of our congregation and also features on our front cover. Congratulations go to all 3 children and we hope they enjoy their prizes.



James Harwood Key Stage 1



Annabella Gray Overall Winner



Evelyn White Key Stage 2

ARMISTICE DAY 11TH NOVEMBER 2020

This year the children were not able to visit the Swithland War Memorial due to the coronavirus restrictions. Instead they all paid their respects to those who gave their lives for our freedom by gathering in the school field at the appropriate time around a wreath of poppies.



SCARECROW TRAIL

In October the school organised a scarecrow trail and villagers were invited to join in. Schools in Burton on the Wolds, Cossington and Kegworth also took part. The theme was 'People Who Help Us' and overnight 26 scarecrows appeared around the village. Pupils within their class bubbles made a scarecrow and some of them are shown below. Over the half term week many families visited Swithland searching for scarecrows. Thank you to everyone for all their efforts.

Ali Wright, Foundation Governor





CHRISTIANS IN THE FOREST ADVENT AND NEW YEAR COURSES

For the **Advent Course** we will be unpacking various Christmas Carols to examine the story and meaning behind the carol - together with associated Bible readings. Among the carols to be discussed will be Away in a Manger, God Rest You Merry Gentlemen, Good King Wenceslas, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, O Come All Ye Faithful, O Little Town of Bethlehem and many more. The dates for the course are: **1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd December.**

After Christmas our **New Year Course** we will be looking at the Gospel of Luke. The dates are: **5th, 12th, 19th, 26th January and the 2nd & 9th February.**

All meetings start at 7pm and last for about one hour. The meetings are online using Google Meet and if you would like to participate, please let me know by email so that you can be sent the meeting link. In case you have not used Google Meet before, it is very similar to Zoom.

My email address is : garyhlee87@gmail.com

Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year when we will be able to hug each other again. *Gary*



LEICESTER YMCA SHOE BOX APPEAL



In the absence of our Church Wives Gift Service this year, we are once again organising the collection of shoe boxes for the Y Centre.

Ideally each shoe box should contain products that a young homeless person might need including items such as toothpaste, hairbrush, soap, shampoo, toothbrush, notebook & pen, etc, and perhaps a chocolate Christmas treat.

Boxes can be wrapped in Christmas paper with a label saying if it is for a male or female dropped off to either Sarah May or Trish Laurence.

NEWS FROM THE BELL TOWER

The pandemic put an immediate halt to bell ringing to the extent we were not able to go into the tower at all. However, once the restrictions were lifted slightly we did go and check the bells and were allowed to commence ringing with certain constraints. We were able to ring socially distanced for 15 minutes before a service only, which meant either ringing 3 bells or 4 bells if members of the same household were in the team and could ring adjacent bells, and we had to wear masks. Following the 2nd lockdown ringing again ceased.

Sadly we were unable to ring for VE Day, but Nick Cunningham, our steeple keeper, rang the 5th bell 75 times to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of VJ Day.

Janet Beeby, Tower Captain



IN REMEMBRANCE

October 2020 - Bill Howlett

Bill Howlett has died at the age of 94.

He was born in Quorn and after serving in the Parachute Regiment in World War 11 he worked at Corah's in Leicester before starting his own business in Loughborough. He and his wife Pam moved to Vancouver Island Canada in 2014 to live near to their daughter Kate.

The family first lived in Glenfield and then Woodhouse Eaves and finally in Swithland where they enjoyed taking part in Church and village activities, particularly as they lived opposite the Village Hall!

October 2020 - Gweneth Mary Gimson

Gweneth Gimson has died at the age of 108.

Best remembered as Churchwarden at St Leonard's from 1967 to her retirement in 2008, Gweneth died in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, and her funeral service took place there on 12th October.

Gweneth's ashes are to be interred at St Leonard's at a later date when a memorial service may also be arranged.

*Note: Please forward any special memories you may have of Gweneth to me for an article to be published in the New Year.
Editor - maryselina@hotmail.co.uk*



SOAR VALLEY COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECT REMAINS OPEN THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC

During the last 6 months the Food Project in Rothley has remained open every Monday to serve those in need in our communities. Over 550 parcels have been provided during the pandemic thus far.

Each Monday, the Project team are busy packing the food parcels, sorting the donations received and then putting all the food away ready to start again next week. Typically this involves moving around 2,200 tins and packets, or around a ton of food each Monday whilst wearing masks and repeatedly hand sanitising!

Unfortunately demand for food parcels has increased from an average of 17 distributed each week, to 45. This is partly due to the impact of the pandemic, though also because the Project now operates weekly through four other churches in Barrow upon Soar, Birstall, Mountsorrel and Sileby.

All areas of the Project are manned by fellow Christians. In November the Food Project will be open each Tuesday at the Syston Evangelical Baptist Church - becoming the sixth local church to bring food provision and support for root cause issues closer to those at the point of need in their local community. Thank you to Swithland Church, school and village folk who have regularly made very generous donations of food and money, including the Harvest collection too.

The Project reached its sixth anniversary in September and has provided over 3,700 food parcels, each and every one with God's love. We give our thanks too to God for his safe protection over all folk; those in need, those who donate food and the volunteers.

Could you please help with our biggest challenge? If you know of, or become aware of, anyone who may have lost their job or have less income due to the harsh economic climate and may be struggling financially, please encourage them to make contact. Never easy, though generally the sooner help is sought, the better. Debts can quickly mount up.

Please pass on this number **07743 765958**

Roger Watts on behalf of the Soar Valley Community Food Project



REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

The Soar Valley Community Food Project has asked us to advertise the Reverse Advent Calendar. This is where you put a food item each day from the calendar below, into a bag to donate to the food bank to be given out as a Christmas package. The bag can be for a single person, a couple or a family. If you are able to commit to doing this, please let them know by emailing them at mbcfoodbank@aol.com



REVERSE

Advent
Calendar

WHEN YOU HAVE
COMPLETED YOUR ADVENT,
PLEASE DELIVER YOUR
DONATIONS TO YOUR LOCAL
FOOD BANK BY FRIDAY 11TH
DECEMBER.




1 COFFEE	2 STUFFING MIX	3 CHRISTMAS CRACKERS	4 TINNED FISH	5 CHRISTMAS CAKE OR CHOC LOG	6 JAM
7 TINNED TOMATOES	8 BREAKFAST CEREAL	9 SELECTION BOX	10 TEA BAGS	11 MINCE PIES	12 LONG LIFE FRUIT JUICE
13 BAKED BEANS	14 CHRISTMAS PUDDING <small>NON ALCOHOLIC</small>	15 TINNED CUSTARD	16 TOILETRY GIFT SET	17 CHUTNEY	18 CRACKERS FOR CHEESE
19 TINNED CARROTS	20 GRAVY GRANUALS	21 TINNED MEAT	22 TINNED FRUIT	23 CHRISTMAS TREAT	24 UHT MILK

Pat Copson - Life at "Rose Cottage"

As I expect many of my friends know, I am now living at "Rose Cottage" a really wonderful Care Home in Mountsorrel.

As Care Homes go it is quite small, only 17 residents, so that it is possible to get on first name terms with all the other residents and all the staff who look after us in different ways. There are staff who come in and play scrabble or dominoes or rummy - all good fun. The male-female ratio is rather one sided - 2 men and 15 women. We have a lovely mixed menu, all home cooked on the premises.

It is such a strange world for everybody so we are very fortunate to have company all the time.

It is 80 years since I first came to Leicestershire from London - Mountsorrel proved very welcoming then and has done so again.



RIDE & STRIDE - PIT CREW PERSPECTIVE

Although I wasn't actually pedalling. I like to think I played my part in this year's Ride & Stride event as "pit crew" for my two boys (well, son and husband)!

Pit crew responsibilities on the day:

Bananas and snacks packed (along with lots of hand sanitiser given the current climate!)

Water bottles full and ready to go.

Bikes ready - husband sorted that one!

Making sure the route planner was packed.

Put some more snacks in the rucksack.

Waving them off.

Tracking the boys progress throughout the cycle ride.

Meeting in Quorn with a picnic (including more water and more snacks) in order for cyclists to "refuel".

Waiting around at the end to cheer and welcome the boys back.

Quite an exhausting day for me and a little more exhausting for the boys!

Once again the boys enjoyed Ride & Stride. Clearly 2020's event was always going to be a little different from previous years - whilst there was a reduced number of churches open to visitors for the event, a warm (but socially distanced!) welcome was received at all manned churches on the route.

We ended the day with a very proud 7 year old - visiting 11 churches, cycling just under 15 miles and raising just over £230 in the process. Needless to say we ended the day as very proud parents too.

Laura Rowbotham

(And a very big thank you to those who sponsored Jack and who cheered him on.)



RIDE & STRIDE 2020



As we are all well aware 2020 is proving to be a very different, challenging and difficult year so when we were approached by the organisers of Ride & Stride we thought long and hard whether we should even go ahead, considering safety and the restrictions.

With the church at that time closed we wondered how we could best meet and greet visiting participants bearing in mind our unpredictable weather. We could shelter in the porch, or, if a sunny day, set up a table in the churchyard. In the end we decided the best spot would be under the lychgate with the porch as an alternative should the weather be wet. With this decided, we advised the organisers St Leonard's would once again support the event.

Next, we asked for volunteers from the congregation to participate in riding, striding or simply visiting churches by car. Additionally, welcomers were needed to check in participating visitors. As always, we had a good response and we were able to provide a team of 16, either riding and striding, or welcoming. For the size of our church this was very good and we were able to fully man the lychgate from 10am to 6pm and also provide 6 members of the congregation from all ages to ride and stride, the youngest being 7 year old Jack Rowbotham.

For those riding and striding the distance between churches was longer than usual as some of the churches in Charnwood decided to remain closed. Thus there were fewer churches visited but just as many miles travelled with less breaks, meaning more exertion which tested everyone's reserves! At the end of the day, which had been luckily blessed with perfect weather, everyone felt it had proved a great success.

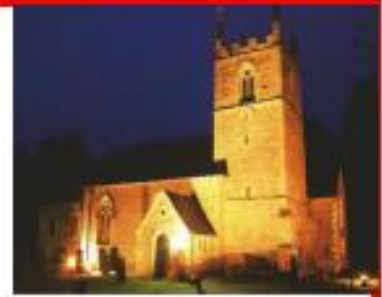
Those participating raised an amazing £1,081! I know I say the same thing each year but it really turned out again to be a record amount at least since I became involved 5 years ago. Thank you to **all** who participated and **all** who contributed.

It is most encouraging to hear from the organisers that this year in spite of all odds the amount raised to date is around £26,000, similar to last year, and the figure is still rising as the account will not close until January. This is very typical of our life styles, when times are difficult we always step up to the mark. I would add that as well as raising monies for the preservation of Leicestershire's Historic Churches Trust, half the amount raised by each church is given back to that church to help in the maintenance and running costs. Thank you.

Martin Greenwood

CHURCH FLOODLIGHTING - 2020

- August 17th - Lizette Pugh
In loving memory of David
- October 5th - Janet Hunt
In loving memory of David and Moss
- October 17th/24th - Sally Allen
In loving memory of Jack and Joan Copson
- October 26th - Val Capewell
In loving memory of Phyllis and Pat Close
- November 1st - Derek & Jayne Cranage
In loving memory of our parents Betty and Neil Dewick
and Emily and Ted Cranage
- November 27th/28th - Jeff Harrison
In loving memory of Valerie Harrison



FROM THE REGISTERS - 2020

- Baptism**
March 8th Catherine Lily Rowbotham
- Marriage**
July 4th Liam Duncan and Emma Kemp
September 3rd Liam Smith and Loretta Hall
- Funeral**
September 9th Dennis Bramwell
- Burial of Ashes**
October 2nd Terence Donaghue



Comfort and Joy   **CHURCH**
at home

Carol Service

A service of readings and carols for Christmas

Sunday 20 December
6.00pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 844 1200 6781
Passcode: carols

Ladies Carol Service

*although we cannot hold our carol service in Church,
we can still celebrate the birth of our Saviour together.*

Monday 7th December at 7pm
via Zoom

Meeting ID: 824 1218 3604 - Pass code: 535471

Join with us to sing carols and hear the nativity story

I am pleased to announce that the Ladies Carol Service, usually held at Christ Church Mountsorrel, will still be happening on line via Zoom on 7th December as you will see from the details above.

There will still be the usual carols to join in with as well as poems and bible readings telling the story of our Saviour's birth and videos to enjoy.

I hope you will be able to join us and if you know of someone not on Zoom, and the Covid restrictions allow, please consider inviting them round to share the service and maybe a mince pie or two with you. *Liz Resch*

Christ Church & St Peter's Church Online Nativity

With the children of Fun@4, Sunbeams & St Leonard's Swithland



Sunday 20th December 4pm

On Facebook – 'Christ Church/St. Peter's Church, Mountsorrel'

and our website: stleonardsswithland.org/nativity



FESTIVE SEASON SERVICES AT
ST LEONARD'S CHURCH



Please be aware that all of our services are subject to any Covid-19 restrictions currently in place and may change at short notice. Visit our website stleonardsswithland.org to obtain the most up to date information.

DECEMBER SERVICES

Sunday 6th - Advent 2

9.30am Morning Prayer
11.00am Zoom - Sunday Worship

Sunday 13th - Advent 3

9.30am Holy Communion (BCP)
11.00am Zoom - Sunday Worship

Sunday 20th - Advent 4

9.30am Morning Prayer
4.00pm Website Crib Service
6.00pm Zoom - Carol Service

Thursday 24th - Christmas Eve

4.00pm Zoom - Christingle

Friday 25th

CHRISTMAS DAY

9.30am Family Holy Communion
11.00am Zoom - Christmas Praise

Sunday 27th -

St John the Evangelist

11.00am Zoom - Sunday Worship

JANUARY SERVICES

Sunday 3rd - Epiphany

9.30am Holy Communion (CW)
11.00am Zoom - Sunday Worship

Sunday 10th - Baptism of Christ

9.30am Morning Prayer
11.00am Zoom - Sunday Worship

Sunday 17th - Epiphany 2

9.30am Holy Communion (BCP)
11.00am Zoom - Sunday Worship

Sunday 24th - Epiphany 3

9.30am Morning Prayer
11.00am Zoom - Sunday Worship

Sunday 31st - Candlemas

9.30am Morning Prayer
11.00am Zoom - Sunday Worship



If you require help or assistance or simply need to chat, please feel free to contact any of us and we will do our best to help.

Assistant Curate: **Revd Darren Walker** 07568 173184

Churchwarden: **Mrs Sally Allen** 0116 2375704

