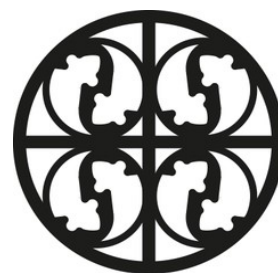


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Wednesday	Mass	10:00 (church)
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In God alone my soul quietly rests,
for my hope comes from Him. Ps 62:5

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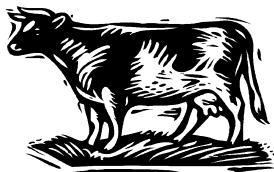
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New Beginnings

Easter, not Christmas, is the most important celebration of our faith. But our redemption through the cross and resurrection of Jesus could not have happened without the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, “through whom all things were made” as St John’s gospel has it, being born just like one of us, as a tiny vulnerable baby. God came to us facing up to all our vulnerabilities, being tempted as we are tempted, yet giving up his life for us all. And because he was divine, he was able to overcome death and lift us all up to His divine life forever. He was Emmanuel, God with us. He IS Emmanuel.

And so, after our weeks of preparation through Advent, it is so important that we rejoice and celebrate the birth of Christ. Christmas is far too important to be confined to a day, a weekend or even for the twelve days of Christmas. The Church encourages us to celebrate Christmas right up to Candlemas in early February. I don’t mean we should put off taking down the Christmas cards or delay going back to work; or eating mince pies until February. But there are two major feasts to celebrate at Christmas time. The first is Christmas itself on 25th December and the second is the feast of the manifestation of Christ to the world on January 6th, the feast of the Epiphany. Both are important.

The two feasts reflect two different stories of the incarnation. The first is an intimate story of the family life of Mary and Joseph. It’s about Mary’s courage, despite her fears, in accepting God’s wish. It’s about Joseph’s embarrassment, shame even, about what happened; and his eagerness to be faithful to both the Jewish law and to Mary. For both of them, listening to God via angels was important. It was all very personal. I imagine they probably didn’t want too many people visiting them at the stable or whatever it was where the child was born. I can imagine Mary thinking: “Thank goodness it was only three wise men bringing gifts !”

The second story is a grander, more public story of kings and magi and doing homage. The magi “who saw his star from far away came to worship him”. Meanwhile the local Jewish king was doing his best to destroy the infant king. This second story is much harder to understand scientifically. Who were these magi ? What star ? How does a star do all this ? Theories abound. But for me, the best account lies in the prophetic value of stories in the Old Testament such as in Psalm 72: “May the kings of Sheba and Saba

bring gifts. May all kings pay him homage.” It is a prophecy not quite come true yet. Not all kings or governments pay homage to the saviour of the world. And there is far from peace in the world.

Which brings me to our celebration of the start of the new year 2024 and what we should pray for. We have experienced great sadness recently in the deaths of Val Warne, Fr Paul, Mary White and Gail Stidolph. As we open up our hearts to Jesus celebrating afresh his birth let us pray **for the** consolation of the bereaved, let us pray for **peace in the world**, particularly in the land of Christ’s birth. Let us pray that we will learn how best to **protect our environment**; and let us pray for our new beginnings as a Parish with **Fr Darren** as he begins his ministry here in the season of the Epiphany.

May God bless all of us and our families at Christmas time.

Fr John

Gospel Gossip: Faithful in faith, exploring our practices

Gospel gossip has provided important opportunities for parishioners to chat together on any topic, however remotely associated with our faith. During the lockdown, when it operated online, it was a particularly valuable way for parishioners to share concerns and keep in touch. More recently Gospel Gossip has developed into an opportunity for parishioners to meet together, twice each month after Wednesday mass, to learn more about our faith and how we practise our faith in church. Our faith is something which doesn’t change but how we practice it changes, very slowly, over time. The Bible itself never changes but how we translate it into English changes as language itself changes. How we involve children in our worship changes as our understanding of children’s needs changes. Fr Paul and Fr John both contributed to Gospel gossip.

Fr John is less able to attend gospel gossip on Wednesday morning. In the new year, he will convene Gospel Gossip once a month in his own home at 212 Devonshire Avenue, Milton, Portsmouth, PO4 9EH. The next meeting will take place at 1030 on Monday, January 8th at 212 Devonshire Avenue. Refreshments will be available. It would be helpful if you could let him know if you would like to attend.



We are always keen to welcome new members. Our friendly choir rehearses most Friday evenings from 7:30pm to 9:30pm at St James Church Hall. Call Madge on 02392 385272 to find out more!

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We will continue to explore what doesn't change about the Christian faith and the way we practise it in our own tradition. We will explore together how the way we practise it has changed over the centuries. We will explore for example how the mass has developed through the centuries. Our new Parish Priest, Fr Darren, will wish to review what we do in Gospel Gossip so there will be an update in the February magazine.

Fr John

A Huge Thank You

As you can imagine the last two years plus have been very challenging for the Churchwardens. With keeping the Services going and social events taking place, general maintenance and the roof project, and all the things people enquire about after the Service on Sunday we have certainly been very busy.

So this is to send a massive THANK YOU to everybody who has helped us out. Firstly Father Bob who has tirelessly provided us with vicar cover and his hard working team, covering all sorts of events:- services, school visits and funerals. To all the Serving Team who have managed to steer all the visiting vicars on the correct path, and generally keep the services flowing. Hugh and the choir providing the lovely music that we take for granted. To the ladies that keep the Church clean and dusted, arrange flowers and who help in the garden. (You know who you are). Also we have to be thankful for the printing of the Pew Sheet every week, and our monthly magazine which has kept the parish informed of events and happenings.

And to everybody who has contributed in any small way to the life of St. James, there is now finally light at the end of the tunnel. Roll on the 10th January, 2024.

St James extends a very warm welcome to Fr Darren and family As he joins his new parish when licensed by Bishop Jonathan on January 10th 2024.

Stella and Mark

**Result of draw no. 611
drawn on 26th November after 10am service**

1st £15 57 Mrs N Beech
2nd £11 199 Mrs C Maton
3rd £9 68 Ms C Sims
4th £7 15 Mrs D Saunders
5th £5 19 Mrs R Ginever



**Result of draw no. 612
drawn on 17th December after 10am service**

1st £15 37 Mrs J Snell
2nd £11 141 Mr P Garner
3rd £9 184 Mrs M Donnachaidh
4th £7 197 Mrs S Pledsted
5th £5 3 Mrs S Pearce

Sandra will be collecting 2024 subscriptions throughout the opening weeks of the New Year and there are plenty of numbers available for new members wishing to join this fun way of fund raising for the Church.

Craft Club

Craft club meet every third Tuesday of the month in the lower hall from 2pm to 4pm. It is an informal group and no tuition takes place, except for help being given when anyone wants it. People who come do all sorts of crafts including embroidery, patchwork, cross stitch, knitting, crochet, paper craft or and any project that they have at hand at that time. We natter quite a bit and set the world to rights. Refreshments are available, a small charge of £2 is required to cover the hire of the hall. Contacts for the club are: Netta 023 92731130 or any of the other club members.

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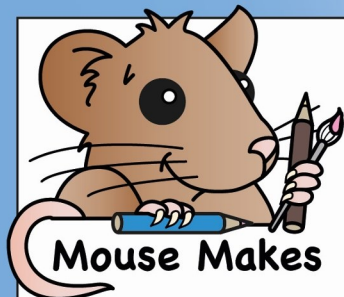


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EPIPHANY is the time in the Church year that we remember when the 'wise men' or 'Magi' followed a star that led them to the Christ child Jesus. They bowed down, worshipped him and left *three* special gifts.





Where was Jesus born?

Luke 2:1



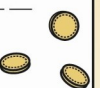
What three gifts did the wise men give Jesus?



 Who was the king?


Luke 2:1

and -----
Luke 2:11

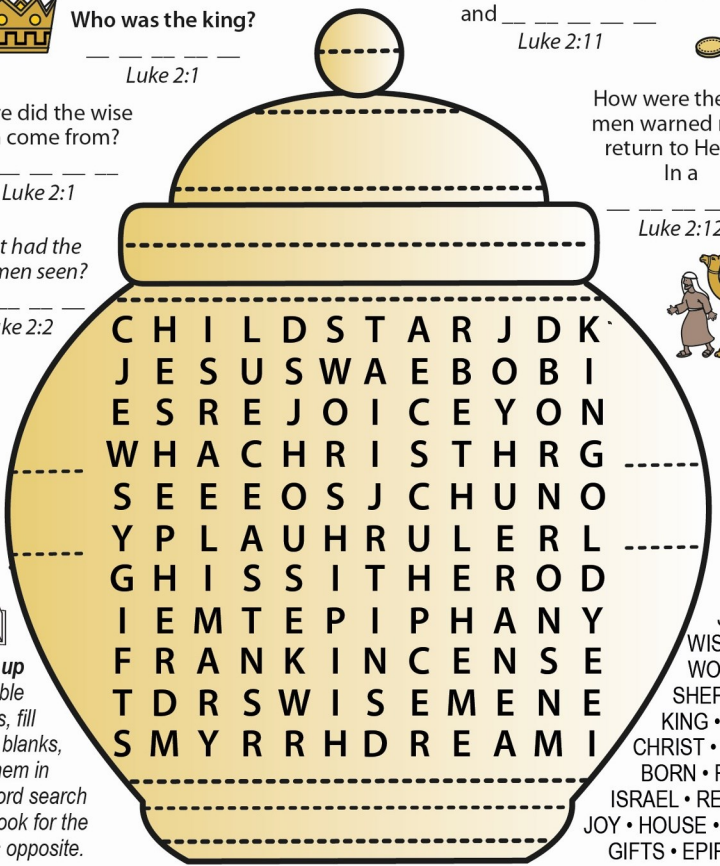


Where did the wise men come from?
the -----
Luke 2:1

How were the wise men warned not to return to Herod?
In a -----
Luke 2:12



What had the wise men seen?
a -----
Luke 2:2



Look up the Bible verses, fill in the blanks, find them in the word search then look for the words opposite.

W O R D S E A R C H

C	H	I	L	D	S	T	A	R	J	D	K
J	E	S	U	S	W	A	E	B	O	B	I
E	S	R	E	J	O	I	C	E	Y	O	N
W	H	A	C	H	R	I	S	T	H	R	G
S	E	E	E	O	S	J	C	H	U	N	O
Y	P	L	A	U	H	R	U	L	E	R	L
G	H	I	S	S	I	T	H	E	R	O	D
I	E	M	T	E	P	I	P	H	A	N	Y
F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E
T	D	R	S	W	I	S	E	M	E	N	E
S	M	Y	R	R	H	D	R	E	A	M	I

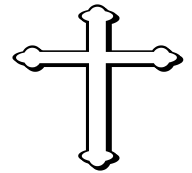
JESUS
WISEMEN
WORSHIP
SHEPHERD
KING • JEWS
CHRIST • CHILD
BORN • RULER
ISRAEL • REJOICE
JOY • HOUSE • MARY
GIFTS • EPIPHANY

How many other words can you make from the letters in EPIPHANY?

From the Registers

We welcomed into the church family at baptism:

Faye Elizabeth Joan Chadwick



Book giveaway that we at St James' sponsored

My name is Emma Campbell. My main job is mum and wife. My second job is my building business Construction and Style Services Ltd plus just recently, I decided to also become an independent Usborne seller called Magical Minds. I have set up a sponsored Christmas book hunt for the local families to get involved in over Christmas. I have had so much support from local businesses and charities. It has been humbling to see the community rallying together to make this event possible.

The aim is to get families from all walks of life together over the Christmas period and having fun, whilst at the same time helping families who do not have the funds to entertain their children daily over the Christmas period, like myself, keep their children entertained and their sanity in tact. It is also to help support children's learning through play and exposing businesses to local families and households that they may not always necessarily come in contact with. All round bringing the community closer together.

I'd like to thank all businesses and charities who have help make this possible and all friends and family who have also supported me in this. Have fun everyone. Merry Christmas.

Ladies Guild

Ladies Guild meet on the 2nd January, 2024 at 2.00pm. We welcome Sister Joanna Elizabeth SSB from the Sisters of Bethany who will talk to us about 'My Calling and Life in the Community'

The Church congregation and group motivation

It is important for a church congregation to have a clear purpose, focus, or aim, as well as belief. But further, for long-term motivation, it must be a purpose or aim that they find aligns with their personal wants and needs. Individuals can be asked to participate on a task. If the task is clear, they might be able to sustain motivation for the duration if they feel it is important. However, if it is a topic that is not in line with their wants and needs, motivation may diminish. Motivation can be lacking because a group's purpose/task was not in line with some of the members' wants and needs. One strategy with a lethargic group might be to stop the process, and re-visit the groups purpose or task. Even with a group that seems well-motivated, it still is a good strategy to re-check once in a while.

Another aspect about group motivation is challenge.

The human species, as with most animals, has been given a survival mechanism called "fight or flight" syndrome. When presented with a challenge, our defences are alerted to move us to action, either to run away from danger or address it directly.

Many people will say that their most rewarding group experiences resulted from some sort of challenge. Often quite un-motivated groups will respond to a challenge with great success. The challenge itself was the motivator.

If these challenges occur infrequently or if groups are not presented with stimulating challenges, lack of motivation can occur. So the question becomes how to provide challenges to the group at more frequent intervals. An additional criteria for a challenge is the level of difficulty. If a challenge is too difficult, perhaps perceived as impossible, the group members may give up before they start. However, the same result may occur if the members perceive the challenge as too easy. Little energy is required to accomplish something easily obtained. For ongoing groups, periodic stimulation in the form of a worthy challenge is another method of maintaining motivation.

III. Camaraderie

If one studies highly effective groups, one finds that the most successful tend to address both task needs and emotional needs. These groups are at the same time competent in the way they perform, and highly functional in their interpersonal relationships. This type of group will well balanced in both task and maintenance.

Calendar for thought and prayer

Monday	1	Naming of the Lord	Our parish
Tuesday	2	Ss Basil and Gregory	The faithful departed
Wednesday	3	Feria	Our University
Thursday	4	Feria	Our choir and servers
Friday	5	Feria	Our parish schools
Saturday	6	Feria	Migrants and refugees
Sunday	7	Epiphany of the Lord	Holy Spirit parish
Monday	8	Baptism of the Lord	Those to be baptised
Tuesday	9	Feria	Hope House
Wednesday	10	Feria	Local doctors and vets
Thursday	11	Feria	Our churchwardens
Friday	12	S Aelred of Rievaulx	Bishop Jonathan
Saturday	13	S Hilary	Our PCC
Sunday	14	Epiphany 2	Our parish
Monday	15	Feria	Uniformed organisations
Tuesday	16	Feria	Our diocese
Wednesday	17	Feria	Our deanery
Thursday	18	Feria	Eastney Free Evangelical
Friday	19	Feria	Eastney Methodist
Saturday	20	Feria	Salvation Army
Sunday	21	Epiphany 3	Christian Unity
Monday	22	Feria	Langstone Fellowship
Tuesday	23	Feria	United Reformed Church
Wednesday	24	S Francis de Sales	Our Lady of Lourdes Church
Thursday	25	Conversion of S Paul	Sisters of Bethany
Friday	26	Ss Timothy & Titus	Our MPs
Saturday	27	Feria	Our city council
Sunday	28	Presentation of Christ	Holy Spirit parish
Monday	29	Feria	European Union
Tuesday	30	Feria	Our King

1st January – The naming of Jesus

Matthew and Luke tell how the angel instructed that Mary's baby was to be named Jesus – a common name meaning 'saviour'. The Church recalls the naming of Jesus on 1st January – eight days after 25th December (by the Jewish way of reckoning days). In Jewish tradition, the male babies were circumcised and named on their eighth day of life.

For early Christians, the *name* of Jesus held a special significance. In Jewish tradition, names expressed aspects of personality. Jesus' name permeated His ministry, and it does so today: we are baptised in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38), we are justified through the name of Jesus (1 Cor 6:11); and God the Father has given Jesus a name above all others (Phil 2:9). All Christian prayer is through 'Jesus Christ our Lord', and it is 'at the name of Jesus' that one day every knee shall bow.

25th January – Conversion of St Paul

January is a month of the beginning of great things! As well as the naming of the Son of God, we celebrate the conversion of the greatest ever apostle of the Christian faith. Many books have been written on Paul, and here is the briefest of introductions.

He was a Jew, born as 'Saul' at Tarsus, and brought up by the rabbi Gamaliel as a Pharisee. A devout, fanatical Jew, Saul persecuted the Christians, and watched with satisfaction the first Christian martyrdom, the stoning of Stephen. Then, on his way to Damascus, Saul had a vision of Christ that stopped him in his tracks. He realised that this Jesus whom he was persecuting was in fact the Messiah for whom he had longed.

Saul changed overnight. He was given a new name, Paul, and became an evangelist for the cause of Christ. He became a leader in the early Church, and his special calling was as an apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote epistles to the young churches that he founded – and thus, inadvertently, wrote a great part of the New Testament.

Life as the greatest apostle was hardly full of perks: Paul was stoned, beaten, mobbed, homeless, hated, imprisoned, and finally martyred. Tradition has it that he was beheaded in Rome during the persecution of Nero in 64AD, and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now stands. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

The factor that emerges in successful groups is camaraderie, meaning comradeship, fellowship, and loyalty. The people in these groups genuinely like each other, and work hard to develop and maintain their relationships.

Research supports this behaviour. It's a lot easier to support your fellow group member when you have a good relationship. This means open and direct communication, and frequent praising of each others' contributions, with mutual support. All well and good for groups whose members like each other, but what if they don't like each other?

Much of the time when we like or dislike someone, it relates more to how well we understand them. Most of us enter adulthood ill-equipped to deal with the myriad of personalities, temperaments, cultures, values, beliefs, ideologies, religions, and idiosyncratic behaviours of those we meet. We grow up with prejudices, either taken in with our mothers' milk, or as the result of specific experiences, which we don't take the time or trouble to question later in life.

One way to break down these barriers is to expand our emotional understanding of others. Here group exercises can be very beneficial if they move us to another level of understanding. But don't overlook the simple solutions. Designing an activity for the group, just to be together, is a powerful way of building camaraderie.

IV. Responsibility

In general, individuals and groups are stimulated by being given responsibility. Having ownership of identifiable task work is a long-held tenet of motivation in groups.

Responsibility can be tricky however. Implied in this concept is the understanding that responsibility comes along with the authority to make any necessary changes. Groups that have both responsibility and authority tend to maintain motivation over longer periods of time.

Responsibility can be de-motivating if the consequences of error or failure are too great. Is the group able to achieve the task given out? Is it achievable and realistic?

V. Growth

Finally, personal and group growth can provide another basis for sustained motivation. When people feel they are moving forward, learning new concepts, adding to their skill base, and stretching their minds, motivation tends to remain

high. Personal growth adds value to the individual, enhancing self-esteem and self-worth.

Accordingly, group members and group leaders should look for opportunities that help add to knowledge and skills. A good technique is to simply ask members what they would like to get from their association with the team, then listen for areas of possible growth.

VI. Leadership and the priesthood

A good leader can be a catalyst for motivation in the short term, but the best leaders create the conditions for the group to motivate itself.

A charismatic leader will only be effective in the short term, and cannot necessarily sustain motivation indefinitely. Motivation is inherently intrinsic, residing within oneself. Therefore, if one depends continually on another for their source of motivation, eventually the individual loses sense of self. So it is with groups.

Good group leaders have a knack for helping others see the best in themselves, providing the stimulus for self-actualizing behaviors.

They also understand the importance of all the factors listed above and focus much of their time on creating the conditions for these to exist.

Summary

A church congregation whose members are aligned with its purpose, feel a challenge in their task, have a strong sense of camaraderie, feel responsibility for the outcome, and experience growth as a group and in their personal lives, will tend to sustain motivation over the long haul.

This is not to say that they will not have difficulties at times, or that members' wants and needs won't change over time. In these cases, sometimes changes will have to be made. A member who no longer feels the group is meeting his or her needs may have to leave to continue on their own path. But, in as much as it is possible to sustain motivation indefinitely, the factors above will tend to create the best possible environment for it.

David Warren Holland

Smiles Lines

Why?

A young couple invited some people to dinner. At the table, the mother turned to their six-year-old daughter and said,

"Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I don't know what to say," the girl replied.

"Just say what you hear Mummy say," the father answered.

The daughter bowed her head and said, "O Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

Keeping warm?

A member of our PCC floated the idea of opening the church during the Warm Spaces hours, for anyone wishing to sit in church and light a candle.

Windows

A wife texted her husband on a cold winter morning: "Windows frozen."

Her husband texted back: "Pour some lukewarm water over it."

The wife texted back five minutes later:

"Computer's completely not working now."



"The vicar really is taking all of January off to recuperate, then."



...the good news is - I've found a way of heating the church on unwanted chip-fat!...

The Unnamed Grave

As I walk gently upon the grass
And move between the stones
A minor tremor disturbs my feet
From a person who's unknown

And as I look down on the earth
I wonder to myself
Is this the grave of someone dear
Whose life had limited wealth

No cross, no border, no headstone
To show who lies beneath
This piece of un-kept sacred ground
Now lost to those who weep

What life did they once live I ask
The family that they knew
The age of their untimely death
Their appearance as they grew

But as my thoughts begin to fly
To imagine who they must be
A sadness fills my aching heart
For the stranger I long to see

Forgotten and lost to everyone
No sentiment of prayer
No loved ones visiting with kindness
To show how much they care

Instead they sleep amongst us
As we talk and walk on by
Until another unnamed grave
Reveals the place where someone died

Let us not lament their peace and quiet
For within these graves they rest
Their lives now over, their voices still

All memories now have left
For they are always remembered
By the others who have died
As their journeys were made together
To a world on the other side

By Maura Kelly

After Jesus was born

What gifts did the wisemen bring
When they journeyed to worship
The infant King
Their guiding star still shone
Down from above
As they knelt and offered
Him their gifts and love

God then warned the wisemen
In a dream to depart without telling
Where they had been
Learning of this Herod
Flew into a rage
And ordered all young
Boys to be slayed.

The holy family now had to flee
And each became a refugee
They travelled on to a country new
This made Hosea's prophecy come true

It was after Joseph dreamt
Herod was dead
They left Egypt and returned to Israel
From where they'd fled
Their new home in Nazareth
Was where they went
And where Jesus' childhood
Years were spent

By Peter Garner

WEEKLY DIARY OF EVENTS IN ST. JAMES' CHURCH HALLS

Day	Time	Activity
Monday	6.30 - 9.30pm	Scouts
Tuesday	9.30 - 10.30am	Latin Dance
	10.00 - 12.15pm	Seven Stars Tai Chi
1st	2.00 - 4.00pm	Ladies Guild
2nd and 4th	1.00 - 2.30pm	Little Shells
3rd	2.00 - 4.00pm	Craft Club
	6.00 - 7.30pm	Brownies
	7.00 - 10.00pm	Victory Model Railway Club
Wednesday	9.30 - 10.30am	Pilates
	10.30 - 2.30pm	Highbury
	5.30 - 7.45pm	AG Martial Arts
	6.45 - 8.15pm	Yoga with Erika Nagy
Thursday	10.00 - 12noon	Jiggy Wrighlers
	3.00 - 7.00pm	Slimming World
	5.15 - 6.45pm	Yoga with Erica Nagy
	7.00 - 9.00pm	Guides
	7.30 - 8.30pm	Yoga with Maz
	7.00 - 9.00pm	Guides
Friday	10.00 - 11.00am	Seven Stars Tai Chi
	7.00 - 9.00pm	Milton Glee Choir
	7.30 - 9.00pm	B Fit with Billie (Ad hoc)
Saturday	7.00 - 11.30am	Slimming World
	9.45 - 11.15am	Yoga with Erika Nagy

If you require a Booking at any other time, please contact our Hall Letting Secretary
Valerie England. Tel. No. 07762 524781.

SOCIAL EVENTS FOR 2024



January 2024

Tuesday 2nd Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Saturday 6th Gardening - weather permitting
Wednesday 10th Father Darren's Licensing 6.30pm
Tuesday 16th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Wednesday 17th Coffee Morning after Service

February 2024

Saturday 3rd Gardening - weather permitting
Tuesday 6th Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Tuesday 20th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Wednesday 21st Coffee Morning after Service
Saturday 24th Quiz Night 7pm

March 2024

Saturday 2nd Gardening - weather permitting
Tuesday 5th Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Saturday 9th Making Posies for Mothering Sunday 11.30am
Tuesday 19th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Wednesday 20th Coffee Morning after Service
Saturday 23rd Making Palm Crosses 11.30am
Saturday 30th Holy Saturday - Spring Cleaning of the Church

April 2024

Tuesday 2nd Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Saturday 6th Gardening - weather permitting
Saturday 13th Table Top Sale 10am - 12.00
Tuesday 16th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Wednesday 17th Coffee Morning after Service

May 2024

Saturday 4th Gardening - weather permitting
Tuesday 7th Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Tuesday 21st Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Wednesday 22nd Coffee Morning after Service

June 2024

Saturday 1st Gardening - weather permitting
Tuesday 4th Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Saturday 15th Summer Fete 10.30am - 1.00pm
Tuesday 18th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm

July 2024

Tuesday 2nd Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Saturday 6th Gardening - weather permitting
Tuesday 16th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Wednesday 17th Coffee Morning after Service
Thursday 25th St. James Day

August 2024

Saturday 3rd Gardening - weather permitting
Tuesday 6th Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Tuesday 20th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Wednesday 21st Coffee Morning after Service

September 2024

Tuesday 3rd Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Saturday 7th Gardening - weather permitting
Saturday 14th Table Top Sale 10am - 12.00
Saturday 14th Ride and Stride all day
Tuesday 17th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Wednesday 18th Coffee Morning after Service

October 2024

Tuesday 1st Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Saturday 5th Gardening - weather permitting
Tuesday 15th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Wednesday 16th Coffee Morning after Service
Saturday 19th Quiz Night 7.00pm

November 2024

Saturday 2nd Christmas Bazaar 10.30am - 1.00pm
Tuesday 5th Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Tuesday 19th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Wednesday 20th Coffee Morning after Service

December 2024

Tuesday 3rd Ladies Guild 2pm - 4pm
Saturday 7th Table Top Sale 10am - 12.00
Tuesday 17th Craft Club 2pm - 4pm
Monday 23rd Making Christingles 10.30am

