



Rev Allison Harding



Rev Margaret Ledger



Rev Malcolm Jones

We are happy to discuss spiritual matters with you.
 If you know of people who are ill or in hospital please let us know. Please contact Allison to discuss Baptism, Confirmation or Marriage

The deadline date for any inclusions for the February 2021 magazine is

Sunday 17th January

Please either email or hand to Helen Dawson.
helenrdawson@yahoo.co.uk

If you have any questions or opinions about the magazine content and style, or would like to write an article please get in touch.

All feedback welcome.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive a magazine (only £5.00 per annum) please get in touch and we will add their name to the distribution list.

50p



December 2020



**Unto us is born a Saviour,
 who is Christ the Lord**

Luke 2:11

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Letter from the Clergy

Dear Friends,

The one thing that is certain in these days is that nothing at all is certain. How will Christmas be for us this year? Writing in November, it is not possible to predict. Looking at the first Christmas, it was pretty much the same. Joseph had to go to



Bethlehem to enlist for taxation. But would the baby be born before, during, or after the visit there? They didn't know. It was a long way from Nazareth to Bethlehem. It would take at least three days. Were they sure? No, they weren't.

Where would they stay when they got there? Did they know? No, they didn't.

Really, you see, the first Christmas was like this one, in 2020. Will we see our relatives? We don't know. Can we travel about this year? Who knows? What about our Christmas dinner? You can't be sure.

The truth is, we have made Christmas so complicated, the way we usually celebrate it, there is no certainty we can do those things this year.

The wonder of the real Christmas is its absolute SIMPLICITY. Mary and Joseph were ordinary, simple people. The first Christmas congregation was the shepherds: humble working men. They lived close to the things God made. The earth was the carpet for their feet. The sun and the stars were their coverings. And the baby: no fuss, no decorations, no pomp, parties or parades. Not even a pram. Just a manger, as He was born in a cave where animals were kept. The manger held the straw for the animals. It was good enough for a cow. So it was OK for Jesus.

With God, everything is simple. No complications. No doubts. No fuss. No traditions. Just the simplest things.

It's the simplicity that makes Christmas wonderful. If we can't do things we usually do on 25 December, then we'll do them some other day. But somehow, keeping things simple, we'll find a way.

So what about the future? 2021 may be a year of blessings. A



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new vaccine may spare us the worst of Covid-19. We don't know.
But we will put our trust in the One who does know. Simply that.
And we'll find a way to get by.
We'll face the New Year with courage. Trusting simply in God's guidance, we will enter 2021 with hope. We will move forward, "looking unto Jesus".
Forgetting ills behind me, the sorrows past and gone,
Forgetting all my wanderings, too sad to dwell upon,
Remembering God's great goodness, in times of stress and strain,
Remembering His restoring's, I praise my God again.
Happy Christmas and happy 2021,
Yours simply, Malcolm.



Service times for December are currently unknown. We hope to reinstate the service times below when the current lockdown is lifted however this is not set in stone.

9.30am St Michael's

11.00am St Mary's

Holy Communion will be on alternate weeks.

Please continue to telephone Amanda Taylor (0191 267 7845) and Elizabeth Hope (0191 264 5276) to book your place at the services.

Please check the parish website for up to date service times due to the ongoing lockdown rules/guidance for the pandemic.

Christmas 2020 isn't cancelled

As we publish the final magazine of 2020 we come to the end of one of the most difficult, challenging and adaptive times in the life of the church since I became a Christian 30 years ago... I want to thank you for sticking with us during Covid and I hope to see you next in a world where there is vaccine and we are Covid free. This Christmas is not going to be anything like we usually have: we can't go into our schools, we can't have schools in the churches, there won't be any Carol Services (because we are not allowed to sing), we won't be able to have our Christingle service, there will be no Nativity Service.

However, we are planning to have a service at St Michael's at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of our Saviour with the first communion of Christmas and then to have two Christmas Day services, one at 9.30am at St Michael's and one at 11am at St Mary's. We are only able to have 20 people at each service at a safe distance so having three services means we will be able to fit 60 people in for our Christmas Services. Of course, this all depends on the state of lockdown restrictions at the time: if we are allowed to sing and have more people in church, we will do so.

Please check our website to see if these plans have been altered at all: www.newburnparish.org (we will update it regularly).

We will also continue to put our reading and Sermons/Talks on our Newburn Parish YouTube channel. Thank you to everyone who has tuned in to watch.

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Poet's Corner

Throckley War Memorial

The inscription reads,
"Greater love hath no man than this
That he lay down his life for his friends"

Where have all the railings gone,
Gone to the war effort, every one.
Railings narrow, railings wide
With a chained and padlocked gate on one side
Unveiled in nineteen twenty three,
Paid for by local people who gave so generously.

Fifty six names are shown in all,
No one left to remember whether they were short or tall
For some, every son a mother bore,
They were called to be soldiers
and they went to war.

Potter, Watson and Hepple
All etched out in brilliant gold
Fathers, brothers, cousins, sons
Young men not allowed to grow old.

Every year a blood red wreath is laid
To remind us of the sacrifice they made
Autumn leaves form a carpet on the spot where I stand
As the poppies of Flanders in that far off land

A proud but lonely monument
Standing in a place of prominence
Passed by hundreds every day
Without a second deserving glance.

Audrey Nelson

Pandemic - printed in the November magazine contained a typo.
Where it said "over-worked" it should have read "over washed". It will
be reprinted correctly in a subsequent magazine. Apologies to Audrey.

We hope to put some extra things on YouTube as we try to 'do Christmas' a bit differently this year, so do keep checking what is going on. I am praying that we can see our loved ones this Christmas but, whatever restrictions we face, please stay in touch and stay safe. And please know that there may be restrictions, but Christmas isn't cancelled. Whatever happens to shopping, travelling, seeing family, etcetera, one thing definitely won't be changing – our certainty that Jesus came into the world as a baby over 2,000 years ago because he loved us and wanted to save us from our sin and separation from God. In a very uncertain world, we can be certain of his love and his longing to be in a relationship with every one of us. So please pray and stay strong, trusting in Jesus that one day we will be together again.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:38-39

With love and blessings, Rev Allison



Follow up

A brief follow up note after my article in last month's magazine. During October half term a number of people from the church packed food into bags to be given out to families in need. Jaqueline Atkinson and I then delivered the bags to families in Newburn, Throckley and Denton. I want to say a huge thank you to the West End Foodbank, to Newcastle Methodist circuit and to St Mary's Ponteland who donated food to us. We were overwhelmed with the kindness of people.



Given the level of need that we have seen, and the positive feedback we have received from those we have



delivered to, I am considering starting some form of foodbank in Newburn, possibly opening once per week. This might operate as a satellite to the West End Foodbank, but all possibilities are open at the moment – it is all very new! We have had some great offers of help for this work, from both the church and the community. If you know of anyone who is in need please do get in to touch. We will try our best to support people.

Rev Allison

Jesus is the 'Yes' to all God's promises. 2 Cor. I v20

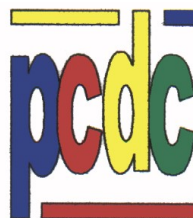
Some weeks ago a friend of mine sent me a video of the American pastor and theologian Rev. Charles Stanley addressing his congregation and reminding them of God's promises. He said, "when you are feeling tired, weary and overwhelmed, read them aloud and put your hope and trust in Jesus, the fulfilment of them all."

Find them here:	Ps 121 v 1 - 8
Ps 16 v 7 - 8	Ps 36 v 5 - 9
Ps 4 v 8	Isaiah 41 v 10
Ps 27 v 1	Isaiah 43 v 1
Ps 32 v 7	John 3 v 16
Ps 23 v 4	John 10 v 10
Ps 138 v 7 - 8	Philippians 4 v 6 - 7
Ps 139 v 3	1 John 1 v 9

Mary Weatherall

Answers to the Christmas Quiz on Page 12.	1. 10 Downing Street.
2. Kirk Douglas	3. Dipping the communion water in wine.
4. "kind"	5. Wash our hands
6. Common years	7. Eyam
8. Forty days long, (the word derives from the Italian expression quaranta giorni)	9. To commemorate De Gaulle's broadcast to France in 1940.
10. It was also the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo.	11. The United States, Europe, Russia and China have all launched space rockets to Mars this year.
12. The Foreign Office cat, Palmerston.	13. Boxing Day is the day furthest away from Christmas Day (because you cannot travel backwards in time - think about it)
14. Part of the Burma Campaign during the Second World War.	15. It was remembered in August as part of VJ commemorations.
15. Rule Britannia	16. Thanksgiving

Pcdc update



As most of you will know, our very own Rev'd Malcolm Jones is the coordinator for the charity Practical Compassion for Destitute Children (Pcdc). Pcdc is a Tyneside-based charity dedicated to serving children in crisis in the Holy Land, regardless of race, creed or colour. They give financial, practical, and prayer-aid through our child-sponsorship scheme. Malcolm sends monthly letters out with updates on the localities the charity supports, relating to the children and the current COVID crisis. A few excerpts from recent months are below:

June 2020:

We are in the third month of lockdown here in the UK. Things are better in Bethlehem now the worst is over. As from midday on 26 May all of Bethlehem is open: all the shops, businesses, churches and mosques are open again. Only three people died of the virus and no-one in the country still has it. The lockdown there was called early, at the very first case, and enforced at gunpoint, so they have moved forward quickly now there are no cases of the virus.

July 2020:

Hope School accepts children that other schools will not or cannot take. Some of these children have enormous personal needs. Somehow the school manages to help them. The final exam results for A-Level pupils came out today and they are absolutely amazing. The average result at Hope School [...] is an amazing 90%.

September 2020:

One thing we definitely know about life in the Middle East is that we really know nothing. We cannot plan ahead, because nobody knows what lies ahead. We cannot be sure of the rules about Covid-19, since nobody knows any rules. It has not happened before, so everyone just tries to do their best, not knowing which way ahead will be the best way. [...] Of course our income is bound to drop, and we have had to reduce the number of children we support to about 150, as some supporters are no longer able to send donations. But God will provide what we need if we are careful to plan the best we can. And if we continue to trust Him.

www.practical-compassion.co.uk - registered charity No.1076588

Christmas can't come too early...

Every year it happens. I hear Christians lamenting how 'Christmas comes earlier every year.' Since this September (or before!) supermarkets, shops and garden centres have been selling Christmas jumpers, socks and pyjamas and all kinds of other seasonal merchandise. Should we be annoyed or exasperated? Should we have gone around reminding people that it's much too early for tinsel and mistletoe?

This year, of all years, the answer from churches and Christians of all denominations must surely be a resounding 'NO.'

As people began looking to Christmas for some light in the gloom of the pandemic – and hard-hit businesses desperately need to increase their income and chances of survival – it sounds a woefully wrong note if the Church is saying 'hold back, it's not time yet...'

Because Christmas is that time of year when increasing numbers of people want to come to church services and share in the story of the new-born King. It is when carols are played in shopping centres, and there are openings to speak of the meaning of the season.

Churches might not be able to host big indoor carol services this year, but the challenge is how we take the Christmas message out into the streets and neighbourhoods around our buildings. This year has been one like no other for millions of people, with little prospect of better news into the New Year. So we need to be declaring the Christmas message of hope and light and joy in the darkness. And to be doing so at every opportunity.

But also, we need to be doing so with sensitivity and care, for the many who will find it hard to be celebrating this pandemic year, and with the prospect of large family gatherings in doubt because of Covid 19 regulations.

Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell wrote in his 2009 book 'Do Nothing Christmas is Coming', "Christmas is one of the most joyful times of the year. It is also one of the most stressful. It is laden with expectations. It is often overtaken with grief. It might be the season of good will, but it can feel like the last straw on an already overburdened camel." He added ruefully, "Wise men

would not ride this one.”

Archbishop Cottrell is right that Christmas has to be approached sensitively, that we need to take care in how we celebrate, that for many people who have lost loved ones and livelihoods during this traumatic year, Christmas will not be easy.

We come alongside people with the news that the baby born in the manger grew up to be the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief, who experienced suffering and bereavement. God, born as Man, who shared our pain as well as our celebrations, ultimately died on a cross to rise again.

Our mission is to bring a message of hope, and to do so with love, humility and sensitivity to a hurting disorientated world – one that's eager for light in the gloom.

Revd Peter Crumpler



“God is with us in our pain and fear” – Bishop of London’s message of hope

The Bishop of London, Rt Revd Sarah Mullally, has said that despite this being a time of “great uncertainty and challenge” as the world struggles to “overcome a devastating pandemic that has cut short earthly lives, destroyed livelihoods, and separated us from the people and activities we enjoy,” yet still “we are not without hope.” Speaking recently in St Paul’s Cathedral, she said: “Through word, prayer, song and symbol, we are reminded that God’s love for us can never be destroyed. God is with us in our pain and fear and will lead us to a yet more glorious day.” Bishop Sarah also praised the ongoing work of the “real heroes and heroines at work in intensive care units, the Emergency Department, oncology and elderly care wards.” These people have been “giving their all, and are continuing to give their all, because we are still very much in the midst of the Covid pandemic.” “Yet,” she went on, “The hope we have in our hearts as Christians is eternal. Hope that is in Christ will not be disappointed.”

And that’s how it has been today for me. Our churches had their beautiful poppy drapes in already. Allison had asked knitters if they might quickly make poppies for those who came to pray, and of course they did, including creating a real focus for our prayer – a mass of poppies at the front, gathered around a large candle, so we could remember the fallen and in the midst, Jesus the Light of the World. The 2 minute silence was incredibly moving, total silence in the church, each person with their own thoughts. Outside both churches a few people had gathered at the war memorials and, whilst we weren’t allowed anything formal, Allison was able to stand with those at the memorial at St Mary’s – just a small link with our community in these strange times.

I watched the Cenotaph service when I got home. As we would expect now it was socially distanced, but excellent. Aled Jones followed with a special Songs of Praise, sharing not only memories of those who have died but also those who live every day with their injuries. After lunch we received on line the reading Sandra would have read today and Allison’s sermon for Remembrance Sunday.

In just 7 days so much made ready. We thank God for all he gives us – his eternal love and forgiveness, the opportunity to be a people who serve and the knowledge and technology to help us to spread his love far and wide. In a week when we have watched the US going through a really hard national election, with so much hurt around, it was an inspiration to share the prayers from the Songs of Praise contributors at the end.

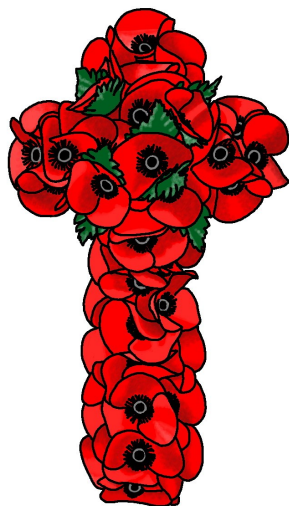
‘Remembrance Day is a time to remember those who have died in war, but not only them, we are asked to remember all who serve, wherever and whenever they serve.’

Lord, for those who have shown service, courage, sacrifice, help us always to remember. And may we look to you the source of peace and hope. Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with us. Amen

Jennie Jones

Remembrance Sunday 2020

I'm writing this on the afternoon of Remembrance Day. It's been a different year in so many ways, everything we're used to doing is touched by the pandemic. Our great desire to plan ahead, and have things ready doesn't work this year, We find ourselves constantly faced by changes that prevent our plans from working! And that happened today. We knew in advance that we would have just limited numbers in church for worship. We couldn't have our usual public remembrance and silence at our memorials. Even the national event at the Cenotaph would be reduced from the thousands of veterans, who normally march past to just 26!



I'm just post war, born at the end of 1945 and my only memory left of wartime was that sweets were on ration until February 1953 ! I've always been aware of Remembrance Day and know its impact for so many people who lost loved ones in war. Having lived in a number of parishes, I know each area has its own traditions, its own way of marking Remembrance day.

But last week with the second lockdown, we learnt we could not even have worship today, our churches would only open for prayer.

If this year has taught me anything it is the realisation that there are many things we may have taken for granted that happen all the time, but which impact on some people more than others. But when those usual events are taken away there may be an even greater impact on many.

Just for fun...

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4				5				
1		6	3					
				4			9	7

And the winner is...

I hope everyone has enjoyed the Sudoku's this year. I've not heard from anyone who has managed to complete all of the Sudoku's included in the 2020 magazines, therefore we will move on to next year. I can provide cross-words, word searches and Sudoku's, or a bit of all sorts. If anyone has a preference please let me know otherwise I'll muddle on!

Just for fun... A quiz on 2020 (answers on pg 17)

1. Job applications from weirdos and misfits were invited from people to work at which place in London?
2. Which famous actor who died this year is associated with the phrase "I am Spartacus?"
3. In February the Church of England advised against the practice of 'intinction' – what is it?
4. In a world "where you can be anything, be _____" – what, wrote actress Caroline Flack on Instagram in December 2019?
5. What were we supposed to do in March while singing the National Anthem or Happy Birthday twice?
6. This year was a leap year. What do we call other years?
7. Which village in the Peak District is associated with self-isolation during a previous plague?
8. How long, literally, is quarantine?
9. Why did President Macron visit Britain on 18th July? What other Anglo-French anniversary could he have remembered but for some reason it was not mentioned?
10. How many countries launched space rockets to Mars this year?
11. Who, in their resignation letter in August, on Twitter posted, "I have championed our work, built our relationships and celebrated the diversity of our staff... and will always be an ambassador for the UK and the new Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office" after a four year career in Downing Street which had included scraps with a neighbour? He was going to spend more time with a family in the country.
12. Which day is the furthest away from Christmas Day?
13. What was the Battle of the Tennis Court and why was it remembered in August?
14. The BBC banned singing the lyrics from which song from the Last night of the Proms, because it had a link in their mind with slavery and colonialism?
15. This year marked the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the *Mayflower*. What event did they start which led to a public holiday?

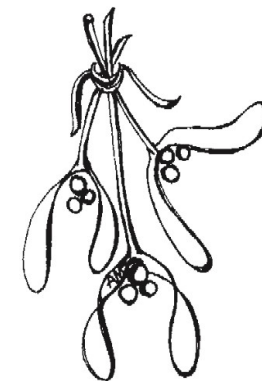
Mistletoe

This time of year you can see all sorts of traditions played out with regard to Christmas decorations. Strict adherents use holly, ivy and of course, mistletoe. While holly and ivy are to be found in gardens and hedgerows, mistletoe usually only appears in greengrocers' shops, or high in a tree well out of reach.

Mistletoe is *hemiparasitic*, meaning that although its leaves enable it to feed itself through photosynthesis, its roots invade the host tree or shrub to extract water and other nutrients. Its favourite host trees are apple, lime, hawthorn, poplar or oak and it normally hangs as a large globe, tantalisingly high and totally visible once winter arrives and it is the only green left on the tree. There are some spectacular examples in Windsor Great Park, clearly visible from the path on the opposite side of the River Thames.

We all know about the almost translucent white berries, fleshy and sticky, which form in the forks of mistletoe's many branches. While they are toxic to humans, they are attractive to birds. When birds have enjoyed the juicy flesh, they wipe the remaining seeds off their beaks onto the nearest branch [somewhat like small children wiping sticky hands on any surface close by – mummy's face or clothes?]. With luck the seed remains stuck to the bark and solves mistletoe's problem of reproduction.

In Greek mythology, mistletoe gave access to the Underworld. Romans thought it represented Peace, Love and Understanding and perhaps that is how it has sidled into our Christmas celebrations. The earliest documentary evidence for kissing under mistletoe dates from the sixteenth century. Some people think a berry should be removed after each kiss. Given the small size of pieces generally available these days, perhaps that is a practice not to be pursued!



by Kirsty Steele

Prayers for January - compiled by Margaret Ledger

EPIPIHANY

As the wise men followed the star sure of finding the Christ, pray for conviction and vision for those who follow Him today.

Pray for Christians who are persecuted for their faith, that they will have courage and be sustained by the Holy Spirit.

Pray for missionary societies and relief agencies working both at home and abroad & for the work of Pcdc, taking gifts of love to children in Bethlehem today.

The wise men brought gifts to Jesus - we are given gifts by the Holy Spirit - pray that we will identify our gifts and use them in the building of the Church.

Pray that the Church will demonstrate gifts of thanksgiving, love, service, caring and compassion.

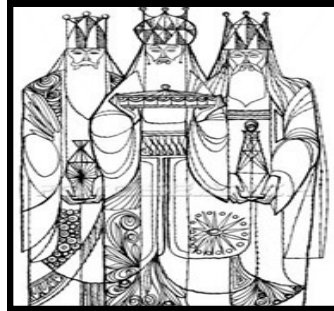
Pray for a just & fair society to be established in the Holy Land that peoples there might live together in peace.

'Wise men seek Him still' - pray that Jesus will be revealed to the world today through the lives of His people so that those who seek the truth may find Him.

Father of all,

Thank you for the revelation you gave to those travellers from the East so long ago. Thank you that everyone who truly searches for you will find you, in Jesus. Show us your Son afresh, we pray, so that, at the start of this New Year, we can go forward hand in hand with him, into whatever the New Year might hold for us, knowing the security which only he can give. Give us confidence and peace and strength to live each day with that assurance.

In Jesus' name. Amen.



by Daphne Kitching

Journeys or lockdown this Christmas?

Christmas is a busy time for travel, as many of us venture a great distance to see family or friends again. But this year coronavirus has put an end to all that. Seeing all our loved ones this Christmas will be difficult, if not impossible. Soon we may not be travelling anywhere very much at all.

Have you noticed that the Christmas story is about journeys? It begins with Mary and Joseph travelling from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Then, some shepherds receive news from an angel about a special birth. They travel through the night, across dark fields and down unlit streets to search for the baby Jesus.

After this, in an eastern country some wise men see a new star, one that heralds a new king. They leave home and set out with only the star to guide them, and their faith to reassure them that Someone special is waiting at the end of their journey.

All these travellers must have wondered what really lay ahead. Nothing was fully understood, carefully planned for, or safe. They all travelled with questions and uncertainties. But God had come unexpectedly into their lives, and suddenly they were given new roles to serve Him. Despite worldly circumstances that could have crushed them, they stood firm and trusted God all the way.

These travellers' tales tell us that God may suddenly enter into our familiar, or this year, unfamiliar circumstances. He may come in surprising ways, to prompt us into new avenues of service. At first His call on us may be uncomfortable and challenging.

If our response is anything like Joseph, Mary, the shepherds and wise men – to be obedient to His call in serving, witnessing and worshipping, we shall be greatly blessed and rewarded.

We are all on life's journey. If we travel with God, He will be faithful and lead us to His heavenly Home.

Lester Amann.

Prayers for December - compiled by Margaret Ledger

ADVENT

A Prayer from the Church of England

Lord Jesus Christ, in these dark and difficult days, we turn our hearts to you. In ages past you have delivered our nation from disaster. Do it again, we pray. Give wisdom beyond human wisdom to our leaders, give strength beyond human strength to the NHS and all our frontline workers. Give comfort beyond human comfort to the elderly and all who grieve. Lord Jesus Christ, in these dark and difficult days, turn your face towards us, have mercy upon us, and heal our land, we pray. Amen.



- In the preparations for Christmas, pray that there will be room in people's lives for Christ
- Thank God for the Bible, the record of the long years of preparation for the coming of Jesus
- Pray for the clutter in our lives to be sorted out so that our hearts will be ready to welcome the Saviour
- Pray that people won't be pressured into buying things they can't afford
- Remember those who have to work longer hours in shops and those working for Royal Mail dealing with increased post
- The preparations and celebrations of Christmas will be so different this year - the things we always take for granted - carol services, nativity plays, Christmas parties, may not be possible. Pray that the Church will find new ways to share the Christmas story with communities and schools that we may together share the wonder of Jesus' birth.

CHRISTMAS

A Grace

Dear God, we are grateful for all that you have given to us - our food, each other and our health.

We pray for those who lack these things we enjoy.

Give us thankful hearts and opportunities to share your gifts with others.

We lift before you this country in these difficult days - and pray you would protect us, encourage us and keep us. Amen.



- Jesus is the Prince of Peace - pray for peace in our troubled world.
- Love came down at Christmas - remember those who have no-one to love and care for them, for the lonely and the homeless
- Pray for the work of the People's Kitchen and the West End Foodbank
- Pray for families as they spend time together and for reconciliation where there is conflict and tension
- Pray for family members who are not able to be with loved ones this Christmas and for children who are disadvantaged or neglected, for whom Christmas holds little joy.
- Pray for medical teams working in our hospitals and for staff in care homes, for their safety as they treat and care for their patients and residents
- While we enjoy the celebrations of Christmas as much as we are able, pray for those who continue to research and develop vaccines that will help to keep us safe in the coming year.