

ST JOHN'S, RANMOOR

Lunch Club Christmas Newsletter



From all at the St John's Lunch Club
to all at the St John's Lunch Club

Merry Christmas and a Happy and healthy New Year

A message from Matt

In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.
John 1:4,5

Dear Friends,

In Advent, we spend time waiting. In the gloom of the short days of December we look expectantly for signs of light in the darkness. In this strange year, the darkness has seemed particularly dark and our pangs of longing for the light of hope even more painful. But now, as we approach the longest night of the year, there are signs of hope. Scientists have worked tirelessly and produced multiple viable Covid-19 vaccines in record time bringing closer the possibility that we will be able to meet together in person relatively soon.



There is no doubt that the restrictions placed on all of us by this terrible virus have been difficult to bear. Many have felt isolated - cut off from friends and family with whom they would have met regularly - unable to pop to the shops or to chat with a neighbour over a cup of tea. The changes we have had to make to the way we organise worship in church have meant that we cannot gather as a congregation in the way we're used to on Sundays or Wednesday mornings before lunch.

Speaking personally, Clare and I have found arriving in a new parish and a new city particularly challenging in a time when meeting and getting to know people has been made so much harder. It's a sadness that we've not yet met many of you and I very much look forward to that being feasible in the near future.

For all their negative ramifications and consequences, I have nonetheless found these last few months helpful. The restrictions on my freedom of movement have made me focus on what is actually important in my life. I have learnt a new appreciation for the view out of my study window; for the sound of the birds singing in the garden; for the voice of a friend on the telephone. I wonder whether I've been able to see things a little clearer with less of the clamour and complication of 'modern life'. I have remembered how to find pleasure in small things.

It has been so good to hear from you how much you've appreciated the deliveries that started back in the summer with afternoon tea put together by Percy and Lily's caterers. It's been a great way to keep in touch and I feel like I've been getting to know each of you a little, even just through hearing from one of our delivery drivers that you've safely received your cakes. I hope you'll enjoy the contents of this little goodie

bag and the poems and other Christmas-themed items below - some relatively serious, some less so.

As Christmas approaches, do please remember that we are here to help if there's anything you need. Please don't hesitate to call Claire in the office (0114 230 1199) or me (07900 436762) if we can help.

With all good wishes for a blessed and peaceful Christmas,

Matt



A Christmas Prayer...

We pray you, Lord, to purify our hearts that they may be worthy to become your dwelling place.

Let us never fail to find room for you, but come and abide in us, that we also may abide in you, for at this time you were born into the world for us, and live and reign, King of kings and Lord of lords, now and for ever. Amen.

...and a Christmas blessing

May the humility of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the joy of the angels, and the peace of the Christ-child be God's gifts to us and to people everywhere this Christmas-tide. And may the blessing of the Christ-child be upon us and those we love always. Amen.



'Christmas' by John Betjeman

The bells of waiting Advent ring,
The Tortoise stove is lit again
And lamp-oil light across the night
Has caught the streaks of winter rain
In many a stained-glass window sheen
From Crimson Lake to Hookers Green.

The holly in the windy hedge
And round the Manor House the yew
Will soon be stripped to deck the ledge,
The altar, font and arch and pew,
So that the villagers can say
"The church looks nice" on Christmas Day.

Provincial Public Houses blaze
And Corporation tramcars clang,
On lighted tenements I gaze
Where paper decorations hang,
And bunting in the red Town Hall
Says "Merry Christmas to you all."

And London shops on Christmas Eve
Are strung with silver bells and flowers
As hurrying clerks the City leave
To pigeon-haunted classic towers,
And marbled clouds go scudding by
The many-steepled London sky.

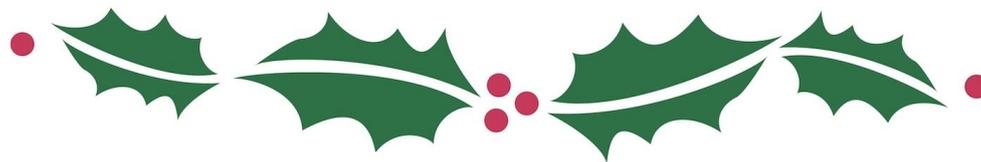
And girls in slacks remember Dad,
And oafish louts remember Mum,
And sleepless children's hearts are glad.
And Christmas-morning bells say "Come!"
Even to shining ones who dwell
Safe in the Dorchester Hotel.

And is it true? And is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me ?



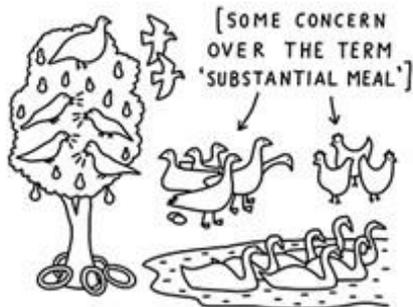
And is it true? For if it is,
No loving fingers tying strings
Around those tissued fripperies,
The sweet and silly Christmas things,
Bath salts and inexpensive scent
And hideous tie so kindly meant,

No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single Truth compare –
That God was man in Palestine
And lives today in Bread and Wine.



THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

ADJUSTED FOR 2020



DAYS 1-7: CONTINUE
PRETTY MUCH AS BEFORE



8 MAIDS A-MILKING
ALLOWED TO CARRY ON
(ESSENTIAL WORK)



9 LADIES DANCING
OVER ZOOM



Who was the first motorcyclist in the Bible?
David – the sound of his triumph was heard throughout the land.

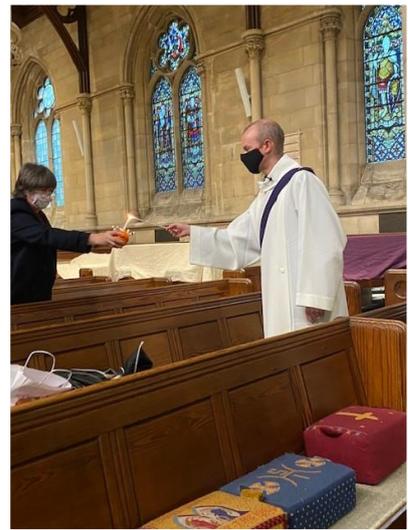
What type of key do you need for a Nativity play?
A don-key!

What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?
A Christmas Quacker!



Our Christingle Service took place on Sunday 6th December and this was a really lovely service in aid of the Children's society. It was really nice to see so many families in Church and it was the first time since the spring that our choristers were able to go into the stalls and sing.

Here are some pictures from the service:



A Message from the Lunch Club Helpers:

Jean Couldry and Trudie Kelly regularly make a phone call around everyone who attends the lunch club and have a nice catch up with everyone. Trudie and Jean both enjoy their regular phone calls and if they can share news with the other members they try to do this. The overwhelming message this month that everyone wanted to reach each other was that they wish each other well, miss each other at the weekly lunch club and especially are missing the Christmas lunch Club.



Lessons & Carols

Led by Revd Dr Matthew Rhodes,
come and join our joyous
Service of Lessons and Carols.

To attend in Church
tickets are available via



Eventbrite

www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

0114 230 1199

**Sunday 20th December
at 4pm and 6.30pm**

Join us in Church, on ZOOM or Facebook Live



Midnight Mass

You are warmly invited to
share in our
Communion service with
Carols, Readings and Sermon.

Christmas Eve

Thursday 24th December
at 11.30pm

Join us in Church,
On ZOOM or Facebook live.

www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

0114 230 1199

No tickets required, social distancing in place.
Restricted numbers





St John's, Ranmoor

CHRISTMAS MORNING

**You are warmly invited to share in our
Christmas Morning Services:**

8.30am Said Communion and 10.30am Parish Communion

Both services are in Church, On ZOOM and Facebook Live

To attend the 10.30am service you will need a pre-booked ticket.

Tickets available from Eventbrite:

www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

Eventbrite

0114 230 1199 administrator@stjohnsranmoor.org.uk



A message from Matthew: