

# THE PORCH

DECEMBER 2024 & JANUARY 2025

## HOPE



80p

ST EDWARD'S CHURCH  
DRINGHOUSES, YORK

## Who's Who in St. Edward's

**Vicar:** Reverend Canon Richard Carew  
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Office Hours: Monday 1.00pm - 4.00pm. Tuesday - Friday  
9.00am - 4.00pm  
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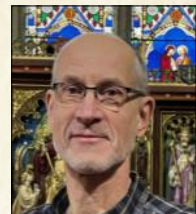
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**Children and Youth Coordinator:** Helen Cross  
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for any submissions or questions.

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## Wrapt in Night's Mantle...

The theme of this month's Porch is hope, and if there is one thing that we could do with a bit more of at the moment, it would be hope! Our TV screens and our newspaper are full of stories of war and rumours of war. The election of Donald Trump as the next President of the United States of America has made other countries around the world understandably nervous as we wait to see what this most unpredictable of politicians will do with his second term in office. And at the top of the news as I write this article, is the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury following the publication of a report critical of the Church's response to disclosures of the appalling abuse perpetrated by John Smyth. In the midst of so much that feels dark or uncertain in our world, where do we see light and hope?



Giving a Retreat talk recently, one of our retired clergy here at St Edward's, the Revd Mark Russell-Smith pointed us to a poem, Christmas 1, by George Herbert which includes the line,

Oh Thou, whose glorious, yet contracted light,  
Wrapt in night's mantle, stole into a manger;

I was very struck by the image of the God who is light, hiding His infinite light so that He might enter the darkness of this world gently and unobtrusively. It suggests that the full radiance of God's light would have been so devastating for humanity to behold, that instead God chooses to come to us in a way that will enable us to approach him as we are, but without being overwhelmed. As someone else once put it, 'God couldn't make Himself any bigger to impress us, so He became smaller to invite us.'

But even this moderated, "contracted Light" was too threatening for Herod who immediately sent out soldiers to kill the infant Jesus. He followed a pattern used by despots throughout the ages to lash out at those by whom they feel threatened, and to respond with violence to protect their own power rather than to seek the common good.

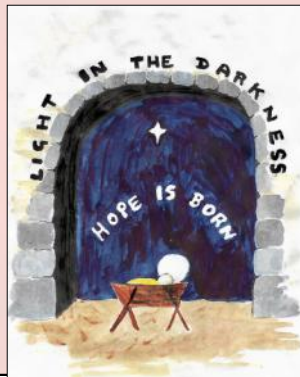
And yet that light of Jesus grew and began to shine more brightly as Jesus began his public ministry. Again, vested interests felt threatened and so the religious leaders who felt exposed by Jesus's popularity, and by his criticisms of them, on multiple occasions tried to intimidate Jesus to stop his ministry. But the light continued to shine.

And so, in one of the darkest hours in human history it looked as though the light had finally been put out as Jesus was arrested, subjected to a sham trial and then crucified on trumped up charges. It looked as though the light really had gone out.

And yet... And yet on that first Easter Sunday the light burst forth from the tomb and that light continues to shine today. Even in the darkest places of the world God is at work, often by continuing to enter the darkness gently and unobtrusively, "wrapt in night's mantle", to invite others to join with Him in bringing light and hope.

And that invitation continues to us today. On that first Christmas night God broke into the darkness decisively and conclusively. And we are invited to be those who step boldly into the world carrying that light of Christ into our neighbourhoods with the message of hope. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. God is at work, and therefore there is hope.

A very Happy Christmas and a hopeful New Year to you all.



## YULETIDE MEMORIES

A festive highlight for my family at Christmas was the Yule log, which was not wooden but a scrumptious, 'bad for your health' doubly-chocolate-encrusted roll fashioned like a log (not available on the NHS). Are they still done? Keep me away from them; good for morale but bad for teeth.

As kids we were aware of the Nativity story, which we heard at school, but, sadly, it didn't seem to resonate to any depth. However, contrastingly, my sister and I religiously went to Sunday School, sent there by our parents even though they weren't 'churchy'. Odd. It was the thing to do in our street.

We just didn't see the point of spoiling Christmas with too much religion! I may have made a vague connection between Father Christmas and God. I used to think angels and fairies were the same thing. Apparently not. Much later I studied theology to disabuse me of this misconception. I should add that I never received a copy of 'the Observer's Book of Heavenly Beings' for Christmas.

I studiously avoided the school nativity play. In fact, I've only ever worn fancy dress once throughout my entire life which was at St Edward's alongside two other church wise men who ought to have known better and quite wisely wish to remain anonymous. Our names together sounded like a firm of solicitors. Come to think of it so did the 'originals', 'Melchior', 'Caspar' and 'Balthazar', Attorneys at Law.

An exciting 'Advent' diversion for York families was the procession of Father Christmas, in full splendour, ensconced on his (wheeled) sleigh from the Station to the extensive Co-op emporium in Railway - now George Hudson - Street, or to the impressive Boyes' department store at Ouse Bridge. The two competing Santa's would take up separate residence at the two establishments. A crowd fit for royalty amassed to witness the rival arrivals.

With each passing day the signs of festive imminence would increase. Dad would bring down from the attic the Oxydol cardboard box containing decorations and accoutrements. We had our favourite baubles. How upset we'd be if a delicate sphere shattered. The special ones we treated almost as seasonal pets that hibernated for most of the year. The pièce de resistance (not a French wartime hero!) was the shiny lance-shaped confection that fitted on top of the tree. We had a reverence for those delicate ornaments. Some were small, "baublelets", in a cluster like cherries, but totally inedible.



The obviously artificial Christmas tree with its folding branches was unfurled from its newspaper wrapping with due ceremony. We'd been waiting for this moment for 365 days, even longer in Leap Years. A sprig of holly would be stuck above the hall mirror. Another bit of greenery, regarded as a trifle risqué, mistletoe, would adorn a ceiling light fitting. Christmas wreaths on front doors were rare then and regarded as exceedingly posh.

The approach of Christmas was marked by growing excitement in the Reed household even though it was virtually a re-run of last time and the time before that and, would you credit it, the time before that. The wish list would waft its way up the chimney to Father Christmas's 'office'. I think we addressed the great myth as 'Father Christmas' rather than 'Santa' or 'Santa Claus' (properly 'Santa von Claus' due to German aristocratic origins). After a year or two the Reed children came up with a new name for Father Christmas - 'Dad'.

Mum got even busier making paper chains using colour paper strips turned into ringlets and insecurely adhered by a floury half-effective paste, helped by sister Julie and me. That wasn't all. An experimental lighting of the candles on the highly-flammable tree would be carried out, partly to test the force and direction of the draught under the door. Then Mum embarked on the great annual project, the construction of the cosy, snowbound cottage for window display to show off to the neighbours.

This awe-inspiring creation comprised a cardboard box with windows cut out, crowned by a folded cardboard strip (the roof) and on top a vertical empty matchbox, the chimney. The whole edifice except window apertures would be covered with layers of cotton wool *aka* snow. The windows were then glazed with red, transparent sweetie wrappers. But the really exciting touch was what went inside the structure - one of those bulky, old-fashioned bike lamps, giving ye olde Christmas cottage a warming glow that would have invited in good King Wenceslas (who, *en passant*, is difficult to trace in the Bible). My concordance is silent there.

Up went the paper chains, much-used threadbare tinsel, crepe balls, balloons and hanging from the living room ceiling, strings of cotton wool blobs. More snow, but at least slush and ice-free snow. My childhood Christmases would have been incomplete without cotton wool.

About this time there'd be a baking frenzy. Mum was a dab hand at producing trays of lovely peppermint sweets like miniature cushions. Less successful was oven-baked toffee. It had the appearance, and texture, of clear brown glass. Nutcrackers (or explosives) were utilised to break up the toffee into portions or shrapnel. When bashed it cracked like sea ice in a sudden thaw. Gum laceration was a danger. Christmas puddings were produced but weren't popular so when the time came, would be shunted around the dish, particularly once the old silver sixpence had been retrieved. Christmas cake, on the other hand, was a different matter. The children had played their part with wooden spoons. What we liked about the cake was its ruby-coloured accompaniment, a cheap brand of port. It made us feel very grown up.

We went out carol singing around the area, taking care to give the Fulford Barracks kids a wide berth. They had a reputation for unseasonal pugnacity which was only right really as they were offspring of the military. Our motley group of young carollers didn't give much of a performance. But curtains did tweak and doors did open after our closing signature chant 'Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat, please put a penny in the old man's hat, if you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do (sometimes it had to), if you haven't got a ha'penny, 'God bless you!'.

After sleigh bells had been imagined during a sleepless night, Christmas morning would begin well before dawn or Reveille. We tried not to switch on bedroom lights until 2.30 am which was as early as we dare push it. Our Christmas stockings were actually pillow cases. We didn't mess about - expectations were high. I was hoping for Dinky Toys or Hornby rail accessories. An orange or tangerine would be amongst the fare left by the reindeer-operator turned fruiterer.

The chicken was plucked and prepared (a euphemism) at home, to our horrified gaze. Never a turkey back then. We faithfully observed the wishbone ritual. Did you?

Boxing Day, then as now, was national leftovers day. Talk about anticlimax. However, there were new toys to be played with. The wireless was a family attraction. We had our favourite BBC Light Programme shows, which still remain in my memory. Generally-speaking, though, it was considered a rather boring day. Undemanding board (bored?) games; Ludo, Draughts and Snakes & Ladders or simple card games like 'Sevensy', 'Rummy', 'Snap!' and 'Happy Families' (just like ours!) were played. However, the one 'saving grace' was the bagatelle, a means of firing musket balls by mechanical means. One thing with which we consoled ourselves was that we weren't at school so 'count your blessings, name them one by one'.

There were parties in the neighbourhood or amongst relatives, but I've consistently not been a partygoer throughout my life, almost made a career of it. Eat your heart out, Scrooge. Nearly forgot the indoor fireworks - what a dead loss, like watching someone light a cigarette!

There was one other thing to look forward to after the main Christmas season, New Year's Eve, or more specifically midnight. We were allowed to stay up for this, a major concession. The highlight was the 'First Footing' where Dad with his black hair, was the star performer; the 'Lucky Bird' was the mysterious term used. He carried out this rite along the street to each neighbour. He would carry with him a shiny lump of coal.

At most addresses he was plied with a wee toddy of something warming and a crumbling slice of Christmas cake plus a lump of industrial strength Cheddar. On that occasion we children were permitted a tincture of port. All very pagan and we loved it. We felt slightly wicked, albeit in a nice sort of way. 'Lucky bird' was invited in to the house by means of a few words that sounded suspiciously like an incantation- but good fun! A bit like Halloween for adults.

No Christmas would be complete without reference to weather. We seemed to have a lot more serious snow back then, even at Christmas. I disliked snow and didn't see the point of it, particularly when setting off on my morning paper round at 7.30 am. I didn't dream of a 'White Christmas'.

Just some Christmas recollections and reflections to fit alongside your own memories. How differently we regard Christmas now. Some of us. Have yourselves a very blessed Christmas.

Derek Reed

Merry Christmas



AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

From the Porch Team

## Promise Page - Hope

As we come to the end of 2024, we may start to look ahead at the next year. Incredibly, 2025 means we are somehow a quarter of a way through this century. I imagine (for those of us old enough to remember the turn of the century!) the past 25 years have seen a lot of change for us all, some good and some bad. I remember at the turn of the century, my family attended a huge New Year's party. It was the only one we ever really went to, and there was such a sense of excitement and hope for the century to come (beyond the dreaded Y2K computer virus that was promised). As I'm sure is true for most, the 25 years that came after this has been full of ups, downs and bits in between. It can sometimes feel a bit 'hopeless' and hope itself can sometimes feel a bit difficult to come by.

But the hope we read about in the Bible, and the hope that we can have as Christians, isn't the hope of 'I hope this year will be a bit better than the last' or 'I hope it will be a bit sunnier in Summer this year'. Christian hope is the confident expectation of what God has promised, and its strength is in His faithfulness. We can have this kind of hope as we look ahead into the new year - the hope in God's promises to us and in His faithfulness to those promises.

Helen Cross

C&Y Coordinator

*A prayer:*

Dear God,

Thank you that we can have a hope in you that is confident and that we can trust in You.

Amen.

### *An activity:*

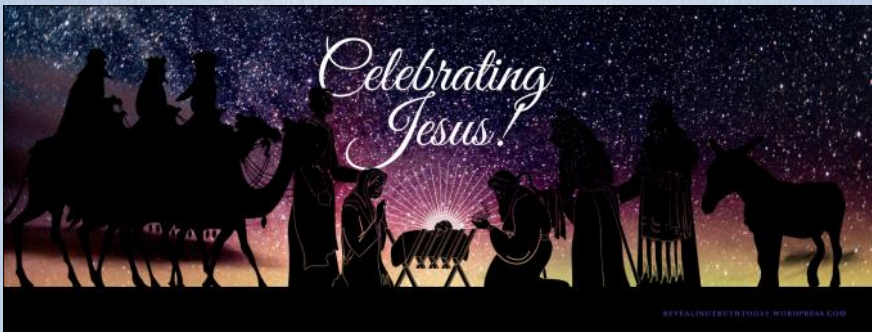
What are your hopes for the year ahead? Write some down and put them in a pot or jar. Pray about the hopes in your jar and then this time next year, take the hopes out of the jar and look at what happened with these over the year.

## **Post Christmas Services**

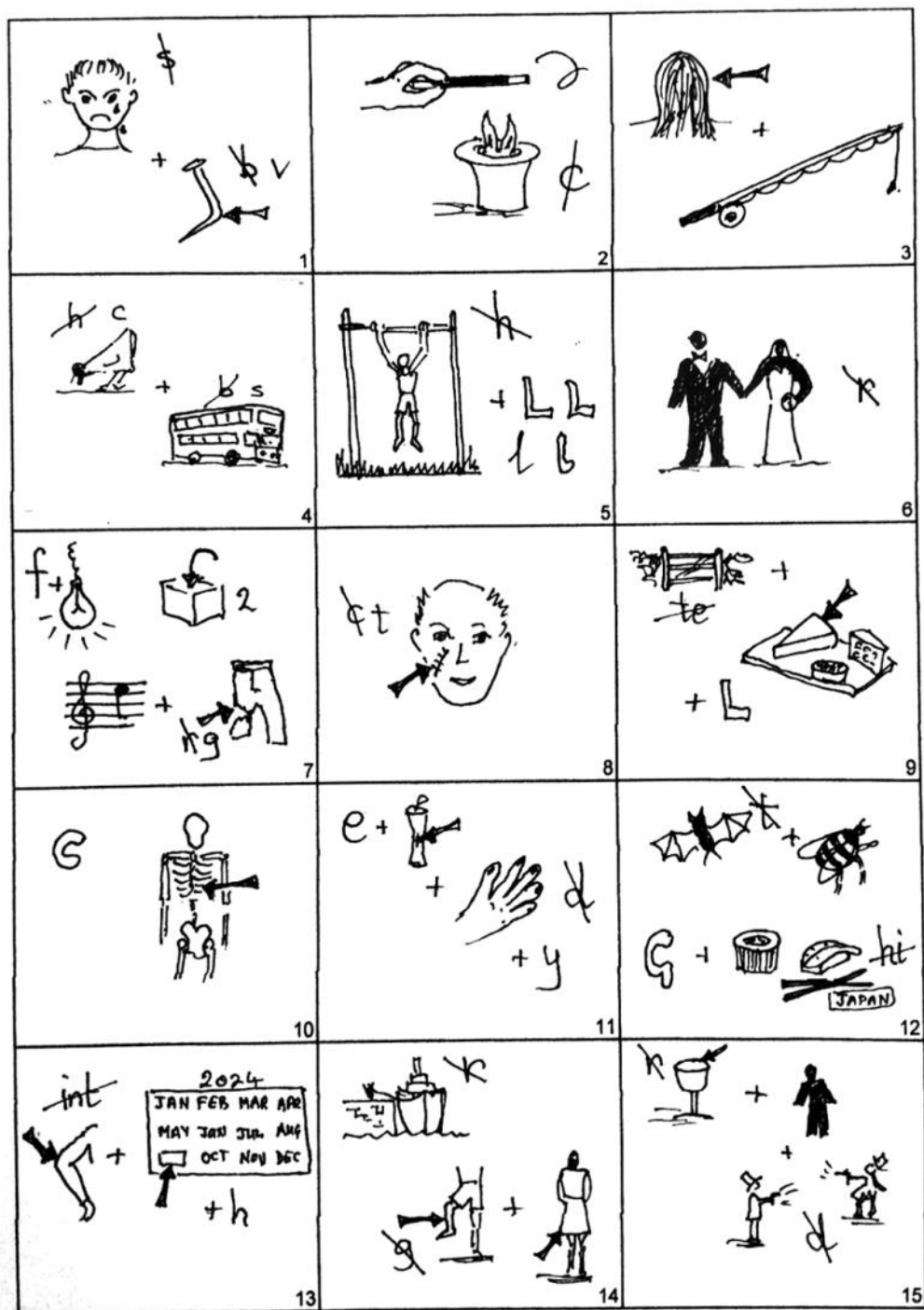
**Sunday 29th December 2024:** There will be only **ONE service** on this day at 10am.

**Sunday 5th January 2025:** The 10am service will be Holy Communion and NOT the All-Age Service - so there will be no 6.30pm service that day.

**Sunday 12th January 2025:** This IS the All-Age Service with the corresponding 6.30pm Holy Communion with Prayers for Healing.



# QUIZ - all the answers are to do with Christmas



# 21



## The St Edward's Advent Calendar

It is back for another year! Starting on December 1<sup>st</sup>, through to December 25<sup>th</sup>, the St Edward's Advent Calendar is available online.

Each day behind the doors is a short reflection on a Christmas theme. Uplifting, inspiring and ecologically friendly - please log on to our website:

[www.stedsdringhouses.org](http://www.stedsdringhouses.org). And yes - there is snow!

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## DECEMBER 2024 & JANUARY 2025 SERVICES & EVENTS

<b>Monday-Thursday</b>	<b>Church open during daytime 9.30am-3.00pm (Friday 12.30-3.00pm)</b>
<b>Monday-Thursday</b>	<b>Café open 9.30am-12.00 &amp; 1.30pm-4.00pm</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Café open 9.30am-12.00</b>
<b>Mondays</b>	<b>Garden Gang (during the season) 2.00pm-4.00pm</b>
<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>Youth Group 7.00pm-8.30pm</b>
<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>Wednesday Afternoon Small Group 2.30pm-4.00pm (alternate)</b>
<b>Fridays</b>	<b>Little Teds 10.30am-12.00pm (term time only)</b>
<b>Fridays (see below for practice dates)</b>	<b>6.30-7.30pm Choir practice in Church</b>

Any enquiries about Baptisms, Weddings etc to 01904 709111 or  
[parishoffice@stedsdriehouses.org](mailto:parishoffice@stedsdriehouses.org)

Timings are correct at time of going to press.

<b>Monday</b>	<b>10.00-12.00</b>	<b>Needlecraft Group</b>
	<b>7.00—8.00pm</b>	<b>My Yoga Journey</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>10.00-11.00am</b>	<b>Exercise for Fitness &amp; Health</b>
	<b>11.10 –12.10</b>	<b>Mindful Yoga</b>
	<b>12.30-4.00pm</b>	<b>U3A Bridge</b>
	<b>6.15-7.15pm</b>	<b>Beaver Scouts (in term time) see back page for Wednesday evening session</b>
	<b>7.45-9.45pm</b>	<b>Line Dancing</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>9.30am-12noon</b>	<b>Probus (fortnightly)</b>
	<b>10.00-11.00 am</b>	<b>Aerobics</b>
	<b>1.15-3.45 pm</b>	<b>Art Group</b>
	<b>6.15-8.15pm</b>	<b>Perfecting Pilates (2 x 1 hour classes)</b>
<b>1st Thursday</b>	<b>11.30-am12.30pm</b>	<b>Yorkshire Club</b>
	<b>2.00-3.00pm</b>	<b>Contact</b>
<b>3rd Thursday</b>	<b>2.00-4.00pm</b>	<b>Townswomen's Guild</b>
	<b>7.30-9.30pm</b>	<b>Local History Group</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>9.30-10.30am</b>	<b>Feel Good Fit</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>9.30-12.00</b>	<b>Living Well Health Community (2nd &amp; 4th in month)</b>
	<b>12.00-2.00</b>	<b>Lunches in the Community Hall ( see poster for dates)</b>
	<b>6.15-7.15pm</b>	<b>Beavers Scouts (in term-time)</b>

## **Sunday 1st December– Advent 1**

8.30am BCP Holy Communion

I Thessalonians 3: 9-end: Luke 21: 25-36

10.00am All Age Service

6.30pm Holy Communion with Prayers for Healing

Readings as above

## **Monday 2nd December**

10.00am –12.00 noon

St. Edward's Needlecraft Group

## **Tuesday 3rd December**

10.00-11.00am

Exercise for Fitness & Health

7.30pm

Sing Shepherds All Christmas Concert

## **Wednesday 4th December**

12.00 noon

Praying in Company

7.00-8.30pm

Youth Group

## **Thursday 5th December**

10.00am Holy Communion

Isaiah 26: 1-6: Matthew 7:21, 24-27

2.00-3.00pm

Contact

## **Friday 6th December**

10.30 –12.00 noon

Little Ted's

2.00pm

Alzheimer's Society Christmas Service

6.30—7.30pm

Extended Choir Practice

## **Saturday 7th December**

10.00am—4.00pm

Wreath Making Event in the Scout Hut

## **Sunday 8th December –Advent 2**

8.30am Holy Communion

Philippians 1: 3-11: Luke 3:1-6

10.00am Holy Communion

Readings as above

## **Monday 9th December**

10.00am –12.00 noon

St. Edward's Needlecraft Group

## **Tuesday 10th December**

10.00-11.00am

Exercise for Fitness & Health

6.30-7.30pm

Carols outside Ged Bell Butchers

## **Wednesday 11th December**

12.00 noon

Praying in Company

7.00—8.30pm

Youth Group

## **Thursday 12th December**

10.00am Holy Communion

Isaiah 41: 13-20: Matthew 11: 11-15

2.00—4.00pm

Townswomen's Guild

## **Friday 13th December**

10.30-12.00 noon

Little Teds

12.00—2.00pm

Lunches

6.30—7.30pm

Extended Choir Practice

## **Sunday 15th December—Advent 3**

8.30am BCP Holy Communion

Philippians 4: 4-7: Luke 3: 7-18

10.00am

Dress Up Nativity

4.00pm

Candlelit Carol Service

## **Tuesday 16th December**

10.00—11.00am

Exercise for Fitness & Health

## **Wednesday 18th December**

12.00 noon

Praying in Company

2.30pm

Wednesday Afternoon Small Group

7.00—8.30pm

Youth Group

## **Thursday 19th December**

10.00am Holy Communion

Judges 13: 2-7, 24-end

7.30—9.00pm

Local History Group

## **Friday 20th December**

10.30—12.00noon

Little Teds

12.00 noon onwards

Christmas Lunch (need to book)

## **Saturday 21st December**

11.00—12.00 noon

Carols outside Café no.12

## **Sunday 22nd December—Advent 4**

8.30am Holy Communion

Hebrews 10: 5-10: Luke 1: 39-45

10.00am Holy Communion

Readings as above

## **Tuesday 24th December -Christmas Eve**

4.00pm

Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Holy Communion Service

Titus 3: 4-7: Luke 2: 1-20

## **Wednesday 25th December -Christmas Day**

10.00am All-Age Communion Service

Titus 3: 4-7: Luke 2: 1-20

## **Sunday 29th December– First Sunday of Christmas**

10.00am Holy Communion

Colossians 3: 12-17: Luke 2:41-end

## **Thursday 2nd January 2025**

10.00am Holy Communion

1 John 2: 22-28: John1: 19-28

2.00pm

Contact

## **Sunday 5th January—Epiphany**

8.30am Holy Communion

Ephesians 3: 1-12: Matthew 2: 1-12

10.00am Holy Communion

Readings as above

## **Tuesday 7th January**

10.00-11.00am

Exercise for Fitness & Health

## **Wednesday 8th January**

12.00 noon

Praying in Company

7.00—8.30pm

Youth Group

## **Thursday 9th January**

10.00am Holy Communion

I John 4: 11-18: Mark 6: 45-52

## **Friday 10th January**

10.30—12.00 noon

Little Ted's

12.00—2.00pm

Lunches

## **Sunday 12th January—1st Sunday of Epiphany**

8.30am Holy Communion

Acts 8: 14-17: Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

10.00am All Age Service

6.30pm Holy Communion with Prayer for Healing

Readings as above

## **Monday 13th January**

10.00—12.00 noon

St Edward's Needlecraft Group

## **Tuesday 14th January**

10.00-11.00am

Exercise for Fitness & Health

7.00—9.00pm

GROW

## **Wednesday 15th January**

12.00 noon

Praying in Company

7.00-8.30pm

Youth Group

## **Thursday 16th January**

10.00am Holy Communion

Hebrews 3: 7-14: Mark 1:40-end

## **Friday 17th January**

10.30-12.00 noon

Little Ted's

## **Sunday 19th January –2nd Sunday of Epiphany**

8.30am Holy Communion

I Corinthians 12: 1-11: John 2: 1-11

10.00am Family Communion

Readings as above

## **Monday 20th January**

10.00-12.00 noon

St Edward's Needlecraft Group

7.30pm

PCC Meeting

## **Tuesday 21st January**

10.00-11.00am

Exercise for Fitness & Health

**Wednesday 22nd January**

12.00 noon

Praying in Company

7.00—8.30pm

Youth Group

**Thursday 23rd January**

10.00am Holy Communion

Hebrews 7: 25-8:6: Mark 3: 7-12

**Friday 24th January**

10.30—12.00 noon

Little Teds

12.00– 2.00pm

Friday Lunches

**Sunday 26th January—4th Sunday of Epiphany**

8.30am Holy Communion

I Corinthians 12: 12-31a: Luke 4: 14-21

10.00am Holy Communion

Readings as above

3.00pm

Baptism Service

**Monday 27th January**

10.00-12.00 noon

St Edward's Needlecraft Group

**Tuesday 28th January**

10.00 –11.00

Exercise for Fitness & Health

**Wednesday 29th January**

12.00 noon

Praying in Company

7.00-8.30pm

Youth Group

**Thursday 30th January**

10.00am Holy Communion

Hebrews 10: 19-25: mark 4: 21-25

2.00pm Women's Fellowship

Fitness to Music with Kate Lamb

**Friday 31st January**

10.30—12.00

Little Teds

**Funerals**

Daphne Doran

12th November 2024

## Hope in Dark Places

*When Hitler rose to power, some leading Christians formed the confessing church in Germany. Its leaders included Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Pastor Martin Niemöller. Martin Niemöller spent his time after the war talking about his experiences, and those who met him talked of a man who spoke of the Bible being his source of strength during those lonely years. Sadly, Dietrich Bonhoeffer did not survive.*

### CHRISTMAS IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP

The Confessing Church in Germany during the Second World War was set up in opposition to the ruling Nazis. Every member knew that joining this church put their life in peril. Leading members were Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Pastor Martin Niemöller. Martin spent many months in a concentration camp, knowing that executions were taking place around him. Yet he survived - and lived to be an inspiration to many. Dietrich Bonhoeffer did not survive the war - he was hanged by piano wire in a former school classroom in Germany, because of his opposition to Hitler and the Nazi Regime.



*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

From his prison cell - shortly before his execution - he wrote the following Christmas letter to his family and especially his fiancé. "I am writing my Christmas letter already (17th December 1943) so as to be on the safe side. If, contrary to all expectations, I should still be here at Christmas, the past 8 1/2 months have taught me that it is the unexpected that happens. I am not going to let this lonely Christmas get me down.

For a Christian there is nothing peculiarly difficult about Christmas in a prison cell. I dare say it will have more meaning and will be observed with greater sincerity here in this prison, than in places where all that survives of the feast is its name.

That misery, suffering, poverty, loneliness, helplessness and guilt look very different to the eyes of God from what they do to Man - that God should come down to the very place which men usually abhor, that Christ was born in a stable because there was no room for him in the inn - these are things which a prisoner can understand better than anyone else. For [a prisoner] the Christian story is glad tidings in a very real sense. And that faith gives him a part in the communion of Saints, a fellowship transcending the bounds of time and space - and reducing the months of confinement here to insignificance.

On Christmas Eve, I shall be thinking of you very much, and I want you to believe that I too shall have a few hours of real joy - and that I am not allowing my troubles to get the better of me. When one remembers the time of terror so many are having in Berlin, it brings home to one more than anything else how much there is to be thankful for. It will certainly be a quiet Christmas for everybody, and the children will look back on it for long afterwards. But for the first time, perhaps, many will learn the true meaning of Christmas."

Extract taken from 'Letters and Papers from Prison'.

SCM Press

Article for the Porch from Friends of Grahamstown and District Development.

Recap: Over the last three years, St Edward's has been supporting two students per year at GADRA matric school in Grahamstown. The academic year in South Africa is January to December with the longer school break over their summer and Christmas.



Anam Binase

The two students receiving the bursary this year are Siyamthanda Tshongweni and Anam Binase

Anam lives with her guardian (her late mother's uncle) and two cousins. The uncle is unemployed and the older cousin dropped out of Rhodes University due to finances.

Anam has already improved her scores in English, Maths

Literacy and Business studies from the 40s to 56% and 65% in her June exams. She is on course for a "compelling" application to Rhodes University and would like to be a teacher, preferably in the primary age group.



Siyamthanda Tshongweni

Siyamthanda lives with her mother, father, three sisters and a brother. Both parents and her older sister are unemployed and her brother is at East Cape Midlands College. As well as improving her English (her first language is Xhosa, I believe) she is studying a module at Rhodes University within their "Bridging Programme". She is doing well in that and should go on to full time university Bachelor of Arts program from 2025.

St Edwards has been paying the bursary for both of these students over 2024.

I felt very privileged this week to meet the Vice-chancellor of Rhodes University, and two senior colleagues in London. I was invited with some fellow trustees to talk about working together in Grahamstown.

It was fascinating to hear how the VC believes it is essential to bring the city of Grahamstown along with the university. This is where the students and the families of their staff live so they know that if the city is not working well, the University cannot either. Although to a certain extent they could plough their own furrow, if the energy or water supplies to Grahamstown aren't working or the streets are not maintained or rubbish collected it impacts their students and staff.

Rather than being negative about the municipality (council) they use their influence persuasively and support them to improve performance.

We talked about facilities across Grahamstown where they can apply their technical expertise to maintain while we provide some financial resource to fund. There are two such hubs in the townships now but the ambition is to give everyone in Grahamstown access to, for example, wi-fi. In 2024 in the UK so many of us take it for granted that we can look things up on the internet or send emails or even work from home. This is a long way off for most people in Grahamstown but small steps can bring it closer.

Thank you to all of you for supporting these two students.

Cai Mallett (October 2024)

**Hello from Dringhouses Library!**



How is it the Christmas season again already?! We're ready for it at the library, with festive events in December, and a few things to brighten up January blues.

**The Friends of Dringhouses Library** invite you to a **Christmas coffee morning, on Tuesday 17 December, 10.30am-12pm**. Delicious cakes and bakes, with mince pies alongside other festive tastes. Come along for a chat with your community, and support your local library, all welcome!



**Children's Christmas Crafts on Saturday 21 December 10am 12pm** with the **Friends of the Library**. Come along and make pretty Christmassy things to hang on your tree or in your window, and of course eat a few festive treats too. All welcome, no need to book just drop in.

**The Bloodaxe Book Challenge** runs until **Saturday 11 January**, so encourage all the young readers in your life to pop into the library and join up. Read 4 books to collect stickers and a ticket to the Jorvik Viking Centre, **PLUS** the chance to meet Sophie Kirtley, bestselling author of *The haunting of fortune farm*, *The wild way home* and *The way to Impossible Island* at a special event.

On **Monday 20 January at 2.30pm** banish the January blues with a lighthearted set of tales all about Dringhouses Railway. Join local history author **Rosemary Cook** for '**Tales from Dringhouses Railway - the Solicitor, the Skater, the Signalman and the Scholar**'. Learn about the arrival of the railway in York through human stories of accidents and incidents associated with the railway as it runs through Dringhouses. Free, booking required.



Our **Parents Place get-together for new and expectant parents** runs every **Tuesday from 11am-12.00pm**. Meet other parents and parents to be, chat, have a cuppa, let the babies have a wriggle, and share the amazing, demanding experience of parenthood! All welcome, free.

**Under 5s Storytime** is on every **Thursday and Saturday, 11am to 11.30am**, with songs, rhymes, and stories for children under 5 and their carers. **Free and no booking required.**

Our **Lego Club** is on every **Tuesday 3.30pm to 4.30pm**. Expect building challenges and creative fun with Lego every week. Free and no booking required.

**Children's Craft Club** is on every **Thursday 3.30-4.30pm** for messy creative fun. No need to book, all welcome.

Our friendly **Knit and Natter** group meets **every Tuesday, 10am to 12pm**, for coffee, chat, knitting, crocheting, and fun. **Free and no booking required.**

**The library will be closed from Tuesday 24 December until Thursday 2 January. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

Lucy

## Hope against Hope

### *Update of the work Accomplish Children's Trust*

We often feel frustrated by our perceived inability to change the things that we care about, be it climate change, economic injustice, global conflicts or just downright unpleasantness in our communities and on social media. And yet, we are educated, we live in one of the wealthiest and most developed countries on the planet and we do have some influence and degree of agency.

Now, imagine trying to scratch a living in one of the poorest countries in the world, with little, if any, access to education and health care, absolutely no safety net of a welfare state and on top of that, having a disabled child. You may hope for a (better) future for your family but have precious little chance of achieving it.



As many of you will know, Accomplish Children's Trust, one of the charities supported by St Edward's, has been working with people in these situations over the last few years. One of the early projects in Uganda, was to help build a school and support teachers who provide education for children with disabilities. Providing primary and secondary education is all very well, but these young people still have aspirations to be part of the local work force and economy, so the next project was to provide Vocational Training. In previous years there have been Christmas Appeals to raise money to equip these young people with hairdressing kits or sewing machines.

This project has been so successful that the current objective is to have their own building, providing a residential Vocational Training Centre so that more young people can have their hopes and dreams become a reality. Land has already been bought and Accomplish hope to raise money which will be used towards building a new classroom block.

This year Accomplish has been accepted to take part in the **Big Give Christmas Challenge 2024**. Big Give is an organisation which attracts donations from businesses, philanthropic organisations etc, and distributes this to charities. The charity has to set a target of money that it wishes to raise via its own fundraising, and if this target is reached, Big Give will double it.

This fund-raising project will run from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December. If you were thinking of making a special donation this Christmas, please do it via the Big Give Challenge during these dates, following this link:

<https://donate.biggive.org/campaign/a056900002TPWRqAAP?c=77211>

This will take you to the Big Give website where there is a short summary about the project and information about how to give.



If you would like to make a donation but feel this is too complicated, you can still donate via the Accomplish website. [accomplishtrust.org.uk](https://accomplishtrust.org.uk) . Updates and more information about the projects can also be found on their website.

We might not be able to achieve world peace this Christmas, but we can help make someone else's dream come true.

Linda Sykes

*[Please note: if you go to the online version of The Porch on the church website, you can click on the page links.]*



## MUFFIN TUESDAY!

Join us for a free hot drink and cake

10.30AM -11.30AM on Tuesday mornings

in the Atrium Café and small meeting room.

A chance to meet old friends and make new ones.

Transport may be possible: please contact the Parish Office on 01904 709111

St Edward the Confessor Church, Tadcaster Road, Dringhouses, York, YO24 1QG

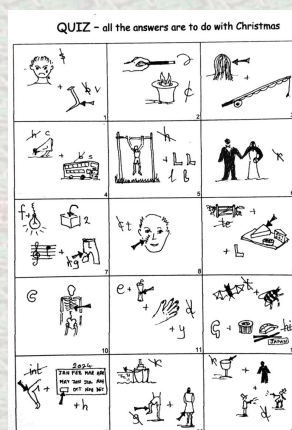
## Christmas Quiz answers

Answers:

1. Advent. 2. Magi. 3. Herod. 4. Census. 5. Angels.  
6. Mary.

7. Flight into Egypt 8. Star. 9. Gabriel. 10. Crib. 11.  
Epiphany.

12. Baby Jesus. 13. Joseph. 14. Bethlehem 15. Im-  
manuel





## The Porch 2025

This is the last Porch edition for 2024 and the first for 2025, so time to say a few thank yous.

Our editorial team Helen, Linda and Ian, and proof-reader Wendy and Isobel who manages the advertising. A lot of thought and work goes into each edition so a big thank you.

To all who have submitted articles and those who advertise and deliver the Porch and lastly and by no means least, to all our subscribers. Thank you.

In this magazine you will find a letter detailing how to subscribe to the Porch in 2025. The cost being £10 for 10 editions. The enclosed envelope is if you wish to pay by cash or cheque.

To all our readers I wish you a Peaceful Christmas and Good Wishes for 2025.

Anne Brabbs

Distribution Manager

## **A Festival of Dedication**

*The following is an extract from the sermon preached by Revd. Dr Susan Collier on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October.*

***'At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple...'***

For the Jewish people, the temple in Jerusalem was a profound reminder of God's presence with them, yet we are often reminded that church is the *people* rather than the *building*. However, I would suggest it is both, as whilst we are on the earth we need a place to worship - and of course it is people, at much cost in terms of both time and money, who build and care for the building.

The church we are in today was consecrated in **1849**, so it is our 175th birthday this year. However, there has been Christian worship on this site stretching back 500 years when the previous chapel and then church were dedicated to St Helen - hence St Helens Road. However, the person who enabled this church to be built was Mrs. Frances Leigh. She was the surviving member of the Barlow family and thus the inheritor of Middlethorpe Hall and its estate. She had the church built in memory of her husband, Edward Trafford Leigh who was an Anglican priest and had died in 1847. She dedicated the new church to Edward the Confessor - an 11th century king of England with a reputation for holiness, generosity and accessibility to his subjects.

Many generations of people have worshipped and prayed here - and the life of the church in this community has continued to develop. You can see that reflected in the physical building. 1996 saw the dedication of the church extension and then some 20 years later the dedication of a refurbished hall and the new atrium and cafe area. All this and more required the giving of skills and time. We have inherited much from those who have gone before.

In our first reading there is the invitation - **to come to Jesus**. At its best all that we are and do here takes us deeper into relationship with Jesus and with each other.

The reading also reminds us how easily we can damage our community, our relationships together - as we read, **'Make a clean sweep of malice and pretense, envy and hurtful talk.'** Buildings need ongoing maintenance and so do relationships. One way of helping to maintain and grow our relationships is using every opportunity to express our appreciation of each other - to say thank you in one way or another. Later on, in chapter 3, we read the words **'be agreeable, be sympathetic, be loving, be compassionate, be humble. No retaliation. No sharp-tongued sarcasm. Instead, bless—that's your job, to bless'**

Which bring us to the present day and I would like to leave you with some questions to ponder:

What attracted you first to this community?

What are you most thankful for in St Edward's?

What would you most miss if this church and community weren't here?

How has the church helped you grow in faith?

In what way is God inviting you to commit yourself to give of what you have received?

Perhaps each time we come into church we could say 'thank you' for this place and all who have cared for it and continue to care for it and then say thank you for each other and the preciousness of our relationships together. Amen

Susan Collier

### **Deanery Treasurer/Financial Advisor**

The meeting started with a vote to confirm **Adrian Fuller** as the new Deanery Treasurer, and Financial Advisor. Adrian has extensive experience and already supports several small churches with their accounts. It was also decided that correspondence for the Deanery accounts should be sent to his address.

### **Admin Support**

The Deanery are now paying for admin support for 1 day a week. This was previously provided by James the Deacon but is now provided by Zoe King, a member of The Belfry. The cost of the admin support needs to be provided by the parishes, and a small contribution by the Diocese. The cost to the parishes is £4000 per year. It was proposed that this amount be divided in line with the Freewill Offering. The motion was passed by a majority vote. Parishes will be informed of the actual amount we need to provide, in due course.

### **Connect Service**

Rev Mairi Taylor-Gibson, curate at Holy Redeemer, Boroughbridge Road, gave a presentation on a new initiative that they have embarked on. In an attempt to make church more accessible for families with children who have special needs, they have started a monthly service on a Sunday afternoon which incorporates activities, crafts, music etc. They use Makaton and have a sensory area for time out.

They have a core group of about 9 children and feedback from families has been encouraging.

Heworth Church is starting a similar service this month.

## **Funding & Community Engagement Officer**

Viv Cooling is currently fulfilling this role. She is available to help parishes in a variety of ways: funding & grant applications, working with volunteers, applying for permission for projects and creating partnerships.

## **Mustard Seed [www.mseed.org](http://www.mseed.org)**

Peter Phillips introduced the Mustard Seed project and spoke of his first-hand experience as an advocate and volunteer with the project.

The strap line for the project is "Growing disciples where life is tough".

Basically, the project encourages people to use their skills to support churches working in deprived areas of the diocese as "partners in the gospel".

## **Generous Giving**

Jan Grey, from the GG team gave a passionate presentation about moving from Generous Giving to Generous Living. She spoke about how we engage our congregations to embrace whole life generosity. The team are keen to visit churches to do workshops and presentations to enable this.

## **Bishop Flora**

The new Bishop of Selby intends to visit each church in the Deanery in November/December, following her consecration on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

Linda Sykes



# Christmas at St Ed's



**1ST DECEMBER 2024**

10AM ALL- AGE ADVENT SERVICE

**10TH DECEMBER 2024**

6:30PM CAROLS AT GED BELL'S

**15TH DECEMBER 2024**

10AM DRESS-UP NATIVITY SERVICE

4PM CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE

**21ST DECEMBER 2024**

11AM CAROLS AT CAFÉ NO. 12

**24TH DECEMBER 2024**

4PM CRIB SERVICE

11:30PM MIDNIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE

**25TH DECEMBER 2024**

10AM ALL- AGE COMMUNION SERVICE



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