

Crosstalk

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The Parish Magazine of St Bartholomew with St Chad
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December 2021 & January 2022



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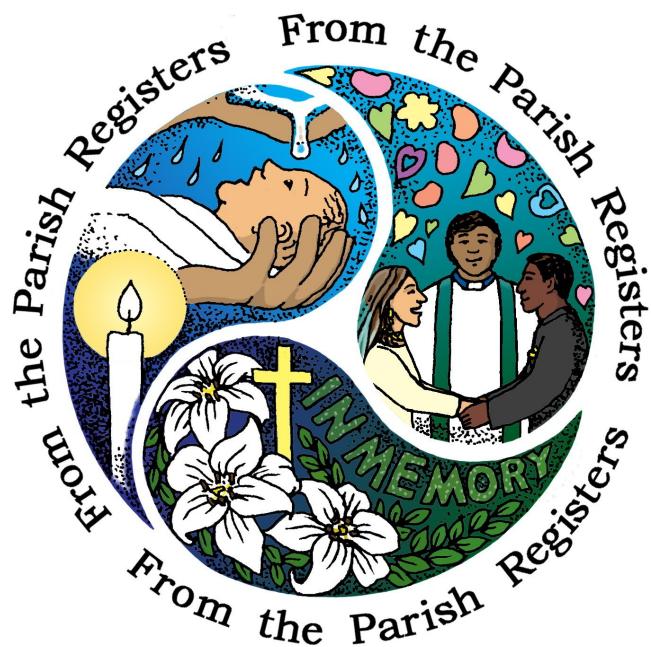
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Contents

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 From your Rector | 13 Gods New Years Honours List |
| 5 Eco Christmas | 14 Plough Sunday |
| 6 Amazed ! | 15 Mouse makes |
| 7 Ruth's Reflections | 16 Hall Hire/Facebook |
| 8-9 God in the Arts | 17-21 Advertisers |
| 10-11 God in the Sciences/
Santa Comes to Irby | 22 Contacts List: Who's Who
/ RDA—Stamps |
| 8 Reflected Faith | 23 January Services/Tots and Tinies |
| 12 Wordsearch | 24 December Services |

Diary Dates

Please see the back page for
Church Service dates and times



Funerals

Baptisms

28th Nov — Dougie Turner

A Christmas Gift

It's not easy getting the right Christmas present for others, especially in these uncertain times. However, the Magi's gifts were entirely appropriate and help us to understand God's gift of Jesus to us.

'On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.' (Matt 2:11). These were the expensive kind of gifts that visitors from the east would bring: gold, frankincense (a plant gum resin used in incense) and myrrh (another resin used in perfumes).

Who is He?

Gold is a gift for a king. In Jesus, we see a king in baby clothes. The worship of the wise men was costly, not only in terms of their gifts but for their lives.

Why did he come?

Frankincense was used by the priests in the temple in offering sacrifices. Jesus, as the ultimate priest, is the one who came to bring God and man together. He could do this because He is both divine and human.

What did it cost Him?

Myrrh was used to embalm the dead. This gift reminds us that the baby of Bethlehem would die on the cross to give His life for us. The wood of the crib and the cross are the same wood!

What are we going to offer Him this Christmas? Jesus is *Christ*, the king who comes to rule our lives; He's *Lord*, the One who knows what it's like to be human as well as divine; and He's *Saviour*, who enables us to be friends of God.

"At Christmas time, when we receive presents that we don't really need, God offers us a gift we cannot do without." – J John



I look forward to seeing you at services and sharing with you as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Revd Jane

10 ways to have a green, eco-friendly Christmas

Let's make this year our most eco-friendly, sustainable Christmas yet and opt for eco Christmas decorations, trees and gifts. Following this year's COP26, we are all aware of just how important it is to make every effort we can to be more sustainable – and for many of us that starts at home. Small changes can make all the difference in reducing our environmental footprint, especially over Christmas, when the potential for waste, over consumption and mass shopping is high.



With this in mind, here are 10 simple ways to host an eco-friendly Christmas – from sending plantable Christmas cards to renting your Christmas tree, and sourcing a sustainable Christmas lunch. Make a new family tradition this year to go green...

1 Rent a Christmas tree OR go for a more eco-friendly alternative

2 Wrap gifts with recycled paper or fabric

3 Send forest-friendly or plantable Christmas cards

4 Buy eco-friendly crackers

5 Think about your wreath

Avoid wreaths adorned with plastic accessories and glittery decorations. Not only are these made using non sustainable materials, but they can be harmful for birds and wildlife if hung up outside. Go for a real, fresh wreath made using seasonal, natural foliage and adornments. Even better, make your own out of fabric that will last year after year.

6 Invest in a reusable advent calendar

7 Reduce your food waste

One option is to buy less. That can be tricky though when guests are staying. Food waste apps, such as Olio, are a smarter option. They connect you to people in need in your local area. You simply list what's available, snap a photo and share your location with other app users. Use your composter and green waste bin for scraps, too.

8 Think about your purchases – food and gifts

Can you buy ethical, fairly traded, plastic free

9 Switch to LED Christmas lights

If every UK household swapped a string of incandescent lights for its LED equivalent, we could save more than £11 million and 29,000 tonnes of CO₂, just over the 12 days of Christmas.

Switch to solar-powered lights outdoors, and put both sets on a timer. You'll not only make environmental savings but your energy bills will be reduced too.

10 Think about your outfit

Resist the temptation to splash out on sequins (they're made from PVC and there are no biodegradable substitutes) and opt for sustainable materials instead.

Amazed!



Some people like surprises. The pleasant ones, anyway!

When we look at the Christmas story, it is full of surprises. Mary didn't expect to be chosen by God to give birth to His Son. Joseph was surprised and shocked that his fiancée was pregnant. The couple thought they would start married life together in Nazareth, but political circumstances forced them to go to Bethlehem and then into Egypt.

The Bethlehem shepherds were surprised and frightened by the heavenly choir and an angel with a marvellous message. Later, they rejoiced at seeing the Saviour - a new born baby in a manger.

The Wise Men were surprised to see a unique star, and so they followed it all the way to Jerusalem. They thought a royal birth would be in a city and in Herod's Palace. They were surprised again, to be redirected to a remote village called Bethlehem. Herod too was surprised that a new king had come, and felt his position and authority were being threatened.

What is most surprising is that God had planned the coming of Jesus thousands of years before it happened. Prophets had told of His coming and their hearers were waiting for Him to appear. But still they were surprised when the Messiah came, for He did not come as a conquering hero but as a suffering Servant.

Jesus came to save people from their sins. He came to restore a broken relationship and bring His people to a glorious Home. The biggest surprise? It was also done for you and me!

Ruth's Reflections

Hello again, it seems hardly any time since I last wrote my ramblings, as Rev Jane calls them! Once again nothing has changed with my moving, it doesn't look as though I will be moving this year. It looks as if I will have to unpack some Christmas decorations.

I have been able to get out into the garden a few times lately to tidy it up, but at the moment the leaves are winning! The last load {hopefully} of rubbish has gone to the tip, courtesy of my daughter and her husband.

I have been going out a lot, with friends, thoroughly enjoying myself, despite Covid. I do think a lot of people, including me, are becoming quite blasé about the pandemic and I must keep reminding myself to be careful and wear a mask when necessary. I do think it should be compulsory to wear one in certain situations. I have realised just how lucky and blessed I am, I am in reasonably good health and my mind is ok {I think} I have a good circle of friends, a lovely family, and various activities to go to. I haven't been able to go and see my elder daughter and grandchildren recently as they had been in contact with covid. Luckily all clear now.

I am still enjoying my photography; I think I am improving, and I intend to buy a new computer when I move.

I am also still ringing, both the church bells and handbells and enjoying that as well. So, in spite of Covid I do have a good life and I thank God daily for it, though I have to admit it would be wonderful if my husband were still alive.

Today is Remembrance Sunday and I went to St Barts, both to ring and to the service. It was lovely to be able to do so, although it saddened me that there were so few there. Being able to go to Church is a comfort to me in these uncertain times.

Well Christmas is fast approaching, and I have done nothing to prepare for it yet. I was hoping to include a change of address in my Christmas cards, but that is not going to happen now. I will be spending Christmas day with my family, so nice not to have to cook!

Have a lovely Christmas everyone and I hope and pray that 2022 is a good year for us all.

Ruth.

Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year



GOD IN THE ARTS : '*The Annunciation to the Shepherds*' by Sano di Pietro.



'In that region there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock'

In the Old Testament shepherds were greatly valued and treated with respect. Patriarchs, prophets and kings had all tended sheep. Job, a rich man, owned 14,000 sheep. David was tending sheep when he was called by God and anointed by Samuel.

But as the Israelites settled in towns and cities and turned to farming, attitudes towards the shepherds changed. As the New Testament opens, shepherding had become a dirty, lonely life, away from civilisation. Shepherds could not observe the daily rituals of their faith, and so they had a low status in society, looked down upon by orthodox Jews.

But out in the countryside with just the hills and the plains and the open air, St Luke tells us that it was there that God's message was proclaimed and heard. Cities and towns had walls and barriers, as Bethlehem has today. But in the fields at night, there were shepherds, watching and alert, ready for any

eventuality. And so, they were the first to hear of the birth of a Saviour.

'The Annunciation to the Shepherds' is this month's painting by Sano di Pietro. We know little about this Italian artist apart from some dates. He was born in Siena in 1406 and died there in 1481. But he has left us a legacy of beautiful and sensitive paintings. As we look at this scene, we see the human details: two shepherds huddled by the fireside with their dog, all three looking up to see the angel, and a spear by the side to ward off thieves and predators. The sheep are safely in their pen, black and white fleeces huddled together for warmth. In the sky the angel appears, bearing an olive branch in one hand and with the other pointing to Bethlehem in the distance.

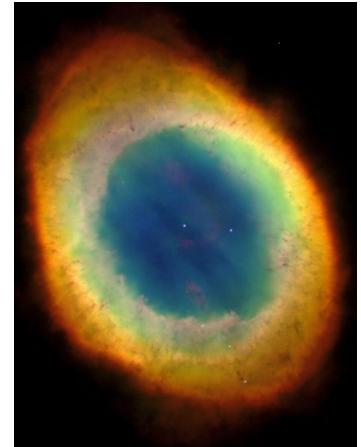
Luke has already told us of another annunciation, with Gabriel visiting Mary. Artists loved to portray this scene and often showed a lily, the symbol of purity, in their paintings. Here there is the olive sprig, a symbol of peace to reinforce the angelic message of peace in the birth of the Saviour. Luke goes on to tell us how Jesus brought new meaning and peace to all those like the shepherds who were nobody in the eyes of people, but everything to the eyes and heart of God.

Jesus in His teaching often turned to the theme of sheep and shepherds, with parables about lost sheep, gates to the fold, and hireling shepherds. Just as the faithful shepherds were prepared to give their lives to protect the flock, so Jesus the Good Shepherd gave His life for the world – a death that would bring the peace and reconciliation shown in that olive branch held by the angel. At this Christmas time we rejoice with the heavenly host to proclaim the birth of this Prince of Peace and we commit ourselves to that work of peace and shepherding. Howard Thurman wrote these words:

'When the song of the angels is stilled...
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost, to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.'

GOD IN THE SCIENCES: Meditation on the Incarnation

*After the bright beam of annunciation
fused heaven with dark earth
His searing sharply-focused light
went out for a while
eclipsed in amniotic gloom:
His cool immensity of splendour
His universal grace
small-folded in a warm dim
female space*



This extract from Luci Shaw's poem *Made Flesh* captures something of the wonder of the moment when the second person of the Trinity became an embryo.

How does a single cell turn into an infant, and what does that process say about us – and God? These are the questions that Professor Jeff Hardin, a developmental biologist, asks himself. Having studied theology as well as science, he has a unique perspective on embryonic development.

A new-born baby is made of around five trillion cells. These cells come in hundreds of different types, each of which must be in the correct place for the child's body to function properly. Every new life is the result of intricate and highly ordered processes. Three things must happen as an embryo develops.

The first important process is for cells to take on their identity as types of muscle, bone, nerves, and so on. The second is when each cell learns which part of the body it belongs to. Third, those cells are moved around to form the different tissues and organs. These three are not discrete stages, but they all happen at around the same time, building up gradually like the different aspects of a picture coming into focus.

All three of these processes are driven forward by the movement of cells, the connections between them, and the signals they pass to each other. Jeff studies a sort of cellular glue which is involved in joining cells together. Making and breaking these adhesions can affect how cells move and signal to each other, their identity in the body, how they are organised as groups, and ultimately their survival. This glue is found on the surface of cells throughout the animal

kingdom, including the small worms Jeff's lab studies.

For Jeff, peering down a microscope at tiny worm embryos can be an act of worship. It is also an exercise in art appreciation, as he learns to appreciate the created order. Understanding the complexities of development, while also being aware that God knows that process intimately both as Creator and created, fills Jeff with a profound sense of awe, wonder and worship.

Does the minute scale of our early development, compared to the incomprehensibly vast and ancient universe, give us a sense of insignificance? Psalm 8 says, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"

For Jeff and the Psalmist, such feelings can be a positive experience if they serve as a reminder to be humble in the face of a universe that is vastly complicated but also deeply meaningful, made by a God who loves each one of us.



SANTA COMES TO IRBY

Christmas Lights Switch-on - Friday 3rd December 2021

Main Event: Shippsons Car Park

4.00 Event opens

Visit Santa in the Shippsons Marquee 4.00 to 5.30

Kids - collect your free glo sticks

Six Classic Cars

Fire Engine

Thwaites Shire horses and sleigh

DJ Paul

Jenny Barkley sings as - 'The Greatest Show Woman'

5.00 Aroma BBQ - home made burgers

5.30-7.15 Irby Methodist Church Outdoor carol singing plus hot drinks

6.30 onwards Visit Santa in the Shippsons marquee

6.45 Jenny Barkley entertains in The Shippsons

Later: DJ Paul in the Shippsons bar

Other Village attractions:

6.00 Santa returns to the village

6.15 Countdown and Christmas lights switch on

PLEASE VISIT THE MANY SHOPS AND BUSINESSES REMAINING OPEN

Wordsearch for December

Christmas is nearly here! Two thousand years ago the Jews were longing for the coming of their Messiah. The Old Testament had promised that when He came, He would preach good news to the poor, bind up the broken hearted, proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, comfort all who mourn and to bestow on His people a crown of beauty instead of ashes. Jesus did all those things. He was and is the Son of God, and whoever has seen Him has seen the Father. Whoever believes in Him will have the best gift of all – His Spirit within them, which gives them eternal life.

Messiah
Broken
Heart
Freedom
Darkness

Favour
Prisoners
Comfort
Mourn
Bestow

Crown
Beauty
Ashes
Son
God
Jesus

Seen
Father
Whoever
longing
thousand



God's New Year's honours list

We are all familiar with the Queen's New Year's honours list, celebrating those who have made a significant contribution to public life. In 2021 famous names included Lewis Hamilton, Craig David and Sheila Hancock, and many Covid Heroes.

What would God's New Year's honours list look like? In 1 Samuel 2:30 God says, '*Those who honour me I will honour*'. In this New Year, how can we honour God in our lives?

Honouring God means giving Him reverence, submission, and obedience; the complete surrender of our entire lives to His glory and loving service: '*in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.*' (Romans 12:1). So, we might honour God this year in five key areas:

My Time: how can I use my time to glorify God (Colossians 4:5)?

My Gifts: how am I using my God-given gifts and abilities in His service (Matthew 25:14-30)?

My Body: in what ways do I honour God in my body (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)?

My Treasure: who is in charge of my finances (Matthew 6:24)?

My Heart: how do I honour God not just outwardly, but from my heart: '*These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me*' (Isaiah 29:13)?

Here's a challenge for 2022: When we wake up each day, let's ask God: '*How can I honour you today? Please help me to honour you with the time, gifts, body, finance, and heart that you have given me.*' Jesus Christ gave His life for us, and promises to give us the Holy Spirit to help us to serve Him. '*When the worship is over, let the service begin.*'

9th January – why we have Plough Sunday



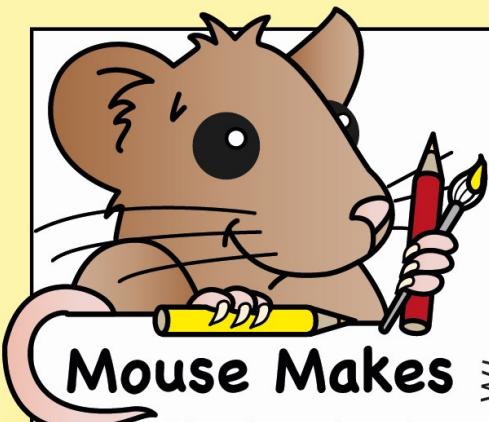
In bygone years, the supply chain of food across Britain was fairly short: if it didn't grow in your local fields, you were very apt to go hungry. Hence the widespread traditional custom of Plough Sunday – bringing a plough (and sometimes a lamb as well) into church, and praying for God's blessing on the land in the year ahead.

Traditionally, Plough Sunday was held on the Sunday after Epiphany, which makes 9th January 2022's special day. Parishioners would often walk through their village collecting alms for the poor, before gathering down at the church. Farmers would sometimes roll up on their tractors at the church door (though there are no stories of any farmer trying to bring his tractor into the church!) Work on the fields would then begin on Plough Monday, the day after the prayers for blessing.

These days, with supermarkets delivering food all year round, the nature of Plough Sunday has changed into a general celebration of farming and the work of farmers. In the C of E's Common Worship there is a suggested prayer for the 'Blessing of the Plough':-

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
for in your abundant care you have given us fertile land,
rich soil, the seasons in their courses.
You provide seed for sowing, water, light and warmth
to bring forth the miracle of growth.
You give us skill to work the land,
to prepare and nourish it, that it may be fruitful.
By your blessing,
let this plough be a sign of all that you promise to us.
Prosper the work of our hands,
and provide abundant crops for your people to share.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God for ever.

God speed the plough.
God speed the plough.



Mouse Makes

Colour the tree then colour in one star each day until Christmas. Leave the large star at the top of the tree to colour in on Christmas day!

What's on the Christmas Tree?

Presents at Christmas under the tree,
A red Christmas stocking waiting for me,

But what really is Christmas,
What is it about?
Just look and the Bible
and you will find out!

It's about **JESUS**

- the best present of all,
JESUS our **Saviour**,
God's gift to us all!

A STAR
shows the way
to Jesus

Read
Matthew 2:1-12

ANGELS

bring messages from God

Read about
Gabriel's message in
Luke 1:26-38

Read the
shepherd's story in
Luke 1:26-38

LIGHTS

AND CANDLES

remind us that Jesus
lights our way to God

Read Luke 2:29-32

PRESENTS

remind us of God's
special gift to us ... **JESUS!**

"For God loved the world so much that He
gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes
in him may not die but have eternal life." John 3:16

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Richard Farrell recommends Open House West Wirral.
February 28

We moved in today! What a delight it was to have Alan at Open House help us through the process. He managed to sell our house within the week -twice after our first buyers pulled out. When we needed advice, he was extremely helpful, very calm, and guided us through the issues that occurred with ease. Available evenings and weekends he was always happy to answer our questions. I would thoroughly recommend Open House West Wirral if you are wanting to sell your property...don't look anywhere else!

Open House West Wirral and Jenny Booth

Patsy Coen Brady recommends Open House West Wirral.
January 29

With Open House, we received an offer on our house in days and we completed less than 2 months later. Alan knows what he's doing, has contacts waiting for the right property, and is a very nice man! We will definitely use him in the future- this is the way that all estate agents should work.

Open House West Wirral and Vicki Roberts

I can't tell you how impressed my boyfriend and I were to buy our house through Alan at Open House in February. They offered such a personal and efficient service at what was such a busy time in our lives, having just had our baby daughter in December! They were understanding, flexible with viewings & their communication was excellent. We are enjoying our new house so much & Alan even gave us a lovely bottle of champagne as a moving in present. Thanks again X"

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Cleaning Guild (St Chad's)					
Mrs Leslie Worrall	648 5590				
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RECTOR: Revd Jane Turner

PLEASE NOTE: Rector's day off - **Tuesday**

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Telephone: 0151 648 1816 (*Day off Tuesday*) E-mail: rector@thurstaston.org.uk

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Telephone: 0151 648 8169. E-mail: office@thurstaston.org.uk
OPEN TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY 9.30am - 12.30pm (term time)

PARISH WEBSITE: www.thurstaston.org.uk

JANUARY 2022 SERVICES IN CHURCH:-

EVERY Wednesday 10.30am HC at St Chads

Sun 2nd January 9.00am BCP at St Barts

10.30am Covenant Service at Irby Methodist Church

we have received an invitation to join our Methodist friends and we would encourage as many as possible to go along.

NO OTHER SERVICES TODAY

**Sun 9th January 9.00am BCP HC at St Barts
 10.30am All Age at St Chad's**

**Sun 16th January 9.00am BCP HC at St Barts
 10.30am MW at St Bart's**

**Sun 23rd January 9.00am BCP HC at St Bart's
 10.30am HC at St Chad's
 with Junior Church**

**Sun 30th January 9.00am BCP HC at St Bart's
 10.30am HC at St Bart's**

**Sun 6th February 9.00am BCP HC at St Barts
 10.30am HC at St Bart's**

**Zoom Evening Prayer 6.30pm Sundays
Not yet decided (as we go to print)
whether this will continue in 2022
Please check with Revd Jane
in the New Year if you are interested**

St. Chad's Tots and Tinies

St Chad's Church (Roslin Road, Irby)

Every Thursday 9.30-11.30am
(Term Time Only)

£1.50 per child – All Welcome



Parents/Carers will be responsible for their child(ren) during the sessions
For further information please contact Allison via the Parish Office 648 8169

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR SERVICES

Covid Precautions mean that at all services we will be asking people to use hand sanitiser, wear a face covering and to provide us with contact details for "track and trace".

For Services indicated in RED:

We will NOT be able to guarantee any social distancing measures, but will request that people are sensible and respectful of others.

For Services indicated in BLUE:

We will have some socially distanced seats available.

Sun Dec 5th

9.00am BCP at St Bartholomew's
10.30am HC at St Bartholomew's

Sun Dec 12th

9.00am BCP at St Bartholomew's
10.30am All-Age at St Chad's

Sun Dec 19th

9.00am BCP at St Bartholomew's
10.30am MW at St Bartholomew's
4.00pm Carol Service at St Chad's

Friday 24th Dec - Christmas Eve

4.00pm Crib Service at St. Bartholomew's
5.00pm Crib Service at St. Bartholomew's

As in previous years, we will run two services exactly the same one after the other. We suggest that the 4pm service is for younger (up to and including Reception) children and that the 5pm service is for older children. If you have children in both age brackets - you choose! If coming to the 5pm service, please don't arrive until 4.45pm in order for the 4pm service to have cleared church and car parking spaces!

11.15pm First Communion of Christmas at St Bartholomew's

Saturday December 25th - Christmas Day

10.30am Family Communion at St Chad's

You are invited to bring one of your presents to show to everybody else.

NO OTHER SERVICES TODAY

Sunday December 26th

9.00am BCP at St Bartholomew's
NO OTHER SERVICES TODAY

Sunday 2nd January 2022

9.00am BCP at St Bartholomew's

10.30am Covenant Service at Irby Methodist Church
we have received an invitation to join our Methodist friends
and we would encourage as many as possible to go along.

NO OTHER SERVICES TODAY

Zoom Evening Prayer
6.30pm Sundays
5th and 12th December
Joining details
from Revd Jane

Every Wednesday
10.30am Holy Communion
at St Chad's

See inside back cover for January Services