

NURSLING & ROWNHAMS
Twin Spires News

Web Edition

December  *2025*



twinspires

St Boniface St John's
Nursling & Rownhams



St John's Church (SO16 8AH) is in Horns Drove, Rownhams.

St Boniface Church (SO16 0YB) is in Church Lane, Nursling.

The Parish Office is usually staffed Monday to Friday 9.30am to 11.30am (excluding public holidays) and it is sometimes staffed remotely, so please do not call into the office in person, except by arrangement.

However, the answer machine and email are checked regularly.

Telephone: 023 8073 8293. Email: office@twinspires.org.uk

Our website is www.twinspires.org.uk

This magazine is available to read on our website. If you would like to have your own printed copy of Twin Spires News, it is available from either of our church buildings, price 60p per copy or £6 for 1 year (Jan to Dec). Copies may be delivered free within the area, by arrangement.

There are a number of ways you can donate to church funds (outlined on page 23). Bank Transfer is the preferred method. More information on 'giving' is available from the Office and the church website.

Donate

There is also a [link](#) which offers a very simple option for any one-off on-line gifts. Look for the donate button on our website, or use the QR code.



Registered Charity Number 1130927

Verse of the Month

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a
Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11



Dear Friends,
“Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.”

— Christina Rossetti

Those beautiful words from one of my favourite Christmas carols by Christina Rossetti ‘Love came down at Christmas’ capture so simply what this season is all about. As the nights draw in and Advent approaches, we are reminded that Christmas begins not in noise or grandeur, but in love: the love of God made flesh in Jesus Christ, and the love that flows from Him into our lives, our relationships, and our community.

In a world that can so often feel hurried, fractured, or uncertain, these words call us back to what truly matters:

loving Jesus, loving one another, and loving our community.

Loving Jesus

At the heart of Christmas is not the tree, the lights, or even the gifts - it is a child, born in Bethlehem, who reveals the heart of God. In Jesus, love comes close. He steps into our world, not as a distant idea, but as one of us; sharing our humanity, our joys, and our sorrows.

Advent invites us to pause, to watch, and to wait. Amidst the bustle of the season, may we find moments of stillness to draw near to Him in prayer and Scripture. Loving Jesus means making room for Him in our hearts, homes, and choices. As we light our Advent candles, we remember again that His light shines in the darkness - and the darkness has not overcome it.

Loving One Another

Christmas reminds us that love overflows. The love we receive from Christ cannot stop with us - it moves outward, shaping our life together as a church family. “We love because He first loved us,” writes St John, and that love is shown not just in words, but in care, patience, forgiveness, and joy.

Let's be mindful of those for whom this season may be difficult - those missing loved ones, those struggling with loneliness, or those weighed down by life's pressures. Sometimes, a small act of kindness - a card, a call, a quiet prayer - is the way Christ's love touches another heart.

Loving Our Community

Our mission as the Church is not only to gather but to go - to share the love of Jesus with our neighbours in both word and action. This year we've seen that love in so many ways: through our Summer Fayre's, the joyful Light Party, and the Giving Day, where the generosity of both our congregations was overwhelming. Each of these moments has been a sign of God's grace at work among us.

At St John's Church, the transformation of our hospitality space and the replacement of pews with chairs will open up new ways to welcome and serve. It has been a real expression of love in action, creating room for community, conversation, and fellowship. At St Boniface Church the new electrical work may be less visible, but it is no less vital - keeping us safe and ensuring our buildings remain places of light and warmth for all who enter.

These practical projects, alongside our worship and outreach, remind us that God's love is both spiritual and tangible - made real whenever His people come together with willing hearts.



A Word of Thanks

As the year draws to a close, I want to say a heartfelt *thank you* to everyone who gives so much of themselves to our church life. To every volunteer - from those who make tea and arrange flowers, to those who read, sing, clean, garden, serve on the PCC, visit the sick, and pray quietly at home - ***thank you***. You are the living heartbeat of our parish.

Your faithfulness reflects the truth that we are one body with many parts, each playing a precious role in God's work among us. As Paul writes,

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (*Romans 12:4–5*)

Looking Ahead

As we step into Advent and look toward Christmas, may Rossetti's words guide us once again: “Love shall be our token.”

Let love be the sign of our life together - love for Jesus, love for one another, and love for our community. And as we continue to “muck in” and share the load - each offering what we can, in time, prayer, or service - may we remember the encouragement of Scripture:



“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:10)

So, let us go forward into Christmas and the new year with thankful hearts, serving together in love, and shining the light of Christ wherever He calls us to be.

A blessed Advent and joyful Christmas to you all. May the peace of Christ dwell richly in your homes and hearts this season and always.

With love in Christ,

Rev Graeme



Church Christmas Cards

As in previous years, for our church family, we plan to produce an oversized Christmas card for each Church, so we can exchange seasonal greetings. As well as saving resources, this means that there is no risk of cards being missed in Church, or accidentally omitting to prepare a card for anyone in particular.

This year, our giant cards are being made by the Ichthians. One card will be placed in each church on Advent Sunday (30th Nov) and the church family encouraged to sign with a small greeting. Between the 2nd and 3rd Sunday of Advent (7th and 14th Dec) the two cards are swapped over, with our church family signing the other card. Then, before Christmas Eve the cards are once again swapped over, so all can see the greetings. Please note, a donation box will be available alongside the Christmas cards.

Freds

Christmas Cards - What to Do?

It's that time of year when we think about Christmas cards. By some they are viewed with pleasure, by others another task to do when they are busy enough already - but nowadays the ridiculously high price of the stamps is putting many folk off posting these. It's a shame really, because many of us like to keep in touch with friends and family. However, the wastage involved in using so much card to produce these and fuel to deliver is not a bad thing to cut down on.

I wrote about this last year and that E-cards can be a good alternative. Admittedly not everyone has a computer or uses email - but most folks these days do and so it is possible to send Ecards to most of your friends and relatives and use land mail for just a small number - or perhaps ring them and have a chat instead.

I personally use: **DontSendMeACard.com** (DSMAC), and support Southampton Mencap. DSMAC invites people to make a donation to a charity. There are over 2000 to choose from and for your donation you get 100 Ecards.

You may donate as little as £2, to as much as you wish. I think this is great because it allows people to keep in touch who may not be able to afford to do so otherwise. It also allows those who can afford to be generous, to give as much as they wish to a worthy cause.

Maybe you are also involved with a charity? It's probably a bit late for this year now, but you could suggest that your charity registers with DSMAC.

I did this with Southampton Mencap last year and also supplied them with some designs using my art work.

The designs I have completed for this year are shown here and are now available on the site, on Southampton Mencap's page:

www.dontsendmeacard.com/ecards/charities/southampton-mencap/christmas



Sandi O'Donnell

Remembrance Service at St John's Church

Many thanks to the St John's Church Flower Ladies and friends, who decorated the church so creatively for the Remembrance Service on Sunday 9th November. The displays were stunning.

Shelley Mabey



St Boniface Church News December 2025

Service of Remembrance

We were pleased to welcome The Draco Explorers Scouts on November 9th. Thank you to Pat Wootten for leading a moving and thought-provoking service.

Crosses represented the 7 men of the small village of Nursling and the hamlet of Upton who died in World War II. Our soldiers in the pews once again represented the 16 men who died in World War I, a poignant reminder.



A poppy from the Tower of London 2014 (given by the late Jean Wylde) was placed on the altar with a poppy from the Commemorative Lancaster Bomber Poppy Display.



A Discovery

During routine cleaning of the loft area, a triptych of paintings was re-discovered.

Long forgotten and very dusty, they have been brought down and placed temporarily at the back of St Boniface Church. They came originally from Lee Chapel (now home of Romsey Art Group) and we have photographs of them in the windows there. It is planned to obtain a professional opinion and advice on cleaning to bring back the vibrancy of the colours. We then hope to place them over the old Lee altar at the back of the church.

Carols by Candlelight

Please come and join us at this always much anticipated special service. Come and begin your Christmas celebrations by singing traditional carols and listening to traditional readings.



Our window displays this year will reflect "The UK at Christmas" We look forward to welcoming you on Sunday 21st December at 3.30pm to the beautiful ancient church of St Boniface. Please stay to enjoy tea/coffee and cake after the service.

Avis Wood, with many thanks to Angela Wright for the photos

Come and join us at
Friday Friends

 **twinspires**
St. Boniface & St. John's
Nursling & Rownhams

The Pastoral team invites you for an

'Afternoon Tea'

Friday, 23rd January 2026

St. John's Church Hall starting at 2.00 pm.

A time for space, quiet reflection and prayer and
for the opportunity to meet people and share
memories of a loved one.



Tel: (023) 8073 8293 or email: office@twinspires.org.uk

We look forward to seeing you.

Street Pastors Clothing Appeal

We're asking friends and family to help support those in need by donating the following men's items:

- Coats
- Jumpers – ideally hoodies
- Joggers – in S, M or L
- Thick Socks
- Hats – beanie Style
- Gloves
- Scarves/snoods



We need all sizes, but not bigger than a large please as many of the homeless are underweights. We currently have good stock of women's clothing, but donations of hats, gloves, and socks are still appreciated. To arrange collection or drop-off, please speak to David Edes. Thank you for your kindness and support

A festive border surrounding the text, featuring green pine branches, gold stars, and gold Christmas ornaments with red ribbons.

Weekly Tots Café ~ Mondays 9.30-11am

If you're a parent, grandparent, or carer, looking after pre-school children, you are invited to our weekly Tots' Café.

We meet during school term-time in the Community Centre in Horns Drove.

This month we will meet on **Monday 1st, 8th and 15th December**, when we will be having a **Christmas Party**.

Connect with other parents and bring your little one for play, crafts, nursery rhymes and Bible stories.

Do come and join in the festive fun with games, activities and toys. Refreshments are provided and entry is free, although voluntary contributions are always welcome.

A logo for 'TOTS GROUP' featuring the text in a blue, rounded font above a colorful rainbow.

SCRATCH:

Southampton City & Region Action to Combat Hardship

We have the toy and gift services coming up, so - taking off my churchwarden hat and putting on my 'chair of SCRATCH charity board of trustees' one - I'd like to thank everyone who donated last year and thank in advance everyone who'll donate this time.



I have one special request. When you choose what to give, please take time to imagine Christmas morning and what a child's reaction will be to your gift. Joy? Excitement? Or will it be disappointment because you've given a dirty, broken toy, a book with another child's name written in or a puzzle missing some of its pieces.

Now, I have to add that those kinds of gifts get filtered out by SCRATCH volunteers before they even reach a child, but they can represent up to 20% of what we get donated. I know that, because I'm one of the people who does the sifting, and many items given by churches have gone to charity shops (or straight into the bin if they're too awful) over the past few years.

Brand new toys are always preferred (as they will be by the children who receive them) but if you have second hand books/cuddlies/games, please make sure they would be good enough for your child or grandchild or friend's child to open on the big day. **Many thanks** **Ann Laird**



We look forward to seeing you at our Toy & Gift Services:
Sunday 30th November 11am at St Boniface Church
Sunday 7th December 10am at St John's Church



Bible Study Notes

Are you interested in a book of dated notes with a suggested Bible passage to read for the day and some short notes to help you think about the passage?

If so, you can subscribe to these through our church. The booklets, which usually contain several months' worth of notes, are collected from Oasis some weeks before the date of the first study and either left at the back of church or delivered to your home if you live locally.

It is usually cheaper to subscribe to the booklets online but Oasis Christian Centre in Romsey is one of a very few Christian Bookshops still in existence and they appreciate our support.



Please let Claire, or the office, know if you are interested in these or if you would like to look at a selection to choose from. **Claire Thompson**

And There Were Shepherds

Luke's story of the birth of Jesus is brilliantly told – the angel's visit to Mary to tell her she would be mother of the long-promised Messiah, the old priest in the Temple told by another angel that his wife would have a son to be called 'John', who would prepare the people of Israel for that event,

and then Mary and Joseph making the 60 mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, as required by the Roman census. When they got there, no room at the inn, and they settled instead for a convenient stable, where Mary gave birth to a boy child.



Suddenly, Luke changes the tone. 'And there were shepherds ...' – that's what he actually wrote, just like that. 'And there were shepherds', doing exactly what shepherds do, looking after their flocks by night. But this night was different: yet another angelic message – a call to abandon their sheep and go into Bethlehem to see the baby Messiah. They were given directions and a 'sign' to identify Him. He would be lying in a feeding trough. Well, at least they would recognise that.

And why the shepherds, in this glorious story of our salvation? Because the event needed witnesses, and the chosen witnesses would be this bunch of scruffy, smelly shepherds straight from the sheep-pen. Nothing could speak more eloquently of God's purpose than that.

This was not a Saviour for the strong, rich and powerful, but for everybody. The carpenter and his wife guarded the Saviour of the world, and the very first witnesses were not kings or priests but a handful of shepherds.

Parish Pump



WISHING YOU A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS
AND EVERY BLESSING FOR THE NEW YEAR

WITH LOVE FROM YOUR FOUR EDITORS (FREDS):

Mary, Marion, Caroline & Shelley



Thanks to our lovely volunteers, we have enjoyed meeting with friends and welcoming many new faces to 'Coffee Break' over the last year. It's a friendly place for you to drop in for a chat, over coffee and cake, to take time out and meet with others in the community.

We usually meet In the Community Centre in Horns Drove, on the **first and third Thursdays of each month between 10am & midday**.

This month, we will meet only once
on Thursday 4th December
for our Christmas gathering, with festive refreshments.
Please do come along.



For anyone who would like to join us in the New Year, you will be very welcome - our next meeting after the Christmas break will be on the third Thursday in January: 15th (ie no meeting on 18th December or 1st January).

Wishing all our amazing volunteers and Coffee Break friends a very Happy Christmas. We look forward to seeing you at the Christmas Party on 4th December from 10am.



The Coffee Break Team

(If you need a lift to Coffee Break, please contact Glennis via the Parish Office, on: 023 80 738293, or by email to: office@twinspires.org.uk).

Ladies' Get Together

We meet on the third Saturday morning of each month, for a catch up over a cuppa in St John's Church Hall.



This month, (in place of Men's Breakfast and Ladies' Get Together) we are meeting for a family breakfast at Romsey Golf Club on **Sat 13th Dec at 8.30am for 9am** (see bottom of p17 for details)

The next ladies' gathering is on: **Sat 17th Jan from 9.30 - 11.00am**

For more information, please call Tracey on 07904 502214.

Hope to see you there!

Tracey Jones

Church Services in December

St John's Church, Rownhams



Our livestreamed worship is primarily via our [YouTube](#) channel. We will make every effort to livestream our 10am services, but there are not enough volunteers to cover every service. **If this is in your skill set, please get in touch.** Tea and coffee are served after the 10am service. There is a crèche area available during services at St John's Church. We hope to provide Prayer Ministry at 10am services.

Sunday 7th December – Advent 2

- 10am All Age Worship** – Christingle, Toy & Gift Service
Led by Rev Graeme Dixon, Ewan Brown & Sarah Phelps
- 4pm LEGO Church** (in Rownhams School Hall)
- 6.30pm Prayer Meeting** – a short meeting for prayer
Led by Dorothy Stratford (in place of 6.30pm service)



Sunday 14th December – Advent 3

- 10am Immerse** - A modern service diving deeper into following Jesus one issue at a time
Led by Steve Beak
- 6.30pm Holy Communion** – A service based on Common Worship
Led by Rev Graeme Dixon with Lynn Black



Sunday 21st December – Advent 4

- 10am Contemporary Christmas Service**
Led by Claire Thompson BCM with Christine Owen BPP
- 7pm Traditional Carol Service**



Wednesday 24th December – Christmas Eve

- 3pm Nativity Celebration**
- 6.30pm Carols & Mince Pies**
- 11pm Holy Communion** An informal service of prayer and praise
Led by Rev Graeme Dixon



Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day

- 10.30am Christmas Family Service followed by Holy Communion**
Led by Rev Graeme Dixon

Sunday 28th December - Holy Innocents/Christmas 1

- 10.30am Morning Worship** led by Marion Swinerd BCM, with Lynn Black
- 6.30pm Prayer Meeting** – a short meeting for prayer, led by Mike Bunce

St Boniface Church, Nursling

Services in St Boniface Church use the Book of Common Prayer

Sunday 7th December – Advent 2

11am Morning Prayer

Led by Tony Wingett



Sunday 14th December – Advent 3

11am Morning Prayer

Led by John Sofrin, with Lynn Black



Sunday 21st December – Advent 4

11am Morning Prayer

Led by Pat Wootten BCM, BPP

3.30pm Carols by Candlelight

Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day

9.30am Holy Communion Service



Sunday 28th December - Holy Innocents/Christmas 1

11am Morning Prayer

Led by John Sofrin, with David Thompson

Other Opportunities for Prayer and Worship:

Each week:

Mondays – Morning Prayer 9am on [Zoom](#)

Tuesdays – Morning Prayer 9.30am on [Zoom](#)

Visit www.twinspires.org.uk for the [Morning Prayer Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 112 879 792 Password: 107871

Wednesdays – Early Prayer Time 7am in St John's Church

Thursdays – Morning Prayer 10am on Facebook Live

<https://www.facebook.com/NurslingAndRownhams/live/>

Fridays – Morning Prayer 8.30am in St Boniface Church

Friday 5th & 19th Dec 2.15pm (first & third Fridays each month) Prayer Meeting at Dorothy Stratford's home.

Please contact the office for the address.



There are various small home groups meeting on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, along with many groups for children, teenagers and young adults. See page 2 of the magazine for details or contact the office.

Please note the details provided here are accurate at the time of printing, but are subject to change

What's on During the Week

For the latest news, online links, videos of services and service sheets, please visit www.twinspires.org.uk. To receive direct emails about news and events for our Churches, please contact the office to be added to our 'big distribution list' (023 8073 8293 or office@twinspires.org.uk). Our administrator is generally in the office on Tues, Weds & Friday mornings.

We have various mid-week homegroups (see p2). Our youth groups meet regularly **during school term time**, in addition to one-off events. Please contact youth@twinspires.org.uk or the office for details.

Mondays 9.30-11am Tots Café in Horns Drove Community Centre (see p10)

Mondays 6-7pm ROOTS Group (ages 11+) in St John's Church Hall

Mondays 7-8pm MORE for ages 11-16 in St John's Church Hall

Tuesdays & Wednesdays Bible Study Home Groups (See p2)

Wednesdays 7-8.30pm BEACON Group (ages 11-16) in St John's Church

Thursdays 1-4pm Ladies' Shed Group (venue: Nursling Men's Shed)

Thursdays 2.15-3.45pm Nursling & Rownhams Friendship Club (See p19)

Fridays 4.30-5.30pm IGNITE Youth Group

for school years Reception – 2 in St John's Church Hall

Fridays 6 - 7.30pm NET for school years 3-6 in St John's Church Hall

First Tuesdays 7.30pm Craft Group in St John's Church Hall

First Wednesdays 8-9pm CONNECT! on [Zoom](#) (for new Christians)

Thursday 4th December 10am – midday Coffee Break only one meeting this month, in Horns Drove Community Centre. (see p13)

First & Third Fridays 2.15pm Prayer meeting 5th & 19th Dec (see p15)

Sat 6th Dec 10-11am Litter Pick meet in Joe Bigwood Close car park, Nursling (see p18)

Sat 13th Dec 8.30am Family Breakfast at Romsey Golf Club (in place of Men's Breakfast and Ladies Get Together) (See p17)



WINCHESTER
CATHEDRAL

If you wish to visit Winchester Cathedral, the Parish Office has six

passes allowing free entry. These may be borrowed by any member of our Church family. Please contact: office@twinspires.org.uk

Dates for Your Diary:



- + Contributions for Next Month's Magazine by 6pm, on Sunday 7th December** (this is one week earlier than usual, so we can publish the January magazine before Christmas) Preferably by email to twinspiresnews@live.co.uk, or, alternatively, to: Mary Carter, 12 Horsebridge Way (paper copy). Please check you receive an acknowledgement of your email
- + Saturday 29th November**
11am – 2pm Christmas Fair in St John's Church. If you can help, or if you would like to have a stall, please email office@twinspires.org.uk (fees will be 10% of the sellers' takings on the day - to be donated to church.) (See p5)
- + Saturday 13th December**
6pm Carols by the Fire, at the Scout HQ
- + Monday 15th December**
9.30-11am – Tots Café Christmas Party in St John's Church (see p10)
7-8.15pm **MORE** group Christmas party in St John's Church
- + Wednesday 17th December**
6.30pm Rownhams School Carol Service in St John's Church
- + Friday 19th December**
4.30-5.30pm **IGNITE** Christmas Party in St John's Church
6-7.30pm **NET** Christmas Party in St John's Church
- + Saturday 3rd January**
10-11am Litter Pick (See p18) venue tbc
- + Saturday 10th January**
8.30am Men's Breakfast. To join in, please contact Andy Ball
- + Saturday 17th January** 9.30-11am Ladies Get Together in St John's Church Hall
- + Friday 23rd January**
2.30pm Friday Friends Afternoon Tea in St John's Church Hall (see p8)

Family Breakfast Sat 13th Dec 9am (please arrive 8.30am)

at Romsey Golf Club. Adults £13.95, Children £7.95

Full English breakfast with veggie option, tea, coffee, fruit juice, toast, jam

(in place of Men's Breakfast and Ladies Get Together)

Please contact mikebuncewoodsiders@gmail.com to reserve your place.



November's Litter Pick

Thank you to everyone who came to this month's litter pick. On this bright and sunny autumnal morning, we met in Bakers Drove, close to the T-junction where it meets Rownhams Lane.

I was pleasantly surprised how little we picked in this area, which ran along all of Bakers Drove and left along Rownhams Lane up to the junction of Horns Drove. At the back of my mind was the fact that the night before was Halloween and a night of trick or treaters coming out for sweets. Maybe everyone was careful to pick up any litter or perhaps lots of children came to the light party at St John's Church instead!

This month we filled just 3 bags of general waste, a bag of recyclables, and another bag of glass. There was also a small fly tip. Thank you to Flora for taking the glass to the bottle bank.



There were some other folk who didn't make it into the picture – thank you to all of you for taking the time to contribute to the pick, it is all much appreciated.

Next month we will meet **Saturday 6th December at 10am** in Joe Bigwood Close carpark, Nursling. If anyone has any queries about the monthly litter pick, then please do contact myself or Mary Carter via the Village Facebook messenger route.

Sophie Ross

Nursling & Rownhams Friendship Club

The Nursling & Rownhams Friendship Club meets
On Thursdays between 2.15 and 4.00pm, in the
Village Hall in Nursling Street.



The cost is £3.00 per week plus annual membership of £20 to enable the club to continue with a small membership. All meetings have a prize draw and include free tea/coffee and biscuits. There is ample free parking next to the Social Club during building works at the Village Hall.

Your first visit is free and we would love to welcome new members at these events: **don't be shy - give us a try**. We have a mixture of visiting entertainers and quizzes. Below is our proposed programme for December:

4th - Christmas lunch at Romsey Golf Club

11th - Christmas carols and mince pies with Mike Bunce

18th & 25th (& **1st Jan 2026** – Closed for Festive break)

A very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year to all our members. And A BIG THANK YOU to all the new members who have joined us during the past year.

For further information, please ring Joyce on 02380 735086, or Mike on 02380 733245.



Mike Ward

10 Fun Facts about Christmas Trees

- Even before the time of Christ, evergreen trees were seen in winter as a symbol of fertility.
- It was the 16th century monk, Martin Luther, who is credited with the idea of having lights on Christmas trees. He added candles to his tree, to look like stars in a forest.
- Windsor Castle got its first Christmas tree in 1800, brought by Charlotte, wife of George III.
- It was in 1835 that the term 'Christmas tree' was first used in English.
- It was in the 1840s, when Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, began bringing trees inside, that led to their popularity throughout the UK.
- Woolworths first sold manufactured Christmas tree ornaments – in 1880.
- The tree in London's Trafalgar Square has been a gift from the city of Oslo, Norway since 1947.
- The world's tallest Christmas tree, at 221ft high, was erected in a Washington shopping mall in 1950.
- In a survey of the nation's favourite smells, real Christmas trees came eighth, just behind the sea, but ahead of perfume.
- About five million real Christmas trees are sold in the UK each year.

Parish Pump

Attendance at Churches

Attendance at Church of England churches grew for the fourth year in a row last year, statistics have confirmed. The overall number of regular worshippers across the Church of England's congregations rose to 1.009 million in 2024, a rise of 0.6 per cent, according to the annual Statistics for Mission findings.

It was the second year in a row in which the Church of England's "worshipping community" (the combined number of regular members of local congregations) has stood above a million since the Covid-19 pandemic. All age average attendance on a Sunday also rose 1.5 per cent to 581,000 in 2024, extending rises over recent years. Overall attendance across the week edged upwards by 1.6 cent in a year, at just over 702,000 last year, according to the figures.

The increase was driven by a recovery in attendance by adults (over 16), among whom average Sunday attendance was up by 1.8 per cent and weekly attendance rose by 1.8 per cent. The 2024 figures showed adult baptisms rose to 8,700 in 2024 (from 7,800 in 2023). There was a rise in the number of young people, aged 11-17 baptised, from 2,100 in 2023 to 2,400 last year. Confirmations also rose by 5.3 per cent from 10,700 to 11,300.

While the overall figures show that in-person attendance has not fully reached pre-pandemic levels, they do suggest it is moving closer to the projected pre-pandemic trend and in some cases has risen above the levels that might have been expected had there been no pandemic.

Parish Pump

The Dictators of Russia & China Would Like to Live Forever

This month Christians worldwide welcome the Baby whose life and death and resurrection bring us eternal life. Meanwhile, it seems that Putin and Xi Jinping are wondering if they might achieve a bit of immortality without divine help.

In a recent meeting to attend the Beijing military parade, the dictators of Russia and China were caught on a hot mic discussing how it might be possible to live to be 150. Mr Xi, 72, told Putin: "These days, at 70 years you are still a child. Mr Putin, also 72, answered: "With biotechnology, human organs can be continuously transplanted, and now people can live younger and younger, and even achieve immortality."

It has been reported that Putin last year ordered scientists to look into '3D bioprinting' to use lab-grown cells to print replacement organs. Putin later confirmed the conversation, when questioned by reporters. "Yes, yes, modern means of healing, medicine, even all kinds of surgery related to organ replacement allow humanity to hope that active life will continue differently than it does today."

A hope that 'active life will continue differently than it does today'. Sounds a bit like the Christian hope of eternity!

Parish Pump



I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth,' I said
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men.'

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



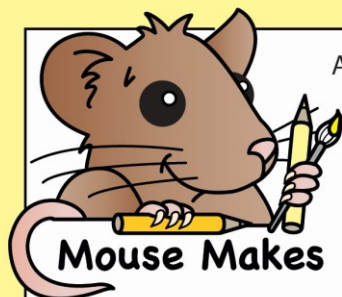
At 3pm on Christmas Day

Many people will stop everything at 3pm on Christmas Day to listen to His Majesty's annual address to the nation. But ever wonder what the King calls his Christmas Broadcast? Could it possibly be 'The One Show'?

Santa's Sleigh

Father Christmas nervously went for his sleigh-driving test. He came rushing back in a thunder of reindeer and pulled up in front of the toy factory. "At last!" he shouted, "No-el plates!"





At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus,
God's Son and our Saviour
coming into the world as a baby,
and we look forward to the time
when Jesus will come again,
not as a baby but as the
King of kings and Lord of lords!

read

John 14:3

A baby needs clothes
to keep warm like
a snugly sleep suit
or a vest and nappy.

What were you dressed in?

Jesus was wrapped in
.....

read Luke 2:7

A baby needs somewhere
to be born like at home
or in a hospital.

Where were you born?

Jesus was born
in a stable in
.....

read Luke 2:1-6

A baby needs
somewhere
to sleep like
a crib or a cot.
*What did you
sleep in?*

Jesus slept in a
.....

read Luke 2:7

A baby needs
a name.

*What name were
you called?*

Jesus was given
a special name
that had a
special meaning.

read

Matthew 1:21-23

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ★ NOLLAIG CHRÏDHEIL ★ NOLLAG SHONA
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN

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Regular giving through one of the available schemes is encouraged, as this helps the PCC fund its mission and ministry. Please consider using the Parish Giving Scheme www.parishgiving.org.uk. This is a direct debit system that reduces the administrative burden locally but still ensures that all of your donation, together with any gift aid recoverable, reaches this parish.



The dedicated telephone number is **0333 002 1271**. Donors will need their parish's PGS Code which is: **PGS Parish Code 416012141** The Parish of Nursling with Rownhams in the Diocese of Winchester.

Donate

More information on 'giving' is available from the Office and our Church website. There is also a [link](#) for one-off donations. Look for the [donate](#) button on our website, or use the QR code here.



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From the Registers



Funerals

'Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep' (1 Cor 15:20)

4 Nov	Irene Jacqueline Hann (86)	<i>Interred at St John's</i>
10 Nov	Margaret Audrey Jones (91)	<i>Interred at St John's</i>
14 Nov	Caroline Gover (90)	<i>Interred at St John's</i>

Prayer for Christmas 2025

Dear Father,

Christmas is coming. It's all such a rush – planning, shopping, spending, wrapping, posting, stressing! What's it all about?

Lord, help us, in all the rat-race busyness, to make time to focus on that baby at the centre of it all. That baby who is Your Son, who was with You in the beginning and who, with You, created all things; that baby who brings life and light and hope and salvation; that baby who was and is Jesus, God, made man.

Lord, we thank You for that baby-gift to us – the greatest gift there has ever been. Thank You that because He came, grew up, lived, died and rose again, there is light in the darkness of this world's mess – light that can never be put out, that evil can never overcome.

Jesus is the Light of the World. Putting our trust in Him, we thank You Lord, for Christmas – for Your grace and love for us. In Jesus' name.

Amen



Daphne Kitching

PCC Legacy Policy Nursling and Rownhams PCC welcomes gifts in wills, however large or small. We will use such gifts to make a difference to the work of the Church (eg by funding development projects in the parish, whether buildings, equipment or staff). We will consult with the executors to identify the sorts of projects the donor would have liked.

Suggestions for Your Prayers

Continue to pray that just solutions might be found to end the wars between Ukraine and Russia, and in the Middle East. Pray for good progress in the next stage of the peace process between Israel and Gaza. Pray too for all those who are terrified, in mourning, displaced from their homes or suffering in any way. Pray for those seeking to rebuild their lives. Ask for protection of innocent civilians and that church leaders might be light and hope in these crises.

Pray for Graeme, Steph and the family. Pray for protection and good health for them and all the leadership team, especially over the busy Christmas season. Ask that we might all seek God for the part we are to play in being the body of Christ here. Pray that we will be united and that we might be able to reach out together to our community with the love of Jesus.

Pray for our Christmas services; that they would be well attended and that God would inspire Graeme and everyone involved in the planning. Pray that the Holy Spirit would work in all our hearts, bringing fresh realisation of God's love for each of us, our need of his forgiveness and a desire to worship and serve him. Pray that those who visit will also feel warmly welcomed.

Pray for those who come to coffee break. That they will continue to enjoy coming and feel welcomed and supported by the group. Pray for wisdom and strength for the leaders and that there will always be enough helpers.

Pray that governments will have wisdom and compassion as they make decisions that impact refugees. Pray that many will be able to return home soon and remember too organisations that seek to care for refugees. Ask that each refugee family would find somewhere safe to live where their basic needs can be met.

SCRATCH Christmas Complete - Please pray for all the people who will be involved in sorting, packaging and delivering the toys – many of whom are not yet Christians. Please also pray that the gifts will be a real blessing to those who receive them. Ask too that God would continue to provide the finances SCRATCH need to continue their good work throughout the year.

Pray that governments will abide by the commitments they made at COP30. Ask too that there will be a real sense of urgency to take action to reduce carbon emissions and an understanding that if money isn't spent now to stop the world's dependence on fossil fuels then it will cost even more money in the future.

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Thank you

12 Days of Giving - Benefact Group Movement for Good.

Please see the below for a chance of winning a donation of £1000 to our charity. If you would like to nominate us, please use the search bar to search for: our registered charity number: **1130927** (THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF NURSING WITH ROWNHAMS) **Thank you for your support**



12 Days of Giving is the festive final phase of the Benefact Group Movement for Good. In December, they will be giving 120 charities £1,000 each over 12 days. The first draw takes place on December 1st and the last on December 16th with 10 charities drawn every weekday.

Every charity nominated in the £1,000 draws this year is already in. But there's still time to spread more festive cheer. Nominations are open now and close at 23:59 on December 15th 2025. To nominate a charity for £1,000 please visit <https://movementforgood.com/?cmp=1#nominateACharity>



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