

# the **KEY**

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50p

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News of Saint Peter and Saint Paul

**BROMLEY PARISH CHURCH**

Church Road Bromley BR2 OEG

"Proclaiming the Word and Work of God"

Member of Churches Together in Central Bromley



***Vicar***

Reverend James Harratt

[vicar@bromleyparishchurch.org](mailto:vicar@bromleyparishchurch.org)

***Contributions/suggestions for the Key***

[thekeyeditor@gmail.com](mailto:thekeyeditor@gmail.com)

For contributions to the Key, or if you would like to receive the Key by email, please contact [thekeyeditor@gmail.com](mailto:thekeyeditor@gmail.com)



*Thank you to Rev. James for sharing his sermon from Remembrance Sunday 2025.*

Perhaps unusually, I want to start this morning with an object I was given last year — and, truth be told, have never quite known what to do with.

It's this: a battered and twisted piece of metal — the tail of a 250kg bomb that fell on this church on the 16th of April 1941, helping to destroy it and taking the life of young Hazel Kissick, who was on fire watch that night in the tower.

The next morning, amid the devastation, it was pulled from the rubble by Captain Bernard Finnie of the Home Guard.

What did he do with this object of destruction and death?

He didn't throw it away, nor mount it as a trophy.

He took it home, set it in concrete, and used it — of all things — as a parasol stand.

There's something wonderfully human about that: a bomb turned into something that holds up a little shade.

He refused to let it remain a symbol of destruction. He made it useful again — ordinary, gentle, part of daily life.

And yet it's more than a curiosity. It's a symbol — one that has now returned to the church. The question is: what does it mean for us today?

Symbols matter — and days like this are full of them. Yet their meaning is never fixed. They are powerful, but fluid, shaped by how we choose to live.

A symbol only carries weight if it points us to something deeper — if it shapes our lives and our purpose.

Our reading from Isaiah shows us this as it speaks into a world of ruins.

Jerusalem had been flattened, its people scattered. Now they had returned, standing among the wreckage, dreaming of restoration.

But Isaiah warns them: be careful what you rebuild.

You can put the stones back in place, restart the rituals, make everything look restored — and still live among ruins.

Because true rebuilding, he says, isn't about walls. It's about the heart.

“If you remove the yoke... if you offer your food to the hungry... then your light shall rise in the darkness.”

Real restoration begins with compassion, justice, mercy.

It's about repairing relationships — becoming, in Isaiah's words, “*repairers of the breach, restorers of streets to live in.*”

And perhaps that's what Bernard Finnie understood.

He turned that fragment of bomb into something peaceful — but more importantly, he devoted himself to rebuilding this community.

He had served in the First World War with the Royal Fusiliers and been awarded the Military Cross. He knew the cost of war. And he chose to serve peace — as president of the United Services Club, tirelessly supporting veterans and raising funds for the Poppy Appeal; as councillor, alderman, and later mayor of the old borough of Bromley; tending the gardens at the Leonard Cheshire Home in Sundridge Park.

His life was not defined by what had been destroyed, but by what could yet be rebuilt.

He turned remembrance into action — helping others find purpose, and hope.

That's Isaiah's vision too. Rebuilding is never just about structures, but about spirit — about the kind of life we want to live together, and the kind of world we want to shape.

And that question still stands before us.

In Ukraine, in Gaza, in Sudan — whole cities lie in ruins.

But the harder task is not rebuilding the houses, but rebuilding trust.

Not just laying bricks, but laying down enmity.

And it's not only "out there." Each of us knows what it means to rebuild — after loss, failure, grief, or division. We know what it is to stand among ruins and wonder where to begin.

Isaiah's promise is that God is not finished with the ruins. Out of brokenness can come light — if we let him shape the rebuilding.

Bernard Finnie worshipped at St Joseph's, and I suspect he saw his life in distinctly Christian terms — shaped by the Cross.

Because the Cross is the place where everything seems destroyed, yet where God begins again.

From suffering comes redemption; from death, resurrection.

Behind me in the chancel, there is stained glass showing the devastation of that 1941 bomb, with the words *Resurgam* — *I shall rise again* — and above it, the image of this church as it stands today.

I am glad this church was rebuilt. But God's greater work is to rebuild not temples or nations, but hearts —

to turn even instruments of destruction into signs of peace.

And the invitation to us is to join in that work:

to be repairers, restorers, bridge-builders;

to turn remembrance from ritual into resolve.

Remembrance Sunday is not only about looking back in gratitude,  
but looking forward in faith —  
asking how we might live so that their sacrifice bears fruit in our time.

So I look at this lump of metal and wonder what it means now.  
On its own, it's cold and lifeless.  
But if it reminds us of courage and sacrifice,  
and of the patient work of rebuilding,  
and of the call to live as peacemakers —  
then it becomes a symbol of hope.

Because symbols are only as strong as the lives that stand behind them.  
The poppy, the flags, even this fragment of bomb — they are empty things unless  
they move us to live differently.

Isaiah's promise was that the ruins would be rebuilt.  
The Cross shows us how God does that — bringing restoration where people turn  
to him.  
But that work is fulfilled not by God alone, but by those willing to build with him.  
So let us be those people.

Let our remembrance today lead us to lives of peace, mercy, and meaning —  
so that when others look back on us, they might say:  
*"They were the ones who helped rebuild what truly mattered."*

Let us pray

God of mercy and renewal,  
you call us to be repairers of the breach  
and restorers of streets to live in.  
As we remember those who gave their lives  
for the cause of peace,  
grant us grace to rebuild what hatred destroys,  
to live as people shaped by compassion,  
and to make our remembrance real  
in works of justice and reconciliation.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who turns even the ruins of the world  
into places of new life and hope.  
**Amen.**

**Charity Quiz Night Saturday 22 November 2025**

Saturday November 22nd saw the return of the Charity Quiz Night to Bromley Parish Church. Teams from Bromley Parish competed with visitors over eight rounds covering a wide range of topics including current affairs, history, geography and sport. Quizmaster Sam Sammons kept the evening flowing with his ever patient wife Gill demonstrating her well-honed organisational and mental arithmetic skills.

Together with a well supported raffle led by Donya Young, the evening raised over £550 for Freedom from Torture.

For those of you who missed it, here were the questions from the Music, TV and Literature round:

1. Who played Sybil in Fawlty Towers?
2. Who was the principal character in the fiction books about military history written by Bernard Cornwell?
3. Rachel Zegler starred in the revival of which London musical at the Palladium earlier this year?
4. What did Jasmine Mitchell win in 2025?
5. Who wrote Northanger Abbey?
6. Who sang the Fate of Ophelia?
7. Who wrote the Forsyte saga trilogy?
8. Who wrote the lyrics to "In the Bleak Midwinter"?

Answers are shown in the 'Puzzle' section.

Bonus question : What is the connection between question 6 and the answer to question 8 ? Answers by email to Sam please on [rdsammons@hotmail.com](mailto:rdsammons@hotmail.com) . Winner announced next month.



Bromley Parish Church  
**Christmas  
Services**

Everyone is Welcome!

30TH NOVEMBER 6:30PM

Advent Carols

6TH AND 14TH DECEMBER 12PM-5PM

Christmas Tree Festival

7TH DECEMBER 6:30PM

Light in the Darkness - a service  
for you when Christmas is tough

14TH DECEMBER 4:00PM

Carols & Cocoa - come & choose your  
favourite to sing!

20TH DECEMBER 6:00PM

Carols by Candlelight

21ST DECEMBER 4:00PM

Christingle

CHRISTMAS EVE 4:00PM

Nativity Service

CHRISTMAS EVE 11:30PM

Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY 9:30AM

Christmas Day Communion



**28<sup>th</sup> December - Holy Innocents**

The death of a very young child is perhaps the hardest grief of all to bear. So, the 28<sup>th</sup> December is a very poignant day in the church calendar. It is when the worldwide Church joins with bereaved parents to grieve the loss of babies and young children. For Holy Innocents Day recalls the massacre of the young male children of Bethlehem by Herod the Great.

Herod had been told by the Magi, or Wise Men, that a great king had been born in Bethlehem, and he felt shaken. How could a child in unimportant little Bethlehem be so powerful that the stars in the night sky honoured His birth?! Herod took the Magi so seriously that he decided to try and kill this new young rival. He decreed that every male baby of two years and under should be killed. (Matthew 2:1-18).

Bethlehem was not a large place, and Bible commentators estimate that between six and 25 infants were slaughtered by Roman soldiers. Their mothers were inconsolable at the death of their babies, as indeed mothers have always been.

The death of these innocent baby boys of Bethlehem became a feast-day in the western Church by the 4<sup>th</sup> century. This was because the Church considered them to be martyrs because they not only died *for* Christ, *but instead of* Christ.

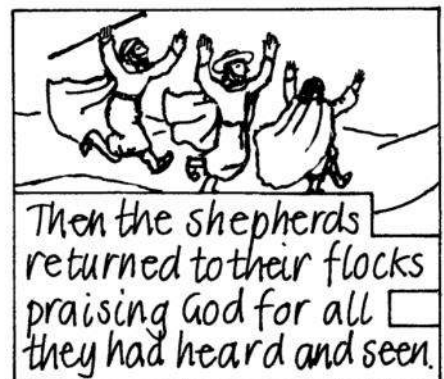
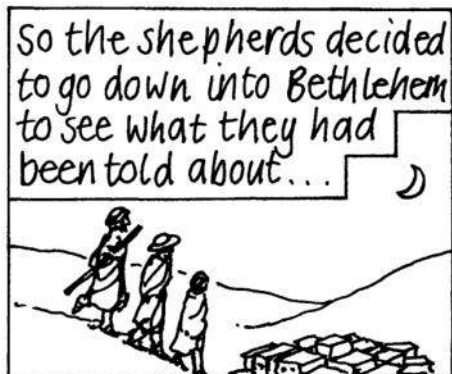
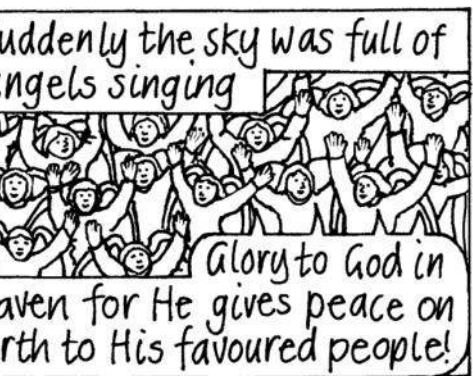
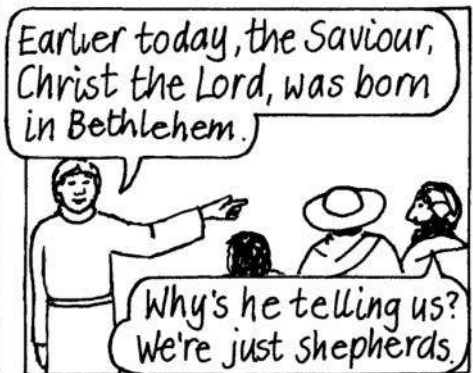
Down the centuries, the tragic loss of the Holy Innocents has touched the imagination and hearts of poets, preachers and artists. Though heart-broken parents still grieve today, the Church can offer them one firm assurance: that young children who die to this world will undoubtedly "this day be with Me in Paradise." The One who eagerly said "Suffer the little children to *come unto Me*" will be the last person to turn them away.

# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Luke chapter 2 verses 8 to 20

Shepherds were paid to look after the flocks out on the hillside. Uneducated and rough, they were usually avoided, or overlooked.



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shepherds  
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 Saviour  
 glory  
 news  
 praising  
 hillside  
 singing

baby  
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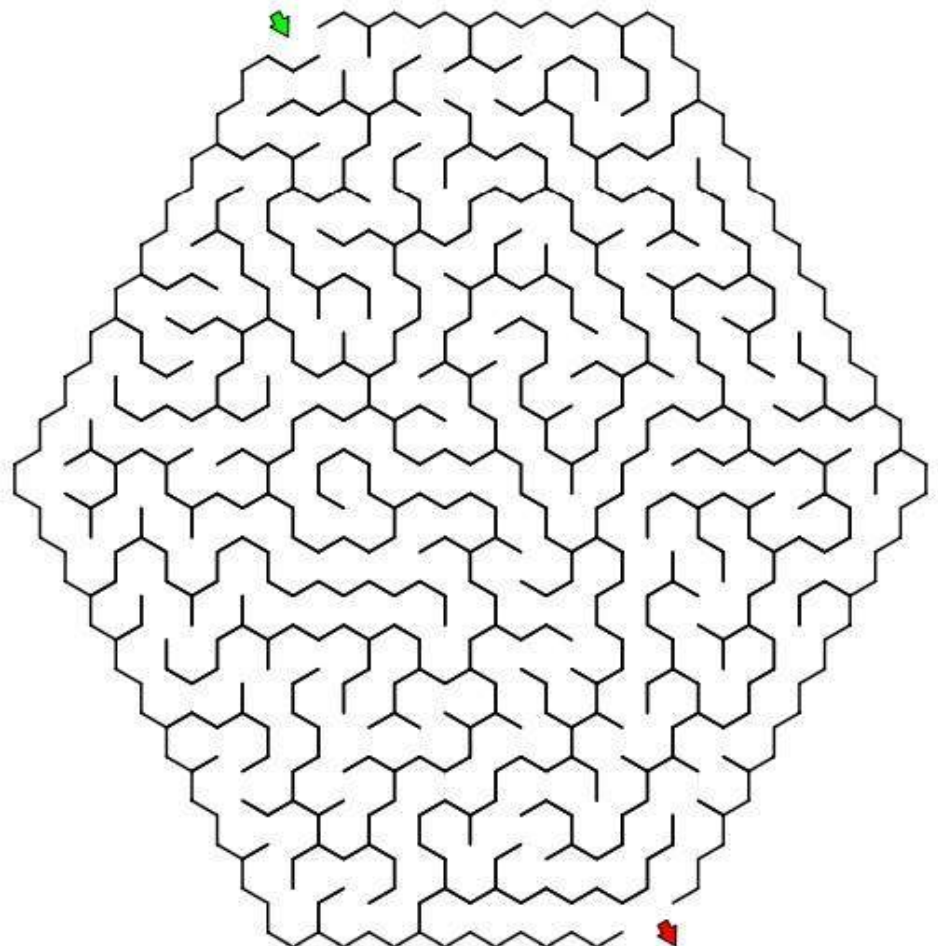
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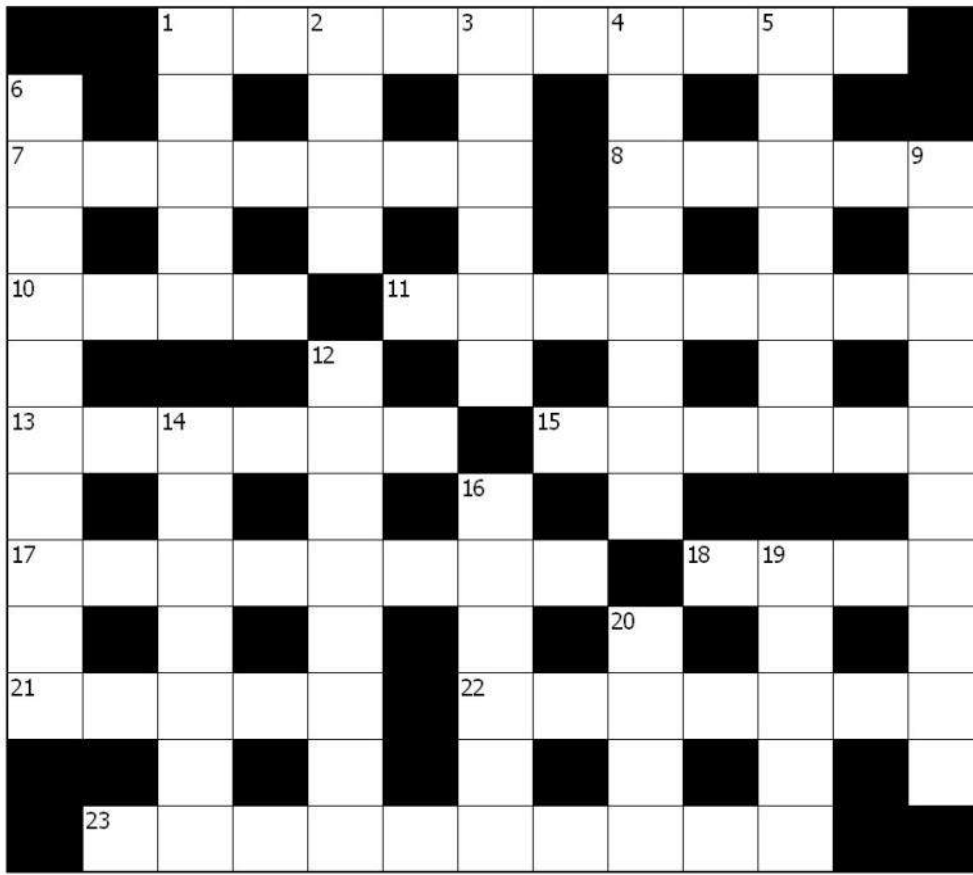
Insert numbers 1-9 in every row, column and 3x3 box.

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**Quiz answers:**

1. Prunella Scales
2. Richard Sharpe
3. Evita
4. Bake Off
5. Jane Austen  
( 250th anniversary of her birth)
6. Taylor Swift
7. John Galsworthy
8. Christina Rossetti





**Answers: ACROSS:** 1, Tabernacle. 7, Absalom. 8, Incas. 10, Roes. 11, Captured. 13, Fright. 15, Cavell. 17, Cyclonic. 18, Herb. 21, Sonar. 22, Amazing. 23, Settlement.

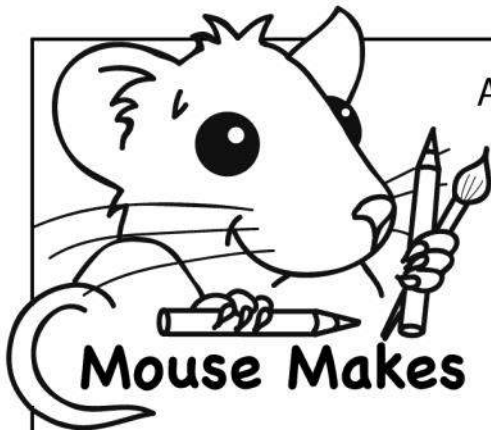
**DOWN:** 1, Taste. 2, Bold. 3, Ramiah. 4, Abiathar. 5, Lucerne. 6, Sacrifices. 9, Saddlebags. 12, Theocrat. 14, Incense. 16, Pilate. 19, Exist. 20, Save.

**Across**

- 1 Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)
- 7 David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14,15) (7)
- 8 They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries (5)
- 10 Small deer of European and Asian extraction (4)
- 11 Seized control of (Numbers 21:25) (8)
- 13 Terror (Luke 24:5) (6)
- 15 First World War heroine shot by the Germans in Brussels, Nurse Edith .... (6)
- 17 Stormy (8)
- 18 A bitter variety of this, together with lamb and unleavened bread, was the Passover menu for anyone unclean (Numbers 9:11) (4)
- 21 Arson (anag.) (5)
- 22 How John Newton described God's grace in his well-known hymn (7)
- 23 Habitation (Isaiah 27:10) (10)

**Down**

- 1 .... and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8) (5)
- 2 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as ... as a lion (Proverbs 28:1) (4)
- 3 One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)
- 4 He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19,20) (8)
- 5 City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)
- 6 Offer your bodies as living ...., holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1) (10)
- 9 Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)
- 12 One who accepts government by God (8)
- 14 Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual (Exodus 30:1) (7)
- 16 He asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) (6)
- 19 Are (Romans 13:1) (5)
- 20 You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will ... his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21) (4)



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 snuggly 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

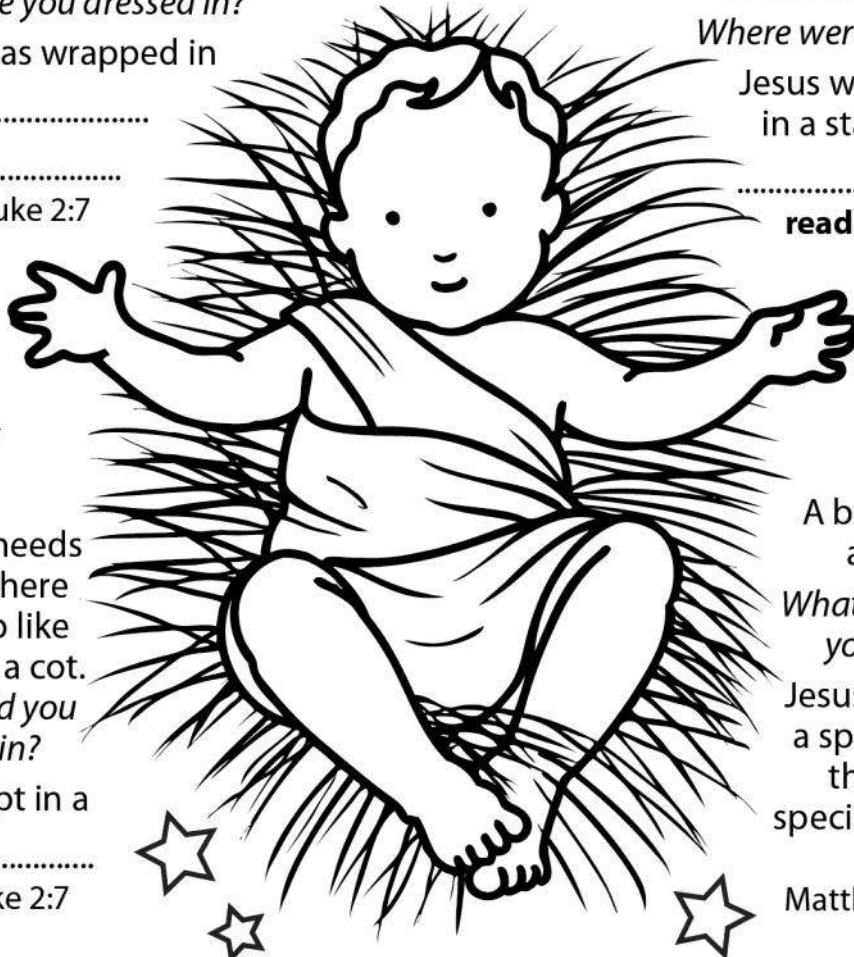
A baby needs somewhere to sleep like a crib or a cot.  
*What did you sleep in?*

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.

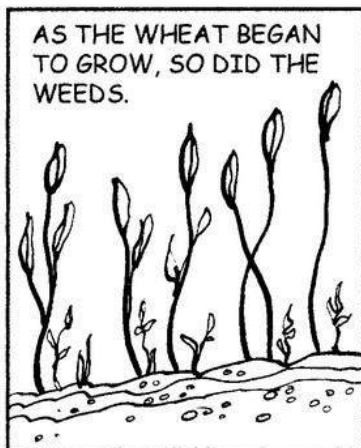
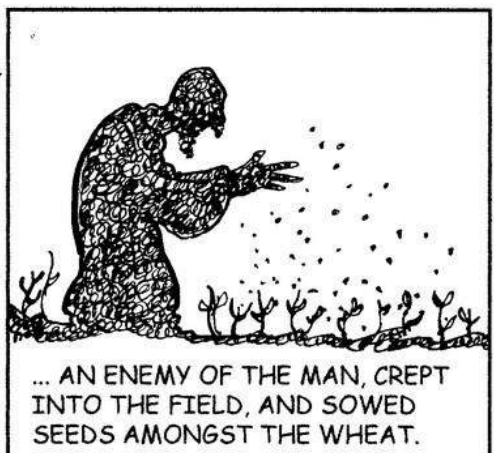
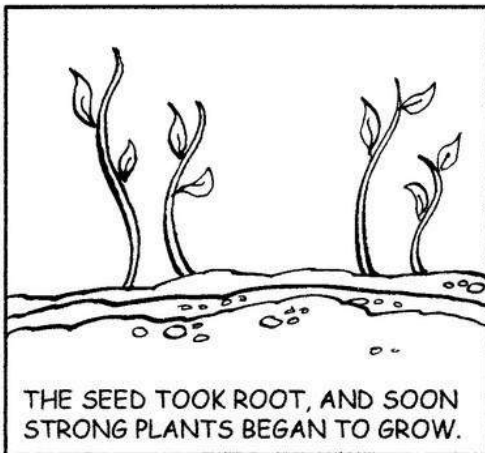
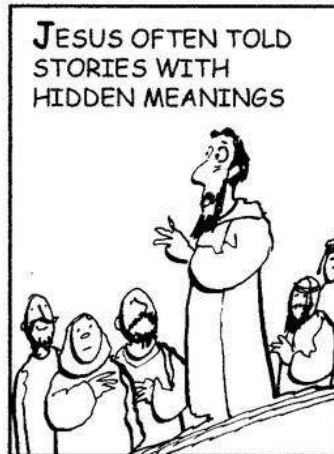
**read**  
Matthew 1:21-23



**HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**

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

The tale of  
the  
Wheat  
and the  
Weeds



*The Ven John Barton explains the meaning of the colours of the vicars' stoles.*

### **Why is the vicar wearing white today?**

You may have noticed that the Minister who officiates at Church Services may wear a long, thin scarf which is called a stole. This can be white, purple, red or green.

White is for festive occasions like Christmas and Easter, christenings and weddings. Purple is worn during Advent and Lent, when we bring to mind our sins and seek God's forgiveness, in preparation for the wonderful seasons of Christmas and Easter. Red at Pentecost, symbolises the fire of the Holy Spirit, and on Saints Days it signifies that many of them (and some today) were martyred because they were Christians. Green, marking growth and hope is worn for the rest of the year.

So, white for 'best', purple for penitence, red for the Holy Spirit and the blood of the Martyrs, and green for growth.

You will also spot the same changing colours for items on the Altar-Table at the beginning and end of the Service of Holy Communion. The Burse is a flat, square case holding a linen cloth called the corporal, on which the vessels used in Holy Communion are placed. The Veil covers them until they are used.

The vessels are called Paten and Chalice. The Paten is like a plate on which the bread is placed. A bowl, called a Ciborium, may be used for the same purpose. The Chalice is a cup for the wine. Because the bread and wine represent the Body and Blood of Christ, which He sacrificed for us when He was crucified, we handle them with care.

The minister's ceremonial robes, called vestments, and the vessels all point to something greater. In one of St Paul's letters in the New Testament, he explains in these words that receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion has past, present and future significance: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."



**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.

*By Daphne Kitching*

**Christmas**

All heaven waited with bated breath  
As the Lord sent Gabriel on ahead  
To break the news to the young Jewish girl,  
'You will be with child' was all he said

'How can this be?' Poor Mary cried,  
'I am a maid and know no man.'  
'With God all is possible' came the reply;  
This child would fulfil redemption's plan

News spread fast when the baby was born,  
Shepherds were alerted by a heavenly host,  
Glory to God and peace on earth,  
God was coming to redeem the lost.

This Christmas day we celebrate,  
Like the shepherds and wise men we play our part,  
As they bring their gifts we worship Him too,  
But the one gift He longs for is our heart.

*By Megan Carter*

*Nigel Beeton writes: One of the nice things about St Mary's in Bury St Edmunds is that it is visited by many tourists who come to admire the angels in the roof or the tomb of Mary Tudor (older sister of Henry VIII.) They do tend to turn up at odd times, like during the early service on Easter Sunday. I recall one year when a pair of Germans turned up, but I was at the back of the church getting communion ready for the next service, so I was able to look after them while the last hymn was being sung, which was 'Thine Be the Glory, risen conquering Son', sung as you know to Handel's tune, 'Maccabeus'.*

*The Germans were puzzled. "Why," they asked me, "are you singing Christmas carols at Eastertime?" Of course, they use Maccabeus for 'Tochter Zion' (Daughter of Zion), which is sung only at Christmas and Advent even though, based on Zechariah 9:9 as it is, it is equally useable on Palm Sunday. Here's an English version based on 'Maccabeus':*

### **Daughter of Zion**

Daughter of Zion, sing with heartfelt joy!  
Children of Jerus'lem your sweet tongues employ!  
See now He is coming – see the Prince of Peace;  
And your songs of gladness never need to cease!  
*Daughter of Zion, sing with heartfelt joy!*  
*Children of Jerus'lem your sweet tongues employ!*

Sing loud hosannas to King David's Son!  
Blessed are His people! See His kingdom come.  
His eternal kingdom ever more shall be!  
Sing your glad hosanna! Sing eternally!  
*Sing loud hosannas to King David's Son!*  
*Blessed are His people! See His kingdom come.*

O Son of David our hosannas ring!  
Joyfully we praise You, Christ our gentle King!  
Now and ever after stands Your peaceful Throne  
The eternal Father's saving love is shown!  
*Daughter of Zion, sing with heartfelt joy!*  
*Children of Jerus'lem your sweet tongues employ!*

**What Does Christmas Mean To You?**

When you prepare for Christmas  
What matters spring to mind?  
The coming of the Saviour  
Or the gifts that you can't find?

Do you think of baby Jesus  
As you deck the halls with holly?  
Or are your thoughts preoccupied  
With piling high your shopping trolley.

Will you be moved this Christmas  
By the sound of carol singing  
Or are you more in tune with  
The sound of shop tills ringing?

On that family occasion  
When you choose your Christmas tree  
Do you think of how that tiny babe  
Came to die for you and me?

Christmas to you could mean much  
more  
If you're prepared to see  
The reasons why each Christmastime  
Just mean so much to me,

So as you celebrate this Christmas  
Why not resolve to start anew?  
And change your whole perspective  
Of what Christmas means to you.

*By Colin Hammacott*

*Finally, for those who like more traditional poems, here are verses from a famous one by the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, written in 1863.*

**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.

*By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

To join Sunday worship online please visit our website [www.bromleyparishchurch.org](http://www.bromleyparishchurch.org) and follow the link on our homepage.

Updates to services and events are posted on our website [www.bromleyparishchurch.org](http://www.bromleyparishchurch.org)

**Please note:**

For all other events and news, please refer to the pew sheet, available in Church or on the website.

There is also a weekly email, if you would like to receive this please email [vicar@bromleyparishchurch.org](mailto:vicar@bromleyparishchurch.org) or sign up via the website.

