

# **St John's Church**

*serving Stanborough, Lemsford, Cromer Hyde*



*December 2023 / January 2024*    **£1**

## Photos from St Johns School



Above Left: Act of Remembrance

Above Right: Children's thoughts and prayers about Peace

Below Left: Class 3 visit to the Roman Baths, at Welwyn

Below Right: Members of Class 1 performing their song in our Harvest celebration



Cover Photo: The Alabaster Reredos of the Lady Chapel of Downside Abbey Church by Sir Ninian Comper c. 1913

### **A Christmas gift...**

I wonder what Christmas means to you? If you enjoy this time of year, take a minute to stop and think about what makes it stand out as a special time. Is it the people you spend it with? The music? Carols? Children in Nativity plays? The Christmas lights? A break from routine?

Many of my special Christmas memories concern food. At the end of November, the air is filled with the smell of my husband's home cooked Christmas pudding and cake. Next, comes the debate around whether to have turkey, or try something new, and whether it's right to have Yorkshire puddings with Christmas dinner – of course it is! And finally, there's the joy of Christmas left overs – bubble and squeak, endless cheese and biscuits and cold turkey for days and days.

If you ask children what they are most excited about in the run-up to Christmas, they will probably tell you that it's their presents.

Christmas presents are exciting in their own right, but they are also a symbol of the greatest gift of all – God coming to us as Jesus.

In his life, death and resurrection, Jesus showed us what God is like - a God who loves the whole world; who is always with the world; and who wants nothing more than for us



to say 'yes' to his love, and to live that love ourselves.

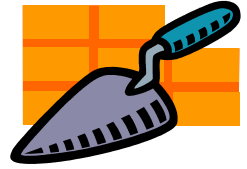
It's this idea of Christmas as a gift of love to the world that helps me see it as much more than all the special 'trimmings'. The first Christmas was celebrated in unsuitable accommodation by a non-traditional family. They were joined by uninvited guests, and were forced to flee for their lives as refugees shortly afterwards. You can imagine that any Christmas gift of love they were offered would have made their lives significantly better.

So here's a challenge: what would it mean to you to give the Christmas gift of love? One place to start, could be to share with someone else whatever you thought of at the beginning of the article.

It's tempting at Christmas to huddle down in our cosy family groups,

*(Continued on page 3)*

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**Celebrate Christmas  
 with St John's Church!**

**December 3rd**

11:00am : All-Together Advent worship\*

**December 10th**

4:00pm : Carols by Candlelight\*

**December 17th**

11:00am : Nine Lessons and Carols

**Christmas Eve**

11:00am : Said Communion

3pm : Crib Service\*

11pm : Midnight Mass

**Christmas Day**

11:00am : All-Together Holy Communion\*

**\*Services especially  
 suitable for children,  
 as well as people of  
 all other ages!**



## Kathryn's message - *continued*

*(Continued from page 1)*

when perhaps we could give the gift of friendship to one of our neighbours who is alone.

Christmas is a busy time, but how about taking a moment to pick up the phone to someone you've not spoken to for a while, or simply smiling at people in the street.

There are often appeals for donations at Christmas, particularly for those who are without a home of their own. Could you give the gift of warmth,

food or a special gift via a foodbank, or charity?

Or, perhaps you could pray for peace in our troubled world, or 'be peace' by reaching out to someone you find a bit difficult or have fallen out with.

However, you share the gift of Christmas love this year, I wish you every blessing for a peaceful Advent, a joyful Christmas and a new year full of hope.

***With love, Rev'd Kathryn***

## Refocussed Christmas by Rev Kathryn

Why not take a break from the shopping, cooking and the Christmas adverts, and come along to some of our services at St John's church this Advent and Christmas?

In her Children and Families article Jo Brooks covers the events and services specifically aimed at children and all ages, like our Sunday 'All Together' Worship for Advent Sunday and Christmas Day, Candlelight Carols on 10th December and in the new year, Christingle on 7th Jan.

I'd like to give a mention here to our other special Christmas Services:

- On **15<sup>th</sup> December**, you're welcome to join us for some joyful carol singing in the **Crooked Chimney pub at 6pm**
- On **17<sup>th</sup> December at 11am** it's our **traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols**, followed by festive refreshments
- On Christmas Eve (24th December) at 11pm we have our **traditional Midnight Mass**

See you there!

[You can find a quick guide to these services opposite, or in the full list of all Dec/Jan services later in this magazine. Ed.]



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### **Concert at St John's Church by Welwyn Garden City Male Voice Choir and St John's School choir - Friday 8th December**

We're really excited to announce this concert which starts at 7pm with tickets £10 on the door, via choir members or via Eventbrite - see the ad. Opposite for details and a QR code.

### **Connect@4**

By the time you read this we'll have held the very first of our Connect@4 events. We are really excited about this new periodic Sunday gathering at 4pm for those looking to connect with God, each other, the community and creation in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

There are no pews, not that many words and no pressure to 'sit still'! This is a space for all ages to have fun, explore, create, pray, worship and eat together in a way that works best for them.

For our first gathering on Sunday 27th Nov (at 4pm, of course), we met outside the Church Annexe for marshmallows and hot chocolate around the fire, before heading indoors to explore our theme for the afternoon - 'Light in the Darkness.' [See the photos later on in this magazine]

Our next Connect@4 Event is Christingle, on 7th December, where we make a Christingle, have a short service, and finish with a pizza party - see the ad. in this issue for more info.

Come along and be part of something new at St John's - we can't wait to see where this is going to lead us!

Whether you're new to faith, not really sure about faith, looking for somewhere to belong, or perhaps attend more traditional worship on a Sunday morning and want to also try something new....then this is the gathering for you.

Whatever your age, background, or beliefs, we can't wait to meet you. This is a safe space to be YOU!

Jesus, light of the world!

St John's Church Lemsford

**CONNECT@4**



# Christingle

**Sunday 7th January at 4pm**

**A new year Christingle celebration!**

Join us for Christingle-making, a short service of light and praise, and a pizza party to follow.

There'll be something for everyone!

In aid of The Children's Society



In our monthly Sunday Clubs this term we have been having fun exploring God's wonderful world – hearing that everything He made was for a purpose and that purpose was for rejoicing, for us to marvel at and delight in as He delights in His creation! And even more marvellously and wonderfully, that includes us too – God made us 'in His image', to love and be loved. What a wonderful promise. But God's wonderful promises go so much further than that – he has also sent Jesus, his beloved son, to be our rescuer and our redeemer, today and for ever.



The next two months are all about God's indescribably good gift of Jesus, and are full of specially wonderful services; there'll be quiet and preparation as we travel through the waiting season of Advent, then all excitement and joy when we reach Christmas.



## *What's on?*

**All together worship on Advent Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 11am** is suitable for all the family and we'll be asking the question so many of us are so familiar with '**are we nearly there yet?!**'

**On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December** we'll have **Sunday Club** during the morning service at **11am** as usual with dressing up and acting, and time for friends and fun as we remember the Christmas story

In the afternoon is a special **Carol Service** for all ages at **4pm** with candlelight and storytelling.

Then there is our **Crib Service** on **Christmas Eve at 3pm** - come and enjoy a moment's peace and calm in church with your little ones, as we get ready for the big day.

And not forgetting our annual **Christingle Celebration** on **Sunday 7th January at 4pm** with pizza afterwards (see opposite). All welcome!

**Sunday Club** is back in 2024 on the **14<sup>th</sup> January** at 11am.

Contact Jo Brooks at [joholifield@gmail.com](mailto:joholifield@gmail.com) for more information about these events or our children's activities at St John's.

## Services

### December 2023

#### 3rd Advent 1

8 am HC (BCP)                      11 am 'All Together' Advent\*

#### 10th Advent 2

8 am HC (BCP)                      11 am HC with Sunday Club  
4 pm Carols by Candlelight\*

#### 17th Advent 3

8 am HC (BCP)                      11 am Nine Lessons & Carols

#### 24th Advent 4 - Christmas Eve

8 am *No Service*                      11 am HC  
3 pm Crib Service\*                      11 pm Midnight Mass

#### 25th Christmas Day

11 am 'All Together' Holy  
Communion\*

#### 31st Christmas 1

8 am *No Service*                      11 am HC

### January 2024

#### 7th The Epiphany

8 am HC (BCP)                      11 am Reflective Worship  
4 pm Christingle - Christingle-making, a short service  
of light and praise, with a pizza party to follow\*

#### 14th Epiphany 2

8 am HC (BCP)                      11 am HC with Sunday Club

#### 21st Epiphany 3

8 am MP (BCP)                      11 am Reflective Worship

#### 28th Epiphany 4

8 am HC (BCP)                      11 am HC

**\* Services especially suitable for children, and all other ages!**

*HC Holy Communion; MP Morning Prayer (Matins); BCP Book of  
Common Prayer; NB Kathryn's day off is Friday each week*

## A Christmas Poem

*Sent in by [Rev]Edward Cardale, with all good wishes for Christmas and the New Year to everyone at St John's Lemsford, who says:*

*Some Christmas poems have echoes of the Bethlehem story, or winter scenes like Christmas carols. This one is different. The original version was written by a 20th century scientist, Robert Boyd. I have shortened it!*

**In the beginning**, long before all worlds, or flaming stars or whirling galaxies,  
before that first Big Bang, and back beyond all time or correlated space,  
source of the whole – in the beginning – was the ‘Word of God’:  
reason, design, form and intelligence.

He who works as much in randomness as in order, to make us in his image,  
creates by patient evolution,  
on a scale of craft divine which dwarfs a million years.

Who is this God who cares about a little speck of cosmic dust that we have  
named  
The Earth?

Who is this God who circles either pole with Northern lights and Arctic dawn,  
the God for whom our sky-filled lightning flash is but a tiny spark,  
this God whose plan so shapes the atoms that they combine to make dust  
LIFE?

And can this God be known within the confines of a human mind?  
A litre and a half of mortal brain, whose interlocking neurons still depend  
on chemistry and physics, (and we shall never truly comprehend).  
This mystery of being, still unresolved by all our science and philosophy,  
fills me with breathless wonder.

And the God from whom it all continually proceeds calls forth my worship  
And shall my worship have – for this God now is known in human form.  
Still Jesus comes to those who seek for God, and those who say  
‘I don’t see God, just show me God today’.

When you’ve seen Him, you’ve glimpsed the eternal God  
who cares and loves and longs to be with us.

This is the Christmas message: God – has – come!



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So much light in the darkness, in the form of conversation, creativity, Bible exploration, prayer, fire toasted marshmallows, friendship, food and fun. See the photos on this and the next few pages:

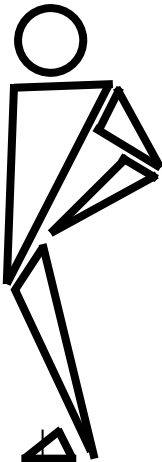


## Our First Ever Connect@4 - photos continued



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# Our First Ever Connect@4 - Photos Concluded





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Hello everyone,

As always, the weeks are flying by with Advent about to begin and Christmas just around the corner. We have had a busy time since the last Parish Magazine was produced with many special things happening relating to the change of seasons and to the church's calendar.

Harvest was a lovely celebration. It was super having members of our school choir joining the adult church choir for the Sunday Harvest service at St John's. During the school Harvest celebration each class presented a song or poem as it was also National Poetry Day. Our Remembrance service was another very special occasion. Jo Hollifield led a lovely Collective Worship in which the children's reflections on Peace were hung from a tree which is situated between the church and the school. Please do come and have a read of the children's thoughts and prayers, many are very poignant.

Every week there has been lots going on. Sporting activities have included class 4 improving their cycling skills during their Bikeability week, class 3 going to Harpenden's pool each week for their swimming lessons, netball sessions at Stanborough School as well as weekly PE lessons. Music activities have included weekly lessons led by our new music teacher Mr Rapson, ukelele lessons for class 3, Rock Steady sessions and



individual instrument lessons. Busy, busy, busy....!

We are now busy preparing for Christmas. The choir are practising for a concert at the church with the Welwyn Garden City Male Voice Choir on the evening of Friday 8th December, they are also taking part in the St. John's Carol Service. Our LSA have all kinds of Christmas fun planned for the children including a Christmas shopping afternoon, Christmas Jumper Day, parties and, of course, a visit from Father Christmas himself. So much to look forward to!

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Love from Michelle Boylan

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The 'Then and Now' image on the inside back cover of this issue is a Christmas card from the 1920s showing the gay young flappers and toffs skating on Brocket Lake. We have this image in our archives thanks to long term member Shirley Knapp who passed it on to the group. She inherited it from her mother who was on the staff of Brocket Hall in the 1920s as shown in the image below. The image from 1924 shows her with Lord Brocket's staff; she is in the front row far right.



Frank, the hard-working editor of the parish magazine [Andy, you're too kind. Ed.], required this article by mid-November and I am writing it on Remembrance Sunday. Leading member of Lemsford Local History group, Doreen Wright, contributed the following article to remind us of the sacrifice local people gave in both world wars.

*(Continued on page 20)*

*(Continued from page 19)*



### **Lest we forget**

On Remembrance Day we remember all those who fought in both world wars particularly those that gave their lives from Lemsford and are recognised on the Lemsford war memorial. There are two other men that served in WW1 and are buried in the churchyard although they weren't from this area, there was also a POW from WW2 whose body was exhumed and is now in the German Cemetery in Cannock Chase.

#### **Basil Arthur Foord M.C., D.F.C - North Churchyard Row 9 Plot 1**

Basil Arthur Foord was born on 2nd June 1897, in Manaia, Taranaki, New Zealand, the youngest son of Ethel and John Anderson Foord. His father had moved to farm in New Zealand in 1886,

He married Ethel Douglas Clarke at St John's Church at Otakeho, near Manaia, in 1889. They had five children there 1890 to 1897 and sold up in 1899 to return to England. Later his father moved to what was then Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia where he had a farm at Fort Jameson, now known as Chipata.

Basil was educated in England, on the 1911 Census he is being educated at a Boarding School in Deal, Kent. At the start of WW1, he enlisted as a Private in the Northern Rhodesia Rifles. After this was disbanded in 1915, he returned to England and joined the 1st Battalion of the 7th London Rifles where, as 2nd Lt. Basil Foord on the 16th of September 1918 he was awarded the Military Cross for gallant behaviour.

He left the army and joined the RAF in 1919 and on the 29th April 1921 Flying Officer Basil A. Foord was awarded the Distinguished

## **LLHG - continued**

Flying Cross for gallantry and distinguished service in Warzirstan 1919-1920.

On the 3rd August 1922 he was admitted to the Central RAF Hospital, Finchley seriously ill with a tumour of the caecum. He died there on the 18th October 1922. His Aunt, Miss Foord, was with him at his death. He was buried in the north churchyard of St. John's on the 20th November 1922. The inscription on his grave reads:

**Left: In proud and loving memory of flying Officer BASIL ARTHUR FOORD. M.C. D.F.C., youngest son of JOHN and ETHEL FOORD. Died October 18th 1922, aged 25 years**

**Foot: "What I do thou knowest not now but thou shalt know hereafter".**

Unfortunately, Basil A. Foord died a year after the cut-off date to be eligible to be Commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves.

### **Gordon Albert Franks - South Churchyard Row 4 Plot 9**

Gordon Albert Franks was born 12th July 1898 in St. Saviours, Southwark,

Gordon Albert Franks first service date was 5th March 1914. On 30th October 1914 to the 13th December 1914, he is stationed at HMS Pembroke. In December 1914 he was serving on HMS Patrol which was on Coastal Defence duties on the East coast of England. HMS Patrol was badly damaged during the German bombardment of Hartlepool in Mid December 1914

He was again serving on HMS Patrol as an Ordinary Seaman in May 1916 and in 1917 as an Able Seaman.

From 19th July 1918 to 23rd October 1918, he served as an Able Seaman on board HMS Lepanto a commissioned Escort Ship in the North Atlantic for the Convoys. He was back serving at HMS Pembroke in October 1918 until August 1920 when he was invalided out due to Tuberculosis.

He died on 2nd October 1920 in Ware and was buried int St. John's Lemsford on 6th October 1920 age 22 years.

*(Continued on page 23)*

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*(Continued from page 21)*

The memorial inscription reads: In loving Memory of Gordon Albert Franks Leading Seaman R.N. in the Great War 1914-1918. Russian relief force 1919. Died 2nd Oct 1920 aged 22years. The Lord was my stay. He is Commemorated in Perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Also in his grave is his mother Elizabeth Franks who died on 18th December 1927 and his Father William A. Franks died 20th April 1934.

---

### **Alfred Rumenap - Originally buried in Row 8 Plot 17**

Alfred Rumenap was born in Mariengarten, Landkreis Gottingen Germany on 23rd October 1926. We know very little about him except he was a POW in Lemsford and after the war he lived at the H.A.E.C. Hostel at Lemsford and was a Tractor Driver for a farmer in St. Albans. On the 22nd March 1948 when he was cycling to work through the lanes he collided with a motor car at Hogg End Lane, he was taken to St Albans and Mid Herts hospital where he died on the 24th March 1948 from a Cerebral Haemorrhage, a fractured skull and Bronchopneumonia.

He was buried on the 30th March 1948 at St. Johns Lemsford age 21 years. On 26th November the remains were exhumed by order of the Home Office and reinterred at the German War Cemetery at Cannock Chase, Staffordshire.

He is also commemorated on the War Memorial at Ballenhausen, Germinde Friedland, Landkreis Gottingen Niedersachsen.

Thank you, Doreen, for taking the time to record local history and also for keeping St John's graveyard tidy together with Mary Douglas. One of many unsung heroes who volunteer time and energy to the Church.

Lemsford Local History Group has recorded memories like this for over twenty years and always appreciates memories from the local community to pass on to future generations. Contact us on [info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk](mailto:info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk) if you have a memory to share or require information about the local area history.



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**A** holly tree in my garden has produced a fine display of berries, in good time for Christmas. One of our best known carols is *The Holly and The Ivy*, which draws parallels between the holly's red berries and Jesus' blood, and its prickles which resemble His crown of thorns.

This carol is ancient. The version we sing was published in 1909 by the folk song collector Cecil Sharp; he had heard it being sung in Chipping Camden by a woman named Mary Clayton.

Henry VIII before he became King wrote a love song possibly based on it entitled *Green Groweth the Holly*. Henry likened the evergreen character of the holly during winter to the faithfulness of a man to his beloved through all adversities. His subsequent treatment of women demonstrates that young men will say anything to win the hand of a fair lady.

The use of holly in festivals predates Christianity. Before every winter solstice Romans celebrated Saturnalia, a festival honouring Saturn, god of agriculture, abundance, and renewal. Work was suspended and social norms relaxed; slaves and citizens alike participated; raucous behaviour sometimes ensued; wreaths and boughs of holly appeared everywhere, indoors and out; when presents were exchanged, a little holly sprig was tied to each gift. The celebration lasted seven days, beginning before the solstice and continuing until December 25, which was the winter solstice by the Julian calendar.



Early Christians refused to worship Saturn and other Roman deities, so were persecuted. To blend in they too adopted holly as ornamentation during Saturnalia but justified this by linking it to Christ's suffering on the cross. Later Christians transformed Saturnalia into Christmas.

**T**he holly affords shelter to birds and small mammals during cold winter months when frosts make its berries soft and palatable. These are a key source of nutrition at a time of year when there are few alternatives. The spikes on its leaves deter foraging animals, but the upper branches often lack them allowing access to birds. This makes sense because hollies are propagated by birds which eat their berries and then excrete the seeds within over a wide area. Interestingly, holly berries are poisonous to man but not to birds. Truly, nature is marvellous.

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## *Prayer for Christmas/*

***This Christmas, God of peace, bless us all,  
that we might live with a new, mature faith,  
that we might become peacemaking saints,  
that we might be instruments of your  
Christmas gift of peace on earth.***

***And finally .....***

What happened to the man who stole an Advent Calendar?  
*He got 25 days.*

What is the best Christmas present in the world?  
*A broken drum, you just can't beat it.*

What do you call a bunch of chess players bragging about  
their games in a hotel lobby?  
*Chess nuts boasting in an open foyer.*

How many letters are in the Christmas alphabet?  
*Only 25, because there's no L.*

When is a boat like snow?  
*When it's adrift.*

What do reindeer say before  
they tell a joke?  
*This one will sleigh you!*





## BROCKET HALL



## SEASONS GREETINGS

Above (Then – 1920s): the ‘gay’ young flappers and toffs skating on Bocket Lake with Bocket Hall in the background

Below (Now): Bocket Lake with Bocket Hall in the background





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