



**“Loving God, loving each other, loving Brackley”**

A winter scene with a snow-covered evergreen tree, a bright star in the sky, and a person in a blue coat and red hat standing in the snow.

What can I give Him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a Wise Man,  
I would do my part;  
Yet what I can, I give Him -  
Give my heart.

## **Revd. Rob Wood writes....**The Meaning of Christmas



My favourite festive film is A Christmas Carol. OK, you can spot my faux sophistication. My favourite movie at this time of year is actually... The Muppet Christmas Carol. I haven't read the Dickens book or seen the other movies, but hopefully Kermit, Piggy, and gang are faithful to the original story (except my guess is tiny Tim was not a frog!).

Throughout the movie's joyous songs, a serious message is woven. As you may know, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come takes Scrooge—ably played by Michael Caine—on a journey in the middle of the night. Scrooge, a grumpy, penny-pinching old man, is confronted with what it will mean to die without love. The themes of love, thanksgiving, and transformation all jump through the screen.

My guess is that as you watch your Christmas movie of choice, there will be many pertinent Christmas themes that are helpful to reflect on (unless your favourite Christmas movie is Die Hard). Each festive film will give its own answer to the question, what is the meaning of Christmas?

To answer that question, I'd like to draw your attention to three truths from one of the most well-known verses in Scripture. Each truth is pertinent every Christmas. They remind us of the true reason for the season.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

***First, Christmas is about love.*** Ask the average punter at the Brackley Community Carol Service what Christmas means for them, and my guess is that love will be high on their list. Christmas is a time to enjoy the love of family and friends, isn't it?

As the Ghost of Christmas Present sings "wherever you find love, it feels like Christmas".

I agree! Christmas is all about love. Indeed, John 3:16 tells us that God so *loved* the world.

This time of year, why not explore the length and depth and breadth of God's love for you? If you regularly attend Church, you might need to do that by really dwelling on the Bible Readings and Carol lyrics. Ask God to speak to you through them again. If you haven't already come along much at St Peter's, you might find that attending one of our Sunday services, Carols by Candlelight service, Christingle services, or any of the Christmas events will help you see how Christmas is all about God's love.

Of course, the truth that Christmas is about love sharpens the pain of those struggling with bereavement and loneliness this time of year. That's why, as a church family, we must seek to express our love for one another as we remind ourselves of God's love for us.

**Second, Christmas is about a gift.** We show our love for those we care deeply about with gifts. It is the same with God! Indeed, God so loved the world that he *gave*.

Now, some of us are better at giving gifts than others. This verse shows that God doesn't give bad gifts. He gave his one and only Son. A unique gift. A gift that is incalculable in value. Therefore, Christmas is not so much about giving gifts as it is receiving the amazing gift of Jesus Christ. We don't deserve this gift. However, we can gratefully unwrap and enjoy the relationship with God on offer to us because of Jesus Christ.

**Third, Christmas is about life.** The festive spirit can so easily mean we forget that Christmas is a matter of life and death. However, that serious message is conveyed by St John.

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal *life*.

The incarnation (God's Son taking upon himself a human nature) was not a case of God coming to make us slightly better people. No, Jesus came to bring us life when we dwelt in death.

Hark the Herald Angels Sing helpfully reminds us of this truth:

*Mild He lays His glory by  
Born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the sons of earth  
Born to give them second birth  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
"Glory to the new-born king."*

To embrace the gift of Jesus is to embrace life.

We naturally think about love, gifts, and life at this time of year. Helpfully, John 3:16 reminds us of the true meaning of Christmas in a way that no festive film can. What is Christmas about? This verse highlights the love of God, the gift of God, and the life of God. Therefore, as you'd expect me to say, Christmas is about Jesus Christ!

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### **The story of mince pies**

Did you know that mince pies have been traditional English Christmas fare since the Middle Ages, when meat was a key ingredient? The addition of spices, suet and alcohol to meat came about because it was an alternative to salting and smoking in order to preserve the food. Mince pies used to be a different shape - cradle-shaped with a pastry baby Jesus on top.





# CAROLS *by* CANDELIGHT

7.30pm on Sunday  
10<sup>th</sup> December

St Peter's Church  
Brackley

with mulled wine  
& mince pies

## St Peter's Nativity Service



9.30am Sun 17 Dec  
Everyone is welcome -  
just turn up!



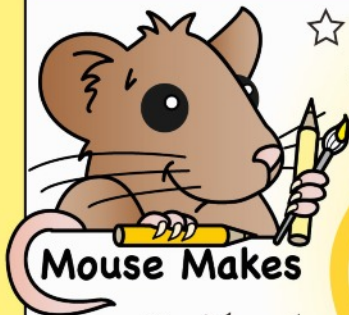
Come dressed as  
your favourite  
Nativity  
character!



Part of our normal service.  
Christmas party for the children while  
the service continues!

[www.stpetersbrackley.org.uk/christmas](http://www.stpetersbrackley.org.uk/christmas)





# Mouse Makes



## GOD'S PROMISE

*Isaiah 9:6-7*

CHILD • BORN • SON  
GIVEN • WONDERFUL  
COUNCELLOR  
MIGHTY • GOD  
EVERLASTING  
FATHER • PRINCE  
PEACE • LORD



## AN ANGEL MESSENGER

*Luke 1:26-38*

ANGEL • GABRIEL  
JOSEPH • MARY  
FAVOUR • SON  
JESUS • GREAT  
THRONE • REIGN  
FOREVER • HOLY  
SERVANT • WORD

**ADVENT**  
comes from  
the Latin  
'AD VENTO'  
which means  
**ARRIVAL**

In Advent we  
celebrate Jesus' birth  
and look forward to  
the time when Jesus  
will come again.



## A LONG JOURNEY

*Luke 2:1-20*

BETHLEHEM  
REGISTER • BIRTH  
MANGER • INN  
SHEPHERDS • FLOCK  
ANGELS • JOY  
GOOD NEWS • PRAISE  
SAVIOUR • CHRIST



## THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

*John 3:16*

GOD • SO • LOVED  
WORLD • HE • GAVE  
ONLY • SON  
WHOEVER • BELIEVES  
ETERNAL • LIFE

V	R	P	R	I	N	C	E	L	R	O	D
W	O	R	D	C	F	A	T	H	E	R	E
J	A	G	M	A	N	G	E	R	G	E	B
O	W	H	O	E	V	E	R	W	I	I	J
S	J	O	Y	B	O	R	N	O	S	G	E
E	S	L	S	E	R	V	A	N	T	N	S
P	P	Y	J	C	H	I	L	D	E	P	U
H	R	O	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S
F	A	V	O	U	R	E	F	R	W	S	O
B	I	R	T	H	S	W	O	F	O	D	L
I	S	A	V	I	O	U	R	U	R	L	O
F	E	C	O	U	N	C	E	L	L	O	R
A	N	G	E	L	B	J	V	K	D	V	D
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	G	E	S
L	A	N	G	E	L	S	R	G	O	D	V
I	G	A	B	R	I	E	L	T	D	S	M
F	P	G	I	V	E	N	A	H	U	O	A
E	E	H	G	A	V	E	S	R	W	N	R
S	A	E	G	R	E	A	T	O	N	L	Y
O	C	H	R	I	S	T	I	N	N	J	O
N	E	O	G	O	O	D	N	E	W	S	N
F	L	O	C	K	M	I	G	H	T	Y	B

# CHRISTMAS AT ST PETER'S



## CHRISTMAS ESCAPE ROOM

6 DEC, 6:30-7:30PM

Kids aged 7+ and their families solving a Christmas riddle

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## CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

10 DEC, 7:30-8:30PM

Sing the classics, reflect on the season, enjoy festive refreshments

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## NATIVITY SERVICE

17 DEC, 9:30AM

Kids can come dressed as their favourite nativity character

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## CHRISTINGLES

24 DEC, 3PM, 4:15PM, 5:30PM

Book your free tickets through the St Peter's website

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## MIDNIGHT COMMUNION

24 DEC, 11:30PM

See in Christmas Day with a chance to pause amid the chaos

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## CHRISTMAS DAY ALL-AGE CELEBRATION

25 DEC, 9:30AM

A short, family-friendly Christmas celebration service

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ALL EVENTS ARE FREE. THERE'S NO NEED TO BOOK EITHER (EXCEPT FOR CHRISTINGLE)

[WWW.STPETERSBRACKLEY.ORG.UK/CHRISTMAS](http://WWW.STPETERSBRACKLEY.ORG.UK/CHRISTMAS)



JOIN US FOR A

# CHRISTMAS ESCAPE ROOM

**6TH DECEMBER 6:30PM  
ST PETER'S CHURCH**

Can your family solve the puzzles to find the keys to the church and escape?



Work as a team or compete to see who can solve the puzzles and escape first!

Under 11s must be accompanied by an adult. Recommended for age 7+, but everyone is welcome!







Brackley Glee Club Choir.

Invite you to a concert of seasonal and other music on Saturday 9th December 2pm— 4pm.

St Peters Church.

Free Admission.

Refreshment  
and raffle for charity.

Brackley Male Voice Choir, with Friends,

will be presenting a Concert of Seasonal Music at

St. Peter's Church on Friday 15th. December at 7:30 p.m.

Admission is free,

but the audience is invited to support our Tombola and Refreshments.



### **MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION**

If you have enjoyed this short online edition of the current magazine you can purchase the full 20 page printed edition for the modest sum of 40p. It is available from Jems on the Market Place.

The printed version contains so much more. Service Times, Contact details, and local adverts. Plus varied articles.

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DOOR (WITHIN BRACKLEY)  
PHONE MARILYN ON 702634**

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your gift would be hugely appreciated.

Our bank details are as follows:  
sort code 30-11-08,  
account number 00060124.

Thank you.