

## The Work of Christmas Begins

When the carols have been stilled,  
When the star-topped tree is taken down,  
When family and friends are gone home,  
When we are back to our schedules

The work of Christmas begins:

To welcome the refugee,  
To heal a broken planet,  
To feed the hungry,  
To build bridges of trust, not walls of fear.  
To share our gifts,  
To seek justice and peace for all people,  
To bring Christ's light to the world.

- by Michael Dougherty, a variation on [Howard Thurman](#)'s 'When the Song of the Angels is Stilled'

### Posada thankfuls

Our Mary and Joseph figures began their Advent journey in church on Sunday on 1<sup>st</sup> December and finally arrived back during the Crib Service on Christmas Eve. On their way they found lodgings in a different home each night. Thankyou to all twenty three homes who took them in! Our annual posada began in 2013 and has taken place every year since then except during covid. We hope this has been a time of blessing to you all.



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**BELONG - BELIEVE - BUILD - WITH CHRIST AS THE CORNERSTONE**



# Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December

## Notices for the week



*Our church is a member of the Wychert Vale family of churches*

## THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

10:30am

### FAMILY WORSHIP

*led by Raymond Medhurst*



*Everlasting God, help us to remember that the Christmas story did not end in the stable but continued as Jesus grew into a man, unnoticed by the world until his appearance at the temple, his spiritual home on earth.  
As the year draws to a close and a New Year begins, and with it the next chapter of our lives, help us to grow in faith and wisdom and to recognise your presence with us in all that we do and say. Amen*

### January services

5 <sup>th</sup>	9:00am	<b>MATINS</b>
	10:30am	<b>FAMILY COMMUNION</b>
12 <sup>th</sup>	10:30am	<b>FAMILY WORSHIP</b> with Explorers
	6:00pm	<b>EVENSONG</b> at SPP DINTON
19 <sup>th</sup>	9:00am	<b>MATINS</b>
	10:30am	<b>FAMILY WORSHIP</b> with a baptism
26 <sup>th</sup>	10:30am	<b>FAMILY COMMUNION</b> with Explorers

Café in the Park this Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> January

10:00am – 12:00 noon



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## Luke 2:41-52

### The boy Jesus at the temple

*41 Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. 43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they travelled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.*

*46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.'*



*49 'Why were you searching for me?' he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

*51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*

This passage in Luke seems to come in isolation as there are no other accounts of Jesus growing up. We do know quite a lot about the customs and practices of the day though and here it is clear that Jesus was brought up in those traditions.

For example the Old Testament Hebrews would go on a pilgrimage to the high city of Jerusalem. Along the way it was their custom to sing the 'Songs of Ascents' (Psalms 120-134). These Psalms reminded them of their history, their struggles with faith, and the hopes before them. So Jesus the boy was learning the history of his people and sharing in their hopes for the future. Despite his young age he amazed the leaders of the day with the depth of his knowledge and understanding. Even so he was still keen to learn and understand even more and he knew the best place to do this was 'in his Father's house'.

This is a challenge to us all – to not become complacent in our faith. We must go on seeking a deeper maturity of belief and knowledge of God so that our faith does not go stale. We can do this together, in our Father's house.

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## The Christmas message from our Bishop Designate Dave Bull

Our minds are full of so many wrong ideas about God: that God is distant, that he's uninvolved, that he doesn't care about our lives. How do we know which of our thoughts about God are true or not true?

Well, Christmas is God coming to meet us in person, in Jesus. Christmas is God's way of saying, this is who I am. This is what I'm like.

At the beginning of John's Gospel, we hear these grand words:

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." These words are imposing and epic, just as we'd expect if they're about God. But a few verses later we read, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

Another translation says, "The Word became flesh and moved into the neighbourhood."

This is God, the grand, imposing, epic God, wanting to become part of our everyday lives.

I think of it like waiting for a friend in a coffee shop. You sit there with your coffee on the table, waiting for the door to open and for your friend's face to appear, for you to hear their voice and for them to sit down with you and have a really great conversation.

I've just been waiting for my daughter to return from her first term at university. She's been living away from home for three months for the first time. And I can't tell you how much I've been longing to see her face again, to hear her laugh, to hug, to sit down and talk and talk about all there is to catch up on. There's nothing like seeing someone we love in person.

Christmas shows us that God wants to meet us personally and relate to us in the person of Jesus. So as we wait for Christmas, I wonder do we realise that God is waiting for us? What if God is waiting for you? What if he's waiting to have a personal conversation with you?

Will you sit down and talk with him?

Happy Christmas.

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### Sitting down and talking with God

At our last SJB church committee meeting we recognised the need for us as a church community to do this on a regular basis. So, in January we will be setting up a time of prayer that everyone can join in with from home, either out loud or in silence. Details are still being worked out, but it will take place on ZOOM once a fortnight on Thursday evenings, and will last for 30-40 minutes. Watch this space!

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