



THE PARISH CHURCH OF
ST LEONARD, LEXDEN

ORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY GOD.



PARISH MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2023 £1.00



Waiting for the Light

Searching for a new violin string in town the other evening, I suddenly found myself in the middle of a large and bustling crowd. To my bemusement, I was repeatedly offered the unwanted opportunity to buy cheeses, toys, sausages, smelly candles, and candyfloss. The experience became all the more dizzying as a PA system began pumping out the inexplicably popular music of Shakin' Stevens, and a Pantomime dame driving a mobility scooter covered in lights nearly knocked me off my feet.

Oh no...

It can't be, surely not?

To my horror, it dawned on me that I had stumbled into my very worst nightmare: The Annual Christmas Lights Switch-On.

I mumbled to myself my usual objections that "I'm still wearing my poppy; I haven't even prepared my Advent sermon yet; and – it's getting so early; I presume these are the Christmas lights for 2028?" Hunching myself into the well-practised Scrooge pose that I reserve for all Christmas celebrations falling in November, I quickly bought my A string and raced home - thereby neglecting the opportunity to discover whether it was Peter Andre, Darren Day, Giles Brandreth, or some Olympic Rower doing the switch on this year.

Friends, I offer this plain confession of my "bah humbug streak," so that you might learn from my mistakes and walk a better path: Because what was in fact happening, was that many thousands of people from

across our community were gathering together in great excitement and anticipation. They were waiting with bated breath for light to appear from the darkness. Hundreds of thousands of people do this all over this country. And, of course, it is what we do at Christmas too.

I've learned that we should go with the grain of how our culture celebrates Christmas. We don't have to embrace everything – but instead of sneering, we can instead relish those aspects of life that help tell the true Christmas story that we hold dear.

Each Christmas we hear, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” This verse, so important to me personally, is the source of our hope. This light deserves a great deal of excitement and anticipation!

All those people at Light Switch-Ons across the country are waiting for light – literal light, and the figurative light that Christmas celebrations bring them.

Each Christmas we too wait for light in great anticipation (we just wait about 6 weeks longer and then celebrate it for 12 days longer!)

So, let's encourage each other to show all people what the light of Christ looks like this Advent and Christmas – in who we are, and in what we do and say. Let's not stand off as Scrooges scowling in the corner but embrace the spirit of celebration and hope and try to show people that perfect hope and perfect light we find in the birth of the Baby Jesus.

Matt



FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our Christmas edition of the Parish Magazine. In this edition we look back at some of the events that took place during October and November. There are reports on our Harvest Festival service, the various coffee mornings, the Quiz and the Deanery Synod which was held in our Church.

On another note, isn't it great to have heat back in the church and look back and remember how we froze during the winter months when the heating was off!

I would like to draw your attention to our various services to be held over the Christmas period and finally the editorial team wish you all a Happy Christmas and a great New Year.

Best Wishes

Mike.

DECEMBER DIARY

Friday 1st December

10:00am Hall open to receive contributions to Christmas Market

Saturday 2nd December

8:30am Men's Breakfast

11:00am – 2:00pm Christmas Market in the Hall

SUNDAY 3rd December Advent Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am ALL AGE EUCHARIST

5:30pm Advent Carol Service

Tuesday 5th December

11:30am Holy Communion at Cheviot

7.30pm 'Medley' house group (Rosemary 515245)

Wednesday 6th December

9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

10:45am Holy Communion at Woodlands

7:30pm Compline and Reflection

Thursday 7th December

8.00am Eucharist

Friday 8th December

1:30pm Lexden Primary School Carol Concert

Saturday 9th December

12:00pm Friendship Lunch

7:30pm Wassail

SUNDAY 10th December 2nd Sunday of Advent

9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church

3:00pm Messy Nativity

6.30pm Carols at the Crown

Tuesday 12th December

2:00pm Philip Morant School Visit

Wednesday 13th December

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

11:00am Baby & Toddler Christmas Service followed by party in the hall

7:30pm Compline and Reflection

Thursday 14th December

8.00am Eucharist

Friday 15th December

12:00pm Women's Breakfast Eucharist followed by Christmas Celebration

Saturday 16th December

2:30pm Charles Dickens' a Christmas carol - performed by Anthony Roberts & Jamie Cunliffe in Aid of Colchester Debt Centre

SUNDAY 17th December 3rd Sunday of Advent

8:00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9:45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church

6:30pm Service of Nine Lessons & Carols

Tuesday 19th December

10:00am Home Farm School Carol Concert

Wednesday 20th December

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

1:30pm Kingswode Hoe School Carol Concert

7:30pm Compline and Reflection

SUNDAY 24th December Christmas Eve

9.45am SAID EUCHARIST for Advent 4

2:30pm Crib Service

4:30pm Service of Light

6:30pm Service of Light

11:15pm Midnight Mass

Monday 25th December Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am CHRISTMAS EUCHARIST

Sunday 31st December 1st Sunday of Christmas

9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST

Harvest 2023



About 9am. on the 29th of September, the Church was invaded by a group of people bringing armfuls of foliage and flowers, and bags of fruit and vegetables plus other items to assist with the displays they were about to create to celebrate Harvest. To the un-

initiated it would have probably looked like

total chaos, but after several hours the Church was imaginatively decorated, and we were treated to a reminder of the beauty and bounty of God's creation. Probably one of the highlights was a visit from the some of the Church Mice (who don't usually allow themselves to be seen by humans), but there they were ---was it a newly married Mr. & Mrs. Hall, with their bridesmaid and page boy? or Mr. & Mrs. Woods and their children, dressed in their Sunday best in honour of the occasion? We shall never know unless Chris can tell us in one of her Mouse Tails. All of this contributed



to a very happy background for the ensuing MacMillan coffee morning and the Harvest festival service on the Sunday morning, when we



probably had one of the most generous giftings of food for the Food Bank, in recent years.



St Leonard's, Lexden

for supporting Colchester Foodbank.

**We are extremely grateful for your
amazing and generous
Harvest 2023 donation**

Of 193 kgs

This will make a **BIG difference to
local individuals, children and
families who face food and financial
crisis at this time and will be of great
help in the forthcoming months.**

**Colchester Foodbank is part of the Trussell
Trust's UK wide foodbank network.**



MOUSE TAILS

After the fun and excitement of the fete things settled down to normal life in the Church mouse community. Days were spent foraging for food and bits and pieces. Grandad was back to giving lessons to the youngsters, Mums and Dads were working hard to reestablish their Church homes and improve them as much as possible.

All the mice held a meeting to decide what to do for their special Harvest Festival celebrations, as this was one of their favourite church events of the year. Once all the flower arrangers had finished filling the Church with beautiful flowers, fruit, vegetables and wheat the mice ventured in to admire the displays and sniff appreciatively at the fruit and vegetables. Mums warned the youngsters not to go near the food till after the Sunday services.

On Sunday night, once all the humans had gone home, Grandad held their own special service, singing all their favourite hymns, especially "We Plough the Fields and Scatter". Before going up to the Hall for the Harvest feast the mice collected a few special ingredients, such as grapes, apple and carrot but they wanted some wheat too. In the porch was a display that had quite a bit of wheat in it and Dad climbed up swiftly up the pedestal to take a few ears. As he got to the flowers he heard a squeak and, looking up, was amazed to see a dear little Harvest mouse tucked into the flowers and happily chewing on an ear of wheat!

Years ago, a Harvest mouse had escaped from the fields during harvest and found himself at St. Leonard's. The Church mice befriended him and went to great lengths to reunite him with his family. This Harvest mouse was the grandson of that same mouse and happily joined everyone in the Hall to enjoy the splendid feast and told them stories

of their ancestors and their lives now. The Church mice regaled him of their lives during the Covid pandemic and how they'd lived with their Woods cousins. It was a fun and interesting evening for everyone, they especially enjoyed the sumptuous feast and ended the evening talking about their plans for Christmas and, of course, the Christmas Market.

CT



CHRISTMAS MARKET



VARIETY OF
CHRISTMAS
STALLS PLUS
REFRESHMENTS

ST
LEONARD'S
CHURCH
HALL
LEXDEN

SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER

11:00AM TO 2:00PM

AT 11:00AM FATHER CHRISTMAS WILL ARRIVE
WITH HIS HELPERS

ANY ENQUIRIES PLEASE E-MAIL MIKE@STLEONARDSLEXDEN.ORG.UK



A Carer's Call

It all started when I went out for coffee with a parishioner who cares for a family member at home...

All they wanted was for someone to listen, to offload some of their frustrations and to share time with someone different.

It got me to thinking that there must be many members of the congregation who are in the same boat and that, as a church community, we should be supporting them if possible. Not by organising a regular, formal meeting but by being at the end of a phone so people can just talk or arrange to go out with someone for coffee and a chat.

The idea is very much in its early stages of development, but I believe that it can grow into something special.

If you are someone who would like to be able to contact our **'Carer's Call'** or someone who would like to be considered as a listener, then please contact me on: maggie@stleonardslexden.org.uk. Confidentiality is ensured.

Please pray for this project.

Lord,

For those who are caregivers to friends and family, may they feel your love and your sustaining power. May they feel less frustrated and experience less guilt for the very human feelings they may have about wanting to escape their tasks. May they find us eager to support them during their difficult times.

Amen

Wordsearch

Christmas Word Search

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

MARY	FAIRYLIGHTS	TINSEL	MINCEPIES
HAY	JOSEPH	GIFTS	MAGI
CAMELS	HOLLY	CHRISTMASSTAR	TURKEY
MISTLETOE	SHEPHERDS	BABYJESUS	STABLE
BETHLEHEM	MANGER	DONKEY	



CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOX OPENING AND COFFEE MORNING

Julie and her team would like to thank everyone who contributed to The Children's Society coffee morning and especially to all those of you who have a box and donate money every year. An amazing £1007.74 was raised which will help towards the Society's work to protect hopes of children threatened by abuse, exploitation and neglect. If you would like to know about the work of the Children's Society or would like a donations box please speak to Julie, Linda or Rachel.



MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

Thank you so much to my team of helpers and to everyone who attended our recent coffee morning. It was lovely to see so many people in Church supporting a wonderful cause. The running total is an incredible £623 from cash and on-line donations, and we expect to receive a further £57.50 in Gift Aid.

Julie.

CHURCH AUTUMN QUIZ

Thank you to Steve and his team for the fun and fellowship we enjoyed at the recent Church Quiz. 8 teams enjoyed a fun packed evening and a lovely supper. A total of £300 was raised for Church funds.

PCC Charities for 2023

At the November PCC meeting it was agreed that the following charities should receive our support this year. Each charity will receive a donation of £1000.

- Colchester Foodbank
- Korban (helps homeless young adults in Colchester)
- OMF (overseas mission)
- CYO (Christian Youth Outreach)
- Youth Enquiry Service (Adolescent mental health charity)
- English for Women (Educational charity for female refugees)
- Next Chapter (Women's refuge)
- Colchester Debt Centre (new name for CAP)



Here we come A-Wassailing

The Comrie Singers and Jubilant Brass invite you to join us for a Wassail on 9th December at 7.30pm in the Church Hall.

We will be raising funds for Lexden Church and its charities; entry on the door will be £8 for adults and £4 for anyone still at school. Cash only please. The hall will be arranged with chairs around tables, and audience participation in the well-known carols will be greatly encouraged! We will supply plenty of mince pies, but otherwise people should bring their own refreshments.

Charles Dickens' a Christmas Carol

performed by Anthony Roberts Esq.

with musical accompaniment by Jamie Gullifffe



2.30pm, Sat 16th Dec

St Leonard's Church, Lexden

FREE - no ticket needed

retiring collection for Colchester Debt Centre
and St Leonard's Parish Church



As is our custom, we marked Remembrance Sunday with a service in Church followed by the Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial.

Thank you to Viv and Jacquie for a beautiful, moving and thought-provoking service, to Jane for the beautiful flower arrangements and to Tom and Kathleen for providing the wreaths.

After the 2-minute silence was observed wreaths were laid by Nick Allston on behalf of the military, Sue Lissimore on behalf of the Lexden Community and Tom Scrimgeour on behalf of the St Leonard's congregation. Wreaths were then laid by the Scout groups and Junior Church.



It was lovely to see so many members of the wider community in attendance to commemorate the contribution of British and Commonwealth military and civilian servicemen and women in the two World Wars and later conflicts.

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERALS

7th November
John Barker



'Rest in peace and rise in glory.'

BAPTISMS

8th October
Lily Jayne Rogers



'One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all.'

MARRIAGE BLESSING



7th October
Laura Aldridge & Christopher Raines

'Those whom God has joined together.'

Women's Breakfast



3rd Saturday of the month in Church.
All Welcome, we look forward to seeing you there...
If you have any questions please contact
maggie@stleonardslexden.org.uk

Friendship Lunches



**St Leonard's Church
Lexden** welcomes you to its
Friendship Lunches

Join us for delicious
homemade soup and cake.

Every month on the 2nd
Saturday from **September to
March** at 12pm

Please book by emailing
admin@stleonardslexden.org.uk
or phoning the Parish Office on **01206
575565** or use the sign up sheet in
Church.

Donations welcome on the day.



DECEMBER 2023

3 rd December All Age Worship in church	1 st Sunday of Advent
10 th December Mark 1:1-8 Messy Church - MESSY NATIVITY In the church 3pm	John, the Messenger, prepares the way
17 th December John 1:6-8, 19-28	John speaks of Jesus as the Light of the World
24 th December CRIB SERVICE 2:30PM (no Junior Church)	Christmas Eve
31 st December No Junior Church	

MESSY NATIVITY!

Sunday 10th December at 3pm
St Leonard's Church Lexden

Christmas crafts
Activities
Songs and Food

Free of charge
Children must be accompanied by an adult.
Please email to let us know if you are coming:
juniorchurch@stleonardslexden.org.uk



MESSY LIGHT! A MESSY CHURCH CELEBRATION OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

In October when the days were growing shorter, and children were looking forward to Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas our Messy Church took the theme of light in the darkness to explore the New Testament's message of hope. We discovered that our stained-glass windows told the stories of saints whose lights shone through dark times. We used our own names to create illuminated designs as monks did long-ago to show the beauty of God's word. We made lanterns to remind us of Jesus's guiding hand in all we do. We thought of the light that is within all of us and prayed for help in knowing how to make it shine for others to see. Amazingly, after our prayers, the whole chancel was filled with light, and we headed home full of joy and anticipation as we prepare for our Christmas celebrations and look forward to Messy Nativity.

Messy Church Team



OMG is back!

Our popular OMG group met in November to share an afternoon of fun and games in the hall. It was good to make time to join together and to spend time getting to each other better whilst playing some extremely silly games and pretty bad badminton! OMG is for children in Year 4 and above. Watch this space for more OMG happenings!

Team OMG



Baby & Toddler Group



9:30am and 11:00am in the Church Hall each Wednesday during term time.
Find us at www.facebook.com/stleonardsbabyandtoddlergroup



From the Archives

The following is the concluding part of the summary from the PCC minutes that appeared in the last magazine and covers the years 1941-1965.

1941

It was ordered that all churches were to remain open day and night. The church was issued with 6 2-gallon cans of water, 12 sandbags and a stirrup pump. The Parish Hall was to be let for dances but only to approved persons with takings going to local charities. Also, the Hall could be used by the WI on a Sunday night for a Rest and Recreation Centre for troops.

1942

During the Harvest Festival Service, the bellows on the Church organ broke down. It was decided that the surpluses of the Choirmen should be washed twice a year but those of the boys four times a year.

1943

It was decided to continue the Parish magazine despite a reduction in the paper available. A new organ blower (Mr. Alexander) was appointed. Although by the end of the year an electric blower was donated.

1944

The King's call for prayer and dedication to be used on the evening of D-Day

1945

A committee set up to raise funds for post war repairs as soon as possible. The church clock was to strike the hour again.

1946

Churchyard closed for new graves. The war memorial was updated to include 1939 -45. An application for German POWs to cut the grass was unsuccessful. Childrens services would continue on the first Sunday of the month. The Rector was *'afraid we should be compelled to follow the example of other churches and increase the number of women in the choir'*. A window in memory of PWG Papillon was installed. Mr Uff the organist was asked to resign due to old age. Mr Simpson was approached but declined.

1947

Mr Horace Hall was appointed as organist. Choir boys were paid 3d, per week, with a bonus for good boys.

1948

Priest stalls carved by Mabbitts in memory of the mother of Elfreda Sanders were dedicated. Chancel lighting was improved.

1950

Church Fete was held in Lexden Park at the beginning of July. The Rector went to Australia, his place was taken by Revd. W.J.B. Claydon. At his first meeting he proposed new hymn and prayer books, a rota and duties for sidesmen, monthly sung Eucharist, improved evening services and a Youth club. A dedication of the columbarium in memory of Major Phillip Papillon; given by his brother David Papillon; to be run by a private company.

1951

Pews moved to allow fitting of new radiators. Revd Claydon departed and was replaced by Revd Cooper and Revd Benson. Mr Hall the organist was asked to resign after difficulties with Revd Claydon and the choir boys. Mr Wendon was appointed in his place.

1952

In October a sacred concert at Endsleigh School starring Sandy McPherson was held in aid of church redecoration. The whole church was redecorated with the total removal of all stencilling. A service was held in memory of the late King

1953

It was decided that it was impracticable to install televisions in the church for the coronation. The Rector Revd Dolph was appointed Rural Dean.

1954

The Rector recovered from a serious illness. In June and July, the Rector went to the USA. The church celebrated 1300 years since the arrival of St Cedd.

1955

The church gave the alter with plaque to the new St Cedds church.

1956

A request from the WI for a reduced charge to hire the Parish Hall was refused.

1957

The Rector broke his leg in a road accident but only missed two services. Mr Beecham the Bell ringer for over 50 years resigned and was presented with a clock at the Harvest Festival. Annual church service for the Church of England's Childrens Society was held. Winston Bently was appointed Bell Ringer.

1958

Revd Dolph the Rector died because of a lightning strike whilst playing golf. His ashes were placed under a marble slab near the Altar. As parts of the parish had been lost the stipend was reduced to below the Diocese standard. This was made up by the Diocese with the parish undertaking to pay the Rectory rates. Christmas services were taken by Mr Cooper and Dr. Burnet.

1959

Revd Tassell instituted by the Bishop of Chelmsford. PCC increased from 12 to 16 members.

1960

Revd Tassell made Mayors Chaplain, started training as a marriage guidance councillor.

1961

Carillon abandoned; Mr Wendon resigned as parish organist. Revd D.A. Evans was made assistant priest.

1962

Number of sidemen increased. Death of Sir Percy Sanders, he left £500 pounds to be invested for the fabric of the church and £500 for the churchyard.

1963

New oak font donated by Miss M. Beattie

1964

Mr. Teggin appointed vergger to be assisted by Mr. Hill.

1965

Resignation of Revd Tessell and Revd. Evans

Men's Breakfast



1st Saturday of the month in Church.
All Welcome, we look forward to seeing you there...
If you have any questions please contact
davidw@stleonardslexden.org.uk

The Men's breakfast team are proposing to start the New Year with a full breakfast of Fruit juice, cereal, cooked breakfast, toast and homemade marmalade tea & coffee. Obviously there will have to be a charge for this, and attendance will be by booking only. This will take place on Saturday 6th January 2024 - more details to follow!

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Final day for items for the DECEMBER edition:

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER

Please submit items to the Editor
email: magazine@stleonardslexden.org.uk

Please include your name with any submission
and limit text to 500-600 words maximum.
Longer articles may be edited. Thank you.

Have You been Bereaved?

Losing a loved one can leave you feeling adrift; talking and meeting with others in a similar situation may help.

Lexden Bereavement Support Group offers the opportunity to chat over a cup of tea. The group is informal and relaxed, and led by trained volunteers.

It is open to people of all faiths and backgrounds and is usually run on Thursday afternoons fortnightly.

If you would like to attend – or to find out more - please telephone Margaret on 01206 547803 or email [**bereavement@stleonardslexden.org.uk**](mailto:bereavement@stleonardslexden.org.uk)

BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE DECEMBER

Long, Ernest Walter	6 th June 1894 – 12 th December 1961
Scrimgeour, David Iain Cameron	8 th June 1969 – 1 st December 1989
Birbeck, Florence	13 th October 1934 – 20 th December 1996
Farren, Frank William Campbell	9 th November 1911 – 30 th December 1999
Beck, Margaret Neal	29 th December 1921 – 1 st December 2003
Marshall, Laurence Geoffrey Walrond	8 th August 1913 – 14 th December 2001
Partner, George Cecil	23 rd August 1913 – 14 th December 2004
Drake, Kenneth	18 th March 1922 – 20 th December 2005
Baker, Jack	8 th July 1905 – 12 th December 1997
Breens, Anne	25 th March 1912 – 25 th December 2009
Burrage, Eric David	15 th April 1917 – 10 th December 2014
Reed, Richard 'Ba'	29 th August 1940 – 17 th December 2015
Newton, Keith Henry	8 th June 1929 – 26 th December 2020



If you would like the name of a relative added to the Book of Remembrance, you will find forms with instructions on the bookcase beside the north door.

REGULAR SERVICES

Sunday	8.00am 1662 BCP Holy Communion (1st & 3rd Sundays) 9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church <i>Or All Age Eucharist</i> (1 st Sunday in the month) 5.30pm Evensong and Sermon (2nd Sunday) 5.30pm Eucharist for Wholeness & Healing (4th Sunday)
Monday	8:45am Morning Prayer
Tuesday	8:45am Morning Prayer
Wednesday	10.00am Eucharist
Thursday	8.00am Eucharist

CHRISTMAS 2023



SUNDAY 10th DECEMBER

3.00pm Messy NATIVITY

Mess! Fun! Food! FREE Kids crafts, activities, games, stories, & songs!

Children must be accompanied by an adult. This event is free, please email to let us know you're coming: juniorchurch@stleonardslexden.org.uk

6:30pm Carols at the Crown

SATURDAY 16th DECEMBER

2.30pm Charles Dickens' a Christmas carol

- performed by Anthony Roberts & Jamie Cunliffe in aid of Colchester CAP Debt Centre

SUNDAY 17th DECEMBER

6.30pm Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

- a service of traditional carols and readings

SUNDAY 24th DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS EVE

9.45am Parish Eucharist (said)

2.30pm Crib Service – especially for small children

(Children are invited to come dressed as shepherds or angels)

4.30pm* The Service of Light - a candlelit carol service for all ages

6.30pm* The Service of Light - a candlelit carol service for all ages

***These two services are identical**

11.15pm Midnight Mass, with the blessing of the crib

MONDAY 25th DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS DAY

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

9.45am Christmas Eucharist