



Worship with us this Christmas

This Sunday (18th) we have our Nativity Services in both Churches **10.00am** Christ Church, **11.30am** St John's. Come dressed as a Nativity character and have the chance of winning a £100 restaurant voucher

Sunday Evening (18th) 9 Lessons & Carols in Christ Church starting **6.00pm**. Why not invite a friend and join us afterwards in the hall for some mulled apple juice, mince pies & shortbread.

Christmas Eve Communion @ St John's starting **11.30pm**.

Christmas Day Family Celebration, join us in either Christ Church **9.30am** or St John's **11.00am** as we celebrate Christmas. **Kids should bring toys with them and everyone to wear those mad Christmas jumpers.**

Sunday 1st January 2023- New Year's Day

Please join us for our **joint Communion Service** in Christ Church at the normal time of **10.00am**. We would encourage all from St John's to come across and join together as God's people celebrate a new year.

Office Hours

The Office will be closed from Friday 23rd Dec- Monday 2nd January inclusive. David will be back on Tuesday 3rd Jan. Revd Jonny will be working during the holidays for pastoral emergencies.

2023 begins

Alpha- 4 weeks and counting

Alpha starts on a Sunday evening commencing on **Sunday 15th January 2023** in St John's Church. Alpha is a place to explore the Christian faith in an easy & informal setting, where anything can be asked. This is a terrific opportunity to invite your friends and family to explore the Christian faith. Postcard invitations are available in both churches. For more information on **Alpha** please visit our website: <https://theunitedparish.org.uk/>

Week of Prayer commencing Mon 9th January

Every term we commence with committing all of our activities to God in prayer. Join together each evening from 7:30pm to pray for different aspects of our church family.

Dates for your diary :

House groups return from **16th January**

Sunday Clubs in both Christ Church & St John's start back on **8th January**

All Boy's Brigade sections start back week commencing **Mon 9th January**

Please pray for....

Albert Green, Barbara Bankhead, Billy Clarke, Agnes Kelly, David Livingston, Sadie Wilson, and Jim & Robina Stewart.

Holy Communion

As a parish over past years we had been very careful to protect the most vulnerable. One such precaution was sharing communion from a single chalice at the front of church through the use of individual cups in the pews. As we learn to live with COVID, Rev Jonny would like to give our parishioners the opportunity to resume coming to the front again, but mindful of the need for safety. Therefore from **Christmas Eve Communion**, he plans to offer the following options for people : -

1. Continue with the existing sealed cups, collect from rear of church and sit in the pews using these during the service, or;
2. During the administration of communion, members have the option to come forward to the Communion rail and receive bread (where tongs will be used to avoid contamination) and individual cups of wine.

Christmas Poetry

In the United Parish we are blessed with folk with many God-given talents. Bert Rea called at the office during the week and impressed us with the following piece about Christmas which we would like to share.

What is the Point?

"What really is the point of it all? I hear you say,"
For all the palaver leading up to Christmas Day
"The build up to it begins earlier each year,"
With adverts for gifts for those we hold dear.
"Christmas trees can be seen twinkling in mid-November,"
And Christmas cards are sent out at the start of December.
"Many people stockpile food and drink for many a dinner, "
Just like squirrels who gather nuts to last through the winter.
"There's no reason at all for people to be so manic,"
For shops nowadays rarely shut, so why the big panic.
"Christmas movies and parties abound in the weeks up to Christmas,"
"Along with religious events, like Advent in the period of Michaelmas."
"Many church nativities are played out with childlike vigour,"
"Where the true meaning of Christmas is seen to be bigger,"
"Than rampant commercialism and selfish indulgence,"
Or excessive eating and buying expensive presents.
"For the only true gift we receive, by far and away,"
Is the wonderous birth of Jesus on the Saviour's Day
"And when people lose sight of this, we should hasten to remind them,"
"That Christ's birth is the start of the only process to redeem them,"
"For the point of Christmas is Jesus, who points the way,"
For all of us to be granted unearned salvation on Easter Day.
"By accepting Him into our heart,"
Is where our new lives will start
"Submitting to His divine rule and living by His teaching,"
And love for God and others should lead us to outreaching.
"So, when asked about the reason for the season and it's point,"
"You should point to Jesus, the one who will never disappoint."

Mission Allocation 2022

Each year as a Select Vestry in obedience to God's word we recognise His goodness to us and tithe our income to bless others 'outside of our walls'. This is a biblical instruction. In the past 5 years through this obedience, we have blessed various charities and individuals with approximately £70,000. As a result, the Select Vestry have agreed to tithe once again, which this year equates to **£14,000**.

The following organisations and individuals were chosen by the Select Vestry based on specific needs. Should you have any questions please contact Rev Jonny.

Charity/Individual Category	Amount
CMSi	£750
Tujisaide / Tumaini Project	£1,500
Release International	£750
Sulawesi Mission School	£1,500
Emma McCallion (Valencia)	£750
GBYFC	£750
Support Worker in GBYFC	£750
Summer Madness	£250
Street Pastors	£250
UCB	£750
Links Counselling	£750
Mindwise	£250
Bible Society NI	£500
Mothers' Union Hardship	£500
Hope365	£750
SAMS	£500
Equipping for Life	£250
Church's Ministry of Healing	£250
Divine Healing Ministries	£250
Care for the family	£500
New Horizon	£250
Evangelical Alliance NI	£250
Exodus NI	£500
The Secret Place	£500
	£14,000