



December  
2025

# Rushen Parish Magazine



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# *From the Editor*

Christmas presents are a significant way of recreating what happened during that Christmas period over two thousand years ago. We purchase gifts for our families and friends in the lead up to Christmas and enjoy giving them. In fact children find it a magical time of year. From the first moment you see Christmas trees being sold, displays of twinkling lights in windows and gardens, to the day itself, there's an air of excitement which prepares us, and our families, for a season of fun and enjoyment. My first recollection of Christmas was receiving an electric train which ran on a circular track and didn't need to be wound up every two or three minutes to keep it running. I remember playing with it for hours, and all it did was go round in circles! The most exciting thing was that I didn't expect it. My normal Christmas morning was finding a stocking at the bottom of my bed full of goodies including nuts, tangerines, and a few coins which could be used to purchase sweets at the corner shop when it was open. The mere fact that Father Christmas had entered my bedroom without me knowing was a mystery.

All that happened as the Second World War was coming to an end. Money was scarce, and to buy groceries or sweets, and other items, was limited to what you had left in your ration book. Nonetheless families managed to cope, and whilst many went without the good things in life, there was an air of acceptance and thanks for the army, the Royal Airforce and Royal Navy, and many other organisations, that steered us through the war and enabled us to have the freedom we enjoy today. The cost however was horrendous. Families were broken by the loss of their sons and daughters who fought so valiantly to make life better for everyone. Some of the veterans, who are still alive, can tell stories of how they were treated by the enemy, and they are not particularly good to hear. I know that some still tolerate the scars of war and suffer unbearable pain even to this day. We must remember that the Christmases of years ago were not quite as wonderful as they appear to be now in 2025.

How many of us spare a thought for the countless people who are still suffering today? Imagine what it is like in the Ukraine, Gaza, the Sudan, middle eastern countries and countless other areas of the world where there is conflict and bloodshed. Those who are homeless, sick, split up from their families, scared of opening their door, or just simply fed up with the constant battles of life. I know that they're not all Christians, but they do believe in a higher force as we do. What can we do to help them? Life has dealt them a severe blow, and one for them that doesn't seem to have an end. What presents can we give to them this Christmas? What will give them hope? What will give them the ability to enjoy their lives? It's not for me to suggest what you should do because many of you have already subscribed to the many charities which provide help and comfort. Of course there are others who are already finding the cost of this season too much to cope with. We can all help with the power of prayer. It is a gift that we can give for free and which I hope you will consider. The pictures on our television screens are vivid and quite horrendous. Nobody in this world should have to endure the pain and suffering that these people are having to face. Please help in whatever way you can, you can be assured that Jesus is listening to you and will give comfort and solace to those who require it. It is His, and our, Christmas present to them during this festive season.

**I wish you all a very Happy Christmas full of love and surprises.**

**God Bless**

**David**

## Family & Youth Update: Fruits of the Spirit and Following the Star!

Hello everyone! As the days grow shorter, the energy in our Family and Youth ministry has only gotten brighter! This month, we've focused on deeper spiritual growth with our young people and continued the wonderful journey of Wild Sparks.

### Deepening Our Faith: Residential & Retreat

We've been so proud of our young people who gave up their weekend to explore some big topics about faith and life. Our younger youth (Years 7-10) spent a brilliant weekend away on a residential focused on the **Fruit of the Spirit**. It was an invaluable opportunity to step away from the everyday and explore how qualities like love, joy, peace, and patience show up in their lives and relationships, leading to a weekend packed with fun, challenges, and meaningful discussion as they grew closer to each other and to God. Meanwhile, our older youth (Years 10-13) had a more focused Retreat Day, diving into the stories of **Heroes of Faith**. We looked at figures, both historical and contemporary, who have demonstrated incredible courage and commitment in their journey. It was an inspiring day, helping them reflect on what it truly means to be a hero in God's story today as they navigate their own paths.

### Wild Sparks: The Journey Continues

Wild Sparks continues to be a highlight of the month, blending fun activities with an exploration of faith. We brought the great outdoors indoors once again with a very special indoor campfire session! Around the 'fire', we shared incredible stories of God at work today real life, modern day experiences that remind us faith is alive and active. We even had some heartfelt sung worship as a community, creating a truly special atmosphere of connection and warmth. Our latest session focused on the theme of following the Star that showed the way. The families worked together to create a wonderful, collaborative art piece that is now proudly displayed at St. Catherine's Church. The piece features silhouettes of our families, showing us following the star, a beautiful representation of our parish being in God's story and a powerful visual reminder of our shared journey of faith!

I'm so encouraged by the commitment and enthusiasm shown by our families, young people, and volunteers. These opportunities for fun, fellowship, and deep reflection are invaluable. If you have an idea for our next adventure, or you'd like to get involved in supporting our youth and families, please get in touch! [rushenparishyouth@gmail.com](mailto:rushenparishyouth@gmail.com)!

**Natalie Heaton**

### **Nativity set**

*A man visiting his daughter and her family for Christmas was admiring the beautiful nativity set in her hallway. His young granddaughter came up to him, and he asked her if she knew what it was. "Sure I do," she replied. "It's breakable."*



## Reflecting Faith: Listening to the gospel

One of the highlights of the Christmas services is the reading of the opening passage from John's Gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word ...'

I love the poetry of the words and sentences, as well as their very meaning. In most churches everyone will stand for that reading, which emphasises its importance. But what makes it important?

Most gospel passages that are read in church include the words of Jesus Himself, handed down to us over the centuries, but here there are none. Rather, this is the defining statement of who Jesus is and where He came from.

The way that the gospel readings are valued by the Church can be seen in our church buildings over the years. In older churches you will find two lecterns, one either side of the central altar. The right-hand side is for the Old Testament and epistle readings, and the left-hand side lectern (as the congregation faces the altar) is for the gospel reading.

On the altar, the holder for the priest's book was physically moved to that side, so that as he read out the gospel he would be facing the northern side of the church. Traditionally that was the colder, darker side, thought to be 'least' holy and therefore in need of the gospel most.

Nowadays all readings may be given from the same place at the front of church, though in some churches the gospel book will be processed with or without candles, into the centre of the congregation, to bring us all gathering around Christ's words.

It is because of this absolute importance of the gospels that people face the gospel, so as it is processed, they move their body and heads towards it. This will leave some people with their backs to the altar for that time, but it is the 'Word made flesh' that we honour.

***This month:*** This year during the Christmas season, listen out for that wonderful passage from John chapter 1 and consider how and where from it is being read and how that reflects the faith of the congregation you are within.

**Rev'd Dr Jo White**

### ***True story***

*The nativity play was going as planned and Joseph and Mary were going from 'house' to 'house' knocking on the doors and asking if there was any room for them. As they continued to get 'no room' answers, a little voice called from the back of the church: "You should have booked!"*

## St Mary's Sunday School Report



We finished the month of October with a session about Noah's Ark and God's promise to Noah. The children had fun listening to sound recordings and trying to guess the animal - and they got most of them right, too! We enjoyed acting out the story with a wooden toy Noah's Ark and animals, adding our own sound effects. We talked about how Noah obeyed God and did exactly what God told him to do, even when it didn't seem to make sense. Noah trusted God completely, and his trust was rewarded! God kept Noah and his family and all the animals safe, and He promised to never flood the whole earth again. As

the children were colouring in Noah's Ark and the rainbow and decorated hand-made paper boats with animal stickers, the grown-ups shared personal stories of times when they had trusted God in a difficult situation, and how God had been faithful to get them through.

Our first session in November focused on the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector, whose life was completely transformed by an encounter with Jesus. As 'Zac' was very small, we played a game trying to reach sweet treats that were hung up high - too high to reach without climbing onto a chair or a table. The children learnt that 'Zac' used to take far more money off people than they owed to the Romans, but despite being rich, 'Zac' wasn't happy, because people hated him and didn't want to have anything to do with him. How amazing that Jesus spotted 'Zac' in the tree, and although he knew exactly what 'Zac' was like, Jesus wanted to come to his house and eat with him. Jesus didn't tell 'Zac' off or threaten to punish him in any way... no, Jesus just showed him God's amazing unconditional love, and that made all the difference! Zacchaeus was so touched by Jesus' love and kindness that he changed instantly and became the most generous and honest person! How wonderful that the love of Jesus can change people's hearts! As the children enjoyed some craft activities, we had a good discussion about some things that we can do in our everyday life to show the love of Jesus to those around us, including the people we may not necessarily be very fond of.

To coincide with the Lord's Prayer Exhibition at St Mary's, we also had a session about prayer. With the help of some fun videos, the children learnt that prayer just means talking to God, as they would talk to a friend or family member. God loves to hear from us, anytime, anywhere, and about anything! He's never too busy to listen, and if we take time to stop and listen, we can also hear God speak to us (in some shape or form)! He hears all our prayers - long or short, prayed out loud or quietly in our hearts - and He answers them all in His own way and His own time. We may not always get what we want, but God knows what we need and provides for us (although sometimes we don't get because we haven't asked, eg for His strength, wisdom or peace). With the help of a game trying to catch sweet treats we also learnt that talking to God on a regular basis brings us closer to Him and deepens our relationship. Taking the time to pray in the morning, thanking God for His blessings and asking for His help throughout the day, can make all the difference to how your day goes. You may know the poem by Alan Grant 'I got up early one morning'... We also shared some children's prayers to say in the morning, at mealtimes or at bedtime, we prayed the Lord's Prayer together, and the children enjoyed making colourful prayer bead bracelets and decorating teaspoons to remind them to say Thank you, Sorry and Please (TSP) to God.

We are now looking forward to the season of Advent leading up to the joyful celebration of Christmas, with our Parish Christingle service in aid of the Children's Society on the 7th of December, our Sunday School Christmas party on 21st December, and our very special Crib Service on Christmas Eve (4pm at St Mary's). All are very welcome! We wish you all a blessed Advent and a very happy Christmas, full of love, joy, hope and peace.

May the light of Christ shine in your hearts this Christmas and always.

**With love and blessings, Claudia**





## The man who married Mary

The traditional Nativity scene on our Christmas cards has Mary with the Holy Babe. Around her are the shepherds and Magi. We may also see stable animals, angels and a star! While Joseph is often included, his presence seems to be of minor importance.

After all, we praise God for Jesus with our familiar Christmas carols, mentioning angels, shepherds, Wise Men and Mary but the name of Joseph is absent! Why is Joseph given a low profile?

For he is a man to be remembered.

Joseph was a resident of Nazareth. He worked as a carpenter and his skills would have included making furniture, repairing buildings, and crafting agricultural tools. Although Joseph had an honourable profession, he would not have been a man of great wealth.

The gospel writers Matthew and Luke give Joseph a few brief mentions. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary go to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate the Baby to God. Afterwards, they flee into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod and much later return to Nazareth. 12 years later, Mary and Joseph go with Jesus to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Here they lose Jesus, only to find Him in the Temple talking with religious leaders!

Apart from these verses, the New Testament is silent about the rest of Joseph's life. However, we do know that Joseph was father to other children by Mary. His four sons are named, and they had at least two daughters. (See Matthew 13:55)

And we also know that Joseph was someone who quietly and humbly took on the awesome role in caring for the early life of the Son of God. Joseph would have taught Jesus many things – not just the skills of a labourer, but the lore of the countryside which was evident in our Lord's teaching. Jesus grew up within a loving family and described God as 'Father', knowing also the good fatherly qualities of Joseph.

In the Christmas story, Joseph is placed into a situation that brought him misunderstanding and suspicion. But Joseph remained faithful in the knowledge that as long as God had spoken, the opinion of others mattered little. Before Jesus began His ministry, it is believed that Joseph died. It is likely Jesus took on many of His father's responsibilities before He left home.

In the eyes of the world, Joseph was a nobody. He was not a man of valour, fame, and fortune. But he was the one who had parental responsibility for the greatest person who has ever lived!

It is sad that we often equate ordinariness with ineffectiveness. Down the ages, God has used many ordinary people to accomplish great things. God continues to use ordinary people. Like Joseph, we need to know that doing God's will is the most important thing in life. May we, this Christmas, respond to God's call to us and please Him in all that we do.



## News from St Catherine's and Kirk Christ



Kirk Christ held the annual Remembrance Day Civic Service on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November for the Royal British Legion. As usual there was good attendance from the various organisations in the parish including the younger people laying wreaths on and around the War Memorial. Unfortunately a shower of rain occurred just as the parade from the Royal British Legion Hall in Droghadafayle Road, to the Parish Church, was about to begin. Unfortunately it had to be cancelled at the last minute. Had it gone ahead as planned the Rushen Silver Band was going to lead the parade. Of course, during the two minute silence everyone present stood and remembered the brave men and women who had died in two world wars and subsequent conflicts.

We now look forward to the birth of Christ on 25<sup>th</sup> December. There are a number of events throughout December leading up to the special day. On page 13 of this magazine you will find a list of these events, the time they commence, and where they are taking place.

St Catherine's Church held a 'Godly Play' event during the half term holiday in October. Led by Natalie Heaton, Claudia Konig and Wendy Heaton, and other volunteers, it was good to see the children enjoying the activities.

It has been enjoyable having the children, and some families attending the services at St Catherine's Church during the past month.

The North Wall of the church has had to be pointed to prevent ingress of water and damp patches from occurring. This is now more or less completed.

I would like to take this opportunity in wishing you all a Very Happy Christmas.

**Gerry Callister**

### ***Know what?***

*As we were putting out cookies for Father Christmas one Christmas Eve, I accidentally dropped one. I picked it up and dusted it off before placing it back on the plate. "You can't do that," argued my four-year-old. But I assured him that Father Christmas would never know. He shot me a dubious look. "So, he knows if I've been bad or good all year, but he doesn't know if you dropped his cookie on the floor?"*



# Sudoku November 2025

	5					3	7	
			2	7	6			
7					1			
2		3		1				
		7				6		
				3		4		5
			1					9
			5	9	4			
	6	2					1	

## Well known pilot

At Sunday school, the younger children were drawing pictures to illustrate a biblical story. The teacher was startled to see one little boy was drawing an airplane. "This is the Flight into Egypt," the little boy explained. "See, here is Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. And this," he said, pointing to the figure in the front of the plane, "is Pontius. He's the Pilot."

## Sudoku Solution November

2	6	5	1	9	7	8	4	3
4	8	7	6	5	3	9	1	2
9	1	3	8	4	2	5	6	7
8	5	2	4	3	6	7	9	1
3	9	6	7	1	5	2	8	4
7	4	1	2	8	9	3	5	6
5	2	8	3	6	1	4	7	9
6	3	9	5	7	4	1	2	8
1	7	4	9	2	8	6	3	5

## Crossword Solution November

	J	E	H	O	I	A	C	H	I	N	
J		U		A		S		H		N	
E	N	D	U	R	E	D		E	A	S	E
Z		A		M		U		E		U	
R	A	S	H		S	T	A	R	T	L	E
E				S		Y		F		A	I
E	A	S	I	E	R		R	U	B	R	I
L		U		C		S		L			A
I	M	P	U	R	I	T	Y		F	E	E
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		M		L		U		I		P	
	H	O	L	Y	S	P	I	R	I	T	



## Micah's Message: Look forward to the child born in Bethlehem

Why is the news so full of depressing stories? Why can't they report some good news for a change? Indeed, our world is always full of troubles, and we may wonder if better times will ever come.

Similar comments might have been directed at many of the Old things. The people of Micah's day had many problems. They were surrounded by warring nations, and peace in their time was unlikely.

It was Micah's task, as God's messenger, to tell the people how it was and how it was going to be, no matter how painful the facts. Micah was deeply concerned with the social ills of his day and spoke out against false prophets who were leading the people into contrived hopes and errors.

Micah was quite forthright. He announced that God would punish the people for their sinfulness and their enemies would overcome them. Micah came with bad news and there seemed no end to his reprimands and denouncements.

But in the desert was an oasis. Amidst his descriptions of imminent pain and suffering, Micah looked forward to a time of peace with freedom from injustice, fear and war. Micah delivered God's promise that from Bethlehem there would come a ruler to free them from their oppression. Their Saviour would come. (Micah 5:2)

Of course, Micah's hearers did not understand about the Babe at Bethlehem, but they were told to stand firm in their faith no matter what troubles or disasters would befall them. They were to look forward to their deliverance, whenever that would be.

Amidst Micah's attack on the deplorable actions of leaders and the nation's wrong values and behaviour, he gave hope that God was with them in the failures and difficulties. Only God could take them through their troubles to a place of peace.

Micah's message still stands for us today. God wants us to mend our wilful ways; to correct bad attitudes and behaviour; to strive for heaven's values of justice, peace, equality, love and harmony.

As we approach a New Year, we would do well to respond to Micah's words: *What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.* (Micah 6:8)

## Mary's Boy Child. The Song and the Story

Long time ago in Bethlehem, So the Holy Bible said  
Mary's boy child, Jesus Christ,  
Was born on Christmas day

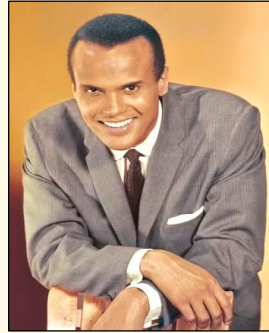
*Hark now hear the angels sing, A new king born today  
And man will live forevermore Because of Christmas day  
Trumpets sound and angels sing, Listen to what they say  
That Man will live forevermore Because of Christmas day*

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
They see a bright new shining star  
They hear a choir sing a song, The music seemed to come from afar  
Now Joseph and his wife, Mary, Came to Bethlehem  
that night They found no place to bear the child,  
Not a single room was in sight

*Hark now hear the angels sing, A new king born today  
And man will live forevermore Because of Christmas day  
Trumpets sound and angels sing, Listen to what they say  
And Man will live forevermore Because of Christmas day*

By and by they find a little nook, In a stable all forlorn  
And in a manger cold and dark, Mary's little Boy child was born  
Long time ago in Bethlehem, So the Holy Bible said  
Mary's boy child, Jesus Christ,  
Was born on Christmas day

*Hark now hear the angels sing, A new king born today  
And man will live forevermore Because of Christmas day  
Trumpets sound and angels sing, Listen to what they say  
That Man will live forevermore Because of Christmas day  
That Man will live forevermore Because of Christmas day*



**Harry Belafonte**

The song "Mary's Boy Child" started with a fun idea. The writer, Jester Hairston, was sharing a room with a friend. His friend asked him to write a song for a birthday party. Hairston decided to use a calypso rhythm. This was because most people at the party were from the West Indies.

The first version of the song had a different name. It was called "He Pone and Chocolate Tea." "Pone" is a type of corn bread. This first version was never officially recorded.

Later, a conductor named Walter Schumann asked Hairston for a new Christmas song. Hairston remembered the catchy calypso rhythm from his old song. He then wrote new words for it, making it a Christmas song.

Harry Belafonte heard the song and loved it. He asked if he could record it. In 1956, he released it as a single. A year later, in 1957, he put a longer version on his album *An Evening with Belafonte*.

This longer version became a huge hit in the UK. It was the first song in the UK to be number one and last over four minutes! It reached the top of the UK Singles Chart in November 1957. It has sold more than 1.19 million copies in the UK.

## The Late Dame Patricia Routledge



Many readers may be unaware that the late and much loved Patricia Routledge had close links with this parish. Her father, Edgar, came to live in Port Erin, when he retired from his Birkenhead business, and was a faithful member of Port Erin Methodist Church, although his son, Graham, was an Anglican clergyman, who rose to be a Canon of St Paul's Cathedral. Edgar was a regular member of our United Men's Fellowship, which is where I came to know him, and greatly valued his friendship. Just

as with Margaret Thatcher, her father was a big influence on Pat's life. Unlike Mrs Thatcher, who, to her sister's sorrow, rarely bothered to actually visit her father in later life, Pat was very devoted. When filming once in Norfolk, she hired a small plane to make sure that there would be no interruption to her visits. Despite her hectic life in theatre, television, film and radio, she found time to open our summer Parish Fete in the Royal British Legion Hall in the 1980s.

Although greatly respected in show business on both sides of the Atlantic, she was not as well known then as in the later days when Hyacinth Bucket was familiar to all the nation. Although full of life and fun, she was worlds away from the awful snob she portrayed as Hyacinth. (Just as with another of our Fete openers, Mollie Sugden, in private she was the exact opposite of her Mrs Slocombe in 'Are You Being Served'.) Old age eventually caught up with Edgar, and he moved to a residential home in Selborne Rd, Douglas. On one of my last visits there, he confessed he was ready to depart and was weary of the staff's well-meant attempts to 'jolly him along'; 'Now then Mr Routledge, you can do this.' He said, 'I am like a clapped out car that has failed to pass its MOT', and died soon after.

I felt very privileged when Pat invited me to conduct the funeral. She returned to Port Erin a few years later to play the role of the pianist Myra Hess, whose recitals during the war amidst the falling bombs were credited with keeping up the morale of the nation. (Piers Lane played the piano as Pat movingly read Myra's diaries.) This was part of the annual Erin Arts Festival, when founder John Bethell, managed to attract world famous artists, such as tenor Nicolai Gedda and soprano Victoria de Los Angeles, to our Island.

When Pat was made a Dame, we sent a card of congratulation, knowing we would be only one of many thousands and not expecting any reply. Months later, out of the blue on the phone came her familiar voice, telling us she was painstakingly wading through her huge correspondence, and had arrived at us. She recalled how my girls, whose names to our surprise she all recalled, had enjoyed her stories when she came to lunch after worshipping at the Parish Church, especially about her being told off at her Birkenhead school for being naughty! A multi-talented lady, of strong faith in God, and greatly respected by all as a star in whatever she undertook, and voted in 1996 to be Britain's best loved actress in television, stage or film, her passing at 96 years of age has meant fond memories all across the nation, but for older members of our Parish perhaps a little more personal than most.

**Rev'd Hinton Bird**

## The Difference

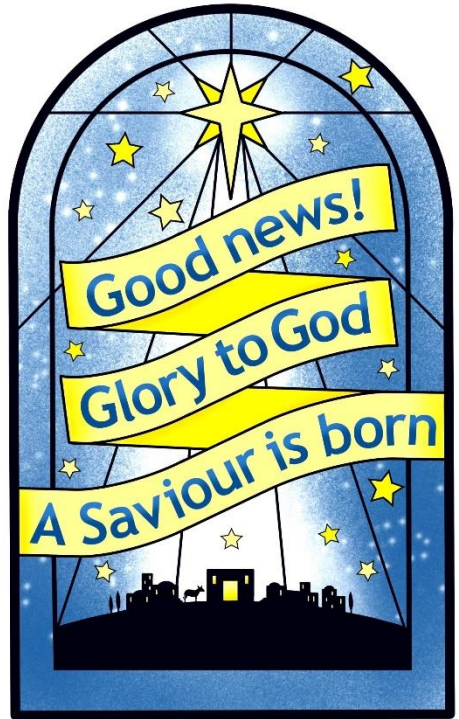
I got up early one morning  
and rushed right into the day.  
I had so much to accomplish  
that I didn't have time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me  
and heavier became each task.  
"Why doesn't God help me," I wondered.  
He answered, "you didn't ask."

I wanted to see joy and beauty,  
but the day toiled on, grey and bleak.  
I wondered why God didn't show me.  
He explained, "you didn't seek."

So, determined to be in God's presence  
I used all my keys at the lock.  
God gently and lovingly chided,  
"My child, you didn't knock."

Alan Grant



## Dates for Advent & Christmas Services

### Advent

7 <sup>th</sup> December	4pm	<i>Christingle Service</i>	St Catherine's Church
9 <sup>th</sup> December	7.30pm	<i>PSM Commissioner's Carol Service</i>	St Mary's Church
17 <sup>th</sup> December	7.30pm	<i>Carols, Candles and Cake</i>	St Peter's Church
18 <sup>th</sup> December	7pm	<i>PE Commissioner's Carol Service</i>	St Catherine's Church
21 <sup>st</sup> December	6.30pm	<i>Parish Carol Service</i>	Kirk Christ

### Christmas Eve

24 <sup>th</sup> December	4pm	<i>Crib Service</i>	St Mary's Church
24 <sup>th</sup> December	7.30pm	<i>Holy Communion</i>	St Peter's Church
24 <sup>th</sup> December	11.30pm	<i>Midnight Communion</i>	St Catherine's Church

### Christmas Day

25 <sup>th</sup> December	10am	<i>Joint Service</i>	Kirk Christ
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### 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas

28 <sup>th</sup> December	11am	<i>Joint Service</i>	Kirk Christ
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## All in the month of December



**250 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> Dec 1775**, Jane Austen, novelist (*Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*) was born. Over 30 million copies of her books have been sold, 7,000 of them in her lifetime.

**175 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 1850**, William Sturgeon, physicist, electrical engineer and inventor died. He created the first electromagnets and invented the first British electric motor.

**150 years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec 1875**, Evelyn Underhill, writer and pacifist was born. Best known for her books on religion and Christian mysticism.

**75 years ago, on 25<sup>th</sup> Dec 1950**, the Stone of Scone, the coronation stone of British monarchs, was taken from Westminster Abbey in London by four Scottish students. They transported it to Scotland but broke it. It was later returned to London and used in the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Since 1996 it has been kept in Edinburgh Castle, with the agreement that it will be transported to Westminster Abbey when needed for coronations.

**70 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 1955**, African American civil rights activist Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery Alabama. This violated the city's racial segregation laws, and led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott (5<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Dec 1956) and the birth of the modern American civil rights movement.

**65 years ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 1960**, the first episode of the TV soap *Coronation Street* was broadcast on ITV.

**60 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec 1965**, Richard Dimbleby, journalist and radio-television broadcaster, died. The BBC's first war correspondent, he was one of the greatest figures in British broadcasting history. Father of the TV presenters David Dimbleby and Jonathan Dimbleby.

**40 years ago, on 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 1985**, Philip Larkin, poet, librarian and jazz critic died.

**30 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec 1995**, the British 'rogue trader' Nick Leeson was jailed for six and a half years in Singapore for fraudulent financial dealings which had led to the fall of Barings Bank. **Also on 15<sup>th</sup> December**, the European Council announced that the new European currency would be called the Euro.

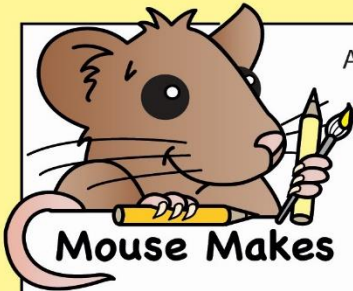
**25 years ago, 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 2000**, George Bush finally claimed the US presidency, 36 days after the election was held. The results were delayed by disputed votes in Florida.

**20 years ago, on 27<sup>th</sup> Dec 2000**, British pharmaceutical companies Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham merged, to create the world's largest pharmaceutical company, GlaxoSmithKline.

**15 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> Dec 2010**, Ireland was granted a 67.5 billion Euro bailout from the European Union to rescue its banks and other financial institutions from collapsing.



## Children's Page December



### Mouse Makes

A baby needs clothes  
to keep warm like  
a snuggly sleep suit  
or a vest and nappy.

*What were you dressed in?*

Jesus was wrapped in

.....  
**read** Luke 2:7

A baby needs  
somewhere  
to sleep like  
a crib or a cot.  
*What did you  
sleep in?*

Jesus slept in a

.....  
**read** Luke 2:7

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus,  
God's Son and our Saviour  
coming into the world as a baby,  
and we look forward to the time  
when Jesus will come again,  
not as a baby but as the  
King of kings and Lord of lords!

**read**

John 14:3

A baby needs somewhere  
to be born like at home  
or in a hospital.

*Where were you born?*

Jesus was born  
in a stable in

.....  
**read** Luke 2:1-6

A baby needs  
a name.

*What name were  
you called?*

Jesus was given  
a special name  
that had a  
special meaning.

**read**

Matthew 1:21-23



# HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ✨ NOLLAIG CHRÏDHEIL ✨ NOLLAG SHONA  
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN



## Jane Austen – still loved 250 years later

It was 250 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1775, that novelist Jane Austen (*Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*) was born. Over 30 million copies of her books have since been sold – 7000 in her lifetime.

She was the second daughter and seventh child of the Revd George Austen, rector of the village of Steventon in Hampshire.

Two of her brothers became clergymen, two were Admirals in the Royal Navy and the other inherited substantial estates in Kent and Hampshire from a distant cousin. Neither Jane nor her sister Cassandra, with whom she was very close, ever married.

Jane had a sincere Christian faith which deepened as she got older and is reflected in her novels. She had sympathy with hands-on evangelicalism and a desire to abolish the slave trade, which she refers to particularly in *Mansfield Park*.

She lived at Steventon for 25 years and then moved with her parents and sister to Bath, enjoying holidays in the West Country. Her father died in 1805, and they moved to Southampton and then Chawton in Hampshire, less than 20 miles from Steventon, where they had a cottage on one of her brother Edward's estates – now a Jane Austen museum. This cottage was where she devoted herself to writing, revising her first three novels and composing another three.

But it was here too that she fell ill and died in 1817 – probably from Addison's Disease. She had been published only anonymously in her lifetime, and her style was not immediately appreciated, though its comments on the world of the landed gentry, to which she belonged, quickly became popular – as did her wit, irony and her realistic plots.

She is now more popular than ever, with followers known as Janeites and a flourishing Jane Austen Society with worldwide membership, plus numerous film and TV adaptations of her work.

There are some gaps in her private life, mainly because her sister Cassandra destroyed most of her letters. At the age of 20 she seems to have fallen temporarily for Thomas Lefroy, a neighbour who later became Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, but the relationship never developed. The epitaph by her brother James on her tomb in Winchester Cathedral praises the "extraordinary endowments of her mind".

**Tim Lenton**

### ***Big part***

*A little boy rushed home from school: "I got a part in the Christmas play!" His mother asked which part it was. "I'm going to be one of the three wise guys!"*

## Rushen Mothers' Union



Our November meeting was attended by 18 members and guests. We remembered those who had fallen and suffered in conflict and centred our short service around the need for peace, kindness and understanding. Thanks go to David for his reading on the behaviours and attitudes that we should all have to make the world a better place. And many thanks to Iris for selecting and playing our hymns.

We were delighted to welcome our guest speaker Tina Teare from Southern Befrienders. Most of us were aware of their work befriending socially isolated and mainly elderly members of our community but few of us realised the how it is done and the wide range of activities that are on offer. Not only do they regularly have one to one visits with people for chats and company they also run bingo, film afternoons, crafting and games clubs and many other social events. A programme of these activities is available at St Catherine's Hall, or from their headquarters at Thie Rosen.

They are always looking for supporters and volunteers, so if you feel you can help this amazing charity, please get in touch with them direct or talk to me about it.

Thanks must go to Jude for sorting out our bank account, she has spent many hours talking to the Isle of Man bank, who clearly are not keen on having charity accounts and were requesting information that we just don't have. We will in future be doing our banking through the MU account at Lloyds! Thanks to everyone who has paid their subs for this year, if there are any outstanding, please give Jude cash, or talk to her before filling in cheques.

Our next meeting will be in St Mary's Church; it is our Christmas Party. Please bring yourselves, a small plate of finger food and a Secret Santa present. This is just a bit of fun, so please just get a token gift, spending no more than £5. Readings, poems, activities or party acts are also very welcome and Christmas attire is preferred. It will be a fun afternoon and all are welcome.

### Dates for your diaries:

2<sup>nd</sup> December      MU Advent Service, 7pm Abbey Church, Ballasalla. There will be an envelope collection for Victim Support IoM. This will be for camera doorbells, as part of our Rise Up campaign. I will have spare envelopes with me if needed.

8<sup>th</sup> December      Christmas Party. 2pm St Mary's Church. Don't forget Christmas attire!

**Lesley Scott**

## Did the Old Testament expect Jesus to come?



Yes indeed! The Old Testament contains many prophecies about a coming Messiah which were fulfilled by Jesus. Here are just some examples:

### **He would be born of a virgin.**

Isaiah foresaw: 'Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel.' (Isaiah 7:14)

### **He would be born in Bethlehem.**

Micah wrote: 'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.' (Micah 5:2)

### **His lineage would be of the line of David.**

Jeremiah prophesied: 'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour.' (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

### **He would bring healing**

Isaiah looks forward to: 'Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.' (Isaiah 35:5-6) And the Psalms add that He will be the one who 'forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.' (Psalm 103:3)

### **He would be betrayed**

The Psalms prophesy: 'Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.' (Psalm 41:9) Zechariah even prophesies the price of that betrayal: 'So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.' (Zechariah 11:12)

### **He would be crucified**

Psalm 22 foresees the horror of His crucifixion: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?... All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. "He trusts in the Lord," they say, "let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him." ... I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death... Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. And Isaiah explains this suffering: 'Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed.' (Isaiah 53: 4-5)

### **He would rise from the dead**

Malachi declares: 'But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays.'

And the Psalms put it this way: 'Therefore my heart is glad ... because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. ...You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.' (Psalm 16: 8-11)

### **Finally, in Acts, Peter uses the Old Testament to explain Jesus to the crowd at Pentecost:**

"Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

### **Parish Pump**



### **Archbishop Designate, Sarah Mullally, sets out her hopes for the Church**

Shortly after the announcement of her nomination as the next Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Sarah Mullally delivered an address at Canterbury Cathedral, reflecting on her calling, the challenges facing the Church, and her hopes for its future.

Rooted in her early vocation as a nurse and shaped by her ministry in London, she spoke of "washing feet" as a guiding image of Christian service, and of finding hope in the quiet faithfulness of churches, chaplaincies, and communities across the Anglican Communion.

She addressed the Church's responsibility in safeguarding, the need to confront power dynamics, and the importance of standing against hatred and antisemitism.

She said she would seek to be "a shepherd who enables everyone's ministry and vocation to flourish," and expressed her desire to nurture confidence in the Gospel. "Held fast by the Lord's hand," she concluded, "please pray for me as I will pray for you."

### **Parish Pump**

### ***The Wrong Gift***

*A young couple began to assemble a special Christmas gift they had bought for their children. They had bought a kit for a tree house, but it didn't make sense. Then they realised that the materials were for a sailboat, so they wrote to the company to complain. The company's reply was brief: "While we regret the inconvenience this mistake must have caused you, we are more concerned about the man who is out on a lake somewhere, trying to sail your tree house."*

## God in the Arts

**‘He gave us eyes to see them’**

### **Madonna and Child from Donatello’s workshop**



*Editor: The **Revd Michael Burgess** completes his survey of sacred art that can be found in various museums*

Each month during this year we have visited art galleries and museums in England that are often overlooked by the tourist trail, but which contain treasures that can inspire and deepen our Christian faith. Our final visit in this series is to a gracious, elegant Georgian villa rejoicing in the odd name of the Ranger’s House. It is outside the western wall of Greenwich Park in London and is home to the Wernher collection of art.

Julius Wernher was a diamond magnate who died in 1912, and in his lifetime, he amassed an amazing array of 700 works that make up this collection. There are paintings by Joshua Reynolds and Romney, Renaissance jewellery, and a marble statue by Bergonzoli, ‘The Love of Angels.’

But this month we focus on another love – the love of a mother and child by the workshop of Donatello. When I was a student I visited Florence for the first time, and I can always remember the impact of entering the Bargello and being greeted by the sculptures of Donatello. It was a special moment of revelation to be able to look around and wonder at the glorious works of this sculptor filling the second floor of the castle.

By contrast the Madonna and Child in the Ranger’s House is a miniature, a bronze plaque just 4 inches square. Our Lady is depicted in classical profile with flowing robes and wavy hair, but the mood is one of tenderness as she cradles the Christ-Child. She holds His left hand in hers, while He looks down at something that has caught His attention. Perhaps it is a noise at the stable door or the sound of an animal in the Bethlehem night. Perhaps it is St Joseph getting everything ready for the Holy Family to leave. We don’t know, but it is another special moment of revelation caught in this little plaque. It may not be by Donatello himself, but we sense the master overseeing the creation of this work.

At Christmas we ponder the mystery of infinity caught in a little space, the cradle at Bethlehem, just as the mystery of love, maternal and divine, is caught in the little space of this plaque. Margaret Rizza’s carol, ‘Jesus is our joy’ captures the mood of wonder, joy and hope as we open the stable door to see the love of a mother and her new-born baby expressed here and at the heart of the Christmas gospel:



## Rushen Parish Prayer Diary

*During this season of Good Will let us pray that we can do our part to bring Peace to the world: God our Father, Creator of the world, please help us to love one another. Make nations friendly with other nations; Make all of us love one another like brothers and sisters. Help us to do our part to bring peace in the world and happiness to all people.*

**Amen**

### December 2025

#### **This is your invitation to pray day by day for:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Shopkeepers during the busy build up towards the Christmas period
- 2<sup>nd</sup> All Christians preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Nativity plays being performed at our island's primary schools prior to Christmas
- 4<sup>th</sup> Our fellow neighbours and the love and respect we have for them
- 5<sup>th</sup> Mothers' Union Advent Carol Service today at the Abbey Church, Ballasalla at 7pm
- 6<sup>th</sup> People in care homes preparing for Christmas and all that it means to them
- 7<sup>th</sup> The annual Christingle Service at the Parish Church at 4pm on this day
- 8<sup>th</sup> Children with disabilities which require them to be cared for by others
- 9<sup>th</sup> Port St Mary Commissioner's Carol Service at 7.30pm on this day at Mary's Church
- 10<sup>th</sup> All children and their many expectations during this Christmastide
- 11<sup>th</sup> The vicar, readers and retired clergy and all they do for the parish
- 12<sup>th</sup> The relatives of those who have died throughout the parish during 2025
- 13<sup>th</sup> Sportsmen and women providing enjoyment and competitiveness
- 14<sup>th</sup> Those who have no homes and are wondering what Christmas will bring to them
- 15<sup>th</sup> Rushen Parochial Church Council and the work it does for the parish
- 16<sup>th</sup> All those who do such good work for charities across the island
- 17<sup>th</sup> The Carols, Candles and Cake event at St Peter's Church this evening at 7.30pm
- 18<sup>th</sup> The Port Erin Commissioners' Carol Service at St Catherine's Church at 7pm
- 19<sup>th</sup> The hope that Christmas will bring families, which have been apart, together again
- 20<sup>th</sup> Gerry Callister, his dedication to the parish, and all he does for everyone
- 21<sup>st</sup> The Parish Carol Service at Kirk Christ at 6.30pm this evening
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Sidespersons and the important role they play during church services
- 23<sup>rd</sup> People in hospital hoping to be home during the Christmas season
- 24<sup>th</sup> The Crib Service taking place in St Mary's Church at 4pm this afternoon
- 25<sup>th</sup> Peace throughout the world
- 26<sup>th</sup> St Stephen, the first martyr, who is remembered today
- 27<sup>th</sup> Those who have suffered, in one way or another, during the Christmas period
- 28<sup>th</sup> People who have had to work throughout Christmas to maintain vital services
- 29<sup>th</sup> Teachers preparing for a new term at school
- 30<sup>th</sup> Preparations for the New Year and the hope it brings for everyone
- 31<sup>st</sup> New Year celebrations throughout the world and the hope for peace

## Services December 2025 & January 2026

7 <sup>th</sup> December <b>(Advent 2)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW)
	11am	St Mary's Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Morning Prayer (CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)
14 <sup>th</sup> December <b>(Advent 3)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Mary's All-Age Service (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Holy Communion (CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Holy Communion (BCP)
21 <sup>st</sup> December <b>(Advent 4)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW)
	11am	St Mary's Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Morning Prayer (CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)

***See Page 13 for a list of the Christmas Services and Events***

28 <sup>th</sup> December <b>(Christmas 1)</b>	<b>11am</b>	<b>Kirk Christ Joint Holy Communion (CW)</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> January <b>(Christmas 2)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW)
	11am	St Mary's Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Morning Prayer (CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)
11 <sup>th</sup> January <b>(Epiphany 1)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Mary's All-Age Service (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Holy Communion (CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)
18 <sup>th</sup> January <b>(Epiphany 2)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW)
	11am	St Mary's Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Morning Prayer (CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Holy Communion (BCP)
25 <sup>th</sup> January <b>(Epiphany 3)</b>	11am	<b>Kirk Christ Joint Holy Communion (CW)</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> February <b>(Epiphany 4)</b>	9.30am	Kirk Christ Morning Prayer (CW)
	11am	St Mary's Holy Communion (CW)
	11am	St Catherine's Morning Prayer (CW)
	3.15pm	St Peter's Evening Prayer (BCP)

**Contact Details for Rushen Parish cont'd....**

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**St Mary's Ladies Working Party**

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**St Catherine's Hall Bookings:**

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*Articles for the magazine should be submitted to the editor no later  
than 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. This arrangement is subject to change.*

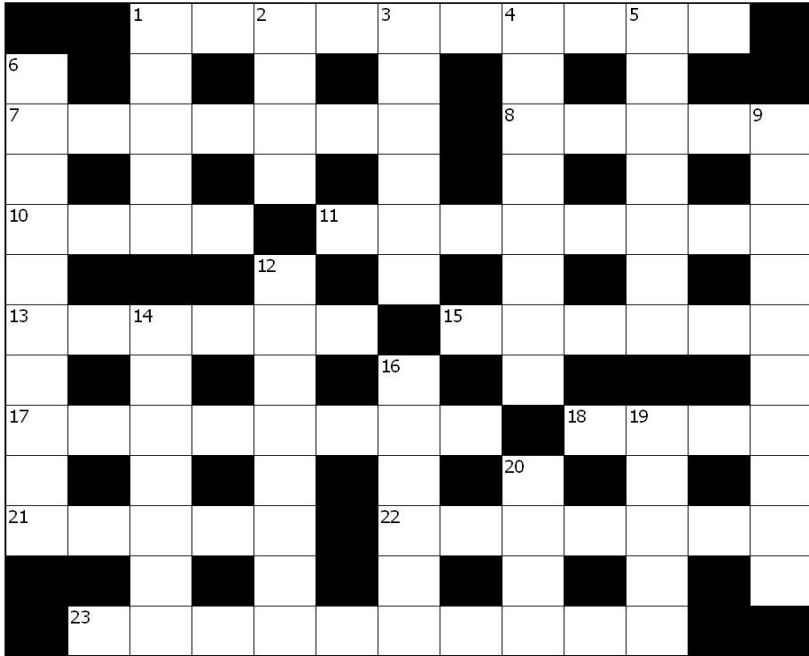
**Parish Director of Music:**

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**Churchyard Enquiries:**

Please contact      Mr Harry Dawson:      478050/835770  
or Mr G Callister:      474924/834627

# Crossword December 2025



## Across

- 1** Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)
- 7** David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14,15) (7)
- 8** They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries (5)
- 10** Small deer of European and Asian extraction (4)
- 11** Seized control of (Numbers 21:25) (8)
- 13** Terror (Luke 24:5) (6)
- 15** First World War heroine shot by the Germans in Brussels, Nurse Edith .... (6)
- 17** Stormy (8)
- 18** A bitter variety of this, together with lamb and unleavened bread, was the Passover menu for anyone unclean (Numbers 9:11) (4)
- 21** Arson (anag.) (5)
- 22** How John Newton described God's grace in his well-known hymn (7)
- 23** Habitation (Isaiah 27:10) (10)

## Down

- 1** .... and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8) (5)
- 2** The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as ... as a lion (Proverbs 28:1) (4)
- 3** One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)
- 4** He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19,20) (8)
- 5** City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)
- 6** Offer your bodies as living ...., holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1) (10)
- 9** Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)
- 12** One who accepts government by God (8)
- 14** Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual (Exodus 30:1)(7)
- 16** He asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) (6)
- 19** Are (Romans 13:1) (5)
- 20** You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will ... his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21) (4)