



Holy
Trinity
WATERHEAD

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50p

December 2019

holytrinitywaterhead.co.uk

Services at Holy Trinity Church

Sunday 11:00 am Parish Worship
Wednesday 7:00 pm Family Communion
Thursday 9:30 am Morning prayer in the vestry
Baptisms and marriages by arrangement with the Vicar.

Please submit items for the January 2020 magazine by 15 December. You can e-mail files to paulmonk111@gmail.com

People at Holy Trinity Church

Vicar

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Warden

John Wolstencroft (0161) 620 2401

Readers

Ruth Lees (0161) 624 0777
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Organist	Rosie Kingham	(0161) 652 4265
Administrator	Sarah Gura	(07843) 178 762
Church Secretary	Lynne Schofield	(07804) 094 457
Church Treasurer	Vicky Heaton	(07906) 077 058
Gift-aid Secretary	Vicky Heaton	(0161) 624 0777
Parish Hall Manager	Naomi Parkes	(07907) 410 606
Sunday School	Yolanda Ryder	
Rainbows	Sarah Wilson and Natalie Morris	
Brownies	Val Lees and Moira Belcher	
Guides	Karen and Lisa Cannon	
Beavers and Cubs	Lee Thompson	(07907) 907 354
Scouts	Mark Dickinson	(07976) 666 512

Letter

from the Vicar

Many people treat the Christmas story as an annual event to accompany the Christmas TV, mince pies and carols. Seen this way, the Christmas story becomes an end in itself, to be forgotten as soon as January appears.

Again, we can think of Easter as another stand-alone story. Jesus' atoning sacrifice becomes a different seasonal item to accompany the eggs and chocolate. It is not. Rather, it's more like an illustration of God's supreme for us.

The problem is the way we live: we are always too busy. With preparation and publicising; visiting and services; doing and being; and the form-filing that accompany all aspects of life, we become so busy that we concentrate on the small details but exclude the bigger picture.

Before we start the rush and expense of Christmas, let's re-remember the bigger picture. Christianity, when authentic and true to itself, always focuses our attention on the way God makes himself accessible to ordinary people like us. In this light, the bigger picture becomes very simple: Jesus came to earth as a human being in order that we could see what God is truly like. Jesus went to the cross to remove our sins completely and utterly, to clean us from the sins that separate us from God and his love. This way, we can recognise God when the blinds between us and him come down.

Enjoy the beauty of Christmas. Enjoy the tinsel and the glitter. Enjoy the presents and the fun. Enjoy the sight of wonder in children's eyes. But also try to remember that we celebrate the birth of a baby thousands of years ago because he enables us to come close to God. Now that *is* a present worth celebrating!

Wishing you all a joyful and peaceful time of great love this Advent and Christmas:

PAUL

Church and Parish news

Quiz night

We had a successful quiz night on 26 October which raised £260 towards the new floor at the back of the church. It was very well attended with 38 people making up 8 teams. Once again it was a very close-run contest with only 3 points between the winners and the runners-up.

Special thanks must go to Linda and John Birkby for their help before and during the event, and to Duncan Goodman for running the bar.

We hope to have another two quiz nights in 2020 with the first one in the Spring and the date will be confirmed early in the New Year.

Christmas Faith Lunch

Please note that we've changed the date of the Christmas Faith Lunch to **22 December**. It will occur **in the Parish Hall** after the morning service. We will be holding a raffle and tombola as well. The first prize in the raffle will be a hamper and there is still time to contribute to this if you have not already done so.

We also welcome donations of raffle and tombola prizes. Please bring all your donations to church **no later than Wednesday 18 December**. Thank you.

Christmas Flowers

If anyone would like to contribute towards the flowers in Church at Christmas please see Lynne Schofield or Sue Crabtree. Thank you.

Bible readings for December

Sunday 1 December 2019

Advent Sunday

First: Isaiah 2:1-5

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14

Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44

Sunday 15 December

Third Sunday of Advent

First: Isaiah 35:1-10

Epistle: James 5:7-10

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

Wednesday 25 December

Christmas Day

First: Isaiah 52:7-10

Epistle: Titus 2:11-14

Gospel: Luke 2:1-14

Sunday 8 December

Second Sunday of Advent

First: Isaiah 11:1-10

Epistle: Romans 15:4-13

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday 22 December

Forth Sunday of Advent

First: Isaiah 7:10-16

Epistle: Romans 1:1-7

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Sunday 29 December

First Sunday of Christmas

First: Isaiah 63:7-9

Epistle: Hebrews 2:10-18

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23



Flying on eagle's wings was not as cool
as Norbert thought it might be.

(With apologies to Isaiah 40:31.)

Saint Nicholas is the most popular name for Nikolaos of Myra, a saint and bishop in the Greek Orthodox Church. He was born in 270 AD and died on 6 December in 346 AD.

Nicholas was bishop of Myra (a city we now call Demre, in Lycia, in modern-day Turkey). Because of the many miracles attributed to him, he is also known as 'Nicholas the Wonderworker.'

Nicholas had a reputation for secretly giving gifts, for example putting coins in the shoes of those who left them out for him. Later legends tell of these gifts multiplying miraculously; and of him giving an unbelievable number of gifts in a very short time.

Nicholas' reputation for performing miracles became so great that his relics were stolen in 1087 and — many years later — re-appeared in Bari, in south eastern Italy. According to legend, his bones were stolen by Italian sailors during the eleventh century and taken to the crypt of the Basilica di San Nicola on the southeast coast of Italy. For this reason, he is also known as St Nicholas of Bari.

To commemorate the date of his death, St Nicholas' Day is usually celebrated on 6 December. It became a festival for children in many European countries and was celebrated by the giving of gifts. The idea of Santa Claus (the name comes from the Dutch for Saint Nicholas 'Sinterklaas' — literally 'saint claus') and thence Father Christmas derives from these stories of a wonderful giver of gifts.

St Nicholas is the patron saint of more things and more places than virtually any other saint. For example, he is the patron of sailors, merchants, archers, children and even thieves! In many countries, he is also the patron saint of students. He is the patron saint of places as diverse as Aberdeen and Liverpool. In 1809, the *New York Historical*

Society retrospectively named Santa Claus the patron saint of New Amsterdam, the old name for New York City.

The relics of most of the saints were divided and thence spread over numerous churches in several countries. By contrast, St. Nicholas is unique insofar as most of his bones were preserved in one place: the crypt in Bari.

A facial anthropologist at the University of Manchester analysed the bones and, using modern software simulations, created a modern reconstruction of the long-dead saint. The real Nicholas was barely five feet in height and had a broken nose. We now have a human face on Santa's original namesake. Incidentally, his nose probably suffered during the persecution of Christians under the Roman Emperor Diocletian.

In December 2009, the Turkish government formally requested that the Italian government return Nicholas' bones to his native land.

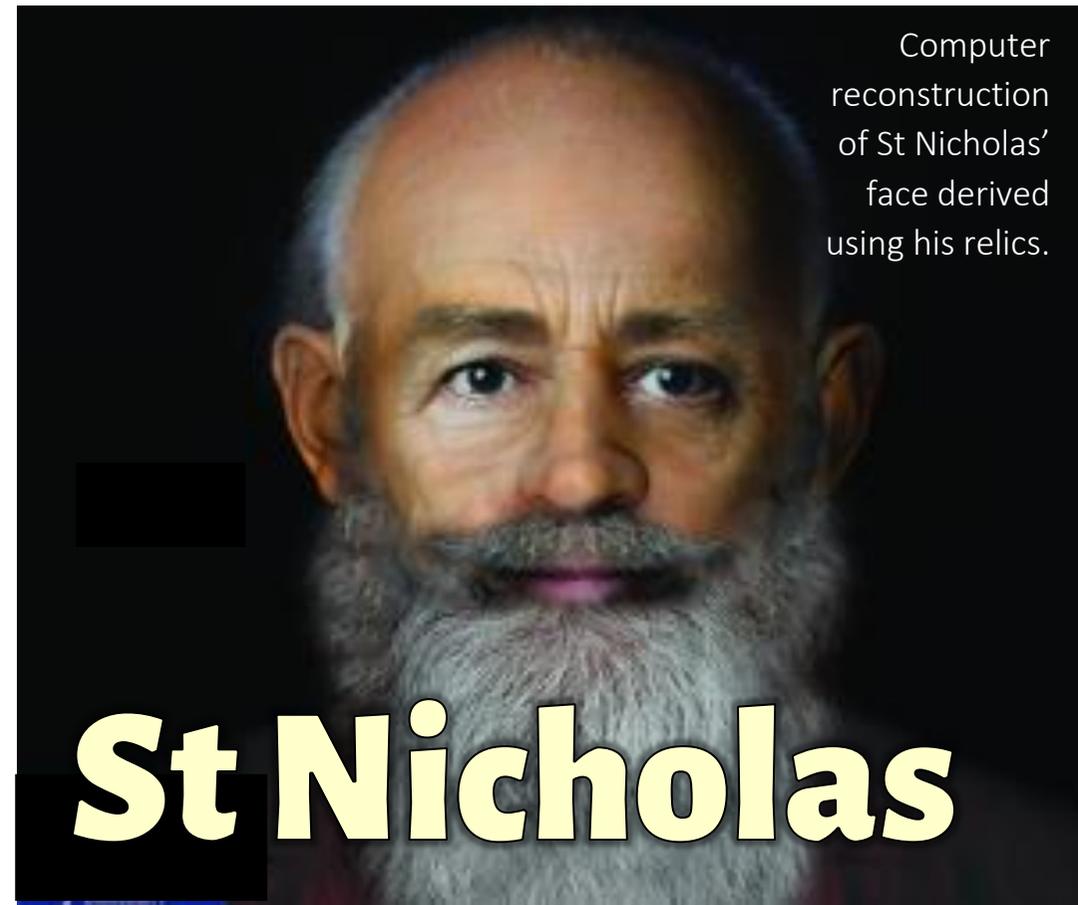
For more information, please visit the following sites:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-30354994>

<https://www.whychristmas.com/customs/fatherchristmas.shtml>

For a good description of the transformation from 'St Nicholas' to 'Father Christmas':

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2018/12/131219-santa-claus-origin-history-christmas-facts-st-nicholas>



Computer reconstruction of St Nicholas' face derived using his relics.

St Nicholas

Jesus: the reason for the season

The Bible often describes Jesus as 'the Son of God'. That title needs explanation because it's so huge.

Jesus lived on earth as a human being during a very short period of human history (between approximately 4 BC and 29 AD). That period started when his mother Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit and ended after his Ascension, when he returned to Heaven.

Despite his unusual conception, the Bible is always keen to demonstrate that Jesus was fully human. Like us, he grew from a baby, became a teenager, and thence grew into adulthood. It also describes times when he needed sleep, food and warmth, just as we do. It also displays him as having the full range of human emotions: he wept, was angry, and so on. And he could be killed and die.

And this God-man had a perfect understanding of what it's like to be human, which is surely what the whole thing is about.

We give the name 'Incarnation' to this mind-boggling event of God becoming human. The word literally means the 'en-flesh-ment' of God — Jesus is God wrapped in a human body.

In several places the Bible suggests that Jesus is both God and man, but each example needs a bit of explaining. The most dramatic instances refer to 'The Word'. The most famous is John 1:14, 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.' The Nicene Creed describes it with the words:

**For us and for our salvation,
he came down from heaven,
he became incarnate from the Holy Spirit
and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.**

The Incarnation ended when Jesus returned back to Heaven — 'back' because he first entered the physical world *from* Heaven. That's why Sirach 24:8 (in the Apocrypha) describes the Incarnation with the beautiful phrase, 'The Word leapt from heaven to earth'.

Jesus was active in Heaven before the Incarnation. Colossians 1:16 shows him as being somehow instrumental in forming the world.

It's our job as Christians to live with God within us, which is a different but related form of Incarnation. It also helps if we ask God (through prayer) to help us to understand these things in our souls.

Gold for the manger bed

**Gold for a manger bed,
Jesus enshrining:
straw where he lays his head,
softly reclining;
so small and still he lies
as on his infant eyes
high in the darkened skies
the stars are shining.**

**King and Creator see,
whose hands have wrought us;
Saviour and shepherd he,
who loved and sought us;
our God in human frame
who to a lost world came
and on the cross of shame
so dearly bought us.**

**Gold for a monarch's state;
all things sustaining;
High Prince and Potentate,
death's dread disdaining;
to him the ransomed raise
unceasing hymns of praise,
through everlasting days
in glory reigning.**

**Words © Timothy Dudley-Smith.
These words can be sung to the tune of 'To be a Pilgrim'.**

The principal idea behind Advent is expectant waiting. It invites us to await the coming of Christ. Indeed, this sense of waiting explains the name of the season, for *adventus* is Latin for 'coming'.

Advent often gets incorporated into Christmas under the continual, relentless pressure to celebrate a commercial Christmas. We give in too soon. Preparing for Christmas from mid-September makes it harder to sustain an appropriate sense of attentive watchfulness. Indeed, the pressure grows as the adverts appear at an ever-earlier date. It can feel impossible to concentrate on Advent while keeping the focus away from Christmas. Many Churches avoid the pretence altogether by the end of Advent and celebrate its fourth Sunday with a nativity event involving the Sunday-school children acting out the characters of the story, with carols and a party. In these ways, we lose any sense of hope in response to hype, adverts and the monotony of the Christmas songs and jingles. The antidote to this bludgeoning is to celebrate Advent as a separate and distinct liturgical season. We enhance Christmas in direct proportion to our celebrating Advent appropriately before Christmas starts properly.

The Church expresses its sense of waiting for Jesus within two complementary viewpoints: first, we await our meeting with Jesus as a new-born baby in a crib at Christmas time. This is the subject matter of the incarnation and requires preparation to avoid any sense of Christmas becoming 'samey' — the annual rehearsal of a familiar and now over-sentimentalised story.

The second and related theme of Advent revolves round the idea of Jesus returning to earth as Lord and judge. We call this return, 'the second coming.' The scriptures assure us of his return at the end of time, or at the end of our individual lives on earth if a mortal believer should die sooner. The readings and liturgies of Advent look forward not only to Christ's birth, but also to his final coming.

The Church sometimes calls him Christ *pantocrator* — a Greek title representing Jesus as the ruler of the universe. One of the principal challenges of Advent is our modern reluctance to confront the implications of divine judgement.

Several classic Advent hymns explore these ideas. For example, the first verse of Wesley's well-known 'Lo! he comes, with clouds descending' concludes by saying 'Christ the Lord returns to reign.' Another famous Advent hymn is 'O come, O come, Emmanuel,' which derives from a twelfth-century hymn translated. And 'Emmanuel' is a Greek title for Jesus meaning, 'God is with us'.

Advent is a penitential season, although the importance of this theme is less than either 'expectation' or 'dread'. We repent of everything that will displease Jesus on his return. The prayers can usefully underpin the penitential feel of the season, as do the prefaces and choice of hymns, if chosen wisely. For these reasons and more, Advent has long been known as 'the lesser Lent', which also explains the omission of the Gloria in all its possible forms. That Advent falls during the darkest weeks of the year can enhance these ideas, as can the natural symbols of Advent, which include darkness and light.

Fasting in December could pre-date Christmas, for example as a preparation for the Celtic festival of Beltane. Alternatively, it might simply reflect a pragmatic rationing of food during the bleak days of mid-winter. Fasting as an explicit practice for Advent started in what is now France during the fourth century. Later, the Church in Rome made the Advent fast mandatory and introduced stricter rules on Church attendance before Christmas. The Eastern Orthodox call their preparation for Christmas the 'Nativity Fast'. It starts the day after the Feast of St Philip the Apostle (14 November) and lasts 40 days until 24 December.

What is Advent?

Holy
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Carol Service

Wednesday 18 December
at 7:00 pm

holytrinitywaterhead.co.uk

Holy
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Midnight Mass

Christmas Eve

Service starts at 11:30 pm

All are welcome

Holy
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Christingle Service

Christmas Eve at 4:00 pm

All are welcome

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Christmas Day

Celebration and Eucharist

Service starts at 9:30 am: all are welcome

medlockhead.co.uk

Curate's Corner

I don't know about you, but I always dread the question: 'What do you want for Christmas?' I find that nowadays, I neither want nor need anything in particular, and thinking about gifts for older friends and family, also often leaves me in a quandary.

Various brochures and catalogues popping through my door have given me the impetus to try and find ethical and/or eco-friendly gifts this year.

I can sponsor a donkey, polar bear or tiger, or buy chickens, goats, bicycles, water pumps (and even toilets) in far away places in the names of family and friends.

I can purchase handmade toys, ornaments, clothing, tea cosies, and jewellery to benefit artisans in poorer areas of the world. Then there are Fairtrade items like chocolate, fudge, biscuits, candies, tea and coffee. If I want to contribute to saving the planet in my buying choices, I can source 'green' toiletries, bamboo toothbrushes, reusable drinking straws, beeswax food wraps, travel cups made of rice husk, bug hotels and seeds for wild flowers that will encourage insects to thrive in the garden.

As well as all this, I can buy charity Christmas cards and eschew the usual glossy Christmas wrapping paper and ribbon in favour of gift bags made from Indian newspaper (£3.95 for ten) or use plain brown paper and twine (and biodegradable sellotape if I can get it).

I suppose what I really 'want' for Christmas is what all people want: peace on earth; justice, freedom and a fairer share for all; a greater respect for our earthly home; and (as a Christian) for more people to realise that on that first Christmas day, God gave us the best gift of all.

The gift, without price, that I can re-commit to offering the Christ child this Christmas is best summed up in Christina Rossetti's famous words,

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

Revd Jane

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

All the following words in the grid relate to events, saints days, holy days in December, and elements of the Christmas story.

Advent, Ambrose, Ass, Bethlehem, Birth, Christmas, Eve, Boxing Day, John, John of the Cross, Lucy, Manger, Midnight Mass, Nicholas, Ox, Stephen, Thomas

2019 dates for your diary

Wednesday 18 December 7:00 pm **Annual Carol Service** in the Church.
 Tuesday 24 December 4:00 pm **Christingle Service** in the Church.
 Tuesday 24 December 11:30 pm **Midnight Mass** in the Church.
 Wednesday 25 December 9:30 am Service for **Christmas Day** at St Barnabas.

2020

Sunday 5 January 11:00 am **Epiphany and Annual Covenant Service.**
 Saturday 22 February 11:00 am **School of Prayer** (workshops and talks).
 Sunday 22 March 11:00 am **Mothering Sunday.**
 Sunday 12 April 11:00 am **Easter Sunday.**
 Sunday 7 June 11:00 am **Trinity Sunday and Annual Gift Day.**

New placement student

I'm Darren Quinlan. I'm 53 years of age and married with two children. My eldest has just started a first year at university and my youngest is in year six.

I was brought up in a large Roman Catholic family with seven brothers and one sister. I have been worshipping in Anglo-Catholic churches for the last eight years. I was welcomed into the Anglican Church in May 2018 by Bishop Mark of Middleton.

I was a detective in a homicide and major-investigations Unit. I'm also an accredited Senior Investigating Officer, in road deaths, cold-case review and counter corruption. I took a secondment to the Home Office in 2004 and stayed there, I'm part of a team that investigate breaches of Article 2 and 3 of the Human Rights Act, Article 2 being the right to life and Article 3 being inhumane treatment and torture.

My faith makes me who I am and gives me the strength to deal with the things I see or hear about. Without my faith I would not succeed in my current role.

I'm really excited about my placement at St Barnabas' and Holy Trinity and looking forward to meeting each of you. God Bless for now, enjoy the uplifting period of Advent and have a wonderful Christmas.

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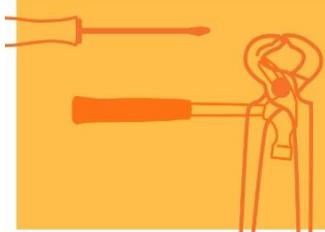
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While we associate newspapers with matters of grave concern, it is also nice to have some good news. In recent weeks the *Oldham Times* has reported bird sightings by 'The Mancunian Birder', also known as James Walsh. Great egrets have been seen in Royton and whooper swans on local reservoirs. The

Evidence

latter observation prompted me to call at Ogden reservoir. No swans on that particular afternoon, but after light rain the sun shone with tangible warmth as a stiff breeze generated waves which slapped against the concrete like a marine tide coming in. Here I was able to watch one of my favourite common water-birds, the great crested grebe. Although they are at their most spectacular when sporting springtime breeding plumage, they are still worth watching in autumn with their bright white necks and powerful swimming movements.

It is recorded that, during the Victorian era, the great crested grebe was hunted to the verge of extinction in the UK. An account given on the splendid British Trust for Ornithology website tells how a display of grebe pelts by a fashionable furriers at the Great Exhibition of 1851 led to a vogue for grebe feather muffs, boas and hats. The bird was saved by a series of protection acts which enabled the population to recover.

Checking the wild plants growing along the edge of the Ogden car park I came across the reflectively shining leaves of common winter cress. This edible cabbage-relative (formerly called yellow rocket) has the intriguing scientific name of *Barbarea*. During the mediaeval period the plant was dedicated to the early Greek martyr and saint named Barbara, who was said (in one version of

her legend) to have been be-headed by her father for refusing to renounce her Christian faith. After committing this cruel act, he was struck by lightning and consumed by fire. By association St Barbara has



British woodpecker

become the patron saint of artillerymen and all who must work with explosives. Her commemorative day falls on December 4th.

On a very rainy day recently a young heron was practising a slow-motion stalking technique. Pace, pace, lower neck, stab downwards with dagger-like beak. Repeat. This was taking place not on a substantial body of water but on the wet Waterhead Park basketball court.

From the Parish Registers

Holy Baptism

- 3 November Eliza Grace Burgess
- 10 November Liam Kai Chesterton
- 24 November Joshua Rose

Christian funeral

- 25 November Leslie McDonald in the Church, followed by burial in Greenacres Cemetery.




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From the memorial book

- 1 **Norman Smith** died 1992 aged 77 years. Taken from our lives but always in our thoughts.
- 2 **Margaret Hammond** (nee Whitehead) died 1991, aged 45 years. O for the touch of a vanished hand And the sound of a voice that is still.
- 5 **Jack Preece** beloved husband of Amy, died this day 1994, aged 71 years. 'Loved and Remembered Every Day.'
- 6 **Nellie Atkinson** died this day 1989. Reunited with Harold Atkinson who died 10 August 1981.
- 7 **Winifred Kershaw** 'Pal of my childhood days' Born this day 1942. Died 2nd November 1992.
- 9 **Edith Robinson** died this day 1986. 'Loved and remembered always.'
- 13 **William Oliver MD** Edin. died 1926. A loving father and compassionate physician.
- 14 **William Robinson** died this day 1969, aged 50 years. Treasured memories of 'BILL.'
- 18 **Reverend Charles Edward Shaw MBE BA FLS** Vicar of Waterhead from 1957-1994, died this day 1994. He saw God in Technology, Man and Snowdrop.
- 20 **Peter Barnes** (Skip) died 1998. Forever in our hearts. Birthday memories for 24th December. Jenny and Family.
- 21 In affectionate remembrance of **Edgar Hanson** who passed away in 1983.
- 22 **Jessie Whittaker** died this day 1989 aged 74. A sorrow too deep for words.
- 22 **Kenneth Shawcross** died this day 1997, aged 81 years. Loving husband and uncle. Will be remembered always.
- 23 **Thomas Wainwright** died 1974. 'Loved and remembered every day.'
- 23 **Constance Himsforth** Loving wife, mother, grandmother and a dear friend, died 1966 aged 71. 'Memories of you will never die.'
- 29 **James Pearson Robinson** died 1995. Loved and Remembered Always.
- 30 **Ida Fletcher** died 1991. Dearly loved. Happily remembered.
- 30 **Michael Wynn** died 2006. Forever in our thoughts.
- 31 **Jimmy and Annie Mills** Two wonderful parents remembered with love. Great-grandparents of Lisa.
Lisa Kershaw died April 27th 1999 aged 16 years. Treasured birthday memories of a daughter more precious than gold. Loved and remembered always.
Harold and Elsie Prendergast - a special mum and dad. Loved and remembered always and forever. Now with precious granddaughter Lisa in heaven.

Church diary

- Sunday 1 11:00 am: Service for **Advent Sunday**.
- Weds 4 9:00-10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.
7:00 pm: **Family communion** in the Church.
- Thursday 5 9:30 am: Morning Prayer (please enter via the vestry).
- Sunday 8 11:00 am: Service for **the Second Sunday of Advent**.
- Weds 11 9:00-10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.
7:00 pm: **Family communion** in the Church.
- Thursday 12 9:30 am: Morning Prayer (please enter via the vestry).
- Sunday 15 11:00 am: Service for **the Third Sunday of Advent**.
- Weds 18 9:00-10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.
7:00 pm: **Annual Carol Service** in the Church.
- Thursday 19 9:30 am: Morning Prayer (please enter via the vestry).
- Sunday 22 11:00 am: Service for **the Fourth Sunday of Advent**.
12:00 approx.: **Christmas lunch**. We celebrate Christmas with a faith lunch after the service in the Parish Hall.
- Tuesday 24 4:00 pm: **Christingle Service** in the Church.
11:30 pm: **Midnight Mass** in the Church.
- Weds 25 9:30 am: Eucharist for **Christmas Day** at St Barnabas Church.
- Thursday 26 **Boxing Day**: no scheduled activities.
- Sunday 29 11:00 am: Service for the **First Sunday of Christmas**.

January 2020

- Weds 1 **New Year's Day**: no scheduled activities.
- Thursday 2 9:30 am: Morning Prayer (please enter via the vestry).



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