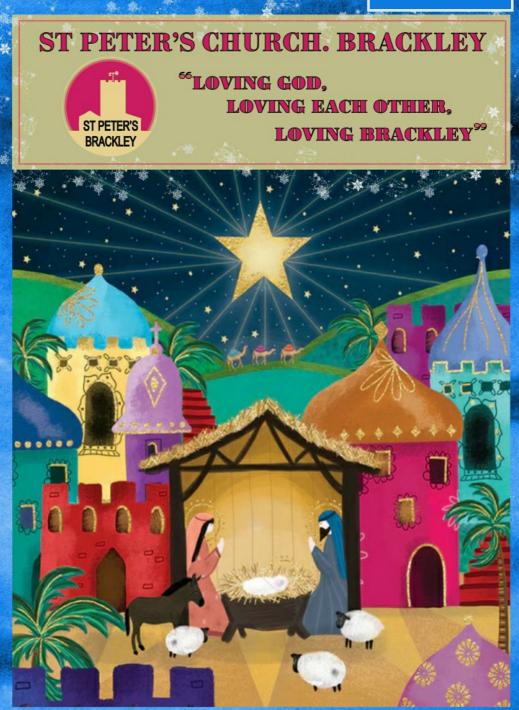
Vol.64 No 12 December 2024 Online Edition



Rev. Rich Duncan writes...



Perhaps you've heard the quip: "If you take Christ out of Christmas, all you're left with is M&S!"

Marks & Spencer always invests heavily in its December advertising. But this year, instead of just the usual big budget Christmas ad, M&S Food has released six. That's right, six!! Beautifully presented in festive, fire-lit rooms, celebrities including Dawn French, Katherine Jenkins and Ryan Reynolds, will be trying to get us to fork out (get it?)

for an array of mouthwatering delights. After all, this is not just food, this is M&S Food.



But before you think I'm on commission, this is going somewhere. I promise.

This December, I want us to feast on something far better than the culinary delights of Christmas. Even better than the fantastic threecourse dinner at our Advent Lunch (12pm on 1st), or the mince pies and mulled wine at our Carols by Candlelight (7.30pm on 15th), or the chocolate at our Nativity Service & Christmas Party for children (10am on 22nd), or the sweets at our Christingle Services (3pm, 4.15 and 5.30 on 24th). With all the busyness of this month, it's all too easy to miss out on the main meal at these and other events, the true feast of this season. Nineteenth-century preacher Charles Spurgeon put it like this,

"We have nearly arrived at the great merry-making season of the year. On Christmas Day, we shall find all the world in England enjoying themselves with all the good cheer which they can afford. Servants of God, you who have the largest share in the person of him who was born at Bethlehem, I invite you to the best of all Christmas fare – to nobler food than makes the table groan—bread from heaven, food for your spirit. Behold, how rich and how abundant are the provisions which God has made for the high festival which he would have his servants keep, not now and then, but all the days of their lives!"

Wizzard's well-known Christmas single is currently blaring out in the shops, "Oh I wish it could be Christmas every dayyy." And for Christians, says Spurgeon, it is! God wants us to be filled *every day* with the Bread of Heaven – the Lord Jesus who came down to earth to bring everlasting life and satisfaction to all who will receive him. So amidst all the frenzy of these coming days, be nourished in your soul by Christ's extraordinary, undeserved love, forgiveness and friendship. Gorge yourselves on this "food for your spirit". All are invited to his banquet. It's daily and it's free of charge. It won't give you indigestion, or Boxing Day guilt, and it will fulfil you forever. "Whoever comes to me," says Jesus, "will *never* go hungry" (John 6:35).

Do you know that sensation of feeling satisfied deep down, even when Christmas dinner is delayed, the family is feuding and things aren't going according to plan? Or are you more familiar with the sensation of feeling empty and unsatisfied, even when you're full to bursting after a perfect Christmas dinner and all the Lindt chocolate balls you can scoff? God implores us, "Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare... Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near" (Isaiah 55).

So whether or not you splurge at Marks & Sparks this month, please don't take the Christ out of Christmas. Treat yourself to what your soul is craving most and seek the Lord. After all, this is not just food. This is "nobler food". And I invite you to the best of all Christmas fare.

CHRISTMAS AT ST PETER'S





CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT 15 DEC, 7:30PM Sing the classics, reflect on the season, enjoy festive refreshments

NATIVITY SERVICE & CHRISTMAS PARTY 22 DEC, 10AM Kids can come dressed as their favourite nativity character

CHRISTINGLES 24 DEC, 3PM, 4:15PM, 5:30PM Book your free seats through the St Peter's website

MIDNIGHT COMMUNION 24 DEC, 11:30PM See in Christmas Day with a chance to pause amid the chaos

CHRISTMAS DAY ALL-AGE CELEBRATION A short, family-friendly Christmas celebration service

25 DEC, 10AM

EVERYONE IS WELCOME AND ALL EVENTS ARE FREE. BOOKING IS ONLY REQUIRED FOR CHRISTINGLES.

WWW.STPETERSBRACKLEY.ORG.UK/CHRISTMAS

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CAROLS /// CANDELIGHT

7.30pm on Sunday 15th December

St Peter's Church Brackley

with mulled wine & mince pies

St Peter's Nativity Secretaries Nativity Nativity Come dressed as Nativity Character!

10am Sun 22 Dec Everyone is welcome to take part - just turn up!

Part of our normal service. Christmas party for the children while the service continues!



St Peter's Church, Brackley ENJOY AN AFTERNOON OF FESTIVE FUN

You will watch some Christmas floral demonstrations and take away ideas for Christmas table decorations. You will make a beautiful table centrepiece to take away and adorn your table this Christmas.



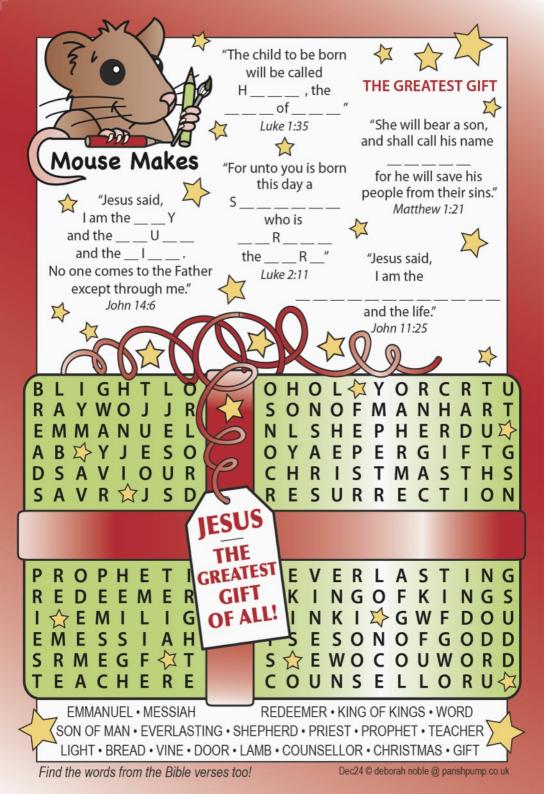
During the afternoon you can enjoy a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie.



Please bring secateurs or scissors with you. Candles will be supplied. If you have a favourite candle (not too thick) we will try to incorporate them into your arrangement.



Saturday Dec 14th 1.30 -3.30 Tickets available from Sally Hughes on 07925 531465 or 01280 700778 £25



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