



THE PARISH CHURCH OF
ST LEONARD, LEXDEN

ORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY GOD.



PARISH MAGAZINE

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025 £1.00



A Spiritual Spring Clean

I write this just a few weeks before Christmas. I don't think I've ever been more excited about a Christmas! But I am also aware that once the decorations and carol books are tidied away, the new calendar year will bring unexpected challenges and opportunities for us.

So, I want to invite us all to approach the start of the new year with a "spiritual spring-clean".

What is a spiritual spring-clean? It starts with this question:
How can we clear away some of the clutter of our lives and leave more space for God?

Then come other questions to ask ourselves:

Can you set aside regular times each day to be still and pray? (There are resources to help you pray in church and also online – just be in touch and we can recommend some.)

Can you protect a few minutes each day to read scripture? (There are many guides to reading the Bible or books of the Bible in our library – again, if you're looking for advice do ask the clergy team)

Could you join our regular Bible group or a home group to share in reading the scripture together?

It is true, however, that like any attempt to spring- clean a house, the reality of spiritual spring-cleaning is often more complicated than first imagined! “Tidying” a space in our lives for God can seem complicated – there are many demands on our time. And yet, it brings the greatest rewards! So don’t be deterred!

I pray and read scripture regularly because being brought closer to God holds the rest of my life in a helpful and hopeful perspective. I know there is a time each day when I can give thanks and offer my concerns and worries to God. I benefit from a short time of stillness and reflection.

Praying and reading scripture also gives a rhythm to our days, so that when we come face to face with the more difficult aspects of life, we have an anchor point in our lives where we can be refreshed and refuelled.

What’s true of daily prayer is true of Sunday worship: there’s always some convincing reason not to prioritise it in our busy lives, but when we do prioritise it and attend each week, it can be life-giving and refreshing. Gathering to worship the God of love together is a great way of demonstrating (to ourselves as well as others) that in our lives love and hope are what really matters – love and hope are the frame within which we view all other things, good and bad.

Whatever you face this New Year, I hope you will prioritise a “spiritual spring-clean” so that you might meet what awaits you with love and hope in your heart.

Matt

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our first magazine of the New Year and all at St Leonards I hope you had a great Christmas and wish you all a Happy New Year.

The last two months of 2024 were hectic with Remembrance Day, a Quiz, a Memorial Concert, the Christmas Market, Messy Church and all the Christmas services. Reports on fund raisers appear in the magazine.

January and February are always in my view dim and dreary months, but they bring with them longer days, the coming of spring, warmer weather and the coming of Easter.

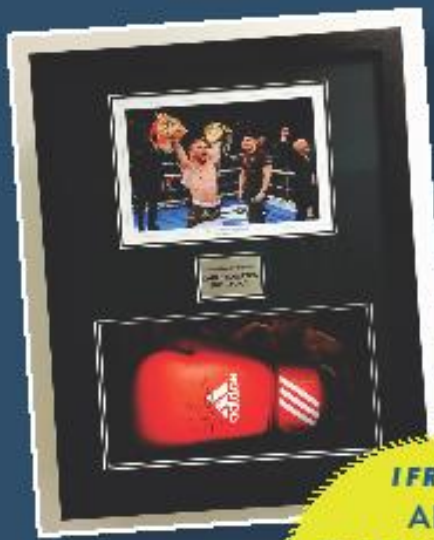
Best Wishes

Mike.

•Cards•
•Framing•
•Gallery•

SEBASTIAN WARNER *Framing*

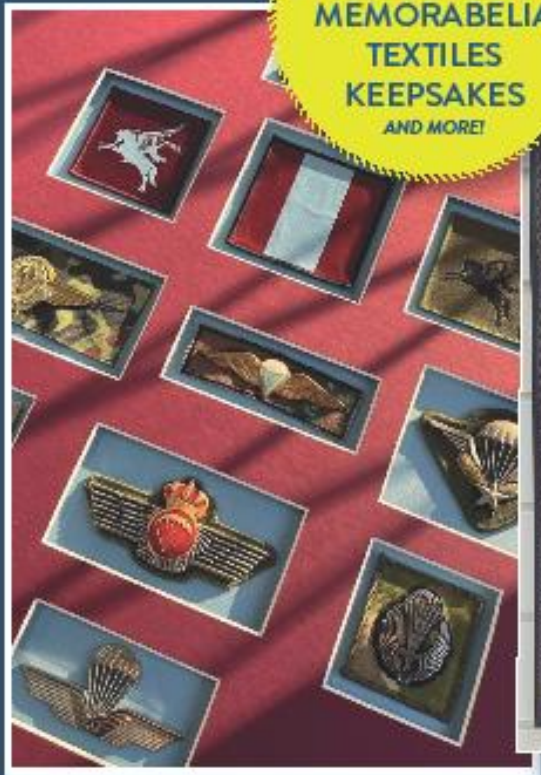
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JANUARY-FEBRUARY DIARY

Thursday 2nd January

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 4th January

8:30am Men's Breakfast

SUNDAY 5th January – The Epiphany

8:00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST

Tuesday 7th January

11:30am Holy Communion at Cheviot

Wednesday 8th January

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

10:45am Holy Communion at Woodlands

Thursday 9th January

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 11th January

12:00pm Friendship Lunch

SUNDAY 12th January Baptism of Christ

9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church

5.30pm Evensong & Sermon

Monday 13th January

2:00pm Funeral of Brian Crockett RIP

7:00pm Eucharist

7:45pm PCC Meeting

Wednesday 15th January

9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

Thursday 16th January

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 18th January

8:30am Women's Breakfast

SUNDAY 19th January 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

8:00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9:45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church

Wednesday 22nd January

9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

Thursday 23rd January

8.00am Eucharist

SUNDAY 26th January 3rd Sunday of Epiphany

9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church
3:00pm Messy Church
5.30pm Eucharist for Wholeness & Healing

Wednesday 29th January

9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

Thursday 30th January

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 1st February

8:30am Men's Breakfast

SUNDAY 2nd February Presentation of Christ (Candlemass)

8:00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9.45am ALL AGE CHRISTINGLE Celebration Eucharist

Tuesday 4th February

11:30am Holy Communion at Cheviot
7.30pm 'Medley' house group (Rosemary 515245)

Wednesday 5th February

9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
10:45am Holy Communion at Woodlands
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

Thursday 6th February

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 8th February

12:00pm Friendship Lunch

SUNDAY 9th February 4th Sunday before Lent

9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church
5.30pm Evensong & Sermon

Wednesday 12th February

9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

Thursday 13th February

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 15th February

8:30am Women's Breakfast

SUNDAY 16th February 3rd Sunday before Lent

8:00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9:45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church

Wednesday 19th February

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Lent Course
7:00pm Lent Course

Thursday 20th February

8.00am Eucharist

SUNDAY 23rd February 2nd Sunday before Lent

9:45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church

5.30pm Eucharist for Wholeness & Healing

Wednesday 26th February

9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

Thursday 27th February

8.00am Eucharist



MOUSE TAILS

The Church mice had a wonderful Christmas. On the day the Balcony family awoke early (as anyone with young children will know) and greeted each other and their cousins, the Woods family, who were staying with them for the festivities. After a quick breakfast they settled down to listen to the Church service and once that was over they got ready for their own special service.

Mice from all around the Church, Hall and outsiders came to the now quiet church to celebrate Christmas day. Grandpa led the service as always. They all joined in prayers to thank God for the year that they'd had and for giving them the opportunity to gather and celebrate the birth of Jesus.

After the service the mice took the time to admire the Church floral decorations, the tree and the Crib scenes. There was a mild panic when little Dotty Under-stairs couldn't be found, the family set out on a search of the immediate area and the Balcony twins remembered how they had got lost as babies. They headed towards the Crib area and after investigating all of the boxes they found Dotty in the Brick made Crib, fast asleep and tuckered out after all the excitement of Christmas morning. Everyone was very relieved and continued to look and admire all the decorations in the Church.



As had been agreed and arranged at their last get together, all the mice made their way to the Hall for the day's celebrations. The Mums had been super busy (as always)

and had produced a sumptuous feast from all the contributions everyone had made. It didn't matter that some had been able to contribute less than others for mice are very kind and sharing creatures. The Dads had a 'healthy' array of drinks to offer, the Woods cousins had brought their usual contribution of acorn beer, elderflower wine and berry cordials and had also brought a huge variety of nuts and berries and of course, watercress. The outsiders had brought a huge Christmas tree, made up from lots of fir tree branches and placed in a tub of soil, the Church mice and the Halls has decorated it with all the bits and pieces that they'd managed to forage from the Christmas Market and all the other Church events. Each family had placed their gifts, some wrapped, some not, but all had the name of the recipient clearly written on the outside.

After the feasting it was time to open the presents. Grandpa called out the names and the mice came up to collect their gifts, he started with the youngest of course and worked his way through to the eldest which, surprise surprise, was himself! All of the mice were thrilled to receive a gift especially as they all knew how hard it was for some families to scavenge anything like suitable for gifting. The Balcony twins, the Halls and the Woods youngsters had all received sledges built by their dads, along with knitted hats, scarves and mittens. The gifts for each other and their ingenuity had to be admired, Molly had made Rupert a catapult and he'd made her a new pair of knitting needles, along with scraps of wool he'd scavenged and saved throughout the year. Everyone was grateful for their gifts. The youngsters had a great time examining their gifts and playing with them whilst their parents took the opportunity to have a nap.



After a while the youngsters got restless and wanted to play games, so Rupert used his new catapult to flick bits of paper at his dad who remained sound asleep, snoring loudly! He tried his Mum next and with

more success as she awoke quickly, looking around for who had woken her. It took all of 2 minutes to see that Rupert was the culprit! "What do you want son, she asked?" He told her that all the youngsters were wide awake and wanted to play games so she roused all of the parents and they organised the start of their traditional games - pin the tail on the cat, musical chairs, statues etc after an hour of games and general running about the youngster started to flag and get a bit hot so the Mums sat them down with cold drinks and story time. All of the youngsters loved story time. Uncle Bert was a favourite teller because he used different voices and made the characters come alive.

Although everyone had enjoyed a huge lunch, the Mums brought out the teatime favourites, the Balcony Mum had made a huge cake from pieces of cake, nuts and berries which was admired by all before they all tucked in. More drinks were offered, and Tommy Organ played his miniature harmonica accompanying the Church mouse choir who sang their favourite Christmas carols. Tommy's band then joined him, Benny on his drums, Charlie on the oboe and Micky with a penny whistle. They played all the old favourites whilst the mice danced along, young and old together.



When everyone tired of dancing and the exertions of the day (not to mention the overeating and drinking!) They mice sat down and chatted, bringing each other up to date in their news. When the youngest mice started to nod off the Mums took them off to their nest and gradually all the mice decided that the day, which had been truly wonderful, was at an end and soon, all that could be heard was the gentle rustling and snuffling as the mice settled down for a long sleep dreaming of the lovely day that they'd had.

CT



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The Jesus Deck

Because I haven't enough to do I belong to a group called 'Journey into Wholeness'! We attend Mind, Body and Spirit events. I attended one such event back in October last year at Mark's Tey Village Hall. We take along with us a deck of cards called 'The Jesus Deck' which we use to engage people in conversation.

There is nothing exceptional about the pack of cards. Instead of having the suits hearts, clubs, diamonds and spades as in a normal pack the Jesus Deck has Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They tell the story of the New Testament. They were 'invented' to teach an American pastor's grandchildren about the bible.

At the Mind, Body and Spirit events we can ask the simple question 'have you heard of the Jesus Deck': To which most people reply, 'No'. We can then explain to them about the deck of cards, and it starts a conversation. People who attend such events are often there seeking for something. Perhaps they have lost a loved one or unwell themselves. Having the Jesus Deck there just allows us to approach them without scaring them off by asking if they want to sit and talk to us about God!

At the last event over the period from Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon we sat with fifty-six people and were able to talk to them about where God was or could be in their lives. There are not many places where you can talk to so many, mainly unchurched, people about God.

It's a great privilege to be able to speak to so many people. God does work through the cards. We will deal them somewhere between one and five cards – depending on who is doing it – and ask the person to look at them. Whilst they are doing that I pray to God to give me the words that this person needs to hear. I will then ask they are drawn to any of the cards. If the answer is yes we talk about that card and the bible reading it has on it. If they can't choose a card we

just talk about them all. I usually put them into some sort of chronological order.

And, of course, God speaks. He gives me the words to comfort, to bring a little hope – whatever is required. We rarely know where the seeds sown at these encounters fall but we hope that some will be brought to Jesus through their encounter with us.

If anyone wants to talk to me about the cards, I know some people have reservations about them, please let me know and I will show you the innocent pack of cards that allows Godly conversations.

Reverend Jacquie.

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERALS

20th November

Mary Smith

21st November

Patricia Borges

2nd December

Velma Bryant

17th December

Colin Noon



'Rest in peace, and rise in glory.'

St Leonard's Memorial Concert

On Friday 16th November, in the season of remembrance, I was among the audience at a very special concert in the church. Members of the congregation had felt inspired to put together and present a selection of readings, poetry and songs from the two world wars. The programme was arranged so that the first half was dedicated to World War I, and the second half World War II. The Revd. Maggie Whiteman compered, beginning the concert by reading Siegfried Sasson's powerful protest letter of 1917, *Finished with the War, a Soldier's Declaration*. We were then led by members of St Leonard's choir and musicians in singing songs such as *Pack up your Troubles, Keep the Home Fires Burning*, and all the other classics which helped boost morale during the First World War. There were some lovely solos from choir members, and the songs were interspersed with evocative and famous poems, including *Dulce et Decorum est*, by Wilfred Owen, *In Flanders Fields*, by John McCrae, and to conclude the first half, a reading of Laurence Binyon's *For the Fallen* - those familiar words: 'They shall grow not old...'

During the interval we gathered at the back of the church and were served a delicious hot meal, with time for conversation. Returning to our seats for the second half, we heard characterful readings of famous speeches by Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill, and we sang songs from the Second World War, including *Run Rabbit, We'll Meet Again*, and many others. Each reading or song was enhanced by an illustrative backdrop projected onto the screen, and we enjoyed some recorded wartime music too. The production was smooth and the performances excellent, reflecting the work and commitment which went into this concert.

The final reading was the evocative Kohima Epitaph, '*When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today,*' before we stood for the National Anthem. It was a moving and wonderful evening of fellowship, a respectful and loving tribute to the sacrifices of so many in those wars. Some useful church funds were raised, and we were reminded once again how blessed with talent we are at St Leonard's. There are too many to name individually, but they are pictured here. Thank you, all of you.



Viv



A TRIBUTE TO VELMA BRYANT - HAPPY MEMORIES OF A KIND, ELEGANT, FUN - LOVING LADY

Who arrived into the world in July 1931, to parents Olive and Leslie Brown, growing up at number 49 London Road, Lexden, along with younger brothers Doug and Graham.

Velma always loved school, attending Lexden primary with glowing reports, as at St. Helena, where she gained the coveted title of 'Head Girl'. A studious pupil, she loved

figures, which led to her first job at Kent Blaxill, undertaking

secretarial duties and bookkeeping.

Elegant and stylish, Velma would have looked beautiful when going to the many dances in Colchester, and it was in 1952 that she met a young man named Charlie Bryant on the steps of the Town Hall. He asked her to dance – and here began their many precious years together.

They were married in August 1954 at St. Leonards Church, both blissfully happy, as you can see on the back of your orders of service.

Their first home was in Chapel Street, before moving to the Home Farm Estate, to Shelley Road, which became their family home when Tracy arrived in 1965.

Velma and Charlie just adored their little girl, and Tracy recalls the contentment of them just being at home together.

Velma was a lovely, gentle mum, devoting all her time, instilling the simple values of kindness, manners and of course fun! Tracy recalls records were always playing, Velma's favourites Barbra Streisand and Frank Sinatra echoing in the background, and though Charlie did most of the cooking, Velma enjoyed baking, creating tasty sponges and many cakes.

When Tracy began at Home Farm school, Velma became a dinner lady there, no doubt a much loved one, with her kind, fun nature – though it must be said that although she was petite, she would not stand for any nonsense!

However, it was the adventure of the summer holidays that they loved as a family – packing the car up and enjoying the picturesque views in Hastings, Weymouth and other resorts in the south of England. The sheer joy when the sea came into view, and idyllic days as a family, which Velma absolutely loved.

Spending so much time too with her dear mum Olive, her brothers and their families was just at the heart of life, and they all shared fantastic Christmas's together, beginning with the family church service at 4pm on Christmas Eve, before the merriment and laughter of the big day.

Velma treasured these times with all her loved ones, just as she did at the beach hut in Brightlingsea, where idyllic summer days were enjoyed, all the family making memories, playing games and enjoying the seaside surroundings. Always keeping fit and active, Velma and Charlie were members of the rambling club, both embracing the outdoors, and Tracy remembers joining them occasionally on walks, looking forward to the frequent 'apple stops' along the way.

As Tracy grew up, Velma's love and support never wavered, she was so giving of her time, helping with the teenage struggles of maths, along with so many other milestones.

Working for Ellisons Solicitors, then Collins Carpets as a bookkeeper, Velma was a respected employee, but it will be her other work that many would remember her for. For more than 20 years she would walk with her trolley, ring the bell and announce the familiar "Avon calling", a much-loved representative of the company renowned for their beauty products.

She loved this role, especially the social connections it brought, making many friendships over the years.

Extremely sociable, Velma had so many friends, too many to mention – she was a treasured member of the local Women's Institute, and other groups, always encouraging others to join in the activities on offer.

Both she and Charlie attended the Jazz Club in town, both enjoying the music, dancing, and of course spending time with friends there. Once retired, they loved their holidays with Kings Coaches, embracing Scotland's beauty, observed in their many walks there.

Such proud 'mother and father of the bride' in 1997, Velma and Charlie were beyond excited to become grandparents when Oliver arrived two years later, followed by Charlie, both little boys the absolute apples of their eyes. Just as they had with Tracy, Grandma and Grandad gave their time freely, sharing precious days that meant so much. The simple things like playing games, visiting the duck pond, walking in the woods, where on one occasion Velma and Charlie were in a panic, thinking they had lost little Charlie! - priceless, idyllic times, forever treasured memories.

Velma loved playing games, especially Scrabble, Rummikub and card games, again making this a social occasion with friends. She also loved the challenge of a jigsaw puzzle, and her creativity was enhanced by colouring books, and in the making of cards, gifted to others for birthdays and Christmas.

Life changed for them all when Charlie sadly died in 2012 – he is of course remembered with love today.

Velma, Tracy and the boys found this terribly hard, though together, they navigated their way through by sharing special times, Charlie forever in their hearts.

A favourite place for Velma, Tracy and the boys was Potters resort in Norfolk, where she was in her element watching Oliver and Charlie play tennis, joining in herself with bingo, and watching the wonderful entertainment.

As a grandma, she was forever proud of Oliver and Charlie and the wonderful young men they have become.

In her 80's the biggest adventure for Velma was her first time on a plane, when Tracy took her to Jersey, which she of course loved, very precious mum and daughter time at the forefront.

In October 2017, Velma moved into Wren House, a huge wrench after being in Shelley Road for so long. However, it didn't take her long to settle in, and it was a comfort, knowing her dear mum Olive had also lived there.

Velma had this incredible gift of bringing people together – and she instigated many gatherings in the lounge, encouraging others to play Scrabble or card games, a dearly loved resident, who enjoyed a glass of sherry before bed each night!

Forever looking elegant and glamorous, she had her hair done each week, nails painted, and would never be seen without her lipstick, and a little bit of sparkle in her jewellery.

Sadly, when the Covid pandemic hit, this was devastating for her, and she missed the company of others terribly, finding comfort just a little from her colouring and crafts.

More sadness followed with the loss of dear brothers Doug and Graham within a short time – they are of course also remembered today with love.

In 2022, Velma's character began to fade a little, and she became a treasured resident at Stanway Green Lodge, with regular visits from Tracy, Oliver Charlie and Kate, with support and love from Jonathan, who are incredibly grateful to the devoted carers who looked after Velma with so much kindness and dignity. In her final days, this wonderful, dearly loved 93-year-old would still treat her precious daughter to a little glimpse of that forever loved beautiful smile....

PCC Charities

At the November PCC meeting it was agreed that the following charities should receive our support in 2025 year. Each charity will receive a donation of £925.

- 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)

I thought it would be helpful to give you a bit of information about each of these charities, this time it is Next Chapter, a charity who work with victims of domestic abuse.



Next Chapter (formerly known as Colchester & Tendring Women's Refuge) is a domestic abuse charity working across the areas of Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester, Maldon, Tendring & Uttlesford. They provide free and confidential services to support people who are currently experiencing or have previously experienced domestic abuse.

They are passionate about ensuring that every person has the opportunity to live their life free from domestic abuse.

Their vision is for Life without Domestic Abuse with their mission to provide rapid responses to domestic abuse that increase safety for all victims, enabling them to rebuild their lives & create lasting change. They believe in raising awareness through education, training & partnerships in the community.

CHRISTMAS MARKET



The 2024 Christmas Market took place on the 30th of November. This was earlier than usual instead of the first Saturday in December which it was felt was a bit too late. However, everyone else had the same idea, in the event there were five markets in close proximity on the same day. This affected the footfall so numbers attending were down on previous years.

Nevertheless, those attending seemed to enjoy the event and in trying times we managed to make over £ 2000 towards church funds.





I would like to thank everyone who worked on the stalls, provided refreshments for our visitors and keeping the stallholders supplied with tea and coffee for their hard work.

We met many people who had not attended before, some said it was the first time they had been to the church hall. The date for 2025 has not as yet been set but planning is already underway.





CAROLS AT THE CROWN

This occasion seems to have become a firm favourite in the Parish - around 100 people turned up to the Crown to enjoy an evening of singing and fellowship.

Our wonderful choir, led by Sarah and our organist Simon, helped us all follow the story of Christmas through a set of 7 Carols; following the break we enjoyed singing requests from the audience. What was so wonderful was that people volunteered to sing solos, alongside female and male voices singing alternate verses or taking different parts as in, 'We Three Kings of Orient Are' and 'Good King Wenceslas.'

Another highlight was a visit by a newly-formed choir, Hic Sumus (We are here). This inclusive choir is led by Jen Skingsley with great enthusiasm and passion for what she does. A year ago, some of the singers had never sung before, but Jen has convinced them that if they can shout, they can sing ...and they certainly can. Hic Sumus sang us two Christmas songs which were really well received.

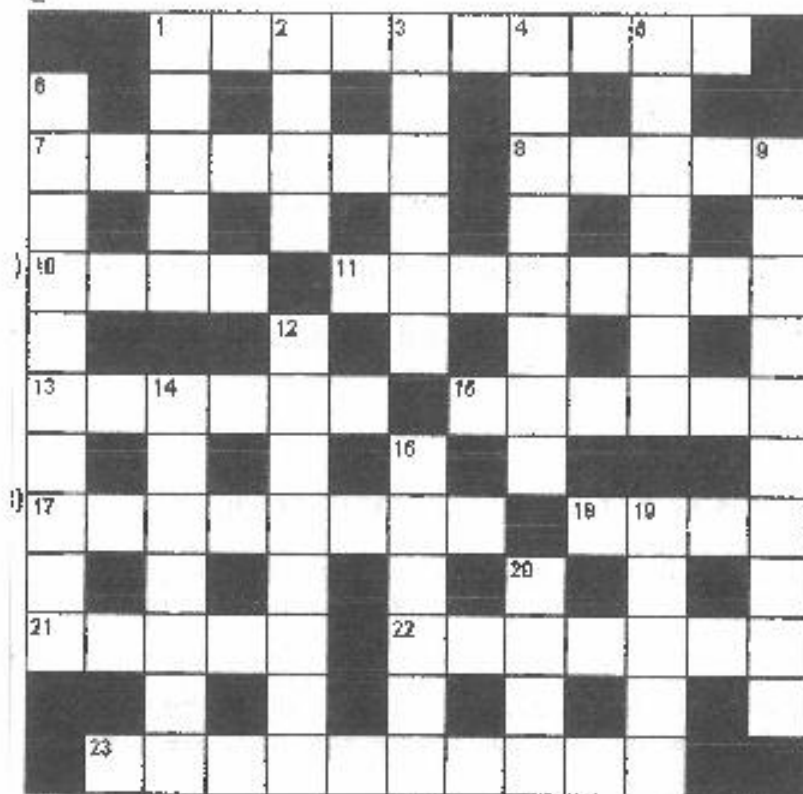


A huge thank you must also go to Patric & Jo & Pepe at the Crown, alongside all of their staff who looked after us so well.

It was an evening of warmth, fun and great fellowship. Thank you to everyone who joined us.

Maggie

Crossword for January and February



Across

- 1: Belligerence, Hostility (10)
 7: Make Unclear (7)
 8: Hesitate (5)
 10: South African of Dutch Ancestry (4)
 11: Bring Back (8)
 13: Symbol (6)
 15: Meriting Respect or Esteem (6)
 17: Breed of Terrier (8)
 18: Curved Structure (4)
 21: Hairdresser's Establishment (5)
 22: Pouch Worn With a Kilt (7)
 23: Brains (4,5)

Down

- 1: Gangway (5)
 2: Adhesive (4)
 3: Football/Cricket Team (6)
 4: Higher Ranking (8)
 5: Wealthy, Luxuriant (7)
 6: Orchestral Instrument (6-4)
 9: All (10)
 12: Inclination (8)
 14: Housebreaker (7)
 16: Northernmost American State (6)
 19: Less Common (5)
 20: The Left-Hand Side of a Ship (4)



Digital Access Help – Do you need help getting online?

The North East Essex Digital Access Support Team (NEE DAST) offer a free service that helps people gain basic skills and confidence using today's smart technology. The team host support sessions, tutorials and events helping people become more digitally aware, whether that be helping you use your smart devices to keep in contact with loved ones, manage health and wellbeing and so much more. They can help with

- Understanding how your device works
- Being safe, legal, and secure online
- Using social media and other communication apps
- Online shopping and Online banking
- Accessing and using Council Services and GP Services
- Uploading and downloading applications

We are thinking about hosting some of these sessions at St Leonard's but we need a minimum of 8 people to run the course. If you think you may be interested in attending please speak to Esther who can give you more details.

Labyrinths

At the end of last year, I spent a very restful and peaceful day at The Retreat House at Pleshey. The leader for the day was the Reverend Gill Morgan whom I had known for some years through my hospice work. She is now the rector of the North Hinckford Benefice, with fifteen churches to oversee!

Fortunately, she also finds the time to deliver these wonderfully peaceful days explaining more about using a labyrinth and the many types there are. Firstly, explaining the difference between a maze and a labyrinth. A maze has many twists and turns and dead ends. A labyrinth leads you gently to the middle – no dead ends, nothing to distract you from reaching the centre.

There is a labyrinth marked in the grounds at the Retreat House and some of the group walked it that day. Some of us made clay labyrinths which we could bring home to use. And there were various designs that could be used on paper and Gill had also brought some wooden ones for people to use.

With the clay, paper and wooden labyrinths you ‘walk’ them with your fingers in the same way as you would physically walk the one in the grounds. You just need to find a quiet place and sit comfortably. You walk mindfully, being aware of your surroundings, hearing the noises around you, being aware of yourself. The labyrinth leads you to the centre and then you turn and, equally mindfully, walk your way back out.

Whilst ‘walking’ whatever version of the labyrinth we chose we were encouraged to pray, reflect and listen. It was a peaceful day spent with God.

I believe Gill is leading another labyrinth day in May next year at Pleshey. It is well worth going to.



This is a simple labyrinth pattern. (Many can be found online). You can see the starting point at the bottom and you gradually, prayfully, mindfully, walk your finger into the centre and out again, taking time to do so, no rushing. Be with yourself and be with God.

Reverend Jacquie



THE CHURCHYARD

The more observant amongst you may have noticed that the Churchyard is looking remarkably neat and tidy recently.

And whilst some of that is down to the City Council, much of the work to re-edge the paths and clear the area around the Garden of Rest and up to the hall has been voluntarily done by Mick Adams. Mick has been quietly beavering away, clearing leaves and brambles and cutting back ivy and branches to open up the area behind the extension and improve the access up to the hall.

Thank you Mick for all your hard work, the difference is incredible!



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
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575565** or use the sign up sheet in
Church.

Donations welcome on the day.

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



Families and Children at St Leonard's

What's on in January and February?

The Baby and Toddler Group takes place in the hall on Wednesdays in term time. There are two identical sessions 9.30am - 10.30am and 11.00am - 12 noon.

5th January	Parish Eucharist 9:45am
12 th January Junior Church	A promise made real- The baptism of Jesus
19 th January Junior Church	Unexpected abundance - The wedding at Cana
26 th January Junior Church Also MESSY CHURCH 3PM	Good news for everybody - Jesus in the synagogue 
2nd February All Age CHRISTINGLE SERVICE 9.45am	Come and join in this lovely candlelit service with Christingles and sweets!
9 th February Junior Church Also OMG Youth Group in the hall 3-5pm	Whom shall I send? - Jesus calls his first disciples For children Years 4 - 8
16 th February Junior Church	Growing deep roots - Psalm 1
Tuesday 18th February BRICK CLUB in the hall 10am to 12 noon	No need to book - just turn up and build!
23 rd February Junior Church	Having a generous spirit - Loving your enemies



Celebrating Christmas with children at St Leonard's

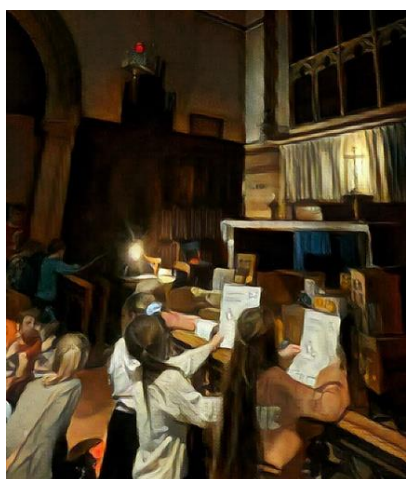
Two amazing things happened on the 8th December at 3pm. The first was that Messy Church and Brick Club met together for the first time ever in our church as Messy Brick Nativity. And it was amazing!

Matt told the Christmas Story through the Lego figures and finished by showing the children the tiniest piece of Lego ever, well almost, in his hand – the figure of Baby Jesus. Then off the children went to meet the challenges that had been set to make brick creations to add to our candlelit cardboard Bethlehem. It was a sight to behold with the traditional characters surrounded by all things Lego and of course the tiny figure of Jesus in the crib.



The second amazing thing is that we have been 'joining up so many dots'! In the last magazine issue Matt wrote about the importance of making connections and building relationships between all the many varied activities and worship that take place at St Leonards. God sees us as a joined up community and on Sunday he would have seen Junior Church, Baby and Toddler Group, Messy Church, Brick Club and OMG youth group all gloriously mixed up together but united in celebrating the birth of God's

precious son who came to earth to bring peace and reconciliation to all nations.





We enjoyed a wonderful Christmas celebration in the church with our toddler group children and carers in December. The children loved discovering what was inside the numbered advent calendar boxes that Maggie had made. Gradually a beautiful nativity scene was put together on the steps of the nave.

Thank you so much to the knitters who made the characters, animals and stable. We then gathered around Bethlehem for our carol singing before having fun with our Christmas crafts. Up in the hall we had a well-deserved party lunch and an exciting visit by Father Christmas.



It was lovely to welcome so many of the group - nearly a hundred of us! We look forward to seeing everyone again in the new year

Baby and Toddler Group



Every Wednesday during term-time
in the Church Hall

Session Times – 9:30am and 11:00am



Find us at www.facebook.com/stleonardsbabyandtoddlergroup

OMG Sleepout 2024



St Leonard's Church once again lent us its mighty space for a good cause. One cold, wet and very windy night in December saw various bodies, young and old (!) camp down for the night to raise money for the OMG group chosen charity of The Trussell Trust.

It's quite an intriguing experience, bedding down in what we all felt was a very familiar space. Once the "soft" excited whispers of the children gradually dampened down, the history of our magnificent church revealed itself. Creaks and groans of the structure emerged, the likes of which most never get to hear, as if the building itself was sighing, stretching and yawning, from its rafters to its foundations, to close the day.

It's little wonder that sleep didn't come easy - images of hundreds of years of weddings, funerals and festivities flitted through my mind, only occasionally pulled back into the present by the busy sounds of modern-day life on Lexden Rd.

But, as sure as day follows night, it was soon time to get up, sleep or no sleep, rouse the sleeping kittens, pack up and go home.

Thank you once again St Leonard's for providing safe refuge, a memorable experience for the children and a night of contemplation (and a bit of sleep) for the adults.

The latest news (week after the sleepover) is that we have raised nearly £1000 for Trussell Trust! Thanks to all who supported us for this great cause, and to the choir for relinquishing their practise space for the evening, **Kirsty**



From the Archives

In recent weeks there have been several occasions when the name of the last Lord of the Manor of Lexden has been mentioned, in fact I wrote about his brother during the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings.

David Pelham Papillon was born in 1911 and was the oldest son of Harold Garnier Papillon and Elizabeth Papillon (nee Reynolds). In the south aisle of the church there are several stained-glass windows dedicated to the Papillons and in the Lady chapel several plaques and memorials can be seen. David Papillon died in 1977 without ever marrying or issue, so he was the last of the male line in Colchester.

Yet if we study one of the stained-glass windows it shows at the bottom representations of Lexden Manor house and Crowhurst Place in Sussex. For the Papillons, Crowhurst Place was their ancestral home.

How the Papillons became Lords of the Manor of Lexden is for another time, yet if you look at the names given to the Papillons you will come across the surnames Pelham, Garnier, Cresset and Rawston to name but a few. The question must be pursued why put Crowhurst Place in the Stained-Glass window? As stated the Papillons regarded Crowhurst as their ancestral home. Although it did not come into the Papillon family until 1838 following the death of John Cresset Pelham when his youngest sister Anne Cresset Pelham Papillon inherited it from him. Anne did not live long enough to enjoy her inheritance before her eldest son Thomas Papillon became the owner of Crowhurst place in 1839.

Crowhurst Place was originally granted to Sir John Pelham by Henry IV in 1412. Sir John's father had been at Poitiers in 1356 and had taken the surrender of King John of France. It is said that for this deed he was made the Earl of Chichester and given a buckle which ultimately appeared on the family crest. Crowhurst was finally given in perpetuity to the Pelhams by James the 1 or VI of Scotland. It continued down the male line until 1838.

By then the Papillons were already involved in Lexden but as stated earlier that archive piece is for another time.

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

Listed places of worship scheme - request to write to your MP

Please see below a letter from the Diocese regarding the Listed Places of Worship Scheme. This is particularly relevant to St Leonard's given the work we need to do to the Church roof in the coming months so please do consider writing to Pam Cox, our local MP, asking for the scheme to be continued.



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

Dear friends,

This week, the Co-lead Bishops for Church Buildings, the Bishop of Bristol and the Bishop of Ramsbury have written to the College of Bishops about the Government's Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme (LPW)

The LPW allows listed places of worship of all faiths across the UK to reclaim the full amount of VAT they pay on repairs over £1,000. There are increasing concerns that the scheme may not be extended past its current end date of 31 March 2025. Simply put its removal would mean that 20% more would need to be raised by local people to pay VAT on such repairs.

The members of the College of Bishops have been asked to publicise a Church of England briefing document on the matter and to encourage those concerned to write to their local MP requesting the continuation of the LPW.

Please do share this information with your colleagues and members of your congregation who might also want to write to their MP.

Yours,

The Diocesan Communications Team

[*Download the Church of England Briefing Document*](#)



New Year 2025

A New Year reflection from the Bishop of Chelmsford

The Right Revd Dr Guli Franics-Dehqani, the Bishop of Chelmsford has written a New Year reflection for 2025:

For many people, celebrations at New Year are marked by grand gestures: large gatherings and spectacular fireworks; lavish feasts and late nights. There's probably something about wanting to recognise the significance of the past year and properly mark its ending; but also, a deliberate leaning into that which lies ahead – eager anticipation for what the New Year might bring. There's nothing wrong with a good party at New Year, but many of us will also recognise how the glitz and glamour can sometimes provide a cover for the deeper complex of emotions we often experience as the old year passes to the new: those little successes and failures, joys and sorrows, hopes and regrets that have shaped us.

The truth is that, whether it's New Year or any other time of year, if we focus too much on the extravagant and large scale we might just miss some of the poignancy contained in the smaller treasures: the sight of the first tiny bulbs poking through the soil, hints of a lighter evening sky, a small act of kindness from a friend, gentle signs of healing in a relationship that's been damaged.

In the life of the church, too, as we look for the signs of the coming of God's kingdom, it's perhaps natural to seek out the exciting and remarkable. The prophecy of Jesus, recorded in Matthew's Gospel, about "the son of man seated at the right hand of power and

coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matt 26:64) would seem to speak to this. Again, there’s nothing wrong with this and it’s part of the Christian story. At the same time, it’s perfectly possible to catch glimpses of the kingdom in the smaller, more ordinary things of life. And to notice these we have to resist being dazzled by those things which appear impressive and successful, and we must be open to seeing God in the small and marginal. To recognise Christ in unlikely people and places is to be alive to the signs of God’s presence which might otherwise easily pass us by.

My sense is that much of the church’s life is like this. Small things, acts of love and generosity which may not, by themselves, feel particularly significant, but gathered together transform the worlds we inhabit. These are tangible reminders of God’s ongoing love and presence in our communities.

So as the first bulbs begin to poke their way through the Spring soil, beautiful in their fleeting vulnerability, I give thanks for the small and fragile ways in which God’s kingdom is evident here in Chelmsford Diocese. These are signs which require us to slow down, stay awhile, and look closely. As we do so this New Year, may we be encouraged and renewed in faith and may our hearts be filled with joy for the many ways in which God is at work in the world.

+ Guli Chelmsford

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Final day for items for the DECEMBER edition:

SUNDAY 9TH FEBRUARY

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

BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE JANUARY-FEBRUARY

Francis, John Bernard	21 st February 1928 – 7 th January 2010
Newton, Marjorie Annie	25 th January 1929 – 22 nd January 1983
Bonner, John Reginald	18 th September 1930 – 7 th January 1984
Garland, Patricia	10 th August 1933 – 30 th January 2015
Loxley, Harry Cedric	5 th February 1927 – 22 nd January 2018
Chaplin, George Brian Barrie	27 th January 1924 – 12 th January 2021
Carter, Dorren June	22 nd January 1929 – 3 rd February 2000
Tokley, Jack William	29 th April 1914 – 7 th February 2005
Drever, Roy Howard William	9 th March 1949 – 12 th February 2002
Sceats, Kenneth Henry Gordon	7 th December 1915 – 11 th February 2006
Merryweather, Violet Maud	4 th February 1918 – 6 th February 2010
Coulter, Martin Austin	5 th May 1933 – 12 th February 2011
Flower, Mary Gwendoline	22 nd February 1926 – 26 th February 2011
Hyde, Irene Mary	7 th October 1910 - 27 th February 2011
Wake, Charles	26 th October 1926 – 16 th February 2012
Matthews, Stuart James	22 nd September 1980 – 28 th February 2012
Clary, Mary	6 th March 1924 – 29 th February 2012
Whalley, Benjamin	31 st December 1928 – 27 th February 2012
Holden, Arthur Stuart James	29 th June 1923 – 11 th February 2013
Caunter, Margaret Emma	24 th September 1931 – 3 rd February 2017
Ellis, William Frederick	2 nd May 1919 – 16 th February 1991
Lappage, Leonard Arthur	28 th June 1931 – 19 th February 2018
Moxon, Grace Phyllis	13 th March 1920 – 18 th February 2019



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 of 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



Christingle Service

Our annual All Age Christingle Celebration service will take place on Sunday 2nd February at 9:45am. All proceeds from this service will be donated to the Children's Society.



Ash Wednesday – 5th March

There will be two services with Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday, 5th March, at 10:00am and 7:30pm.