

PRENTON NEWS

The Magazine of
Prenton United Reformed Church
Prenton Road West, Birkenhead



DECEMBER 2024
&
JANUARY 2025

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Church & Community Activities during school term time

Monday	Little Movers	10.00 a.m.
	1 st Tranmere Rainbows, Brownies & Guides	5.00 p.m.
Tuesday	Guitar Jam Group	6.30 p.m.
Wednesday	Warm, Welcome Space	
	Coffee	10.00 a.m.
	Lunch	12.15 p.m.

Donations towards the cost of the magazine would be appreciated.

**We wish you all a Happy, Healthy and Enjoyable
Christmas and New Year**



**Come and join the celebration,
It's a very special day;
Come and share our jubilation,
There's a new king born today!**

FROM THE MANSE

THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

As I write this Christmas letter, I do so in the backdrop of the Remembrance and Remembering services we held during November and, one of the things I like about the Advent season, is that it gives us an opportunity, amidst the hustle and bustle of the Christmas preparations, to remember what the real meaning of Christmas is.

Some might say that the true meaning of Christmas lies in the values of love, peace, hope and unity that the season brings; that it is a time to reflect on those values and the blessings in our lives and to share those blessings with others. It is a time to embrace the spirit of giving and to remember the importance of gratitude and generosity.

Whilst I wouldn't want to take away from any of those values, they only become possible because of the incarnation and the reality that God is with us; that at a point in our history God became a human being in the form of Jesus and stepped into our world. Not only the geography of our world but the chaos, division and heartache of our world too.

With the birth of Jesus, we see the beginning of God's plan for re-creation, and for a time when love, peace, hope and unity will be a reality, not because everyone is trying harder to share those values but because God is with us and within us as we recognise the babe in the manger as the Saviour of the world.

So, in our world filled with chaos, division, heartaches and grief, Christmas reminds us of what truly matters; that God is with us and God is for us. When we believe that then we can dare to hope of love, peace and unity in our world.

God bless you this Christmas time and for the year ahead.

Jeff

CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH

FUNERAL

On Friday 8th November 2024

Rev Jeff Hughes conducted the Funeral Service
in Church
for

HARRY BRADLEY

We send our condolences, sympathy and love to his wife Joan, Sharon, Emma and Kenneth and their families and friends on this very sad occasion.



NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY & FRIENDS

We continue to remember, in our prayers, all the members and friends who are unable to join us regularly on a Sunday morning and in particular **Joan Bradley & her family**.

Pauline Green is now recovering from her knee replacement operation and is walking with a stick. **Dougie Kite** is in Sheffield from Monday to Friday. undergoing rehabilitation with his new prosthetic lower leg limb. Please continue to remember them both in your prayers.

Joyce Holland spent a few days in hospital with an infection but is now back home and it was good to see her in Church.

Congratulations to **Rose & Oscar** on the birth of their daughter Sabrina, a granddaughter for **Julie and Tim Jones**, and a great granddaughter for **Don Howard**.



Congratulations to **Martin, Jo John's** 18 year old grandson who passed his A Levels with flying colours with one A* and two A's and has now gone to Edinburgh University.

THANK YOU



On behalf of Wirral Foodbank, I would like to thank you for your recent donation of £221 received today from your Harvest Celebrations.

We are very grateful to you for your donation which will enable us to carry on our work at what is a very difficult time for many local families. Some of the situations families contact us about are very sad and it is only through the generosity of local people that we are able to support them.

We want to thank you all particularly for helping us at this time.

Kindest regards,

Liz Appleby

Office Manager and Volunteer Co-ordinator



Charles Thompsons Mission would like to thank you on behalf of those people who will benefit from the donation of your Harvest gifts.

Sadly, there are still many in our community who are struggling to make ends meet, be assured the gift of your Harvest goods will go in some way to help with the challenges some of the poorest people in our area face.

Some of your donation will go towards emergency food parcels and Christmas Hampers for struggling families or a hot meal for those who are homeless.

Yours gratefully,

Bernie Frost & all the team at Charles Thompsons Mission
Centre Manager

Do you recall your parents saying to you “Remember to say thank you”? Two magic words, as they often referred to, but so important in many situations of life.

I always consider Christmas and the start of a new year, to be the time to say “Thank You” to our friends and neighbours for their helpfulness and kindness throughout the year, with a Christmas card and perhaps a small gift, and the people who make our lives easier like the dustbin men, the milkman, the postman and the paper boys and girls who deliver my daily paper, whatever the weather.

So, I would like to take this opportunity to say “Thank You” to our Minister, our Elders, our Church Secretary, our Church Treasurer, our Organist, our Cleaner and everyone who does something in the background to enhance our Church life. There are those who act on a Sunday as Meeters and Greeters, or read the lesson, or lead us in Prayers of Intercession and those who provide the flowers.

We also have to thank the visiting Pulpit supplies and especially this year, the members of the congregation who have “stepped up” to take a Sunday morning Church Service.

Our Warm, Welcome Space on a Wednesday morning is a success, providing hot drinks and food for three to four hours every week and it could be more important in these winter months with the loss of the pensioners winter fuel payments. Pauline has put her heart and soul into this project, so she deserves a very special “Thank You”.

So this is a big “THANK YOU” to you all.

Editor

I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.

From A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD A BIG 'THANK YOU!'

What an amazing result for Operation Christmas Child this year.

A big 'Thank You', to all who helped in anyway with donations of money, home-made and bought items, and of course your time and prayers.



This year we sent an amazing 129 Shoe Boxes full of Love and Gifts to children who might otherwise receive nothing for Christmas and who already have very little.

The friends and fellowships of Prenton and Wallasey Village URCs have made a difference to 129 children and their families. We also covered the full cost of sending the boxes, £645.



Thank you! (and get knitting and collecting for next year)
Heather x

FABRIC REPORT

Work is now underway in the Church kitchen with a new super cooker, new bright lights, new flooring supplied free of charge by Bogans Carpets. The new worktop will follow!

A few financial donations have eased the costs of doing this work but we need to paint the kitchen and paint costs money!!

I wish to thank everyone who turned up for our Gardening morning. There were over twenty people on a wonderful sunny dry morning and we finished with bacon and egg sandwiches followed by cakes made by Pam and Anne.

Special thanks to Jeff who has spent time improving the grass, Marian's gardener who has done a lot of good work on the Remembrance garden and Tony who is a whiz kid with his hedge and bush hedge cutters.

My thanks to Jeff who took a lot of heavy rubbish to the tip and Deryk who helped me do the same thing.

We also thank Jamie, Barry & Pam's son, for fitting new plugs in the hall.

Friday 29th November at 6 p.m. Our Pie & Pudding Night in aid of "Children in Need".

Anyone who has helped with making or supplying food, also prizes for the Raffle, thank you.

Fred Foulkes

Convenor

Christmas is a season of joy and goodwill, of singing and merriment and of generosity. Christmas is a season of sharing and love. Christmas is a season of concern for the needs of others, a season of the helping hand. And that's as it should be. For there is great satisfaction in making others happy.

ERIN'S HALF TERM TRIP TO LONDON

During half term Mummy, Daddy and I went on an exciting trip to London, and it was amazing! We started by getting a big train from Liverpool Lime Street, which felt like an adventure straight away.

London was so busy, when we arrived, we lost Daddy on the tube! He jumped on the train quicker than we could, so he had to wait for us at our stop.

When we got to London, we saw the Houses of Parliament and lots of people protesting because it was Budget day — they were asking for things to be fair, which felt a bit like standing up for what's right.



At Trafalgar Square, I climbed on one of the giant lions, and it was so much fun!

Then we went to the Paddington Experience, where I helped Paddington to celebrate Marmalade Day and even got a cuddle from him—it was so special.

The next day, we visited the Tower of London and Buckingham Palace, I counted 68 windows on the Palace! We ended the day at the Lego shop at Leicester Square, which was full of incredible creations.

On the last day, we went on the London Eye, and the view was breath-taking — it made me think how big and beautiful the world is!

We also took a boat cruise, which felt like a little adventure on the water. It was such a fun trip, and I felt really thankful to see so many amazing places.



*Mulled Wine, Mince Pies
&
Mingle at the Manse*



**Jeff & Heather would like to invite you all
to an evening of Festive Fun, Food & Fellowship
(Oh, and some festive drink too!)**

**Please come and join us at the Manse,
109 Shrewsbury Road, Claughton, CH43 8SS,
on
Thursday 5th December, 2024 from 6.00 p.m.**

Everyone is welcome

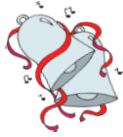


MERRY CHRISTMAS

DIARY FOR DECEMBER 2024

DECEMBER			
Advent Sunday	1st	11.00 a.m.	Communion. Rev Jeff Hughes
Tuesday	3rd	1.30 p.m.	Conversations with God
Wednesday	4th	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m. 6.00 p.m. 7.00 p.m.	Warm Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch Meal House Group
Thursday	5th	6.00 p.m.	Mulled Wine & Mince Pies at the Manse
Friday	6th	1.00 p.m.	Masonic Ladies
Saturday	7th	10.00 a.m.	Decorate the Hall
Sunday	8th	11.00 a.m.	Toy Service. Worship Group
Wednesday	11th	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m. 6.00 p.m. 7.00 p.m.	Warm Welcome Space Coffee Morning Christmas Lunch Meal House Group
Sunday	15th	11.00 a.m. 4.00 p.m.	Rev Jeff Hughes Carol Service
Wednesday	18th	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Warm Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch
Friday	20th	1.00 p.m.	Church Christmas Lunch at Clifton Road
Sunday	22nd	11.00 a.m.	Mr Ron Taylor
Christmas Eve			
Tuesday	24th	4.00 p.m.	Carols Round the Tree
Christmas Day			
Wednesday	25th	10.00 a.m.	Family Service. The Worship Group
Sunday	29th	11.00 a.m.	Mr Fred Foulkes & Mrs Sue Kite





HAPPY NEW YEAR



DIARY FOR JANUARY 2025		
JANUARY		
Sunday	5th	11.00 a.m. Communion. Rev Jeff Hughes
Tuesday	7th	9.30 a.m. Elders' Meeting at the Manse 1.30 p.m. Conversations with God
Wednesday	8th	Warm Welcome Space 10.00 a.m. Coffee Morning 12.15 p.m. Lunch
Sunday	12th	11.00 a.m. Rev Geoff Felton. Moderator
Wednesday	15th	Warm Welcome Space 10.00 a.m. Coffee Morning 12.15 p.m. Lunch
Sunday	19th	11.00 a.m. Rev Jeff Hughes Church Meeting Items for the February & March 2025 Magazine
Wednesday	22nd	Warm Welcome Space 10.00 a.m. Coffee Morning 12.15 p.m. Lunch
Sunday	26th	11.00 a.m. Mr Ron Taylor
Wednesday	29th	Warm Welcome Space 10.00 a.m. Coffee Morning 12.15 p.m. Lunch

As we look back at the year just passed
 Maybe we're glad that it's over at last.
 Maybe we've good reason to feel hurt and sad
 But be thankful and hopeful - your heart will be glad
 No-one knows what the future will be
 There'll be good times and bad times a plenty - you'll see!

Come welcome the new year with anthems of joy
 in hymns of thanksgiving our voices employ
 and mingle our tribute of gratitude here
 to Him who has blessed us with a

HAPPY NEW YEAR

A TRIBUTE TO HARRY BRADLEY

8th June 1947 – 17th October 2024

Harry started attending Prenton United Reformed Church 10 years ago and made his declaration of faith in 2019 when he became a church member here. Throughout all of those years he struggled with ill health, contracting a rare virus which destroyed his kidneys and operations for two different types of cancer, but throughout all of those struggles he met them with great resilience.

Harry was born on the 8th June 1947, the son of Kate and Thomas Bradley, and grew up in a loving family home in Birkenhead along with his sister, Margaret and brothers, Tommy and Fred. He remembered those years with great fondness. He loved being a part of a close loving family.

Harry kept in touch with some of his school friends after he left school when he went to play football for St Hugh's Old Boys.

As well as playing football Harry was also a great supporter of both Tranmere and Everton and would enjoy going to watch both teams. He also loved horse racing and enjoyed a "flutter", especially in his retirement.

After leaving school Harry worked with his brother, Tommy putting up fences for a couple of years after which he went on to work for Whitbread's Brewery. He worked there for over 20 years until he was made redundant. He was then employed until his retirement in 2014, by MPTE who later became Arriva.

Whilst working at the Brewery, he met Joan Thomas who would later become Joan Bradley following their marriage in 1966. They have two daughters Sharon and Emma, and one son, Kenneth.

Sharon, Emma and Kenneth all have fond memories of time

spent with their dad when they were younger which is a tribute to Harry who made time for them whilst working 7 days a week, in order to provide for his family, and help make some happy memories for them whilst they were growing up.

These happy times included the family holidays camping in Wales or staying at Butlins. The children remember being piled into the back of the box van, being tossed to and fro' as Harry went round and round the roundabouts as he said he was lost!

When the children had "flown the nest", Harry and Joan enjoyed going on coach tours, staying in hotels or on Mediterranean cruises, including a cruise on the Queen Mary.

After retiring Harry found lots to do to keep himself occupied. Football and horse racing were always good pastimes but he also loved gardening and growing a variety of fruit and vegetables.

He liked reading, watching sport on the TV or a good cowboy or comedy film especially the 'Carry On' films. Both he and Joan loved listening to music particularly the likes of Val Doonican, Engelbert Humperdinck and the Brat Pack Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole.

But one of Harry's favourite pastimes was spending time with his family and he revelled in the arrival of his grandchildren and his great grandchildren. He loved them, and like any doting granddad, took a great deal of pride in them. They all remember how generous and kind he was, spoiling them as well.

I got to know Harry about 10 years ago when he started to attend church regularly with Joan after he had been diagnosed with the rather inappropriately named 'Good Pastures Syndrome'.

As a result of a virus Harry's kidneys were damaged to the point of him having to have regular dialysis and learning how to do it himself at home. It was during this time that I recognised Harry's resilience by the matter-of-fact way he accepted the things he couldn't change. I'm not saying that his suffering was made easier by his outlook, but he certainly showed a great example of how to deal with suffering. When I asked him about it he'd just shrug and say something like, 'well what can you do about it. You just have to get on with it', and he did.

He faced a kidney transplant, operations for two different types of cancer, heart problems and a broken arm all in the time I've known him. Any one of those would be a lot to bear.

Sadly, Harry passed away on the 17th October with his family by his side following a heart attack.

Without doubt his passing has left a huge gap in the lives of all those who knew and loved him, his family, friends and loved ones who will all remember him with deep affection for the great and lovely man that he was.

He will be remembered most for being a devoted husband, a wonderful father and dearly loved Grandad and Great Grandad, a good brother and friend.

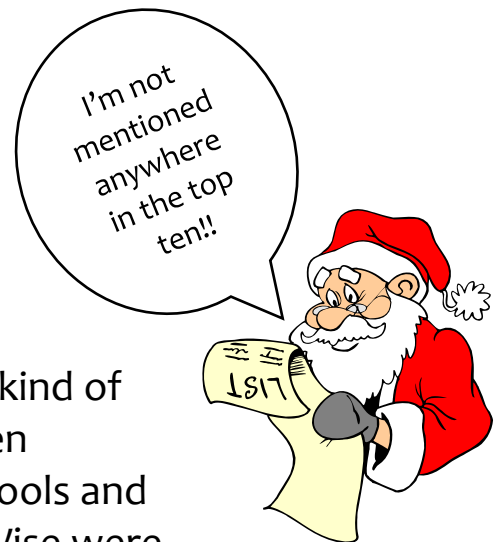
Jeff

“Away in a Manger” is the best known and best loved Christmas Carol, according to a recent survey. Two-thirds of those polled said they knew all the words of the carol and more than 7 out of 10 said they attended a carol service every year. **“Silent Night”** and **“O Little Town of Bethlehem”** were second and third respectively.



In a question about which person was most associated with Christmas, the same poll had Cliff Richard in fourth place and the Vicar of Dibley in tenth.

They were the only people who had any kind of association with Christianity in the top ten answers. The Trotter family, from Only Fools and Horses came first and Morecambe and Wise were second!

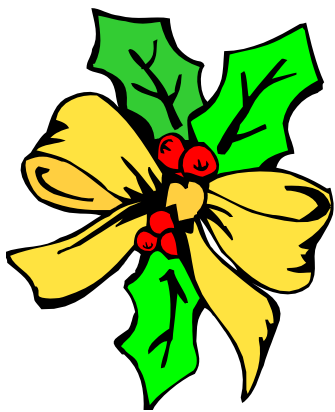


A British clergyman struggled along with a small congregation in a small community.

A commercial firm offered to supply free hymn books, provided they could insert a bit of discreet advertising into the hymnals. The pastor was reluctant but finally agreed.

When the hymnals arrived, he eagerly examined them and was delighted to find no brash advertisements on or inside the covers.

The next Sunday, his flock began to sing from the hymnals. All went well until the third song, in which the congregation lifted their voices in unison to the melodious notes of:



*Hark the herald angels sing,
Harrison's pills are just the thing;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
Two for men and one for child.*

From A Stocking Full of Christmas by Mark Stibbe

CHRISTMAS

The bells of waiting Advent ring,
The Tortoise stove is lit again
And lamp-oil light across the night
Has caught the streaks of winter rain
In many a stained-glass window sheen
From Crimson Lake to Hooker's Green.

The holly in the windy hedge
And round the Manor House the yew
Will soon be stripped to deck the ledge,
The altar, font and arch and pew,
So that villagers can say
"The church looks nice" on Christmas Day.

Provincial public houses blaze
And Corporation tramcars clang,
On lighted tenements I gaze
Where paper decorations hang,
And bunting in the red Town Hall
Says "Merry Christmas to you all"

And London shops on Christmas Eve
Are strung with silver bells and flowers
As hurrying clerks the City leave
To pigeon-haunted classic towers,
And marbled clouds go scudding by
The many-steepled London sky.

And girls in slacks remember Dad,
And oafish louts remember Mum,
And sleepless children's hearts are glad,
And Christmas-morning bells say "Come!"
Even to shining ones who dwell
Safe in the Dorchester Hotel.

And is it true? And is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me?

And is it true? For if it is,
No loving fingers tying strings
Around those tissueed fripperies,
The sweet and silly Christmas things,
Bath salts and inexpensive scent
And hideous tie so kindly meant.

No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single Truth compare –
That God was Man in Palestine
And lives to-day in Bread and Wine.

by John Betjeman (1906-84)

For any fellow poetry lovers out there, this is a particular festive favourite of mine.

Supplied by Pauline Green

THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock.
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost, to feed the hungry,
To rebuild the nations, to bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

Rev J Catoir

IT HAPPENED AT CHRISTMAS!

The leader of the Sunday School was doing a children's story at Christmas. The presentations were always excellent.

This particular year, he had four children to help him tell the story of the star that shone over the stable in Bethlehem the night of the birth of Jesus.

At a given signal, each child was to flip over a large piece of cardboard spelling the word, S – T – A – R. Unfortunately, the leader did not realise that the letters would be in the reverse order when the cards were flipped over.

The word that all the people saw was R – A – T – S.

This object lesson was such a surprise that it took some time until the laughter died down and the service could continue!

From A Stocking Full of Christmas by Mark Stibbe



Quotes from “Very British Problems” by Rob Temple.

‘Did you manage to have a think about what you would like for Christmas yet?’

Translation: You’re three minutes away from getting socks again.

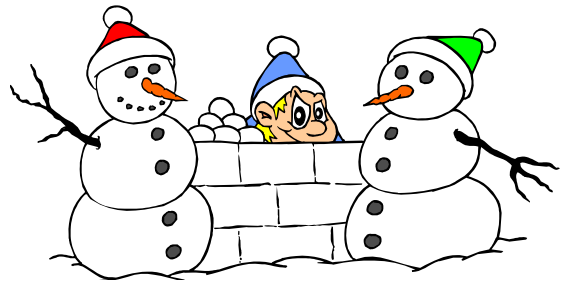
Being unable to unwrap a bottle-shaped present without first saying ‘I think I know what this is.’

Most asked questions on 25th December

1. Have we got any batteries?
2. What is it?
3. Can we watch something else?

SNOW HEAVEN

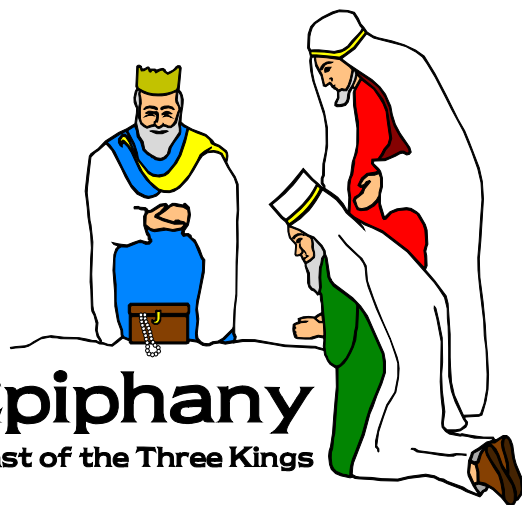
Trillions of snowflakes
Tumbling to the ground,
The sheer magic heaven
Spreading all around.
A brilliant white carpet
Comes fitted wall to wall
With serenity and softness
And snow-clad fir trees tall.



The rooftops all a-snuggle
In icy feather down,
The red gold of the Lamplight
In the windows round the town
The cheerful kindly faces
And children chilling out
All the world's dressed up for
Christmas
Now that Santa is about.

What if the three Wise Men had been
three Wise Women?

Well, they would have asked for directions and arrived on time,
helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, brought a casserole and
given the child much more practical gifts.



JANUARY 6th

Epiphany

Feast of the Three Kings

ROTAS FOR DECEMBER 2024

Duty Elder

December	1st	Marian Davies
	8th	Pauline Green
	15th	Fred Foulkes
	22nd	Pauline Green
	29th	Sue Kite



Communion Elders

December	1st	Shelby Ambrose & Fred Foulkes
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Door Duty

December	1st	Pauline Green, Sue Kite, Elaine Parkin
	8th	Barry Lawrence, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper
	15th	Jean & Les Bayley, Barbara Jones
	22nd	Sue Kite, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper
	29th	Jean & Les Bayley, Barbara Jones

Readers

December	1st	Barry Lawrence & Pam Lawrence
	8th	Shelby Ambrose & Joyce Holland
	15th	Philip Roper & Glyn Roper
	22nd	Barry Lawrence & Jean Bayley
	29th	Fred Foulkes & Marian Davies

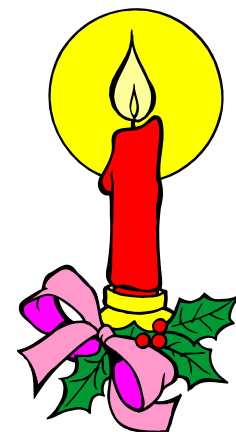
Prayers of Intercession

December	1st	Heather Hughes
	8th	Jean Bayley
	15th	Claire Thomas
	22nd	Pauline Green
	29th	Philip Roper

Church Flowers

December

Christmas Plants



ROTAS FOR JANUARY 2025

Duty Elder

January 5th Jean Bayley



Communion Elder

January 5th Marian Davies & Pauline Green

Door Duty

January 5th Heather Hughes, Deryk Jones, Elaine Parkin
12th Pauline Green, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper
19th Jean & Les Bayley, Barbara Jones
26th Sue Kite, Barry Lawrence, Elaine Parkin

Readers

January 5th Pam Lawrence & Shelby Ambrose
12th Joyce Holland & Deryk Jones
19th Glyn Roper & Barry Lawrence
26th Fred Foulkes & Jean Bayley

Prayers of Intercession

January 5th Barry Lawrence
12th Claire Thomas
19th Heather Hughes
26th Philip Roper

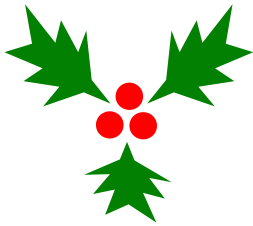
Church Flowers

January 5th Carys Evans
12th
19th Don Howard
26th Anne Foulkes

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 8th December
11.00 a.m.

Toy Service



Sunday 15th December
Carol Service

4.00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday 24th December
4.00 p.m.

Carols Round the Tree



CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday 25th December
10.00 a.m.

Family Service

