

CHRISTMAS 2024

# THE HOLLY



# & THE IVY



# St Mary's Parish Church

Cowgate Kirkintilloch G66 1JT

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# Pastoral Letter ...

*Hello everyone!*

We are just a few days into Advent and already lots of carols have been sung at Open Doors, Christmas crafts have been made by children from Lairdsland Primary and the story of that first Christmas has been remembered with some residents at Campsie View Care Home (sincerest thanks to all who have made these events happen). In the manse, the tree is up, the window pictures are still sticking and our daily December visit from the Elf on the Shelf is under way! I've tried to hush in the rush, I've tried to keep up with my daily advent readings, and I've tried (and failed!) to burn my advent candle each day. What a wonderful reminder it was then, as I sat down to write, to see a post with a Christmas decoration hanging from a tree that said this: "It was never meant to be a burden. He came to set us free."

This time of year can be so very busy. There is much to do, things to get, places to go – lots of it enjoyable and fun – but it can, nevertheless, be exhausting. Add to that the pressure to remember everything and get things 'just right,' and it can feel overwhelming, filling us with a longing for it just to be over already! That's before

I've mentioned our fears and worries about the world (as I write, a tsunami warning has just been issued in North California, following an earthquake), or the sadness that many are facing, or the situations that leave folks wondering, 'where is the good news?' I was asked that earlier today and then found myself at the bedside of someone who was ill and sleeping. I chatted with the person's loved one for a while and then I opened my bible and shared the wonderful verses from Isaiah 9.1, 6-7: "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine ... For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity."

As I read, eyes opened, a heart heard and peace stirred and settled – what a gift faith is and how wonderful for us to be receivers of good news! To trust that He, who was promised by the prophets, is the one who came and lived among us. The Word who took on flesh and moved into the neighbourhood. Not to remind us of how dark the world is or how often we fail, but to show us God's love and to save us. To free us from sin, death, all that is not life giving and to shine brightly upon our path, that we might follow His way and point others to Him.

No matter what is on your to-do-list this December and beyond, may you remember the wonder of Christmas, be touched anew by the promise of God with us, and breath and let go, even as you strive and try your best; remembering that Christmas was never meant to be a burden. Jesus, the light of the world, came to set us free. Wishing you all the love, hope, joy and peace of this Season and a blessed 2025 when it comes,

Your Minister, *Ruth*



Copy for the February 2025 Parishioner should be e-mailed to [sandraburns.me@gmail.com](mailto:sandraburns.me@gmail.com) no later than Thursday 24 January.

## ***The Parishioner Online***



**[www.stmaryskirkintilloch.org.uk](http://www.stmaryskirkintilloch.org.uk)**

Missed or lost your copy of the Parishioner ... why not go to [www.stmaryskirkintilloch.org.uk](http://www.stmaryskirkintilloch.org.uk) and see this month's copy. Stephen McKean, Webmaster, has built up previous issues online so you can look back on past copies. Also, if you wish any news or information to be put on the website, please e-mail [webmaster@stmaryskirkintilloch.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@stmaryskirkintilloch.org.uk) and we will put these on the News page of the Website.

# Parish Register

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## Funerals

November      08      Ian Twaddle, 5 Kingsway, Kirkintilloch  
                    28      Mrs Molly Cope, 32 Gallowhill Road, Kirkintilloch

Our thoughts and prayers are with all the families at this sad time.

## Change of Address

Mrs Janet McKean formerly 1 Briar Walk, now residing in Campsie View Care Home, Kirkintilloch

## Church Office

The secretary, Mrs Denise Japp is available in the office Monday to Thursday 8.00 a.m. – 2.15 p.m., Friday 8.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. and may be the first point of contact for general enquiries. Denise will be able to refer you to the person best suited to respond. Church office telephone 0141 775 1166 or e-mail: [office@stmarysnursery.uk](mailto:office@stmarysnursery.uk)

## Thank you

The family of the late Neil and Bernie McKinnon thank everyone for kind words, beautiful flowers and love following the passing of their lovely Mum and Dad within months of each other. Your support has meant so much to us all.

## Church Gardens

As is usual in Scotland the weather impacts on what can be done in the Church grounds. However, the volunteers still managed to keep the gardens and areas around the Church and Hall looking at its best for another year! My grateful thanks to everyone for all they do year in year out. Here's to a dry and sunny 2025!

**Garry Burns**

## The week after the month before

After a hectic December full of Christmas events at the church, the vicar went wearily into the chemist's shop. He asked: "Have you got anything for laryngitis?"  
The chemist replied: "Good morning, sir. What can I do for you?"





# Church Flowers

The church is decorated each Sunday with flowers. Each arrangement is delivered to someone who is unwell, bereaved or having an over 80 Birthday! To continue this ministry of flowers we depend on donations from members and recently donations have lessened, so we need your help. If you would like to donate to church flowers either on a regular basis or a one-off donation, then please let one of us know. Grateful thanks to all who have donated over the past months.

***Fiona Leishman, Sandra Burns,  
Ruth Poynton, Elizabeth Walker  
The Flower Committee***

# Nursery Update

The Nursery children visited Campsie View Care Home at the end of last month. They sang Scottish songs as part of the home's St Andrew's Day celebrations. A great time was had by all.

By the time you are reading this the Nursery Nativity will have been held in the church on the afternoon of 11th December. Once again, a lot of work has gone in to producing this. Well done everyone!

A Christmas Jumper Day was held last week when all the staff and children were looking very festive in a wide variety of jumpers. Christmas lunch was served that day too.

The children are now looking forward to a visit from a Puppet Show which has been booked to entertain them on 18th Dec.

It has been a very busy term with new children starting, a few staff changes and lots of learning opportunities provided. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff for their dedication and hard work. I wish them all a very Happy Christmas and a restful break.



**Fiona Leishman,  
Nursery Convener**

# Session Report

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## The Moderator's Challenge 2024-25 – Let Your Little Light Shine

Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, the Moderator of the General Assembly, is encouraging congregations to be a "light in the darkness" to help school pupils and students in Malawi reach their potential. The aim is to help fund solar power energy initiatives which will enable children to do their homework and advance their education with the aid of small solar lights they can borrow from their school's 'light library'. It will also provide solar panels to enable PhD students at Zomba Theological University to study during the hours of darkness.

The Moderator was inspired to launch this challenge after his visit to Malawi in September, where he saw the difficulties children faced in studying during the dark evenings without lights in their homes. Daylight hours in sub-Saharan Africa are short and most children are forced to do their homework by the light of candles, kerosene lamps and fire. Dr Paterson also witnessed first-hand power outages in Zomba Theological University and said the call to action fits the theme of his Moderatorial year, Building Together. He said "As much as I love a good DIY project, this theme is more about 'Building the People of God', allowing everyone at whatever level they are at, to be encouraged and supported to take the next step on their journey through life." The Moderator's Challenge also ties in with our Advent theme of "Light" and Session agreed that it would be appropriate to support the appeal at this particular time. To that end, our offerings and donations received at our Watchnight Service will be sent to the Church of Scotland, to support this worthwhile cause. More information in relation to the appeal can be found on the Church of Scotland Web Site – just search for "Let your little light shine"

## Nominated Charities

The two nominated charities that we will be supporting this year are "MacMillan Cancer Research" and "British Heart Foundation". If you would like to make a monetary donation, envelopes are available at Church on a Sunday morning. Alternatively, simply hand in your donation, clearly marked for the charity of your choice. Our collection will run throughout the Advent period, and in the New Year, monies will be passed on to the two charities.

## Basis of Union

Over the last ten days, separate meetings have been held with representatives from the Presbytery of Glasgow. The first was to look at the development of our Mission Plan and to identify forms of outreach that we see as part of our future. The second looked at the facilities we have available to us and the current usage.

Follow up meetings in early 2025 will take place to allow us to make decisions that support the ongoing needs of the new parish.

As always, if there is anything you would like to discuss, or if you would like any additional information, then please don't hesitate to get in touch. On behalf of the Kirk Session, I wish you and your families a very happy, safe and peaceful Christmas, with our very best wishes for the New Year.

Kind regards

**Gordon Morrison, Session Clerk**  
Telephone: 07306 205303  
email: morrisgo@sky.com





The Church of Scotland

# THE MODERATOR'S CHALLENGE

## 2024-25



**LET YOUR  
LITTLE LIGHT  
SHINE**

**BUILDING GOD'S PEOPLE THROUGH  
EDUCATION IN MALAWI**



# Christmas Geese

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The story is told of a farmer who didn't believe in Jesus. One snowy Christmas Eve, his wife was taking their children to a service at their local church. He refused to come saying:

'Why would God lower Himself to come to Earth as a man? That's ridiculous!'

So, they left him at home.

During the evening the winds grew stronger, and the snow turned to a blizzard. He heard a series of loud thumps on the window. In the field near his house he saw a flock of wild geese. They had been migrating south when they got caught in the snowstorm. They were lost and stranded on his farm, with no food or shelter.

The man wanted to help the geese and so he opened the doors of the barn, hoping they would go inside for shelter. But the geese didn't do anything, despite the man's efforts to move them. He made a breadcrumb trail leading to the barn and tried to shoo them toward the barn, but they only got more scared and scattered.

Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn:

'Why don't they follow me?!'

Then he realised:

'If only I were a goose and become one of them, then I could save them.'

Finally, he understood the heart of the Christmas message. God has become one of us in Jesus. The eternal creator God has entered time and space as a baby, to show us who God is and how we can know Him.



This Christmas, let's celebrate again this amazing truth that we have a God who knows and can meet our needs in Jesus.

'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means 'God with us'. Matthew 1:23.

# Dates for your Diary



## Glasgow Close Knit



As you know, Glasgow presbytery has launched the Glasgow Close Knit project asking congregations to knit squares and create blankets for the homeless. To that end we will be hosting A Big Knit In in church on Wednesday 22nd January. Members of the congregation and the local community are invited to drop in to church and knit squares whilst others sew them up into blankets. The church will be open from 10am – 3pm and tea/coffee will be provided (and hopefully some lunchtime soup!).

Come and stay for as long as you wish, bring your own wool and knitting needles or pick some up in church. We hope this will be a relaxed day of fellowship with a purpose!

Please come along – and bring a friend or two!

ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH - OPEN DOORS DAY - 5th February 2025

As there will no Open Doors Day in January 2025, our next event will be on **Wednesday 5th February 2025** at which we will be entertained by Sally McLellan on the piano and John Thomson singing.

We do hope that you will feel able to join us on this date and would encourage you to bring any of your friends who enjoy musical entertainment.

Coffee, tea and biscuits will be available in the sanctuary from 12.00 until 14.00.

We invite you all to come and, as always, everyone will be made most welcome.

## The Churches Walk and Talk Group

The Walk and Talk group will continue to meet throughout the festive season and on into the New Year. Our own festive lunch will be held in the Redbrae on 19th December, which is both a walk and a lunch. Please feel free to attend either or both. I'd be obliged if you could let me know if you would like to attend the lunch on that day. I need approximate numbers to give to the caterers at the Redbrae. Last year they provided another member of staff to help cater for 14.

The walk on the 9th January will be outside of the local areas. The meeting point shall be St Columba's Hillhead Church at 1:15, please note the earlier time, and a car sharing operation will take place. Please be aware that normally at least ¾ of our walkers arrive by car and are happy to provide transport for non-car users where required.

**Trevor Patterson**

trevor\_patterson@outlook.com

5th December  
12th December  
19th December  
26th December  
2nd January 2025  
9th January  
16th January  
23rd January  
30th January  
6th February

Hillhead Basin.  
St Columba's Hillhead Church. Including coffee break in Kirkintilloch.  
The Redbrae. 1:30 to walk. 2:30 for lunch.  
No plans.  
Donaldson Street, Christine's Way.  
St Columba's Hillhead Church. 1:15 for transport to Broadwood Loch.  
St Columba's Hillhead Church.  
Merkland Nature Park.  
Waterside.  
Kilsyth road.



## Advent at St Mary's 2024



Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup>	<u>Third week of Advent</u>
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	<u>Hush in the Rush</u> <i>7:30pm in the Session House</i>
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	<u>Blue Christmas Service</u> <i>In the Church at 7:30pm</i>
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<u>Fourth week in Advent</u> Nativity
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<u>Hush in the Rush</u> <i>7:30pm in the Session House</i>
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	<u>Watchnight Service</u> <i>11:00pm at St. Mary's</i> <i>Service shared with St. David's Memorial Park</i>

## ORGANISATIONS ACCOUNTS/AUDITORS

It is that time of year again when accounts need to be prepared for the year to 31 December 2024 for all Church Organisations. I would therefore ask that all treasurers of organisations please ensure that a copy of their annual audited accounts is passed to the Treasurer or Finance Convenor no later than 28 February 2025. These accounts will be made up to their year-end falling into the year to 31 December 2024. The Nursery, Social Committee and Young Church whose accounts are included in the Church Accounts should work to a deadline of 15th January 2025 as I go on holiday from 27th January until 25th February. The members of the Finance Committee who have volunteered to act as auditors for the church organisations are John Pears and Hugh Biggans. The Church Accounts should be submitted to Presbytery and Church of Scotland by 31 March annually, therefore it is very important that these deadlines are adhered to. We need to present the accounts to Session as early as possible to enable them to be audited prior to submission to the relevant bodies. Your assistance in this matter is very much appreciated by John and myself.

**Hugh Biggans**  
**Finance Convenor**

# IT'S HAPPENING ON SUNDAY 9TH MARCH!

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What is happening on Sunday 9th March? **The Pancake Sunday of course.** It might be a long way off at the moment, but once Christmas has passed it will soon be here. We are giving you early notice of something you can put in the new diary that Santa might have given you as a present.

After the service there will be a two course lunch - a savoury first course and a sweet pancake pudding to follow.

Tickets will go on sale on Sunday 16th February costing £1 plus a donation on the day.

**The Kirkintilloch and Lenzie Christian Aid Group** once again thank St Mary's for the use of the church hall for the recent Advent coffee morning. £1611.14 was raised and this has been sent to Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal which this year is focusing on the humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

Sincere thanks to everyone who helped out, baked, donated items for the stalls and those who gave a donation. Thank you for supporting families fleeing conflict to buy food and lifesaving equipment.

**Paul Malcolm**

## Thank You

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**To the generous folks of St Mary's.**

Thank you all that have recently donated, towards the cost of the new AV equipment, to the Special Projects Fund, towards Parishioner costs, to the Fabric Fund, or to General Funds, or for any other purpose. And to those that have increased their offering giving, whether it be by weekly Freewill offering envelope, monetary open plate donation or by standing order. I deliberately mention no names as most folks would prefer to be anonymous.

The generosity of folks at Harvest when, as well as an amazing amount of food produce, we also received £746 in monetary donations which was distributed to East Dunbartonshire Foodbank, Lodging House Mission, and St Rollox Community Outreach Project.

I have also received a cheque for £370 from The Running and Walking Group to go to The Special Projects Fund.

**Thank You**

**John M Thomson**  
Treasurer

## Collection

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A minister in a rural church had been having trouble with the collections. One Sunday he announced, "Now, before we pass the collection plate, I would like to request that the person who stole the chickens from our local farm please refrain from giving any money to the Lord. The Lord doesn't want money from a thief!"

The collection plate was passed around and for the first time in months, everybody gave.



# Prayer for December 2024

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Father, the days are short; darkness deepens in December and this year it seems to reflect the darkness in so many parts of the world. We think especially of the land You came to, all those years ago, and other nearby lands where so many are suffering. Father, thank you that Jesus came into the world as Your Light; that He shines today as brightly and powerfully as He did then, and will do forever.

Help us to open our hearts and minds to allow His light to fill us with the assurance that, no matter what is going on, we are safe in Him.

Thank you that, in Jesus, You have conquered death and darkness; that one day, everyone will bow before Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, whose Kingdom shall never end.

Help us, in thankfulness and love, to share Your Christmas Light and Hope and Joy. Hallelujah! In Jesus' name.

Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*

## Blue Christmas

St. Mary's Parish Church  
18<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm

A reflective service for those  
who find this season difficult

All are Welcome

## *Hush in the Rush*

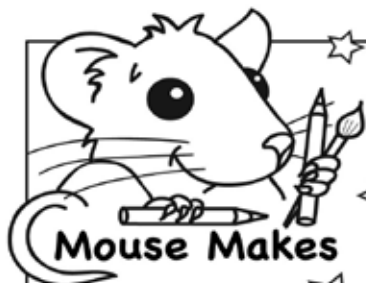
Making space to be still in December

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Monday 9<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup>  
Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>

St Mary's Session House at 7.30pm

All are Welcome

# Young Church ...



**Mouse Makes**

"Jesus said,  
I am the \_\_\_\_ Y  
and the \_\_\_\_ U \_\_\_\_  
and the \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_.  
No one comes to the Father  
except through me."  
John 14:6

"The child to be born  
will be called  
H \_\_\_\_ , the  
\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_"  
Luke 1:35

"For unto you is born  
this day a  
S \_\_\_\_ who is  
\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_  
the \_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_"  
Luke 2:11

## THE GREATEST GIFT

"She will bear a son,  
and shall call his name

\_\_\_\_\_  
for he will save his  
people from their sins."  
Matthew 1:21

"Jesus said,  
I am the

\_\_\_\_\_  
and the life."  
John 11:25

B L I G H T L O  
R A Y W O J J R  
E M M A N U E L  
A B Y J E S O  
D S A V I O U R  
S A V R J S D

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

**JESUS  
—  
THE  
GREATEST  
GIFT  
OF ALL!**

P R O P H E T I  
R E D E E M E R  
I E M I L I G  
E M E S S I A H  
S R M E G F T  
T E A C H E R E

E V E R L A S T I N G  
K I N G O F K I N G S  
I N K I G W F D O U  
S E S O N O F G O D D  
S E W O C O U W O R D  
C O U N S E L L O R U

EMMANUEL • MESSIAH • REDEEMER • KING OF KINGS • WORD  
SON OF MAN • EVERLASTING • SHEPHERD • PRIEST • PROPHET • TEACHER  
LIGHT • BREAD • VINE • DOOR • LAMB • COUNSELLOR • CHRISTMAS • GIFT

Find the words from the Bible verses too!

Dec24 © deborah noble @ parishpump.co.uk

# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Luke chapter 2 verses 1-7

The Roman Empire charged the countries  
it had invaded taxes, based on the  
number of people and what they earned.

Emperor Augustus gave  
orders that all people  
in the Empire  
were to be  
registered  
so they  
could be  
taxed.



This census was before  
Quirinius became  
Governor of Syria \*  
(\* whose own  
census  
started  
riots -  
Acts 5:37)



When the order came,  
Mary and Joseph were  
living in Nazareth.

But Joseph was descended from King David, who had  
been born in Bethlehem...



so Joseph took  
Mary to Bethlehem to stay with his family.

Come and meet  
everyone!



A normal home in Bethlehem.



While they were staying  
there, Mary's baby was  
born.



There was no space in the  
guest room to put a new baby!

So they made a snug  
bed for Jesus in one  
of the mangers.



# Craft Group

The ladies of the Craft Group spent the summer knitting beanie hats for homeless people. One hundred hats along with some gloves and scarves were handed in to the Kindness Charity which supports homeless people in Glasgow. They were delighted with our gift which will help keep folks warm this winter.





# ***The Rectory***

***St James the Least***

***On the importance of NOT keeping accurate minutes***

**My dear Nephew Darren**

Since you were the one to ask this parishioner of yours to act as PCC secretary, you have no reason to complain about the minutes of meetings she produces. You should never let anyone act as a secretary unless they cannot speak English or are hard of hearing, and preferably, both. The more significant the committee and the more contentious the issues being debated, the more you should nobly put yourself forward both to chair the meeting and take the minutes. In the majority of cases, that will spare the other members that awkward moment when you ask for a volunteer, and they all feel the sudden need to stare at their feet.

If you act as secretary, then you can be certain that accounts of what took place will only be what you had wanted to happen and that the decisions taken will be what you had already decided before discussions started. Any inconvenient observations from other committee members can be omitted entirely.

Admittedly, the more observant may notice that your accounts of the meeting may not wholly agree with their recollections, but the skill of being a secretary is not to produce the minutes of the previous meeting until the day before the next one. This will mean that the great majority

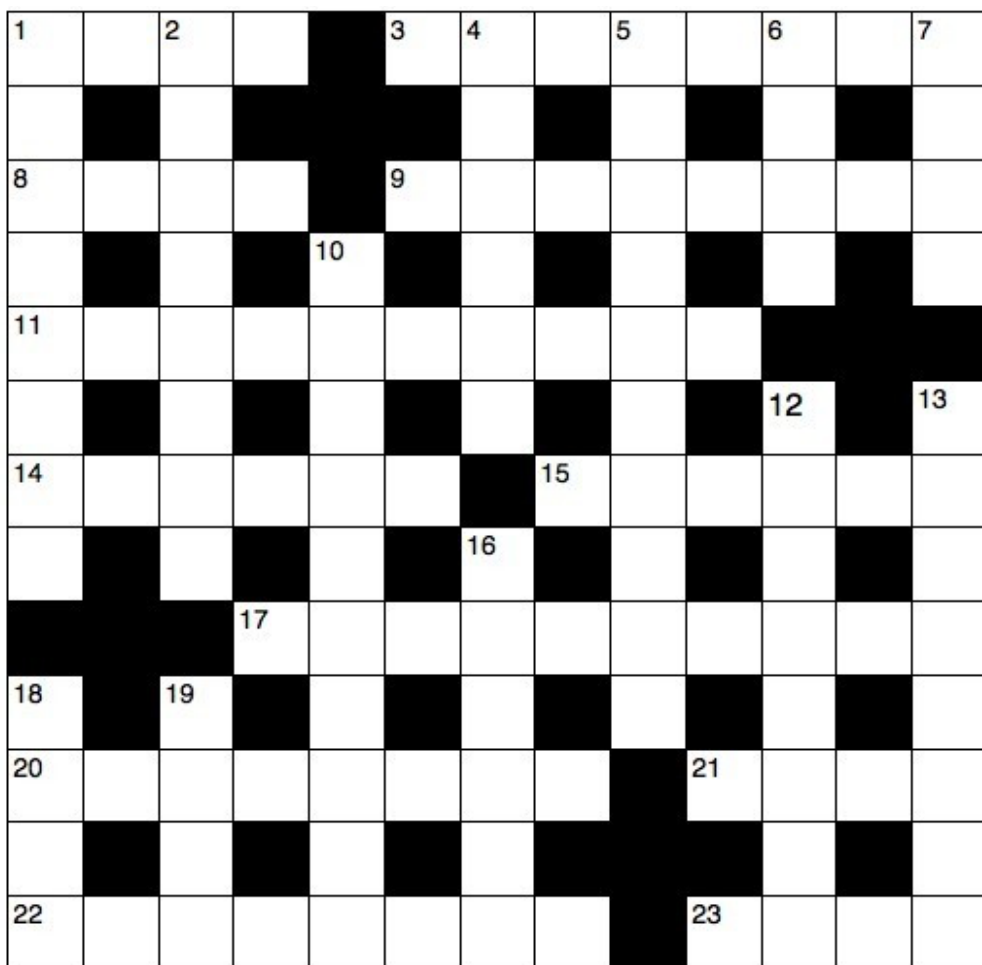
will have long forgotten what actually did happen two months previously, and that many will not have had the time to read them anyway and will avoid having to admit that fact by passing them.

Only the deeply committed will want to pursue apparent discrepancies. In that case, confess to the meeting that your hand-written notes were accidentally left on a bus and so you can no longer check the accuracy of what you have written. As a way of appearing helpful, you could even give the person challenging you the bus route number and time of day you travelled. Further challenges will rally the rest of the committee to your side, and soon someone will suggest you proceed to the next item on the agenda. Since you are also the chairman, you naturally bow to their request.

Just in the way that church rotas bear no resemblance to the people who actually turn up to do the jobs, minutes of meetings need not bear too much resemblance to what actually happened, especially if what did happen is inconvenient for you.

After all, democracy is all very well - provided a benign dictator is in overall control.

**Your loving uncle, Eustace**



### Across

- 1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)  
 3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)  
 8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)  
 9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)  
 11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)  
 14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)

- 15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)  
 17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)  
 20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)  
 21 Rite (anag.) (4)

- 22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)  
 23 'The eye cannot say to the — , "I don't need you"' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

# Down

- 1 'Flee for your lives! Don't — — , and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)  
 2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)  
 4 'The tax collector... beat his — and said, "God have mercy on me, a sinner"' (Luke 18:13) (6)  
 5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)  
 6 'The day of the Lord is — for all

- nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)  
 7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)  
 10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)  
 12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)  
 13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)  
 16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and — ' (Acts 7:22) (6)  
 18 'Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)  
 19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)

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

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ACROSS: 1, Lame, 3, Obtained, 8, Omit, 9, Merchant, 11, Burdensome, 14, Crafty, 15, Please, 17, Blacksmith, 20, Splendid, 21, Tier, 22, Singeing, 23, Hand.  
 DOWN: 1, Look back, 2, Main road, 4, Breast, 5, Accomplish, 6, Near, 7, Date, 10, Pestilence, 12, Basilica, 13, Tethered, 16, Action, 18, Asa's, 19, Clan.



Designed by St Mary's Parish Church Publications Committee