# Stockport Sunday School





Well, here we are at the beginning of December, and into the winter season. Most of the leaves have fallen off the trees, and there are only the last two apples still clinging on to the branches of our faithful apple tree. There is not much in the way of colour in our gardens and it's the time when keen gardeners' thoughts turn to planning next year's floral displays.

I must admit, I don't class myself as a real gardener. I enjoy the physical work out in the open air, but the choosing of plants and individual care is Rosie's province in our household. Nevertheless, while there may not be much to do in the garden at this time of year, there are some tasks that never end.

This is particularly true at St George's Church gardens, where, until Covid 19 raised its head, I used to spend one morning a week with the other 'Garden Gnomes', ( as we were christened by a former curate ) keeping the place presentable.

There, my main tasks throughout the year involve collecting rubbish, pruning trees, a continuing battle against weeds and, especially, with the moss on the gravel paths around the church building. The moss problem comes in two forms. Most obvious is the moss which grows on the chippings on the shady north side of the church. There is limited footfall on these paths, and it is surprising how quickly a thick carpet of moss will appear which can soon cover the gravel path completely. I use the word 'carpet ' advisedly, as you can roll up the moss when it gets thick. It is a time-consuming job, on hands and knees - but it is quite rewarding when you compare the cleared area with what it was like previously.

On the other hand, the more well-trodden paths present a different problem. There the gravel has been broken down by passing feet until it is fragmented, compacted, and, in wet weather, becomes muddy. It then provides a base for a different kind of growth - a cross between moss and small plant life, which can only be removed by digging it up and sorting it out. Weed killers can inhibit the growth, but don't really solve the problem. All in all, the job is similar to 'painting the Forth Bridge' as we used to say.

Whichever type of moss we are dealing with, to maintain a degree of control requires constant attention and action. We can't afford to sit back and let nature take its course. So the winter season, when many other gardening tasks are on hold, is usually a good time to try and get on top of the problem. And, despite being onerous work at times, there is the pleasure of working as a group with a common purpose.

Prompted by the fact that we are now in Advent, it struck me that there are some similarities between the gardeners' perennial battle against moss and the challenges we face in our spiritual life.

Advent is a time of year in the Christian calendar when we start to think about Christmas, and hopefully what is at the core of our festivities - the birth of Christ.

We all have our own ways of practising our faith, probably in well established ways. But if 'familiarity' doesn't necessarily 'breed contempt', it can lead to complacency. Advent, like

Lent is a season when we are called to pause and see where we are up to in life. Have we accumulated a comfortable carpet of moss on our path, so to speak; letting the day to day aspects of life hide the groundrock of our faith. The Old and New Testaments of the Bible are full of examples of how the people of Israel wandered away from God's Will, lost their pathway.

On the other hand, they also allowed the written Law to be burdened with many restrictive requirements and customs, which only seemed to obscure the basic truths about the relationship of God with His people

It's a bit like the second type of moss - have we been walking the same hardened pathway, in the same old way, for too long; becoming entrenched in our views and opinions, rather than being open to the promptings of God's Holy Spirit.

These are questions we should ask ourselves from time to time if we are to be true followers of Christ.

But in doing so, let's not forget that we are preparing for a Celebration! As a result of Covid 19, the next few weeks will be strange for all of us in varying ways. Our ability to celebrate Christmas as we have traditionally done, in our worship and with our families and friends, is likely to be more than a little different from what we have been used to, and what we would wish for. However, let's look at the positive side.

While acknowledging that the trials and hardships of recent months have taken their toll, on the other hand, it has been encouraging to see and hear about the many acts of kindness and care people have shown to one another. In other words being a good 'neighbour' to whoever is in need.

And that is what our Lord commanded us to do. As long as we do not let the 'moss' of every-day life obscure our path, and we endeavour to show to one another, - our families, friends and neighbours - how much we value each other, in a truly Christian way, - then we will be able to say meaningfully to one and all -

'Come and join the celebration it's a very special day. Come and share our jubilation, There's a new King born today'

May you all have a Happy and Healthy Christmas time.

With very best wishes from the Officials.



# ANNIVERSARY DONATIONS

Judith Higgins For her parents, Mr and Mrs W S Rodgers

Garth Higgins For his grandfather, Mr J W Gosling and his parents,

Mr and Mrs H B Higgins

Margaret Forster For her parents, Harold and Winifred Forster

Christine Moore For her parents, Arthur and Mary Jackson

Norman Sellers For his parents, Fred and Ruth Sellers and his sister,

Muriel Higham

Jean Norton For her husband, Ron Norton



# **DONATIONS**

Thank you to:- John and Gwen Henshaw

Joan Heald

Janet Moore

Beryl Manley

and a further donation from Christine Moore, all our loyal members still thinking of SSS.

#### **ACTION FOR CHILDREN**

Thank you to everyone who collected money in their lanterns throughout the year for Action For Children, the updated final total Judith Curry collected from everyone was £284.20.





# GET WELL SOON

We were sorry to hear that Norman had spent a day in hospital and that Ann Mather had to have an operation on her lip recently. We send them and all our friends who have been feeling ill recently a speedy recovery.



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We wish 'Happy Birthday' this month to:-

Judith Higgins on December 4<sup>th</sup> and Don Curry on December 16<sup>th</sup> and Joan Heald on January 10<sup>th</sup>



# ZOOM SERVICES



# ZOOM SERVICE, REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2020

Stuart led our Remembrance Day Service on Sunday 8th November.

After the opening hymn, 'Thy Hand, O God, Has Guided Thy Flock From Age To Age', Stuart read from Matthew chapter 5 verses 1-12, the Sermon on the Mount.

Stuart said that it is important to remember those who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2 and also in other conflicts since. He then showed us two short videos.

In the first, a young soldier in uniform was walking through a busy street but although he smiled and waved at people no-one seemed to see him. He sat down on the steps of a war memorial and a young girl came up and traced with her finger the words on the memorial, 'They gave their lives'. She saw the soldier and smiled and waved to him. He smiled back then disappears. The words:-

# PAUSE REFLECT REMEMBER LEST WE FORGET

were shown on the screen

The second video showed modern day troops working for us today, in a peace keeping role abroad and helping to deliver much needed equipment and helping in test centres during the covid pandemic. The words of the Royal British Legion, 'Every poppy counts' were shown on the screen.

Today the world is a very different place to what it was during the world wars and we don't know what it would have been like if those battles had not been fought.

We live in a changing world, even structures like buildings that we think of as being permanent are pulled down, and the area changes.

In the book of Hebrews the writer states that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, never changing.

In our changing world I t is comforting to know that we can trust Jesus to be constant and unchanging. Stuart reminded us of the words of Anna Waring's hymn:-

In heavenly love abiding
No change my heart shall fear
And safe in such confiding
For nothing changes here.

Norman led us in prayer then Stuart played Elgar's Nimrod as the names of those School members who lost their lives in the two World Wars were displayed on the screen.

Stuart's closing prayer thanked God that He never changes and asked Him to be close when we were going through difficult times.

The service closed with the hymn, 'Abide With Me'.

Thank you, Stuart, for a meaningful and moving service. We were pleased to see many old friends and new members joining us for this service.

Beryl Manley thanked all those members who had contributed to the 239 shoe boxes that were sent to Teams 4 U this year (see article later in the Newsletter).



# ZOOM SERVICE, NOVEMBER 22ND 2020

Garth led the service on November 22nd. His reading was taken from Luke chapter 10, the Story of the Good Samaritan.

Contrary to popular belief, Garth is not just interested in railways, he also likes to watch Scottish football and Rugby League. Rugby League started in 1895 in Huddersfield and one of their main players was Douglas Clarke. Garth went on to tell us a little about the life of Douglas Clarke, who became a hero in World War 1. He was also a wrestling legend. During the war he was awarded the Military Medal for his action in rescuing wounded soldiers from the battlefield in Belgium, giving them first aid and carrying them on his broad shoulders to the first aid post. He drove a truck carrying ammunition to the front line and used it to carry the wounded soldiers back. He did this for four months, driving dozens of times a day along the hazardous Menin Road. Eventually, he himself was wounded and spent 48 hours in intensive care. After his operation to remove shrapnel, his surgeon told him that without his strong muscular build and cardiovascular fitness he would undoubtedly have been killed. Despite being told not to do any strenuous work, he went back to playing rugby for Huddersfield and Great Britain, his wrestling career hit new heights later in life and he went back to delivering coal. He died suddenly at the age of 59 and was inducted into the Rugby League Hall of Fame in 2005 confirming his place in the sport's history alongside his awe-inspiring military service. Norman led the closing prayers.

## FUTURE ZOOM SERVICES

The next dates for our Zoom services are:-December 6th - Judith Higgins

<u>December 13th</u> - Christmas Service organised by members of Lancashire Hill



## SHOE BOXES IN COVID 19

At the end of the long Lockdown Teams4U told us they were able to continue sending shoe boxes to Eastern Europe this year. I contacted various friends who usually prepare boxes or fillers. Many had already collected lots of items or had knitted more scarves, hats or teddies during lockdown. I went to Wincham near Northwich and collected from Susan (Marshall) Percival bags containing about 400 knitted hats and many scarves and later 19 lovely scarves knitted by Joyce Sellers.

Compass Point where the boxes usually are collected from could not open and be used safely and the boxes had to be 'quarantined' each time they were transferred. As friends usually bring their boxes to my home first, the Teams4U co-ordinator for this area agreed with the Covid restrictions to collect the boxes there.

Beryl arranged for the other boxes which normally go to Compass Point to be 'quarantined' and collected from Davenport Methodist and St George's.

Boxes filled with gifts for children and family homes, knitted items and donations brought to St Mary's were blessed by Jess. After 'quarantining' I took them home and later on a wet day 111 boxes and 10 bags of hats, scarves and other items were collected by the Teams4U representative and taken to the collection point in Heywood. As soon as the lockdown in Wales ended the van transferred them to their processing centre near Wrexham.

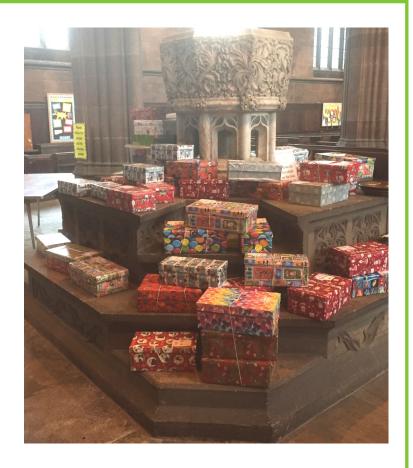
This was an ecumenical effort, as well as St Mary's the boxes and gifts came from friends at Heaton Moor United church and St Paul's Heaton Moor, Aspinall Methodist, St Nicolas Burnage and St Werburgh's Chorlton.

Many, many thanks to everyone who contributed to this year's T4U appeal.

The boxes at St George's were blessed at their morning service and 128 boxes were later collected from Davenport Methodist and St George's. I have since received 21 more boxes which I have sent off to Wrexham. The total boxes from Stockport was 260 which is excellent in these difficult times. The boxes are now on their journey to Romania, Bosnia and Belarus and Beryl has since heard well over 1800 went to Wrexham from Greater Manchester and there are still more to go!

Margaret Forster







**T46** 





This Christmas time is going to be a little different for most people this year, unable to go out as much or see loved ones. Here are a few ideas that you may like to join in with from home.

# CAROLS IN THE CAR

"Come and Sing along to your favourite Christmas Carols in a safe, Drive In Experience, with all proceeds going to Stockport and District Mind."

This is taking place on Saturday 19 December at Hazel Grove Park and Ride, with time slots available between 4pm and (last entry) 9pm, car tickets priced at £6.

Further details can be found at <u>Stockport & District Mind - Carols in the Car fundraiser - Stockport & District Mind (stockportmind.org.uk)</u>

With the restrictions and limitations in place due to the

impacts of Coronavirus, this looks set to be a brilliant way for people to still be able to celebrate but in a safe way, all whilst raising vital funds to support our local mental health services.





# CELEBRATE WITH THE NATIONAL CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

This year The Children's Society is holding their first ever virtual national Christingle Service in partnership with the Church of England on Sunday December 13th at 9am. It will be streamed on the Church of England's website, YouTube and Facebook channels. People can register their interest to join in (free) and on Friday 11th December they will email out Reinformation on how to watch online, join in with Christingle making and download the Order of Service.

The service will include a few words from HRH The Duchess of Gloucester, the Archbishop of Canterbury who will be lighting the Advent Candle, as well as the Vice-Chair of Trustees, the Bishop of Derby Libby Lane.

We'll also see a special performance from award winning number one soprano Joanna Forest, and join young people lighting the Christingles.

Their website says: 'We know Christingle won't look or feel the same this year, but there's no reason why it can't be bigger and brighter than ever. Join us this year for an online family Christingle service in collaboration with The Church of England. This will be a joyful celebration that brings people together to share the light of Jesus and spread a message of hope.'



Let's make Christingle 2020 the biggest and brightest yet!





# NATIONAL ONLINE SERVICES STREAMING DATES BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

We are delighted to be partnering with a range of national charities and individuals for our online services throughout Advent and Christmas. They will all be broadcast on the Church's <u>YouTube channel</u> and <u>Facebook page</u> Website:- <u>Welcome to the Church of England's official website</u> | The Church of England

- 6 December 9:00am Worship at Home for the Second Sunday of Advent with HOPE Together
- 13 December 9:00am Worship at Home for the Third Sunday of Advent. A Christingle service with The Children's Society
- 20 December 9:00am Worship at Home for the Fourth Sunday of Advent with Marie Curie
- 22 December 9:00am Worship at Home: A service of Lessons and Carols with Christian Aid
- 24 December 11:30pm Worship at Home: Midnight Mass with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Dover
- 27 December 9:00am Worship at Home for the First Sunday of Christmas with Church Army
- 31 December 9:00am Worship at Home: A service with the Archbishop of York on New Year's Eve
- 3 January 9:00am Worship at Home for Epiphany with Embrace the Middle East

After teaching Primary School children for over 30 years, I've experienced many Nativity plays of all shapes and sizes. I often used to wonder, after all the parts were given out, just what the children who were donkeys, palm trees or 'just in the choir' were thinking. So I wrote this little poem.

# WISHING

I don't <u>want</u> to be a donkey or a little twinkling star. This year could I be Joseph or a rich King from afar?

I'd like to be important and wear a crown of gold, I'd have a robe of purple, with a sparkly box to hold.

I'm tired of being in a group and singing in the choir or a shepherd with a tea-towel on my head. An innkeeper would be different and I could say "No room", or even Herod would be good instead.

But, <u>please</u> let me be Joseph,
I will do my very best
And I'll practise so my words
Are loud and clear,
My mum could come and clap for me
And sit on the front row,
Oh! I'm sure it's got to be my turn this year!

Margaret Morris-Jones





# LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



# Recipe

#### Smoked Mackerel Pâté

Serves 6

155g smoked mackerel (approx. 2 fillets)
70g sliced smoked salmon
150g cream cheese
200ml double cream
Squeeze of lemon

Remove skin from mackerel. Check carefully for any tiny bones and remove.

Place in food processor and whizz until it becomes fine shreds (you can use a fork for this if you don't have a food processor).

Add the cream cheese and mix again until combined.

Add the double cream and stir well, then squeeze in the little lemon juice and mix well.

Place in the fridge and allow to chill, usually overnight.

To serve: Slice the smoked salmon into pieces approximately 6cm square. Place about 1 teaspoonful of the mackerel mix onto the salmon and roll.

Alternatively, serve the pâté with thin slices of toasted wholemeal bread and butter.







# Season's Greetings

Everyone at The Triangle would like to wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and prosperous New Year.

It is not the cost of a Christmas gift that gives the receivers heart a lift.

It is the joy and loving thought behind the gift so gladly bought.

A gift a child's hand has made imparts a warmth that will never fade within your heart all year through though it may be old and covered in glue. The costliest gift that money can buy given without love is just a lie.

So into each gift put your heart and the meaning of Christmas will never depart.



The following articles are taken from Parish Pump.

# SAINT DAY - 17 EGLANTYNE JEBB - FOUNDER OF 'SAVE THE CHILDREN'

Here is a modern-day saint whose compassion and determination has saved literally millions of lives.

Eglantyne did not begin as an obvious 'mover and shaker' of people. Born in Shropshire in 1876, she grew up in Ellesmere, studied history at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford, taught at Marlborough, and then resigned as she was not physically robust.

Eglantyne moved to live with her mother in Cambridge, and it would have been so easy to settle for a life of peaceful obscurity. But she was a Christian, and at Oxford she had developed a passion for social concerns, so this compassion now drove her to take action.

She began in 1906 by publishing research on the poverty she'd found in Cambridge.

Then in 1912 the Balkan Wars broke out, and Eglantyne left Cambridge for Macedonia. Her months among the refugees led her to decide that long-term constructive aid was more effective than short-term handouts.

The First World War left Eglantyne horrified by the prolonged Allied blockade on Germany and Austria-Hungary, which even after Armistice meant starvation for millions of civilians, especially children.

And so in1919 Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy Buxton helped found the 'Fight the Famine' Council, which wanted to end the blockade and establish a League of Nations.

One day during a rally in Trafalgar Square, Eglantyne was arrested for distributing a leaflet showing starving children which read: "Our blockade has caused this - millions of children are starving to death."

She ended up in court and was fined, but the judge was so impressed with Eglantyne's commitment to children that he himself paid her fine. His money became the first donation to Save the Children, the new charity just set up by Eglantyne and Dorothy.

Save the Children was officially launched at the Albert Hall in May 1919, with the aim of helping the starving civilians of central Europe. It was a success, raising £400,000 in that first year alone.

When in the autumn of 1921 Russia was facing famine, Save the Children chartered a cargo ship, the SS Torcello, to carry 600 tons of lifesaving food and medical supplies to Russia – saving hundreds of thousands of lives.

By 1922 Save the Children had become one of Britain's biggest charities. Eglantyne's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1923, was adopted by the League of Nations the following year. The present-day UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is derived from it.

But ten years of running Save the Children had sapped Eglantyne's fragile strength, and she died in Geneva in 1928, aged only 52.



'Christmas may look different, but the story is still the same!' Coronavirus will make our celebrations this year look very different from usual. However, the message of the baby born in Bethlehem is still relevant!

In one nativity play, the highlight was to illuminate Jesus, with a light in the manger, when all the other lights were turned off. At the appropriate time, all the lights went out, including the manger one. The silence was broken when one of the shepherds loudly whispered: 'Hey, you turned off Jesus.' Of course, nobody can turn off Jesus this Christmas!

The angels announced, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.' (Luke 2: 10,11). The birth of this baby brings great joy and good news for everyone! As the king of the universe, He has come as our Saviour. In an uncertain world, He offers joy and hope, because He holds this pandemic in His hands. This is a real cause for joy!

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests.' (Luke 2:14). We may feel anything but peace amid the anxieties over our current circumstances. How can a Jewish infant born to a peasant family in first century Palestine bring peace to our lives today? But Jesus established peace with God through His death on the cross. Trusting the Prince of Peace for our lives brings God's peace amid the huge uncertainties we face.

As the carol says, 'Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King.'



## SMILE LINES FOR DECEMBER

#### CHRISTMAS CAKE

Every Christmas, composer Giacomo Puccini would have a cake baked for each of his friends. One year, having quarrelled with Arturo Toscanini just before Christmas, he tried to cancel the order for the conductor's cake. But it was too late, as the cake had already been dispatched.

The following day, Toscanini received a telegram from Puccini: "Cake sent by mistake."

He replied by return: "Cake eaten by mistake."



#### A TRUE STORY FROM ONE OF THE EDITORS FROM PARISH PUMP



We were living in Pusan, Korea and attending services at the local Flying Angel. My wife was typing out a carol service, and when I proof-read it, I found that she had entitled the seventh lesson 'The Shepherds go to the Manager'.

'Well,' I thought. 'In a way, they did!'

Here are some titles of carols, as misunderstood by children...

# CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Deck the Halls with Buddy Holly

We three kings of porridge and tar

On the first day of Christmas my tulip gave to me

Later on we'll perspire, as we dream by the fire.

He's makin a list, chicken and rice.

Noel, Noel, Barney's the king of Israel.

With the jelly toast proclaim

Olive, the other reindeer

Frosty the Snowman is a ferret elf, I say

Sleep in heavenly peas.

In the meadow we can build a snowman, then pretend that he is sparse and brown O come, froggy faithful.





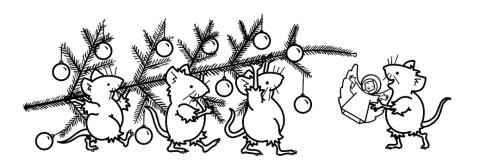
# PICTURE



The teacher asked her Sunday School class to draw a picture of a Bible story with a Christmas theme. She was puzzled by Kate's picture, which showed four people on an airplane. She asked her which story it was meant to represent. 'The Flight to Egypt,' was the reply.

Pointing at each figure, the teacher ventured: 'That must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. But who's the fourth person?"'

'Oh,' explained Kate happily, 'that's Pontius - the pilot!'



# PUZZLES

9				6	7			
			5			8	3	
		4					9	
	3		9		5			8
2								4
1			2		8		6	
	4					6		
	5	2			3			
			7	5				2



Sudoku

# **WORDSEARCH**

Can you find in this grid the words shown in **BOLD CAPITALS** in the Bible passage below? The words can be found in any direction.

# SILENT NIGHT

This much-LOVED CAROL comes from AUSTRIA, where it was FIRST SUNG as STILLE NACHT, HEILIGE Nacht on CHRISTMAS EVE, 1818. It was written by FATHER JOSEPH MOHR, a YOUNG PRIEST at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a MELODY for his carol. Gruber was ORGANIST in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during The carol went on to MIDNIGHT MASS. become loved world-wide: and the VERSION sung by BING Crosby is the THIRD best-selling SINGLE of all time.

SIIOEVETETAL
THIRDGHNLFYE
TVOGGGIEGAOL
IEIAINELNTUO
PRSNIJUIIHNR
BSDIHROSSEGA
SIESAMTSIRHC
MOVTFITSEIRP
CNOSLIRHUPET
IELLAHRVGAHU
VMELODYSBING
SSAMNACHTHNH

# **ANAGRAMS**

Can you unscramble the following to create words associated with Christmas.

- 1. PLDRHOU
- 2. YOLHL
- 3. VINTYAIT
- 4. CRATDOSINEO
- 5. GMRENA
- 6. GYIFG GIPDNUD
- 7. STIENL
- 8. DRLGANA
- 9. TRFEAH SSMCAIHRT
- 10. SRCDA

- 11. GSELIH
- 12. MNSANWO
- 13. UTLERT VDEO
- 14. GEALN
- 15. LROAC GSNRIES
- 16. FSAOKNLWE
- 17. EWSI NME
- 18. HBLEMEHTE
- 19. ESMEOILTT
- 20. MSRHICTSA ERTE





# CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Can you work out the missing letters in the following to form well-known Christmas carols - the first five have all the vowels missing and the second five have all the consonants missing.

- 1. \_ C\_M\_ \_LL Y\_ F\_\_THF\_L
- 2. \_NG\_LS FR\_M TH\_ R\_\_LMS \_F GL\_RY
- 3. TH\_ H\_LLY \_ND TH\_ \_VY
- 4. \_ L\_TTL\_ T\_WN \_F B\_THL\_H\_M
- 5.  $G_D R_ST Y_M_RRY G_NTL_M_N$
- 6. I\_ \_A\_E U\_O\_ \_\_E \_I\_\_I\_\_\_ \_\_EA\_
- 7. A\_A\_ I\_ A \_A\_\_E\_
- 8. \_A\_\_ \_E \_E\_A\_\_ A\_\_E\_\_ I\_\_
- 9. I\_ \_\_E \_\_E*A*\_ \_I\_ \_I\_\_E\_
- 10. O\_\_E I\_ \_O\_A\_ \_A\_I\_\_ \_I\_\_



# ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

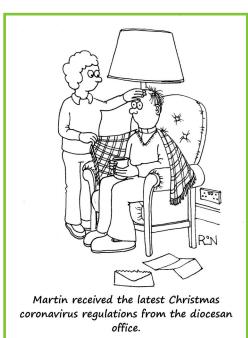
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6	5	9	8	4	3	1	7	2
2	7	3	1	6	9	8	5	4
5	3	1	2	8	6	9	4	7
7	9	4	5	3	1	2	6	8
8	2	6	9	7	4	5	1	3
3	1	7	6	2	5	4	8	9
4	8	5	3	9	7	6	2	1
9	6	2	4	1	8	7	3	5





SUDOKU ANSWERS

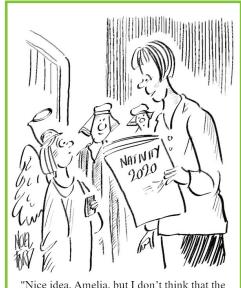
WORDSEARCH ANSWERS











"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think that the Angel of the Lord Zooming with the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."