



Stockport Sunday School

January 2021 Newsletter 11



'Deck the halls with boughs of holly - Tis the season to be jolly'

- the well known opening words of a popular Christmas carol.

Well, most of us will have put up some kind of Christmas decoration, I'm sure, but the jollification may well have been somewhat muted this year.

For a start, the opportunities to join in singing carols have been very restricted. I think one of the attractions of Christmas carols is the wide range of words and music. 'Deck The Halls' is a party song - 'laughing, quaffing, all together' - and very light hearted. In contrast, the favourite carol for many is 'Silent Night', conjuring up the image of a helpless baby sleeping in the sparse conditions of a stable, surrounded by an aura of wonder.

Then there is the Christmas hymn, 'It Came Upon The Midnight Clear' - with its message of God's care for His people in their times of hardship and suffering - and hope for the future.

Not being able to physically join together has been one of the disappointments of this Christmastide. And, of course, it has been like that for most of the last nine months, with the many restrictions on church services. Thanks to Stuart Dean and technology, we at SSS and LHSS have been fortunate to have been able to worship together on-line and join with the 'Songs of Praise' congregations in singing a wide range of hymns, but we still look forward to meeting together in person and singing our praises in the normal way. May that day be soon.

There have been many other aspects of Christmas that have been different this year. The ability to go shopping for presents, to potter through the stores, seeking ideas, has been restricted. I must admit I find it hard to get enthusiastic scrolling through lists of items on-line.

But the most important feature of recent months, of course, has been the limitations on meeting up with people - family, friends, neighbours. The pandemic has brought this to the fore and it has been uplifting to learn in the news about the many examples of kindness and care that have occurred. Maybe it has prompted us to make contact by phone, on-line and suitably spaced meetings, to let each other know we care. Let us hope we can carry this forward into the new year, for, in the words in the last verse of our opening carol:

**'Fast away the old year passes
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses'**

Let us all try to enter it in a positive frame of mind.

Traditionally this is a time of year when we may think about making resolutions. If so, let's include caring for our 'neighbours', whoever they may be, one of our priorities.

And as we look back on this past Christmastide, with '20/20 hindsight' so to speak, let's

let's remember with thanks the positive things that have happened, and resolve to try to put right the negative aspects. For no doubt there will be challenges to face, difficulties to overcome and changes we may have to make in our lives, but with God's help, we can find our way through.

And pray, in the words of Reinhold Neibuhr - the leading American theologian:-

- 'God give us grace to accept with serenity**
- the things that cannot be changed
- courage to change the things that should be changed
- and the wisdom to distinguish one from the other'

With very best wishes to you all for a much happier New Year.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the members of the Triangle who organised and took part in this year's Candle and Carol service. (see later notes)

We must thank Stuart for organising this and for enabling many of us to meet up regularly for Zoom services until such time as we can meet up to worship together in person.

We also thank Stuart for putting up this beautiful Christmas tree outside Sunday School, much admired by passers by.



CHRISTMAS POST



A big thank you to everyone who collected and delivered Christmas post to all our members last month, it was very much appreciated by everyone.

THANK YOU

I am sure all members of School would like to thank Judith (Higgins) for the lovely knitted crackers she included when the Christmas cards were delivered, so beautifully knitted in white with rows of either red or green and filled with delicious chocolates, such patience and skill. Thank you so much.



JS

GET WELL SOON



We are sorry to report that Hilary Wood has recently had an operation, but pleased to hear that although she isn't yet able to return home, she has been allowed out of hospital and is convalescing in a home where she is receiving physiotherapy.

Christine Moore has also spent several weeks in hospital but is now very glad to be home and she is very grateful and full of praise to the kind ambulancemen who took her home and saw that she was settled and to the carers that looked after Tom whilst she was away.

Ann Mather is also expecting to have her second operation early in the New Year.

We are thinking of you all and wish you and all our friends who are unwell at the moment a speedy recovery.

DONATIONS

In lieu of collections:- Ann Mather
Margaret Forster
Walter Stead (this also to School funds)

Judith Curry from the sale of her homemade Christmas cakes, £105.

Margaret Forster - as she has not been able to give to the Christmas Fair for her homemade preserves.

FINDING TRUSTEES

Can you help us with any information, especially addresses for any of the following Trustees? We have recently tried to contact all the Sunday School Trustees, but we have no addresses for:-

Madge Fletcher
Frank Chandley
David Noden

And although we had addresses for the following people, we have had no replies from them, so we think they must have moved:-

David Garland Fildes
Sheila Newcombe
Christopher Bullough
Barbara Fish
Sheila Gidley
Bertha Brooke
David Hallet

USED CARDS & STAMPS

Don't forget to keep your used Christmas cards until we are able to meet again,, for the Shoe Box Appeal, and all your used stamps, throughout the year, for Margaret Forster, for The Leprosy Mission. Please cut stamps off envelopes leaving a border of paper around the stamp.



CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Hilary Wood on the birth of her second grandson, Cooper Ray, a baby brother for Noah, to her daughter, Eleanor, who used to attend the School.

ANGELS

Thank you to the ladies of the Knit 'N' Natter group who recently hung 77 knitted angels along the fence at Compass Point along with a notice inviting people to help themselves to one to brighten their day. What a lovely idea, I'm sure they were much appreciated as many disappeared quite quickly, and Beryl has let us know that they have had lots of lovely appreciative comments from people who picked them up.

Thank you to Gillian Wood (Hilary's daughter) for the photographs.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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We wish Happy Birthday this month to

Joan Heald on 10th January
Ann Mather on 25th January
Jean Norton on 29th January
Simon Davies on 29th January



ZOOM SERVICES



ZOOM SERVICE, SUNDAY 6TH DECEMBER 2020

Judith took the service on December 6th.

Although December 2nd was the first Sunday in Advent, it was our first meeting in Advent so she took the opportunity to speak about the meaning of Advent and the symbolism connected to the Advent wreath.

She then asked if we had thought about the people connected to the Christmas story and spoke about the prophet Micah who lived 700 years before the birth of Jesus, but wrote the prophecy that so disturbed Herod that he ordered the killing of so many innocent babies.

Jesus was sent into the world to become a new kind of King, the King of Kings and yet He was not born in a palace. Have you heard the Bible account of His birth recently? In fact, none of the gospels mention a stable, we assume that Jesus was born in a stable because Mary placed Him in a manger.

God announced the birth of His Son to simple men, shepherds, who left their sheep to go and find the baby.

The Magi are only mentioned in Matthew's gospel. We don't know where they came from, we know they were wise and studied the scriptures and brought three precious gifts for the baby.

A group of very different people, rich and poor, wise and ordinary ones living seven hundred years before Jesus' birth, but all linked to His story and part of God's plan.

Advent is a good time to read again the Christmas story told in the gospels and listen to God's voice to hear how He would like to use us in His work.

ZOOM CANDLE AND CAROL SERVICE

We were pleased to see Sandra Cooper (née Mayer) from Sussex and Gwen and John Henshaw and several husbands of members present at this service, twenty five people in total.

This was to be a very different service to the usual one but thanks to Stuart's technical knowledge it was a very enjoyable one.

The first screen showed the three candles burning on the advent wreath. This changed to a screen of many lighted candles and images of members of Lancashire Hill were superimposed on this as they read the lessons.

First, Elaine read of the Angel Gabriel's visit to Mary and Jesus birth in Bethlehem.

Next Jayne read the shepherd's story.

Pam told of the arrival of the Magi.

Beryl told us that this year marked the 70th Candle and Carol Service.

It started as an evening service at the old Lancashire Hill building. There were candles around the room and on windowsills, with the stable and full sized donkey on the stage. Ivy Arnold always told a story. Mrs Marshall led the prayers and Mrs Pratt played the piano. Tea and mince pies were served in the interval and after that the nativity story unfolded with the arrival of the shepherds and Magi.

Over the years, the service changed. At the Triangle, it became an afternoon service and when Lancashire Hill ran the service for the parent School at Compass Point for the afternoon they were joined by a brass band and the children of the pre-school formed a nativity tableau and sang some songs.

Seventy years is a long time, but some traditions remain. The congregation still sit at small candle lit tables and the main table at the front of the hall is full of very many candles in candle sticks, including Ivy Arnold's two candelabra.

Stuart showed some pictures of services from the past and finished with Jackson, aged two, singing 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' Stuart led the prayers and Pam read a Christmas poem.

After the singing of 'Silent Night', members of the Triangle sang the 'Twelve Days Of Christmas'.

We finished with a general chat and we all enjoyed the traditional mince pies and tea in our own homes.

Thank you, Stuart and all those involved for your hard work in producing this enjoyable service for us.

Lets hope that we will actually be all together next year.

Happy Christmas everyone - keep safe.



HAPPY NEW YEAR

FUTURE ZOOM SERVICES

The next dates for our Zoom services are:-

January 3rd - Walter Stead

January 17th - Garth Higgins

January 31st - Judith Higgins

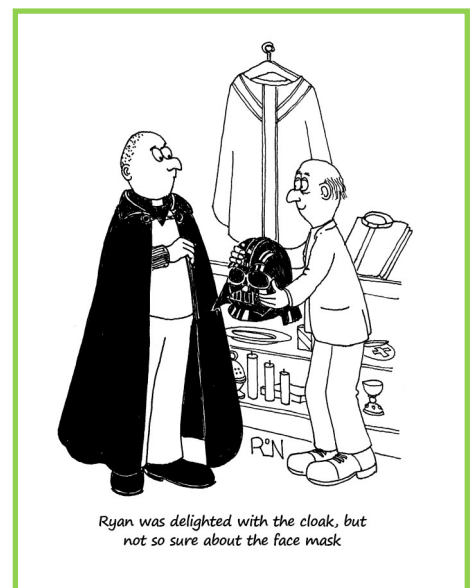
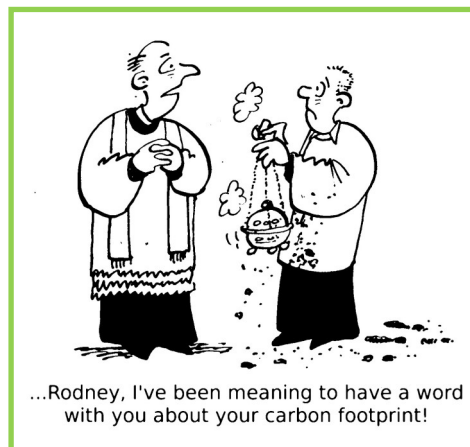
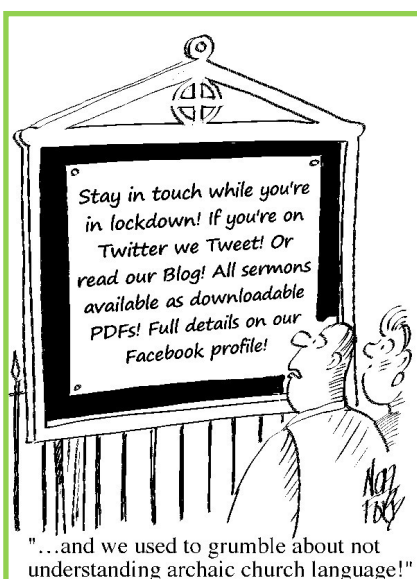
MY FRIEND

My friend died at the beginning of December. We had been friends for over 70 years since the day we started at Stockport High School in 1950. We went to different Teacher Training colleges but then taught together for 6 years at St Paul's Primary School. We laughed a lot together and understood each other really well. We were firm friends through marriages, births, divorces, deaths, and eventually, 10 grandchildren between us. However, we were very different in temperament and in our beliefs, so we never discussed politics or religion, but were happy to accept and respect each other's views. I knew that my friend did not believe in God but in spite of this, she was a true socialist, and in my opinion, so was Jesus. She spent many hours, in spite of failing eyesight, caused by macular degeneration, knitting tiny toys and tiny hats for the children's ward and maternity ward at Stepping Hill Hospital and in sewing beautiful patch-work quilts for the needy. She also raised hundreds of pounds for her favourite charity - 'Wellspring'.

In the last few years, although already a vegetarian, she became a vegan for ethical reasons. I knew how much she used to enjoy milk, cream, butter, eggs, and especially, cheese, but she had the courage of her convictions and stuck to her principles.

I will miss my friend.

Margaret Morris-Jones



LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL

Stuart Dean was sent the following which is very apt at this time. Unfortunately it was missed for the December magazine, but it is still very appropriate and gives us hope for the coming year.

Twas a month before Christmas,
And all through the town,
People wore masks,
That covered their frown.
The frown had begun
Way back in the Spring,
When a global pandemic
Changed everything.
They called it corona,
But unlike the beer,
It didn't bring good times,
It didn't bring cheer.
Contagious and deadly,
This virus spread fast,
Like a wildfire that starts
When fueled by gas.
Airplanes were grounded,
Travel was banned.
Borders were closed
Across air, sea and land.
As the world entered lockdown
To flatten the curve,
The economy halted,
And folks lost their nerve.
From March to July
We rode the first wave,
People stayed home,
They tried to behave.
When summer emerged
The lockdown was lifted.
But away from caution,
Many folks drifted.
Now it's November
And cases are spiking,



Wave two has arrived,
Much to our disliking.
Frontline workers,
Doctors and nurses,
Try to save people,
From riding in hearses.
This virus is awful,
This COVID-19.
There isn't a cure.
There is no vaccine.
It's true that this year
Has had sadness a plenty,
We'll never forget
The year 2020.
And just 'round the corner -
The holiday season,
But why be merry?
Is there even one reason?
To decorate the house
And put up the tree,
When no one will see it,
No-one but me.
But outside my window
The snow gently falls,
And I think to myself,
Let's deck the halls!
So, I gather the ribbon,
The garland and bows,
As I play those old carols,
My happiness grows.
Christmas ain't cancelled
And neither is hope.
If we lean on each other,
I know we can cope.



TOGETHER
WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS



Recipe

Celery and Stilton Soup

Serves 4

2 tbsp Extra-virgin olive oil
1 bunch of celery, leaves picked and sticks chopped
1 onion, chopped
1 medium potato, peeled and chopped
750ml vegetable stock
100ml single cream
100g Stilton, crumbled
1 tbsp chive, snipped

Heat oil in a large pan and fry the celery and onion for 8-10 minutes or until softened but not golden. Stir in the potato and stock then simmer for 15-20 minutes or until potato is tender.

Blitz the mixture with a stick blender until smooth, then stir in the cream and most of the cheese. Heat gently until the mixture is steaming and the cheese has melted. Season well, and add a splash more stock or water if you prefer a thinner soup.

Ladle the soup into four bowls. Crumble over the remaining cheese and top with the reserved celery leaves, chives, black pepper and olive oil.

A NEW YEAR BRINGS A NEW BEGINNING

As the new year starts and the old year ends,
There's no better time for making amends
For all the things we sincerely regret
And wish in our hearts we could somehow forget.
We all make mistakes - it's human to err -
But no one need ever give up in despair,
For God gives us all a brand-new beginning,
A chance to start over and repent of our sinning ...
And when God forgives us, we too must forgive
And resolve to do better each day that we live
By constantly trying to be like Him more nearly
And to trust in His wisdom and to love Him more dearly -
Assured that we're never out of His care
And we're always welcome to seek Him in prayer.

By Helen Steiner Rice

Thank you Judith Curry for the following poem she read in one of Stockport U3A's newsletters.

WHY ENGLISH IS SO HARD.



We'll begin with a box and the plural is boxes
But the Plural of ox becomes oxen not oxes
One fowl is a goose but two are geese
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese
You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice
Yet the plural of house is houses not hice.

If the plural of man is always men
Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?
If I speak of my foot and show you my feet
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?



Then one would be that, and three would be those
Yet hat in the plural would never be hose.
And the plural of cat is cats, not cose
The masculine pronouns are he, his and him
But imagine the feminine she, shis and shim!



The following articles are taken from Parish Pump.

SAINT DAY - 13TH JAN: HILARY, BISHOP OF POITIERS

Heroes are not always men or women of action. Sometimes the fight for right over wrong can be even more powerful when done through words and argument.

Hilary was such a champion of the Christian faith. Born into a wealthy pagan family in Poitiers in 315, he first became an orator of Neo-Platonism. Here he learned how to think and argue, but soon he lost confidence in paganism. By 350, Hilary converted to Christianity.

Already well known and loved in Poitiers, Hilary was made bishop only three years later. His oratorical skills in defence of Christianity were badly needed: it was a time when the Western Church was under severe attack. The heresy of Arianism, which denied that Jesus was divine, was spreading everywhere. Hilary became the outspoken champion of biblical orthodoxy, defending it at both the Synod of Bitterae in 356 and the Council of Seleucia in 359. Although briefly exiled to Phrygia in Asia Minor by the Emperor for his stand, Hilary continued to defend Jesus' divinity, and was praised by both Augustine and Jerome as 'the illustrious teacher of the churches'.

When Hilary returned from exile to Gaul, there was great rejoicing. He continued to write many doctrinal and historical works. He also became the first known writer of hymns in the Western Church, stressing Trinitarian themes and the unique relationship of Christ to the Father.

There are three churches dedicated to Hilary in England. His feast day begins the Hilary Term at the Law Courts and at the universities of Oxford and Dublin.

6TH JAN: EPIPHANY

On 6th January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. But who were these Wise Men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian.

Another church father, Origen, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the 8th century, the Magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.



EPIPHANY

Canon Paul Hardingham finds the wise men's gifts to be of help to us now.

EPIPHANY FOR TODAY

This month we celebrate Epiphany, when we remember the Magi from the East who followed a star to find the baby Jesus: *'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?'* (Matthew 2:1).

At the start of a New Year, amid the uncertainty of the pandemic, are we asking the same question? The gifts they offered show us how we can find Him in the uncertainty of the coming year: *'they bowed down and worshipped Him...and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.'* (2:11).

The *gift of gold* reflects that the Magi saw in the baby a king, destined to rule over us all. In this coming year we need to remember that Jesus is on the throne, the seat of power and authority in the whole universe. Will we crown Him king of our lives and dedicate all that we are and do to Him?

The *gift of frankincense* reflects that the visitors saw not just an earthly king, but God in human flesh. Incense symbolises the prayers of God's people and so this gift reminds us that God is worthy of our worship and prayer. Will we offer our praise and prayer, as we seek God to guide us through the uncertainties of this time?

The *gift of myrrh* reflects that these astrologers saw beyond the baby's birth and life, to His death which would secure life for all. Jesus was offered myrrh on the cross and was a spice used in His tomb. As we face the sufferings of this New Year, we can be confident that Jesus knows and understands our experience. Are we ready to trust Him?

'Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice! Heav'n sings Hallelujah: Hallelujah the earth replies.' ('We Three Kings').

PUZZLES

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



Sudoku

WORDSEARCH

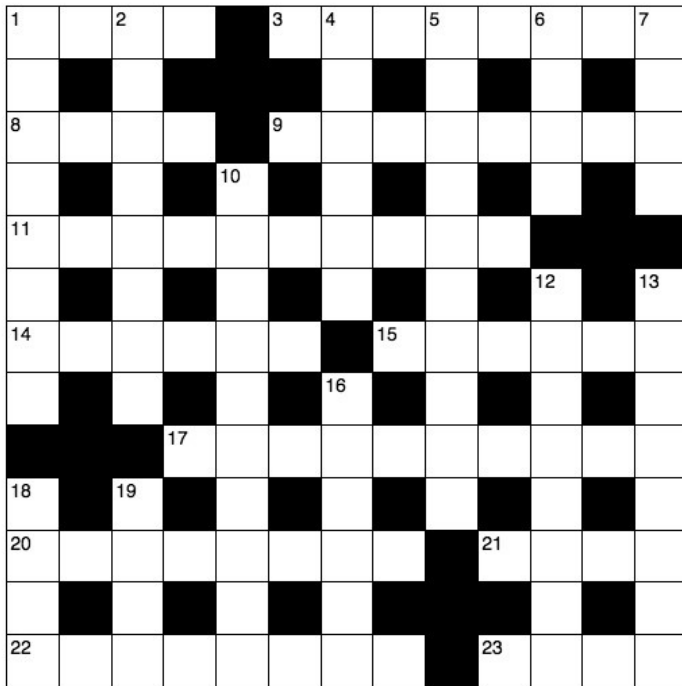
Can you find in this grid the words shown in **BOLD CAPITALS** in the Bible passage below? The words can be found in any direction.

The Christmas story carries on into the New Year, with Epiphany and the arrival of the Wise Men, led by the Star in the East. Through the eyes of faith, they saw Messiah in that small baby, and worshipped him, giving gifts that foresaw his life and work. New Year is also a time of new beginnings for us - resolutions about diets and paying the bills and doing better at work... Happy New Year!

Baby	Men	Worship
Bills	Myrrh	
Camels	New	
Epiphany	Resolutions	
Frankincense	Running	
Gold	Star	
Gym	Study	
Herod	Wise	
Jesus	Work	

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

CROSSWORD



Use the clues below to complete the crossword.

Across

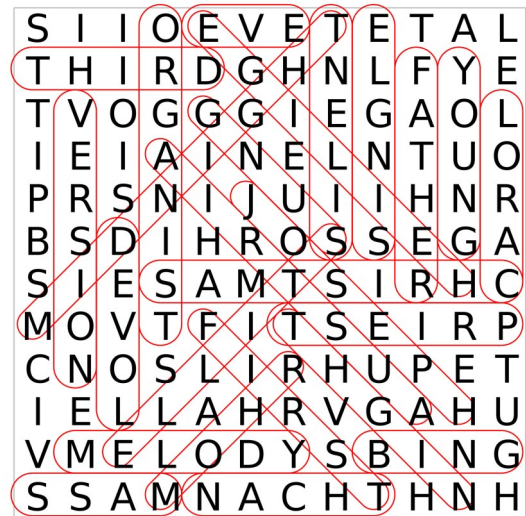
- 1 'Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a — began to crow' (John 18:27) (4)
- 3 Fetters (Job 33:11) (8)
- 8 Perform on a musical instrument (1 Samuel 16:23) (4)
- 9 Paul describes it as 'the third heaven' (2 Corinthians 12:2-4) (8)
- 11 Loyally (Deuteronomy 11:13) (10)
- 14 Hens? Me? (anag.) (6)
- 15 Not visible (Matthew 6:6) (6)
- 17 Predicted site of the final great battle (Revelation 16:16) (10)
- 20 Jacob's youngest son (Genesis 35:18) (8)
- 21 One of Zophar's eleven sons (1 Chronicles 7:36) (4)
- 22 For example, London, Paris, Rome (8)
- 23 United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1,1,1,1)

Down

- 1 Favourite church activity: Fellowship round a — — — (3,2,3)
- 2 Divinely bestowed powers or talents (8)
- 4 Pile together (1 Thessalonians 2:16) (4,2)
- 5 Commanded to justify (John 8:13) (10)
- 6 Timothy's grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5) (4)
- 7 Killed (Psalm 78:34) (4)
- 10 One of Graham Kendrick's best-known songs, — — King (3,7)
- 12 Indecency (Mark 7:22) (8)
- 13 Unceasing (Jeremiah 15:18) (8)
- 16 He prophesied 'the abomination that causes desolation' (Matthew 24:15) (6)
- 18 British Board of Film Classification (1,1,1,1)
- 19 Pans (anag.) (4)

ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

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



SUDOKU ANSWERS

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

1. Rudolph
2. Holly
3. Nativity
4. Decorations
5. Manger
6. Figgy Pudding
7. Tinsel
8. Garland
9. Father Christmas
10. Cards
11. Sleigh
12. Snowman
13. Turtle Dove
14. Angel
15. Carol Singers
16. Snowflake
17. Wise Men
18. Bethlehem
19. Mistletoe
20. Christmas Tree

1. O Come All Ye Faithful
2. Angels From The Realms Of Glory
3. The Holly And The Ivy
4. O Little Town Of Bethlehem
5. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
6. It Came Upon The Midnight Clear
7. Away In A Manger
8. Hark The Herald Angels Sing
9. In The Bleak Mid Winter
10. Once In Royal David's City



ANAGRAM ANSWERS

CHRISTMAS CAROLS ANSWERS