

The Link

ST FRANCIS • OLD SARUM • LONGHEDGE

DECEMBER 21

Suddenly a great company of
the heavenly host appeared
with the angel, praising God
and saying "Glory to God in the
highest heaven,
and on earth peace to
those on whom his favour
rests."

LUKE 2 13-14

WHAT'S ON AT HOPE CHURCH

Carols in the Hangar 5th Dec 3pm
Doughnuts 12th Dec 6pm
Christingle 19th Dec 4pm

Read the latest from
Teddybears

WHAT'S ON AT ST FRANCIS

Toy Service 5th Dec 11am
Carol Service 19th Dec 10.30am
Candle Service 24th Dec 3 & 6pm

Contacts

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ST FRANCIS THIS CHRISTMAS



Sunday 5th December Christmas Eve

9:30 AM Holy Communion
11 AM - Toy Service

If you bring a new unwrapped present for a child who might not otherwise have one to this service our local Children's Centre will deliver it in time for Christmas.

3 PM - Candle Service
6 PM - Candle Service

Come to the Candle Services dressed as a character from the nativity story (if you'd like to!)

11 PM - Christmas Holy Communion

Sunday 12th December Christmas Day

9:30 AM - Holy Communion
11 AM - Family Communion

10:30 AM - Carol Service

Sunday 19th December Sunday 26th December

9:30 AM Holy Communion



Christmas at Hope Church

A weary world rejoices.

December 5th

3pm Carols in the Hangar
Boscombe Down Aviation Collection

December 12th

6pm Christmas Doughnuts
Old Sarum + Longhedge Community Centre

December 19th

4pm Candlelit Christingle Service
Old Sarum + Longhedge Community Centre

Dear Friends,

Despite my decades, I still find there is something mesmerising about Christmas lights and haven't ever quite got over the thrill of seeing them. I can still remember the giddy excitement as a young girl of waiting until darkness fell and being taken from the village where I lived to see the Christmas decorations light up the Promenade in Cheltenham.

There was just something about seeing light transforming the darkness.

Did you manage to get to Salisbury Cathedral in November to see the Sarum Light show which ran over five evenings? You can probably find it on Facebook or YouTube if you didn't!

In a breath-taking programme lasting an hour, light in differing colours, abstract shapes, words, or recognisable images was projected 360 degrees around us, moving in unison with music, seeking out the columns, ribs, towering arches, windows, nooks and crannies of the ancient building and filling the space in between. In a darkened Cathedral, onlookers were held spellbound by the ever-moving array of colours and images reflecting our galaxy and planet, within a building that had been built and dedicated to the God who created them.



There was just something about seeing light transforming the darkness.

Darkness is not limited to the opposite of light though. We face it in many different ways and it can be disorientating and frightening. Sometimes the world or our circumstances can feel very dark; sometimes that darkness can be within us, in our thoughts and hearts. Where might we find the equivalent of a Sarum Light show or a Christmas display in our lives?

Jesus Christ uses the metaphor of light to describe himself as one who is able to transform darkness of all or any kind. He offers to illuminate the darkness of our lives by bringing the light of his love, presence, acceptance, peace and purpose. It is the quest for the mesmerising effect of his light that draws people to St Francis and other churches to learn, share and experience together what this means week by week. It's too good a thing to keep just for Christmas and we would love you to join the quest!

You see, there's just something about seeing the light of Jesus Christ transform the darkness and gloom of our lives.



As Christmas preparations begin and lights begin to festoon and transform our city as we look forward to celebrating the wonder of the birth of Jesus Christ, I pray that we may all catch something of the excitement and hope of his transforming light in our lives; a transformation that endures forever.

Every blessing,

Mary

Mary Terry

Curate@st-francischurch.org

01722 349886

MAKING CARDS FOR CHRISTMAS

Here are two simple ideas I have used this year which you might also like to use. They are easy enough for children to make, though younger ones will need a helping hand.

BABY JESUS IN THE MANGER



For each card you will need:- a blank card, a small piece of brown paper, a small piece of pink or flesh-coloured paper (or colour a piece of white paper), some thin strips of yellow paper (for the straw) and a larger piece of yellow paper, a small piece of silver or gold paper, scissors, glue.

1. Cut out a trapezoid shape from the brown paper to make the manger. Stick it to the card, leaving the top edge unglued for now. Cut out two "feet" for the manger from the brown paper. Stick them in place.
2. Draw and cut out a semi-circle from the yellow paper. Stick this under one end of the top edge of the manger. I added a thin line of silver glitter paint around the outer edge of the semi-circle - but this is optional.
3. Draw and cut out of the pink/flesh-coloured paper half of a face and a baby's hand. Stick these in place (see photo).
4. Cut a few thin strips of yellow paper to make straw. Tuck one end of each strip under the top edge of the manger, leaving the other end free. Glue down the top edge of the manger.
6. Finally, draw and cut out a star shape from the silver or gold paper and stick it above the manger.

POP-UP CHRISTMAS TREES



For each card you will need:- a blank card, an A4-sized piece of dark green paper, a small piece of spare card, a range of coloured dots, jewel dots, sequins etc for decorating the trees, scissors, glue.

1. Using a piece of spare card, make a template of a half Christmas tree.
2. Fold the A4-sized green paper in half. Place the straight edge of the card template on the fold, draw round the template and cut out through both layers of the green paper. Unfold the paper and you should have a complete tree. Make three trees in this way.
3. Take two of the trees and stick them together back to back down to the middle fold line. Trim to make the trees fit together better if necessary.
4. Stick the joined trees into the middle of the card, lining up the fold line in the trees with the fold line in the card (see photo). Stick the third tree to the front of the card.
5. Use the coloured dots, jewels, sequins etc to decorate all three trees as you wish.

This method can also be used to make pop-up angels or stars.



OUT AND ABOUT IN THE PARISHPARACHUTE JUMPERS AND MORE AT OLD SARUM AIRFIELD

We've all heard them! First there's the sound of the lift aircraft as it labours to get to its target height. Then there's the roar of the flapping parachutes as they open, followed by the screams of fear and excitement as they drop rapidly down to land at Old Sarum Airfield. Yes, the jumpers are at it again.

But it's worth going closer and seeing the parachutists as they come in to land at the airfield. Some manage to come in on the landing strip but others land further afield and, every now and then, one misses the airfield altogether and ends up on the Old Sarum open space or in a field. A pleasant hour can be spent watching the parachutists and enjoying a hot drink from the airfield café.



Near to the café is a monument that's also worth a look. It was unveiled in 1993 and is dedicated to the 9 A.O.P. squadrons that were formed at Old Sarum during the Second World War. The plaque beneath the bust of an airman reads: "... (their) gallantry and tenacity were to play a vital role in the final victory. They flew light, unarmed aircraft over enemy lines and many paid the ultimate price." They flew mostly over Normandy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany but some went as far as North Africa.

If all this has whetted your appetite, there's always the Boscombe Down Aviation Collection museum at the airfield that's good to explore. There's a chance to visit it for free after the Old Sarum and Longhedge "Carols in the Hangar" service at 3p.m. on 5th December.

THANK GOD FOR.....DARK STARRY NIGHTS

The other day, while I was stopped at a motorway roundabout, I happened to see a small notice stuck to the fence at the side of the road. It read: "Don't give up hope. When the sun goes down, the stars come out". These words made me smile then and I still smile now when I think of them.

Now that the clocks have gone back and winter is definitely on the way, it's easy to feel down at the prospect of the long dark nights ahead. But on a crisp, clear night when the stars are shining, it's worth wrapping up warm and taking a stroll outside to a place where there is little or no artificial light to gaze up at the heavens above.



The familiar constellations - the Plough, Orion and Cassiopeia - are like old friends, their names learned in childhood and never forgotten. Many is the time I have vowed to make the effort to learn more, but I've not yet got round to it. However, the feeling of awe and wonder when you look up and have a glimpse of the beautiful universe as God created it never fades with the years. And, for once, the dark months of winter are the best time to enjoy this view.

Thank God for the beauty of the night sky!



TEDDYBEARS TODDLERGROUP

It has been wonderful to restart our toddler-group, **TeddyBears** at St Francis Church. It has been lovely to greet old and new faces, to see how much the children have grown and hear how the pandemic has affected family life.

We meet **Thursday** mornings during term time, in the church at **10am until 11:30am**

If you have moved into the area with your family or have started a family during lockdown (- what else was there to do?!) and have under 5's, please do come and join us on Thursday mornings. We are a super, friendly group where all are welcome. We know those early years with young children can be incredibly hard, but we'd love to make it a bit easier with coffee, tea and cake and a huge space for your kids to play and socialise in, we don't even mind if you come in your pj's!

Last meeting this term: 16th Dec (Christmas party)
Next term's dates: 6th Jan to 17th Feb

A big shout out to our TeddyBears friends that have started Primary school! We are sad we didn't get to say goodbye to you but pray that you are all happy at big school. Come and see us if you get a chance - that includes parents!

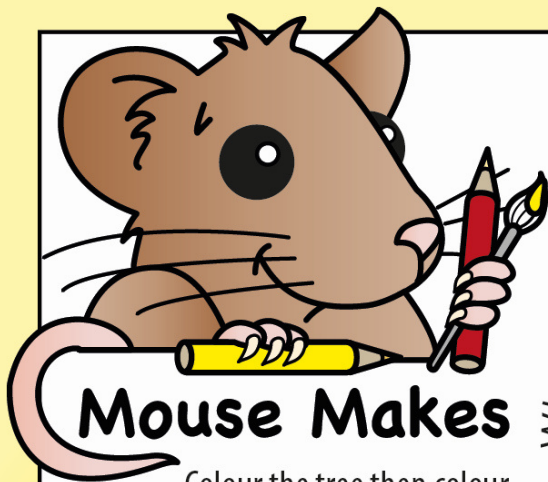
Katie, Ghilly, and The Teddybears team
For more information contact me at
family@st-francischurch.org.uk





Did you FOLLOW THE STAR around our parish last year?
 There will be new windows this year, starting at The Vicarage, Park Lane
 on 1st December.

Download a map at www.st-francischurch.org.uk or
 follow us on Facebook or Instagram



Mouse Makes

Colour the tree then colour in one star each day until Christmas. Leave the large star at the top of the tree to colour in on Christmas day!

What's on the Christmas Tree?

Presents at Christmas under the tree,
A red Christmas stocking waiting for me,
But what really is Christmas,
What is it about?
Just look and the Bible and you will find out!

It's about **JESUS**
- the best present of all,
JESUS our **Saviour**,
God's gift to us all!

A STAR

shows the way to Jesus

Read

Matthew 2:1-12

ANGELS

bring messages from God

Read about

Gabriel's message in

Luke 1:26-38

Read the

shepherd's story in

Luke 1:26-38

LIGHTS AND CANDLES

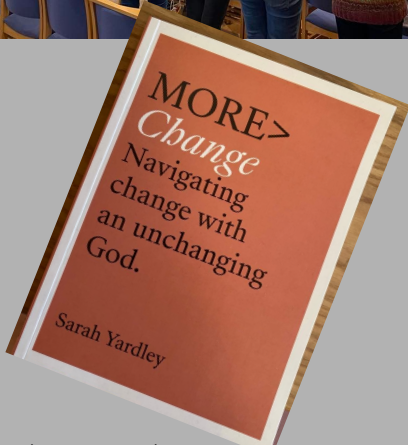
remind us that Jesus lights our way to God

Read Luke 2:29-32

PRESENTS

remind us of God's special gift to us ... **JESUS!**

"For God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life." John 3:16



WOMEN'S BREAKFAST



SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6TH 9 - 11.30AM

Just when I think I at last understand:
When I've got life fixed up the way I'd got planned;
Just when I think that my world is complete
Then change sweeps on through and knocks me off my feet.

That friend who I knew would be with me forever;
My faith in myself - because I'm, Oh, So Clever;
My job or a plan I've depended upon:
All of a sudden it's altered or gone.

The ground that I'm stood on is sliding or shifting.
I'm queasy, unsettled, confused or just drifting,
And just as my plans shift beneath me like sand
That's when, again, I am caught by God's hand.

Beneath every change, every plan that I made
There lies a foundation expensively laid:
Paid for by Jesus, and given with grace,
His strength underpins me, his love my embrace.

When life is a series of slamming shut doors
That's when to say, "Lord, not my will, but yours."

Then maybe, just maybe, I'll let myself go,
Ride on the winds, or go with the flow.
And maybe, just maybe, after the pain
With God's grace I'll find I am grounded again.

Ali Bailey

On the 6th of November about 60 women joined together
at St Francis for a morning of prayer, worship and
discussions on the theme of Change

SCOUT Christmas Post

Last Day of Posting

Tuesday 7th December 2021

Delivered in the South Wiltshire area

only 30p using the *Scout Christmas Stamps*.

Post in the special boxes located throughout the area.

Locations where stamps can be delivered:

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SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SCOUT GROUP



Stamps for sale and post boxes:

- Rachel Squire, 1 Assisi Road, Salisbury, 01722 339006
- Emma Turner, Castlemere, Stratford Sub Castle, 01722 341445
- Stratford Motors Garage, Mill Lane, Stratford Sub Castle
 - Co-op, Castle Road, Salisbury

ST FRANCIS COMMUNITY SINGERS

Will be singing Christmas Songs
at the Friday Café
in the coffee bar at St. Francis Church

Friday 10th December at 11.00 am

Come and have coffee and mince pies and a sing!

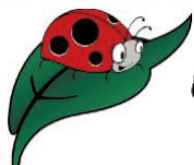


Raffle of Christmas Food Hamper in aid of 'Encircles',
a homeless, loneliness, isolation and poverty alleviation
charity in Salisbury.

Please see encircles.org for more info



Everyone welcome - do join us!!



Ladybirds Pre-School

Ladybirds Pre-school is your local childcare setting that has long established ties within our community located in St Francis Church hall. We are a free flow setting, this allows the children to decide where they want to learn, be it in our indoor area where their imaginations and creativity are inspired or in our exciting outside space.

We currently have spaces so please get in touch using the contact information below if you would like more information or to arrange a visit.



Ladybirdssp1@gmail.com 01722 502234



CONNECT @ ST FRANCIS



We meet on the second Wednesday of the month in the Beatrice Room at St Francis from 9.45am to start our meeting at 10am. There is a different theme each time we meet, after which we have coffee and biscuits and some socialising. Communion (open to all) follows at 11am.

50
and beyond...

We hope to see you at our coming events. The events are open to all, so feel free to invite a neighbour or friend!

FRIDAY DECEMBER 10TH AT 2:30PM

Come and get in a festive mood at our Christmas Tea in the Beatrice Room, St Francis Church. We will have carols, Christmas cookies, tea and even mulled wine!

Please RSVP to Kris Richardson at 01722 500274 or kris@richardson.net.

We are a St Francis based fellowship and service group, focused on people 50+ in age. To find out more, or to be added to the email distribution list, contact kris@richardson.net or any of the organizers.

STRICTLY COME LADIES

STRICTLY COME LADIES meets on the third Friday of the month 7.30-9.00pm in the Beatrice Room at St Francis Church. Ladies of all ages welcome. If you are new to church or local area this is a good place to make friends. For more info contact jacky.macleod1@ntlworld.com; April Hall tel:414296; Jenny Pankhurst tel:328761

DECEMBER 17TH

Join us for a cheery Christmas get together with a mixture of activities-games, music, reminiscence and seasonal treats. Wear your Christmas Jumper or something red and bring along an inexpensive gift for the free raffle.

JANUARY 21ST

Our theme for tonight is 'All things Scandinavian'. If you have any holiday photos or souvenirs bring them along and share your memories whilst enjoying some tasty snacks. We're hoping that Gwen Leslie will be able to join us and talk about her life growing up in Norway.



Family services at St Francis are now at 11am on Sundays. Children's Groups will resume in January. Please see page 2 for services in December





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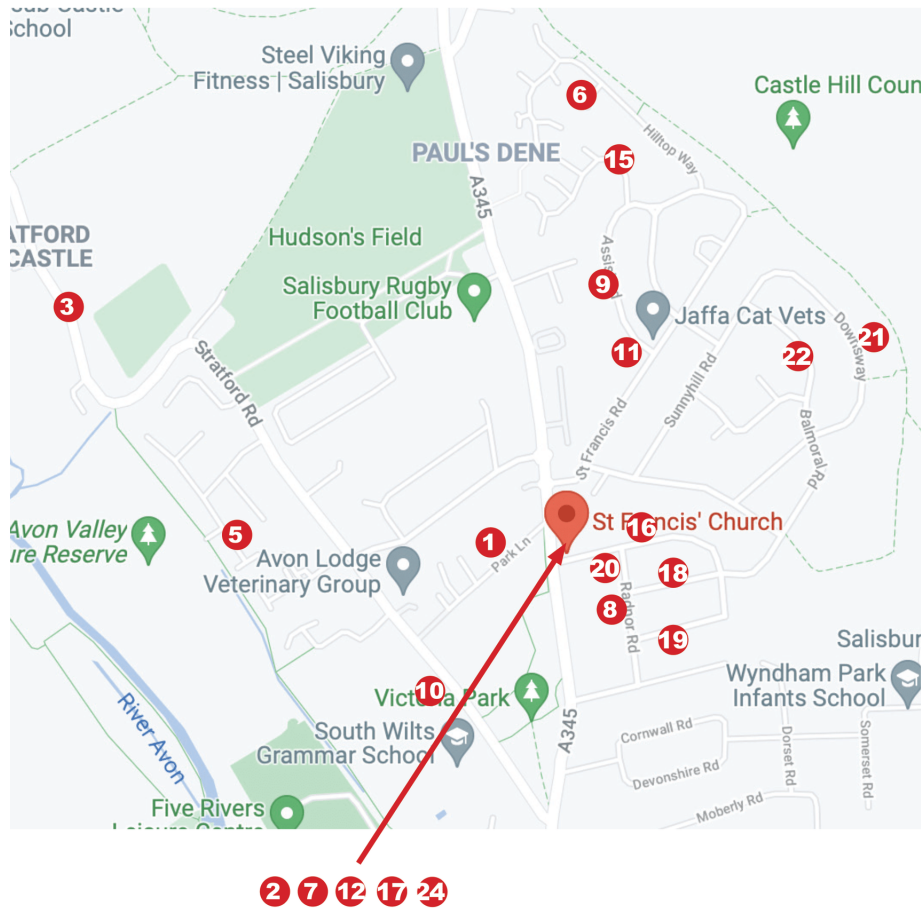
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Follow the star



Follow the Star and see the Christmas story light up in the St Francis Parish Advent Calendar!

From the 1st December a different window will light up to tell the story of Christmas, starting at the Vicarage (Park Lane) on 1st December and ending at St Francis Church itself on the 24th.

Windows will be lit from 5pm – 8pm every evening (just like a paper advent calendar only one window is revealed every day until all 24 will be lit on the last day).

Extra maps can be downloaded from www.st-francischurch.org.uk

We want everyone to be safe. You must abide by the COVID-19 regulations in force at the time of viewing. We will update the Facebook or Instagram page every day should you prefer to see the windows from home.

If you would like to see the windows on foot please remember to:

- Wear masks and bring a torch
- Keep a 2 metre distance from other households
- View windows from the street and stay out of private gardens
- Beware of uneven surfaces and passing road traffic
- Come back later if a crowd is forming
- Keep your children close – they are your responsibility