

December 2024 -

“The Son came out from the Father to help us to come out from the world; He descended to us to enable us to ascend to Him.” – *Anthony of Padua*

PARISH POST

Benefice of Veryan with Ruan Laniorne

Sunday Service Times

(see back page for more details)

VERYAN

EVERY SUNDAY 11.00 AM

RUAN LANIHORNE

1ST SUNDAY

Holy Communion 9.50 AM

3RD SUNDAY

Matins 9.50 AM

PORTLOE

1ST - 3RD SUNDAY

Morning Worship 10.50 AM

4TH SUNDAY

Holy Communion 10.50 AM

Advent Sessions

Monday 9th

The Roseland Inn, Philliegh
Food, good company and
thoughts about Advent and what
it means.

Christmas Flower Rota

Can you help in 2025?



Do you know anyone who would like to receive our newsletter?
Do you have an interesting story to share?
email:
veryanparishnewsletter@gmail.com

2024 in our Parish -

A year of community and celebration

Wow, where has the year gone? I can't believe it's December already! It feels like only yesterday we were celebrating the birth of our Lord and ringing in 2024. Looking back on the past year, it's clear that we've had so much to celebrate here at Veryan Church. Each moment has been a reminder of the love and dedication our community shares.

One of the most wonderful highlights of 2024 came early in the year when our very own Margaret Cortis was awarded a BEM. We were fortunate to celebrate this remarkable achievement with a special service attended by Colonel Edward Bolitho, the Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall.

(continued on pg2)



Representatives from the RNLI and National Coastwatch by the grave of the Hera



An hour with your grandchildren can make you feel young again. Anything longer than that, and you start to age quickly
– Gene Perret

(continued from pg 1)

Throughout the year, we've commemorated both the past and the present. February's service for The Hera was particularly moving. It was heartwarming to see our local school play such a vital role in keeping the memory of those lost alive. We were equally honoured to have a model of The Hera gifted to us by Kevin Patience—it now proudly graces one of the windows in the Lady Chapel. For visitors paying respects at The Hera's grave, it's a beautiful visual reminder of the ship's story.

We've also celebrated milestones in our bell tower. We've been blessed with lots of visiting teams of ringers. Nicola Bush, after years of incredible dedication, handed over leadership to Phil, who we know will continue to steer the team with passion and care.

Over at Portloe Church, traditional services like the Blessing of the Sea and the Harvest Dinner brought the community together, keeping cherished traditions alive and thriving. Meanwhile, Veryan Church rallied around vital causes, with two hugely successful food drives for Truro Foodbank. A particular highlight was welcoming a food bank speaker at our harvest festival, helping us all to reflect on the importance of giving.

We also had some fun, of course! Remember the summer fete? The rain in the morning might've tried its best to dampen spirits, but then the sun blessed us in the afternoon. Here's to sunnier skies in 2025!

Now, as we step into Advent, we look forward to a month filled with carols, joy, and even a wedding! Whether you come here to reflect, visit a loved one's grave, walk your dog through the churchyard, or simply soak in the sound of the bells, this church touches every corner of Veryan.

As your new-ish churchwarden, I'm ever so grateful for the love and support you've shown me this year. The dedication of every member of this congregation keeps our church alive, vibrant, and welcoming.

Wishing you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas, and I hope to see you at one of our services this December!

With love and blessings,

Pippa

Join Us for a Joyful Confirmation Service at Philleigh Church!

On December 15th at 2:30 PM, Philleigh Church will host a special Confirmation Service—a significant moment in the lives of nine candidates from our local villages as they affirm their faith publicly. Bishop Hugh will preside over the service in what promises to be a meaningful and celebratory afternoon.

We invite everyone to join us for this joyous occasion. This is more than just a service—it's a beautiful opportunity to come together as a united church family, to support these nine individuals as they take their next step in their spiritual journeys, and to reflect on the blessings of community and faith.

A Friendly Reminder for the Veryan Congregation

There will be no service in Veryan on December 15th, as we encourage everyone to head to Philleigh for this joint church celebration. Hopefully, many of you will be able to join in support of the candidates and to enjoy this momentous event.

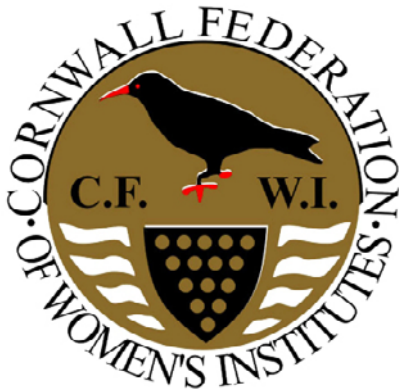
Keep Them in Your Prayers

If you can't attend, we ask that you please take a moment to pray for the candidates and their continued growth in faith.

This service is a wonderful reminder of the beauty of faith and the strength of fellowship. We cannot wait to see you there and celebrate together!

What's gone on?

A summary of what's been going on in the village and surrounding areas



VERYAN WOMENS INSTITUTE

In November we welcomed Jane who spoke to us about her work with Trading Standards. There are so many areas covered:-

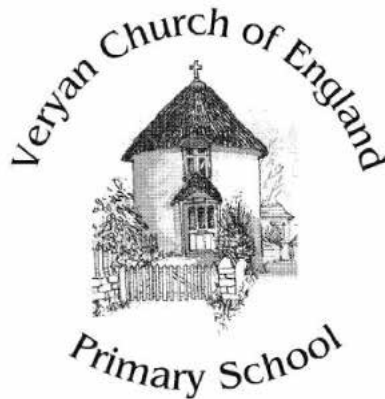
protecting consumers and businesses, business advice, Quality Standards, Animal Health, Citizens Advice, investigating complaints, the Made in Cornwall Scheme and more.

Jane also highlighted about scams which obviously can arrive by post, email, phone or on the doorstep. Scammers are just out to get your money – don't fall for it!

We meet early in December to enjoy our annual Christmas Meal at the excellent Kings Arms in Tregony.

Our meetings are usually held in the Parish Hall at Veryan at 7.30pm on the first Tuesday of the month. Visitors and potential members are very welcome.

Phone Mary Earp on 01872 501636 or look on our facebookpage,



VERYAN CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oh, what a term it's been at Veryan School! The run-up to Christmas is always a whirlwind of glitter, giggles, and goodness—and this year has been no exception! From parents' evenings to mountains of Christmas cards and the excitement of rehearsing festive plays, the children have truly embraced the magic of the season. And let's not forget their endless chatter about snow – because what's Christmas without a hopeful eye on the forecast?

This term, the children have also created beautiful Christingles and learned some sparkling new carols, bringing heartwarming festive cheer to every corner of school life. Amid all the fun, we said a temporary goodbye to the lovely Mrs Bull as she begins her exciting new adventure – motherhood! We wish her all the best and can't wait to meet the tiny new member of the Veryan family.

To all our friends and families at Veryan School, we wish you a very Merry Christmas filled with love, laughter, and maybe just a sprinkling of snow! See you in the New Year!



St Symphorian PCC

VERYAN CHURCH PCC

Big News for the Roseland Parishes

The Church Commission has approved the scheme to unite the six parishes of the Roseland into one benefice. After many years of progress, their official opinion on the proposal has been published. The expectation is for the scheme to be formally approved in the New Year once any outstanding objections have been addressed. We're optimistic about the many positive opportunities this unification will bring to strengthen our community and shared faith.

A Season of Gratitude

Christmas is the perfect time to recognize the amazing members of our congregation who help keep our church and community thriving. Thank you to Luke Dunston for his generous donation of a beautiful Christmas tree, which now stands proudly in our church. It truly adds a magical touch to our space!

Wishing You a Merry Christmas

This season is a time to reflect on grace, hope, and togetherness. Whether you're celebrating with family, friends, or enjoying a moment of quiet reflection, we pray that your Christmas is filled with joy and peace. We look forward to seeing you during our upcoming services and events—come and share in the spirit of the holidays with our church family.

From everyone at the PCC, Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

That faith which is never assaulted with doubting is but a fancy. Assuredly that assurance which is ever secure is but a dream. – Robert Bolton

Community Orchard Takes Root – Be Part of the Growth!

On December 1st, a new chapter began at the Veryan Allotment Community Orchard. Thanks to the Veryan Women's Institute, the very first trees have been lovingly planted! A crab apple, wild cherry, hazel, and rowan now stand proud, symbolizing growth, community, and a shared vision for the future.

The Veryan Allotment and Community Orchard, which officially opened in early October, has quickly become a flourishing hub for connection and sustainability. Come the New Year, we'll see even more life sprout in the orchard as a variety of fruit trees are planted. Their goal? To create a space overflowing with fruit to be enjoyed by all.

But that's not all—they need you to help make this vision come to life! Through the **Sponsor-a-Tree Program**, you have a unique opportunity to leave your mark on this special community space. For just £30 per tree, you can sponsor a tree, help plant it, and even have a personalised dedication plaque placed alongside it. Whether it's a dedication to a loved one, a celebration of life, or simply a way to give back, your sponsorship will help the orchard thrive. Want to get involved? Reach out to Janet to reserve your tree and make a lasting impact. Let's grow this orchard together—one tree, one story, one community at a time.

Contact Janet for more details and to sponsor your tree today! Janet Webb: 501815 or email jwhillside@btinternet.net.



Philleigh Folk
& friends



Steve Turner

Weds 11th Dec @ 7.30pm
Veryan Sports & Social Club, TR2 5UW

Tickets **£10**

on the door
→ visitruro.org.uk
01872 274555
philleighfolk@btinternet.com



VISIT RURO
TICKET OFFICE

**Warm Hub
Community Cafe**

CHAT, CONNECT, RELAX & STAY WARM



Free weekly hot lunches, tea & coffee



Advice packs & leaflets



Free Wi-Fi



Board games

A place to catch up with friends and meet new people

.....

Veryan Parish Hall
Every Wednesday
10.30am - 1.30pm

For more info contact Deanne Field
on 01872 501974
07775 682139
deanne@tobanddicks.co.uk



Advent and Christmas Services

Sunday 1st December

Advent Sunday Evensong St Mawes Church 6pm

Monday 9th December

School Christingle Service St Mawes Church 9am

Friday 13th December

Christmas Concert Tregony Bible Christian Church 6pm

Sunday 15th December

Nine Lessons and Carols St Rumon's, Ruanlanihome 6pm
Candlelit Carol Service St Cuby Church 6pm

Wednesday 18th December

Nine Lessons and Carols St Symphorian Church, Veryan 6pm
Carols in the Barn & Nativity Court Farm, Philleigh 6pm
Carols by Candlelight Tregony Bible Christian Church 7pm

Thursday 19th December

Carols by Candlelight St Just Church 7pm

Saturday 21st December

Carols in the Castle St Mawes Castle 6pm

Sunday 22nd December

Carol Service Portscatho United Church 10.30am
Carols and Communion. Portloe Church 10.30am
Christmas Celebration Tregony Bible Christian Church 10.30am
Christingle Service St Philleigh Church 4pm
Carol Service St Gerrans Church 6pm

Monday 23rd December

Family Nativity Service St Symphorian Church, Veryan 5pm



**Christmas Eve :
Tuesday 24th December**

Crib Service	St Gerrans Church	4pm
Crib Service	St Mawes Church	4pm
Crib Service	St Cuby Church	4pm
Midnight Mass	St Just Church	11.30pm
Midnight Mass	St Symphorian Church, Veryan	11.30pm
Midnight Communion	St Cuby Church	11.30pm

**Christmas Day :
Wednesday 25th December**

Holy Communion BCP	St Just Church	8am
Holy Communion	St Comelly Church	8.30am
Holy Communion	St Mawes Church	9.30am
Holy Communion BCP	St Rumon's, Ruanlanihome	9.30am
Holy Mass	St Mawes RC Church	10am
Holy Communion	St Gerrans Church	10am
Christmas Celebration	St Cuby Church	10.30am
Holy Communion	St Philleigh Church	10.30am
Holy Communion	St Just Church	11am

Advent and Christmas Services online

Can't make it to church this Advent and Christmas? Watch the weekly online worship services from across the Church of England and worship with them this festive season.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/advent-and-christmas-services>
or search "A church near you" for more details

Services start streaming from 9:00 unless stated otherwise.

A Message of Gratitude and an Invitation to Bloom

It is with appreciation that we bid a fond farewell to Nicola Bush, whose dedication to both the bell ringing and the flower rota has brought inspiration and joy to our church. Nicola has decided, most deservedly, to step back from these commitments as she focuses on her upcoming house move and her cherished role as a grandmother. Her presence and contributions will certainly be missed, but we send her off with overflowing gratitude and love.

Now, onto a matter close to our hearts—flowers! I have taken on the joyful (and, dare I say, slightly daunting) responsibility of organising the flower rota, and I am sincerely grateful for the support and advice I have already received.

Looking ahead to Christmas and beyond, I would love to see new faces joining us to keep the church in full bloom. It doesn't take grand floral masterpieces to make a meaningful contribution! Simple arrangements, whether for the porch or altar, are perfectly lovely. If you, or perhaps a friend, family member, or neighbour, have a passion for flowers, please reach out to me. The more the merrier, as many hands make light work!

Christmas Decorating Schedule

For those already on the Christmas rota, here are the key details for decorating the church:

December 22: Decorating can begin after the Sunday service, which concludes at 12 pm. The church will remain open until 6 pm.

December 23: The church will be available for decorating between 2 pm and 4:30 pm (due to a wedding at 12 pm and a family service beginning at 5 pm).

December 24 (Christmas Eve): The church will be open all day for any last-minute flourishes.

If none of these times work for you simply drop me a line, and we'll work out an alternative. It's important to note that we can't put flowers in the church before December 22, as advent traditionally calls for a flowerless church. We are grateful that Father Doug has graciously allowed us to begin the displays on this date.

Thank you, as always, for your contributions, creativity, and sense of community.

Warm wishes,

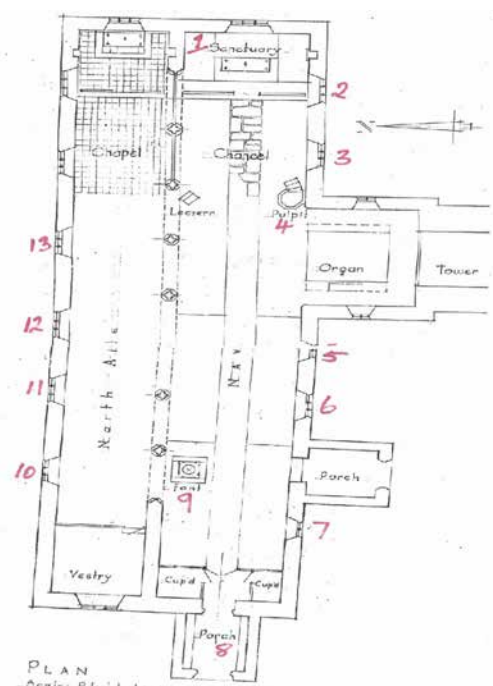
Pippa

Church warden / Flower Rota Coordinator

stephens.pippa@gmail.com

07815 286 905

Alter (1)	Sue Fallick
Window 2	Kathryn Walker
Window 3	Dee Field
Pulpit (4)	Sue Truscott
Window 5	Sharron Cartwright
Window 6	Helen Robbins
Window 7	Mandy Holloway
Porch (8)	Jo Elliot
Font (9)	Barbara Savill
Window 10	Anne Edwards
Window 11	Catherine Taylor
Window 12	Shelagh Kester
Window 13	Margaret Cortis



2025 Reading Rota - now available

The reading rota for the entirety of 2025 is now ready. Thank you to everyone who continues to volunteer their time to bring our Sunday services to life through scripture readings.

If you've been considering giving it a try, we would love to have you join the team! The more readers we have, the lighter the load for everyone. Don't worry— the readings are straightforward, and you'll always be met with warm, friendly faces as you read.

For those who are already on the rota, please remember that if you cannot make it on a particular Sunday, simply find someone to fill in for you. There's no need to notify, as long as the reading is covered.

The church rota is also online. You can access the latest version, where it will be kept up to date with any changes. Simply message me via email if you'd like it sent to you.

For anyone who prefers a printed copy, there will always be one available in the vestry, and I'm happy to print extra copies for you to take home.

Thinking of joining the team? It's a wonderful way to grow your confidence and actively participate in our services. Don't hesitate to reach out if you're interested or have any questions!

With thanks

Pippa

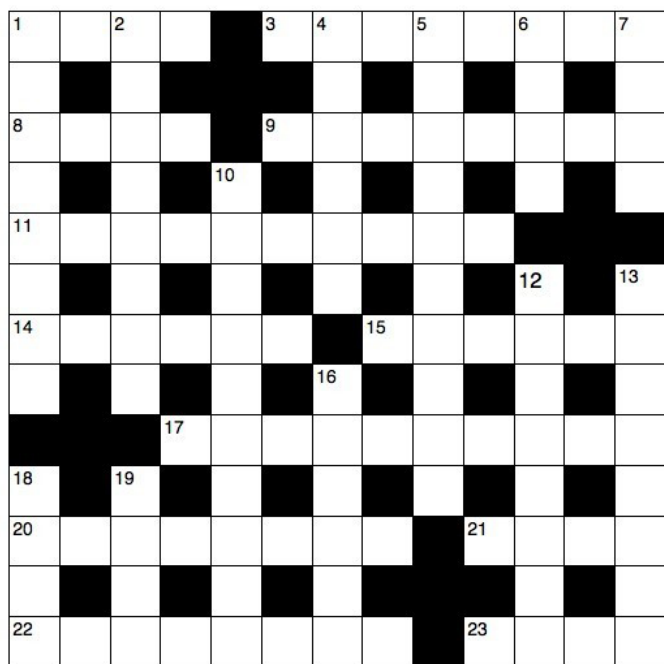
stephens.pippa@gmail.com

Reading Rota Coordinator / Church Warden

Rota from Jan 1st - March 8th 2025

Date / (Sunday number)	Feast / Festival	Service / Colour	Clergy / Leader	Organ	Reader	Readings Lectionary Year C
5th January 1	2nd Sunday of Christmas	White	Fr Doug	Doreen	Sue T Chris	Jeremiah 31.7-14 Psalm 147.13-21 Ephesians 1.3-14
12th January 2	1st Sunday of Epiphany	White	Douglas Wren	Chris	Margaret Sue J	Isaiah 43.1-7 Psalm 29 Acts 8.14-17
19th January 3	2nd Sunday of Epiphany	White	Jill	Doreen	Doreen Blair	Isaiah 62.1-5 Psalm 36.5-10 1 Corinthians 12.1-11
26th January 4	3rd Sunday of Epiphany	White	David	Anton	Julia Pippa	Nehemiah 8.1-3,5-6,8-10 Psalm 19* 1 Corinthians 12.12-31a
2nd February 1	Candlemas (The Presentation of Christ in the Temple)	White	Martyn Pinnock	Doreen	Sue T Chris	Malachi 3.1-5 Psalm 24.[1-6]7-10 Hebrews 2.14-18
9th February 2		Green	Fr Doug	Chris	Margaret Sue J	Isaiah 6.1-8[9-13] Psalm 138 1 Corinthians 15.1-11
16th February 3	3rd before Lent	Green	Bishop Graham	Doreen	Blair Julia	Jeremiah 17.5-10 Psalm 1 1 Corinthians 15.12-20
23rd February 4	2nd Before Lent	Green	David	Anton	Dave S Pippa	Genesis 2.4b-9,15-25 Psalm 65 Revelation 4
2nd March 1	Next before Lent, Quinquagesima, Transfiguration Sunday	Green	Fr Doug	Doreen	Sue T Chris	Exodus 34.29-35 Psalm 99 2 Corinthians 3.12 - 4.2
5th March	Ash Wednesday	Purple	Fr Doug			Isaiah 58.1-12 Psalm 51.1-18 2 Corinthians 5.20b - 6.10

Let's take a pause...

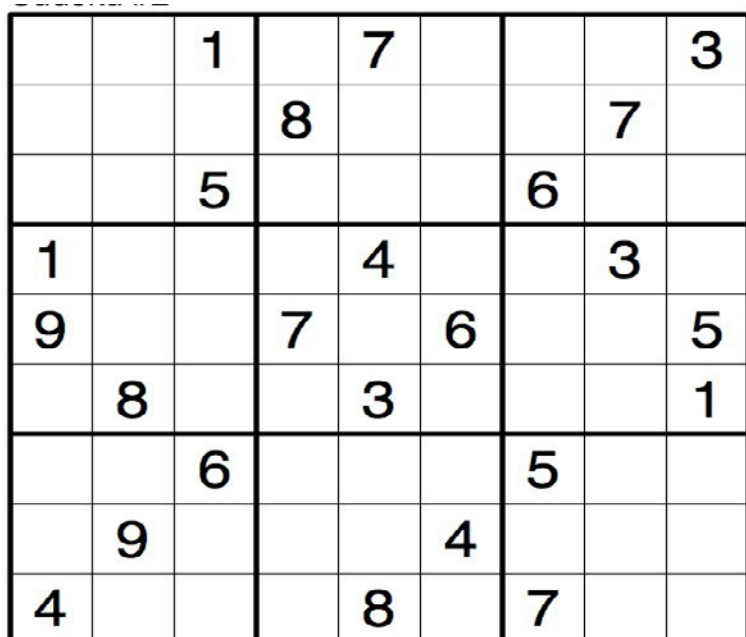


Across

- 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)



If we relied on
chocolate advent calendars
to tell us the date,
we'd all celebrate
Christmas Day on the 3rd
of December



Focus on; Prayer Squares

So, what's a prayer square?

It's a piece of knitted or crocheted cloth, less than 5 or so inches square that can function as a small version of prayer shawl—made in prayer, with prayer, for prayer.

Placed in a pocket or backpack or purse, the prayer square serves as a reminder: a reminder to pause and prayer and also a reminder that someone has already prayed for you.



Prayer squares in Churches have passages from the bible or little messages, such as

“We place in your hand this symbol of comforting hope, a pocket prayer shawl - A little hug from God to carry you through your day. May the presense of someone praying for you bring comforting hope, peace and safe harbour found in each prayful stitch created especially for you”

If you would like to make and donate a prayer square to our Church for visitors to take (donation to the Church would be optional), the pattern is on the right, more can be found on the internet, and there will be an area on our information table for them to be displayed

With thanks and love.

<u>Prayer Square -</u>	
3.00/3.50mm needles and DK wool cast on 27 stitches and knit 6 rows (garter stitch)	
7 th row	k4, p19, k4
8 th row	knit to end
9 th row	k4, p8, k3, p8, k4
10 th row	k12, p3, k12
11 th row	k4, p8, k3, p8, k4
12 th row	k12, p3, k12
13 th row	k4, p8, k3, p8, k4
14 th row	k12, p3, k12
15 th row	k4, p8, k3, p8, k4
16 th row	k12, p3, k12
17 th row	k4, p8, k3, p8, k4
18 th row	k12, p3, k12
19 th row,	k4, p8, k3, p8, k4
20 th row	k6, p15, k6
21 st row	k4, p2, k15, p2, k4
22 nd row	k6, p15, k6
23 rd row	k4, p2, k15, p2, k4
24 th row	k12, p3, k12
25 th row	k4, p8, k3, p8, k4
26 th row	k12, p3, k12
27 th row	k4, p8, k3, p8, k4
28 th row	knit to end
29 th row	k4, p19, k4
30 th - 35 th rows	garter stitch
cast off; sew in loose ends;	

Holy Days for this month

Let's take a look at some significant days and why they are special

6TH DECEMBER

ST NICHOLAS, ANOTHER LOOK AT THIS MUCH-LOVED SAINT

One account of how Father Christmas began tells of a man named Nicholas who was born in the third century in the Greek village of Patara, on what is today the southern coast of Turkey. His family were both devout and wealthy, and when his parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas decided to use his inheritance to help people. He gave to the needy, the sick, the suffering. He dedicated his whole life to God's service, and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. As a bishop in later life, he joined other bishops and priests in prison under the emperor Diocletian's fierce persecution of Christians across the Roman Empire.

Finally released, Nicholas was all the more determined to shed abroad the news of God's love. He did so by giving. One story of his generosity explains why we hang Christmas stockings over our mantelpieces today. There was a poor family with three daughters who needed dowries if they were to marry, and not be sold into slavery. Nicholas heard of their plight, and tossed three bags of gold into their home through an open window – thus saving the girls from a life of misery.

The bags of gold landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. Hence the custom of children hanging out stockings – in the hope of attracting presents of their own from St Nicholas – on Christmas Eve. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols of St Nicholas.

The example of St Nicholas has never been forgotten – in bygone years boys in Germany and Poland would dress up as bishops on 6th December, and beg alms for the poor. In the Netherlands and Belgium 'St Nicholas' would arrive on a steamship from Spain to ride a white horse on his gift-giving rounds. To this day, 6th December is still the main day for gift-giving and merry-making in much of Europe. Many feel that simple gift-giving in early Advent helps preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.

11TH DECEMBER

DANIEL THE STYLITE

Do you know any odd Christians? People with hearts of gold, who would never harm anyone... but who are nonetheless just plain ODD.... Well, Daniel the Stylite should be their patron saint. Perhaps he is the proof that God can bless and use any one of us – no matter how batty some of our ideas may be.

Daniel was born in Mesopotamia in 409 into a devout Christian family. He seems to have been an intense sort of child – when he was only 12 he became a monk. Some years later Daniel visited Antioch, and saw the famed Simeon Stylites, the wild, hairy monk who lived his life perched high on top of a pillar, dropping his fleas and lice on the people below.

Most of us would have walked on by, but in that moment Daniel's vocation was born. He climbed a ladder in order to talk to Simeon, and soon after that set out on pilgrimage. At Constantinople he came across a disused temple, reputedly inhabited by devils.

Most of us would have walked on by, but Daniel moved straight in. He bolted the door, and stayed inside for the next nine years. Local people fed him through a small window. Braving hideous noises and fighting violent apparitions occupied a lot of Daniel's time – perhaps it was like having a fifth century play-station?

Simeon Stylites died in 459, and left Daniel his lice-infested cloak – which inspired him further. With the help of some local admirers, Daniel came out of his temple and set himself up on a pillar just outside the city. The TV programme *Location, Location, Location* would have approved of the view over the Bosphorus, but not the amenities. When Daniel nearly froze to death one night, the Emperor was so worried that he built Daniel a new, more spacious home: TWO pillars close together, with a little shelter on top.

Daniel spent the next 33 years on top of his double pillars. People came to him with their problems, and he comforted and advised them. He preached every afternoon, on the love of God. He urged people to show hospitality to each other. He prayed for people. People loved him for it, and God blessed him, even though he did live on top of a pillar. When he eventually died up there, his hair was four cubits long, and he had sat so long with his knees up to his chest that his bones cracked when they straightened the body.

So next time you meet a good-hearted but eccentric Christian, take comfort – they could be far worse!

Hatred and bitterness can never cure the disease of fear; only love can do that. Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it. Hatred confuses life; love harmonises it. Hatred darkens life; love illumines it. – *Martin Luther King*

25TH DECEMBER

CHRISTINGLE, A GENEROUS PRESENT FROM THE MORAVIANS

It is the Moravians whom we have to thank for bringing us the Christingle. Especially one Moravian clergyman: John de Watteville.

On 20th December, 1747, John de Watteville was taking a children's service in his Moravian church in Marienborn, Germany. He led the children in some hymns, and read out verses which the children themselves had written to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Then he explained to the children that true happiness only comes through knowing Jesus. Jesus, said John de Watteville, "has kindled in each little heart a flame which keeps burning to their joy and our happiness".

John de Watteville then went on to illustrate that 'flame'. He gave each child a little lighted wax candle, tied around with a red ribbon. He ended his service with a little prayer: "Lord Jesus, kindle a flame in these children's hearts, that theirs like Thine become".

The visual aid was a great success with the children; for the Marienborn Diary for that day concludes: "hereupon the children went full of joy with their lighted candles to their rooms and so went glad and happy to bed".

The candle and red ribbon were remembered the following year, and the following after that.... The years came and went, and as the Moravians began to travel beyond Germany, so they took the custom with them: to Labrador, to Pennsylvania, to Tibet and Suriname, to the Caribbean and South Africa. In each country the Christians adapted it for their own use.

No one knows for certain when the word 'Christingle' was first used with regard to the custom. No one even knows where the word 'Christingle' comes from. Some people say it is from the old Saxon word 'ingle' (fire), meaning 'Christ-fire or light'. Another theory is that it derives from the German 'engel' (angel), meaning 'Christ-angel'.

In any event, the symbolism of Christingle gradually developed, until today the Moravians in the British Province use an orange, representing the world, with a lighted candle to represent Christ, the Light of the World. Nuts, raisins and sweets on cocktail sticks around the candle represent God's bounty and goodness in providing the fruits of the earth. Red paper, forming a frill around the base of the candle, reminds us of the blood of Christ shed for all people on the cross at Calvary.

In Moravian churches, the Christingle Service is usually held on the Sunday before Christmas or on Christmas Eve. The website for the Moravian Church says: "We are glad that the Moravian Church has been able to make this contribution to the wider Christian world."

26TH DECEMBER

ST STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

Have you ever stopped to consider that the very first martyr of the Christian Church (Stephen died c 35 AD) was a deacon? (But no, he wasn't worked to death by his church.) It was Stephen, one of the first seven deacons of the Christian Church. He'd been appointed by the apostles to look after the distribution of alms to the faithful poor, and to help in the ministry of preaching.

Acts 6 and 7 tells us all that we know of his life, and the passages seem to suggest that he was an educated Hellenistic Jew. Certainly Stephen's famous challenge to the Jews reveals him to have been learned in the Scriptures and the history of Judaism, besides being eloquent and forceful.

Stephen's proclamation on the day of his martyrdom pulled no punches. He told the Jews that God did not depend on the Temple. The Temple was but a temporary institution destined to be fulfilled and superseded by Christ, who was the prophet foreseen by Moses as the Messiah for whom the Jewish race had so long awaited.

Stephen then challenged his hearers for resisting the Spirit and for killing the Christ, as their fathers before them had killed the prophets. The Jews were so outraged by this that they stoned Stephen on the spot for blasphemy.

As he died, Stephen saw a vision of Christ on God's right hand. The men who were witness to the stoning placed their clothes at the feet of Saul (afterwards Paul), who (to his deep regret later) consented to Stephen's death.

By the fourth century Stephen had his own feast day in both East and West Churches. When his supposed tomb was discovered in 415, his popularity soared. His (supposed) relics were taken to Constantinople and then Rome, along with some stones (allegedly) used at his martyrdom.

Early on the Church made Stephen the patron saint of deacons. In the late Middle Ages he was also invoked against headaches (?!).

In England, 46 ancient churches are dedicated to him, most of them built after the Norman Conquest. In art Stephen is usually given a book of the Gospels and a stone, and sometimes the palm of martyrdom.



✝ *All those missing loved ones at Christmas*

✝ *All those who are working at Christmas*

✝ *for those who are having difficulty managing financially day to day with all they need for their families*

✝ *for King Charles and the Royal Family at this trying time*

✝ *All those worried about financial matters*

✝ *for all whose lives have been touched by tragedy, whether by accident or a deliberate act*

✝ *for those who have died and those whose anniversaries fall at this time*

✝ *All those away from their own country at Christmas*

✝ *All those alone and away from home at Christmas.*

✝ *All those trying to bring peace to the world this Christmas*

A prayer for December

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

Answers

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

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.

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