



December 2018 &
January 2019

Media, Power and Love

Throughout this year, the media have made us more acutely aware than ever of the way in which power is exercised. Political power has been to the fore, as powerful leaders of nations have threatened, negotiated, challenged the status quo. In our complex electronic world, we have seen the power of the internet to access information, to change our lifestyle, to expand our awareness of the world in which we live. We have seen the seemingly uncontrollable power of social media to create great opportunities for building relationships between people, to send instant messages to millions world wide, but, at the same time, to produce addiction, mental illness and social isolation. At a more personal level, people in leadership positions, whether in politics, industry, or the entertainment industry, to name a few, have been accused of abusing their power over the people in their employ. And, not a day goes by without there being some story of a parent's abuse of power over a child, a carer's abuse of power over a client, a teacher's abuse of power over a pupil. We hardly need to be reminded that power at any level brings responsibility.

All this has reminded me of the familiar saying of the 19th century historian and moralist, Lord Acton, that "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely"; and that can apply to anyone who has power over another, from politicians to parents. What is missing, when reports of the abuse of power arise, is the inability of the powerful to put themselves in the shoes of the powerless. Even if they have such an ability, they are apparently indifferent to the possibility of applying it for the good of others. Such an ability is called empathy, and, I want to suggest a rewriting of Lord Acton's saying, that "empathy tends to encourage, and absolute empathy is love".

A true story landed on my desk as I wrote this. A teacher of seven-year-olds asked her class to describe something they wished had never been invented. One child replied, 'the mobile phone, because my parents are on it every day.' The child's drawing of a crossed-out mobile beside a sad face saying, 'I hate it!'

was shared all over Facebook. The teacher said, 'We had a class discussion and every single child said their parents spent more time on social media than talking to them.'

A refreshing moment in this year was back in May when Bishop Michael Curry gave a memorable sermon to send Harry and Meghan on their way into married life. He was picking up on a speech by the late Martin Luther King that, "we must discover the power of love, the redemptive power of love, and, when we do that, we shall make of this old world a new world." And love is the only way. There is power in love to help and heal, to forgive and reconcile, when nothing else can. The reason that the way of love works is because the source of our lives is love, 'absolute empathy' is love, God is love.

In a few weeks time, we shall be celebrating once again the birth of Jesus into this world. If you ask what absolute empathy looks like, then here is where your answer begins, as the Christmas story, a decisive action in God's plan for his creation, unfolds from the birth into the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. God enters our world in a way that we can access and understand. He puts himself in our shoes. He knows what it is like to experience the ups and downs of life, even what it is like to make the ultimate sacrifice for his friends. In Jesus, God says to us 'I love you; whoever you are, whatever you have done, because I think you are worth it.' Ultimately, the Christian faith is in a God who has absolute empathy for us. To seek to follow him is to discover that absolute empathy, love, is more powerful than anything derived from position or status. So for this new year I invite you to live by this new saying, "empathy tends to encourage, and absolute empathy is love". What difference do you think that would make to the parents in my story of the seven-year-olds; or indeed to any of the multitude of relationships we have with other people? The way of absolute empathy will work because love is the way, and when love is the way, we can transform the world for the benefit of all. And that is why we pray every day, 'Your Kingdom come'.

With my love and prayers for a very blessed Christmas and a healthy and happy new year.

Derek



mothers
union



Christian care for
families worldwide

St Michael's Mothers Union

At the time of writing this report, our members will be looking forward to the November Branch 'Informal' meeting. Also, to the Annual Christmas Lunch, being held at the B/S Golf Club on Tuesday, November 27th, when one of our members, Jean Hootton, with husband, John, will be celebrating her 90th birthday, and receiving from me, on behalf of our members, a lovely bouquet of flowers and a signed card.

Mothers' Union continues to support the Tiny Tots at the Wednesday morning 10am service and, so, with the coffee fund have been able to donate £50 towards books for the children in church, which was much appreciated.

As last year MU is to run a chocolate tombola stall to support the church Holly Fair, being held on Saturday, December 1st.

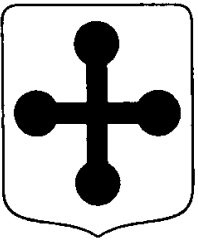
Our year will finish with an Advent Carol service in church lead kindly by the Rev'd June Knight and Richard Carr on the organ, on Wednesday, December 12th, at 2pm, followed by tea and mince pies. Visitors are always most welcome to join us.

We will beginning our 2019 year's programme on Wednesday, January, 9th, with the Rev'd Derek Hinge giving us a talk with photos, on his and Pauline's trip to Canada taken last year, and at which our members will very much be looking forward to joining them.

On behalf of MU, may I wish you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Heather Johns. Branch Leader.





News from St Michael's School

It's been another busy month at our church school. The school's Christian values for the second half of the autumn term, are generosity and kindness. Pupils will be thinking about loving others as we love ourselves, giving sacrificially and cheerfully, and caring for our creation. As St Paul wrote in the letter to Corinthians, 'God loves a cheerful giver'. There will be plenty of opportunities to reflect on these values in the approach to Christmas.

Although it's been getting colder, classes have still been out on trips in the local area over the last month. Reception visited the town library, joining in with stories and rhyme. Year 1 travelled by train to Stansted to visit Mountfitchet Castle and the toy museum, where they enjoyed themselves seeing toys from around the world. Meanwhile, Year 2 ventured further afield to visit Paradise Wildlife Park, to find out more about animals' habitats and learn about places where habitats are threatened.



As part of the centenary of Armistice Day, Year 6 pupils visited the Hertfordshire at War exhibition in Holy Trinity. The children were able to handle objects from the First World War and hear about some of the soldiers from the town who fought in the war. Activities and assemblies on the theme of Remembrance also took place in the week leading up to 11 November.

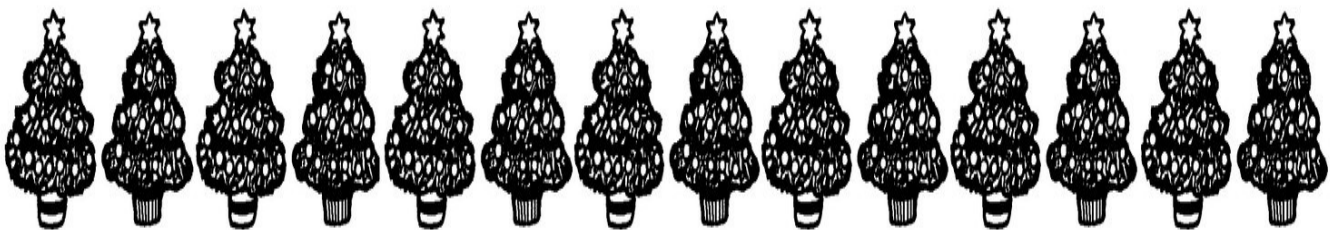
Before half term Val Ashwood led a school assembly on Nabikabala, telling children about her recent trip to Uganda to see the difference funds from St Michael's have made to the school there. The sponsored walk by 12 pupils from Year 6 in Hatfield Forest managed to raise over £250. Following on from the Lego exhibition to raise money, two pupils held a Lego card swap raising £35 and donations for teas provided by Governors at the parents' evening brought in another £40. All the money raised will go towards new windows and flooring for the new school hall.

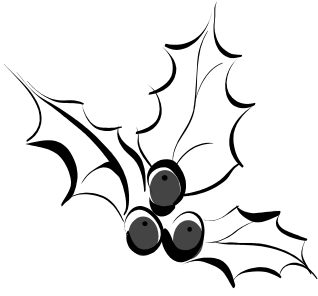
As Advent and Christmas approaches the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children are getting ready to perform their Nativity play in early December. We're also looking forward to Christmas lunches, concerts, Christmas jumper day, and the end of term carol service in the church!

It's important to be able to offer pupils a wide range of activities, but, like all schools, St Michael's is facing increasing pressure on resources. The school is always grateful for offers of support. You might be able to help by donating an old tablet computer you no longer need or supporting the PTA's events. Please get in touch with the school office if you want to know more about ways to help out.

With best wishes for a Happy Christmas from all at St Michael's School.

Mark Johnson





Don't Forget !!

to come to

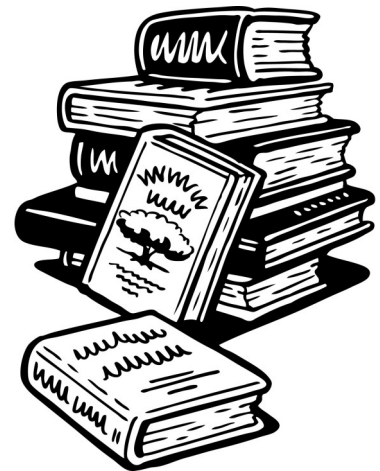
**St Michael's
Holly Fair**

Saturday 1st December

10.30am – 1.30pm

Charnley Hall

Windhill Churches Centre



..... and much, much more!



GIANT CHRISTMAS CARD

Don't spend money on cards and stamps sending Christmas Greetings to your friends at St Michael's. Sign our Church Card and make a donation to the work of The Children's Society.

The card will be on display in the Publicity Area from Sunday 2nd December.

A Very Happy Christmas to all our Supporters.

Isabel Hospice
Together we care

Isabel Hospice Lights of Love
4.00pm 2nd December
Market Place, Bishop's Stortford



Join us and remember a loved one this Christmas at the Lights of Love remembrance ceremony. There will be carols and readings and a small silver paper star for you to take home. You can make a dedication in the name your loved one, and view it in our Book of Love. Call 01707 382500 to make a dedication or go to www.isabelhospice.org.uk/bookoflove

Winter Sale and Coffee Morning

WINDHILL CHURCHES CENTRE

Saturday 26th January

10 am - 12 noon

Homemade Cakes and Preserves,
Books and Nearly new stall

Have a new year clear out or recycle those lovely but unwanted gifts you've received over the past year

We look forward to seeing
you for coffee, conversation
and cake



All are welcome to enjoy
a cup of coffee
and a homemade cake
while chatting to friends.



AT ST MICHAEL'S

Sunday 2nd December

6.00pm Advent Procession

A candlelit choral service of readings, music and carols

Friday 7th December

4.00-6.00pm Carol Singing in Jackson Square

Come and join us and other churches in Bishop's Stortford in singing favourite carols and raising money for The Night Shelter

Sunday 9th December

3.30pm Carols and Candlelight

An informal service in collaboration with Daniel Robinson & Sons. All welcome but especially those who have experienced bereavement in the last year or so

Sunday 16th December

6.00pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Monday 23rd December Christmas Eve

3.30pm The Blessing of the Christmas Crib

A service for younger children and their parents Children come dressed as a character from the Nativity

10.30pm The Choir sings Carols by candlelight

11.00pm Midnight Service of Holy Communion

Tuesday 25th December Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Parish Communion for Christmas
A Family Service with carols and celebration!



COMPANY AT CHRISTMAS 2018

Would you like to join a wonderful Christmas occasion?

Every year, under the banner of "*Churches Together in Bishop's Stortford*", we give a party for anyone in our Town who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day. This is a happy and popular event and is enjoyed by guests and helpers alike.

How can you be involved? There are FIVE ways you can help:

Be a Christmas DAY Volunteer

To ensure the safety of our frailest guests, **we need a minimum of 24 Helpers from 11.00 am - 5.00 pm on Christmas Day.** You will welcome guests, sit down with them and help to serve and share in a full Christmas Dinner. We also make about 60 "meals on wheels" which need to be assembled and taken out by drivers to those who are house-bound.

Be a Christmas EVE Volunteer

Between 3.00pm and 6.00pm we need volunteers to help decorate the Hall, lay the tables and prepare the vegetables (bring your own knives and peelers)

Be a Christmas Day Driver

We need people who are available at **11.45am** to help take out our 'Meals on Wheels' and then collect guests to bring to the Hall, and the again at **5.00pm** to take guests home.

Be a Christmas Day Entertainer

If you could perform between 2pm and 4pm on Christmas Day, please contact Doreen Richardson on 01279 654665

Cook a Christmas Turkey

We need several people to cook a large 20lb Turkey and bring it to the Hall on Christmas Morning

There will be a Meeting for all **Christmas Day Helpers** (excluding Drivers) on **Wednesday 5th December** at 8.00pm at the Methodist Church.

It is very important for all Christmas Day helpers to attend this meeting, as it is the only chance we all must meet with each other before The Day.

There will be a **Coffee Morning** to raise funds on **Saturday, 5th January** at 10am-12 noon at the Methodist Church
Offers of Help, Cakes, Scones and Gifts will all be gratefully received.

There is a sign-up sheet for volunteer helpers on the table in the publicity area in church, and anyone who would like an invitation to be a guest or pass on details about a potential guest should contact our Church Representatives, Margaret Fox or Jenny Klincke.

***Thank you all very much from the Chairman,
Mione Goldspink, and the Committee***

Country file

December & January 2019

Welcome my dear friend,

Yes, it's that season once again, beloved by many and dreaded by others, for a multitude of reasons. I personally love Christmas, but not all the commercialism that surrounds the real meaning of the season, the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. With each passing year I decorate my cottage less and less. Years ago I would hang twinkly lights round my porch and under the kitchen window, go out and cut holly and ivy and always have a very large real Christmas tree, which would slowly shed its prickly pine needles over the floor.

But wisdom comes with age, and I now have a very realistic imitation tree, fake holly and ivy and instead of festooning the house with hanging cards, they are lovingly placed in a decorative basket to be enjoyed at leisure by all, which saves visitors craning their neck to read the greetings high up the wall. Sorry if I am sounding like a character from 'The Christmas Carol'!

The beautiful autumnal leaves are daily fluttering to the ground, making swathes of golden carpets but heralding the arduous job of sweeping and clearing them away.



I know you are always interested to hear any bird stories, well, this one might surprise you. I have a sweet little robin which has been around for nearly two years, and has become very friendly; and yes, I know they call the robin the gardener's friend, but my little robin has taken this to a whole new level. Initially he started

sleeping in the wood shed every night. Then he began flying into the house every time I left the backdoor open; I have found him in the sitting room, in my study, found his 'leaving cards' in the Orangery and hall and even sitting on the working top in the kitchen.

But this intimacy reached a whole new level the other night, as when I switched my bedroom light on, there he was, sitting on my pillow waiting for me! I said ' I know you have formed an attachment to me, but this is not acceptable' I opened my bedroom window and eventually managed to persuade him to fly out, but before I could close the window, he was back in again, and decided to visit the bathroom! I love birds, but he has twice landed on my head, which freaked me out. Eventually he got the message that it was inappropriate to spend the night with me, and flew out.



Further bird news: a heron looking for fish in my nearly dry pond, a greedy flock of starlings twittering and frantically feeding from my feeders, I counted over twenty five! Vast numbers of my favourites, the goldfinches, tits of all types, plus the usual chaffinches, blackbirds, dunnocks, doves, pigeons, six pheasants, wrens and one sparrow. In the trees, crows, buzzards and kites. At night the haunting hooting of the owls.

Incidentally, talking of owls. My friend Lillian, who stays with me each summer, had a very frightening experience in her home town of Scottsdale, Arizona. Whilst out walking the other evening she a tiny dog frantically running for his life and an owl predating on him, swooping down time after time. She managed to rescue the dog, unharmed, and returned him to his owner, who had not realised he had slipped out of the house. Well done Lillian.

Well my friend, it has been such a privilege to share my country cottage over the last twelve months with you and God willing we will be able to continue meeting in the new year, so in the meantime, may I wish you a very happy, blessed and peaceful Christmas, and hopefully I will see you at one of the many services at church during the festive season.

God bless

June



HARLOW
CHORUS

Bach – Christmas Oratorio

Saturday 8 December 2018 – 7.30pm

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, BISHOP'S STORTFORD CM23 2ND

KIRSTY HOPKINS *Soprano*

JULIET SCHIEMANN *Alto*

WILLIAM WALLACE *Tenor*

NICHOLAS MORTON *Bass*

HARLOW CHORUS

PAUL AYRES *organ*

EDWARD-RHYS HARRY *Conductor*

TICKETS ALL UNRESERVED

All areas: **£15.00** | Under 18: **£5.00**

Box Office: tel **01277 362440** or email tickets@harlowchorus.org.uk

Online bookings (no fee) can be made at www.ticketsource.co.uk/harlowchorus

A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS



ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH
6.00PM SUNDAY 16TH DECEMBER
ALL WELCOME

RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREES

IN AID OF GROVE COTTAGE

Sunday
6 January 2019
10am-4pm

Link Road Car Park
Link Road
Bishop's Stortford
CM23 2BA

**Call in, drop off your
tree and make a donation
to Grove Cottage.**

Suggested minimum donation £5 per tree
Registered Charity Number 1122298

***Trees must be bare,
no decorations please!***

**Trees will be chipped
and recycled.**



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**CALL THE SITTER
& BOOGIE ON DOWN!**

**SATURDAY
1 DECEMBER 2018**

**DOORS OPEN
AT 8PM**

TICKETS
£20

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WWW.MENCAPGROVECOTTAGE.ORG

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Stansted Road, Bishops Stortford, CM23 2TH

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The home of Bishop's Stortford Mencap

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**Charity No.
(1122298)**

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THE SALVATION ARMY COMMUNITY CAROLS

Featuring:

*Kadleigh Temple Band
& Timbrellastic*

Saturday 8th December 2018

7pm

Bishops Stortford Methodist Church

A collection will be taken for:

**Helen Rollason
Cancer Charity**



Registered Charity No. 214779 and on Scotland SC009359; Social Trust Registered Charity No: 215274 and in Scotland SC037691, Republic of Ireland Registered Charity No. CHY6399; Guernsey Registered Charity No. CH318; Jersey NP00840
General: André Cox Territorial Commander for the United Kingdom with the Republic of Ireland: Commissioner Clive Adams

Calendar December 2018

1 st	Saturday	10.30am 6.30pm	Holly Fair WCC CH Herts and Essex School Christmas Carol Concert
2 nd	Advent Sunday	8.00am 10.00am 1.00pm 6.00pm	Holy Communion (said) Parish Praise Company on Sunday Lunch Advent Procession
3 rd	Monday	10.00am 7.30pm	Craft Group WCC CH Alpha Plus WCC 1/2
4 th	Tuesday	10.30am 7.30pm 8.00pm	Staff Meeting Albury Introduction to Christian Faith WCC CH Alpha 4 Home Group 1 Chestfield Close
5 th	Wednesday	10.00am 10.45am	Holy Communion Tiny Tots
6 th	Thursday	9.45am	Church Home Group WCC CH
7 th	Friday	9.00am 4.00pm	Prayer and Fellowship Group WCC CH CTBS Carol Singing Jackson Square
8 th	Saturday	9.00am 7.30pm	Bulgarian Education Session WCC 1/2 Harlow Chorus Concert
9 th	Sunday	8.00am 10.00am 12.30pm 3.30pm	Holy Communion (said) Parish Communion Holy Baptism Carols and Candlelight Service of Remembrance
12 th	Wednesday	10.00am 10.45am 2.00pm	Holy Communion Tiny Tots MU Advent Service
13 th	Thursday	2.00pm 7.00pm 8.00pm	Hillmead School Christingle Service Birchwood School Carol Service Holly Fair Meeting
14 th	Friday	3.30pm	Wedding Rehearsal
15 th	Saturday	9.00am 1.00pm	Bulgarian Education Session WCC 1/2 Wedding

16 th Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00am	Parish Communion
	6.00pm	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols
17 th Monday	2.00pm	TBSHS Yrs 7&8
	6.15pm	Choir singing at Frere Court
18 th Tuesday	9.20am	TBSHS Yrs 9&10
	2.15pm	TBSHS Yr 11 and 6 th Form
19 th Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion
	10.45am	Tiny Tots
21 st Friday	9.00am	Prayer and Fellowship Group WCC CH
	11.00am	St Michael's School End of Term Service
	2.00pm	Northgate School End of Term Service
23 rd Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00am	Parish Communion
24 th Christmas Eve	3.30pm	Blessing of the Crib Service
	10.30pm	Choir Sing Carols by Candlelight
	11.00pm	Midnight service of Holy Communion
25 th Christmas Day	8.00am	Holy Communion
	10.00am	Parish Communion for Christmas
30 th Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00am	Parish Communion

January 2019

2 nd Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion
	10.45am	Tiny Tots
6 th Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00am	Parish Praise
	11.15am	Sung Eucharist
	1.00pm	Company on Sunday Lunch
9 th Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion
	10.45am	Tiny Tots

13 th Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00am	Parish Communion
	12.30pm	Holy Baptism
	6.00pm	Evensong
15 th Tuesday	8.00pm	Charity Support Group WCC CH
16 th Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion
	10.45am	Tiny Tots
19 th Saturday	3.00pm	Bellringing
	4.00pm	Service and meeting for Bellringers
20 th Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00am	Parish Communion
	6.00pm	Choral Evensong
23 rd Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion
	10.45am	Tiny Tots
27 th Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00am	Parish Communion
28 th Monday	7.45pm	Fabric Committee Meeting WCC 1/2
30 th Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion
	10.45am	Tiny Tots

PARISH REGISTERS

Baptism

We welcome into the Lord's Family:

Iris Millest

21st October

Funeral

We extend our love and prayers to the family and friends of:

Kathleen Lewis

12th November

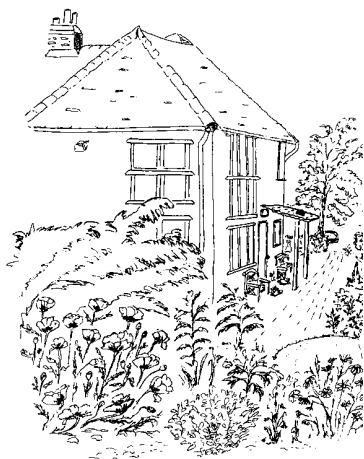
Burial of Ashes

We extend our love and prayers to the family and friends of:

Petal Bury

14th November

Paint with God and Quiet Days at Albury



Next are: -

Paint with God Day

Thursday 14th March

Quiet Day

Thursday 28th February

Both Days are from 10.30am until 3.30pm

Please bring a packed lunch – morning coffee and biscuits

and afternoon tea and cakes provided

For more information and to book your place

please ring June on 771756

**NB there are no Paint with God days in December, January or February
and no Quiet Days in December or January**



Grateful thanks to one of our parishioners who has kindly made a donation to purchase some spring bulbs for the WCC garden. I have planted some crocuses and snowdrops this week.

Martyn Greenwood

The next magazine will be the issue for

February 2019

The deadline for items for inclusion will be

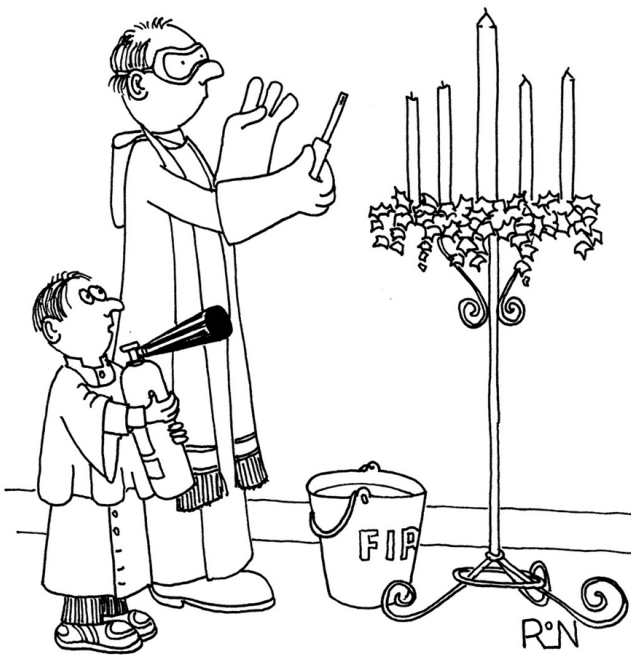
Sunday 13th January

All items to Robert Oliver please

email: **r.oliver2803@gmail.com** (Tel: 07918 121372)

Please include photographs when appropriate - Thank you

Finally on the Lighter Side !



After the first candle fiasco, Brian took no chances



.....and if you scan it, you can download my Christmas sermon