



Yours

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The United
Church
Winchester

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Tim's Letter: Hope has a Name, and His Name is Jesus

As we approach Christmas, the world around us often feels heavy with sorrow – wars rage, families struggle, and hearts break under the weight of loss and uncertainty. Yet, amid this suffering, Christmas offers a radiant beacon of hope: the birth of Jesus Christ.

Christ did not come into a perfect world. He was born in a humble stable, into a time of political unrest and spiritual longing. His arrival was not marked by grandeur, but by the quiet presence of shepherds and the light of a star. And yet, in that moment, heaven touched earth. God entered our brokenness – not to escape it, but to redeem it.

This is the heart of Christmas: Emmanuel, 'God with us.' In Jesus, we find a Saviour who knows our pain, walks with us through our trials, and offers peace that surpasses understanding. His birth reminds us that darkness does not have the final word. Hope is born. Light has come.

For those grieving, Christ brings comfort. For the weary, he offers rest. For the lost, he is the way. His love reaches into the deepest valleys and lifts us with the promise of eternal joy. As a church, let us be bearers of this hope. Let our homes, our prayers, and our gatherings reflect the light of Christ. Let us reach out to those in need, speak words of life, and celebrate not just the season, but the Saviour.

This Christmas, may we remember that the miracle of Christ's birth is not just a story – it is the answer to a suffering world. **Hope has a name, and His name is Jesus.**

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and above all, may the peace of Christ fill your hearts.

Tim

Editorial

This month's cover is *The Mystic Nativity* painted by Sandro Botticelli in 1500–1501. It is one of a series of paintings about the Christmas narrative studied by the South Wonston house group in a previous year. We found it helpful to discuss how the artist viewed the participants, and our response to this.

You can see *The Mystic Nativity* in the National Gallery in person or in close up on its website bit.ly/490y2OR.

On pages 10–13 we you will see 4 other paintings from the Gallery taking us through from the Stable to the Flight to Egypt.

The South Wonston house group is contributing an article on Handel which they hope you will find interesting, perhaps after enjoying a rendition of his *Messiah* at the Cathedral on 6 December bit.ly/4qHw502

We share Tim's recommendation for a thought provoking and light-hearted TV series to watch on cold winter's days and offer you a Christmas Quiz to stretch your brains by a warm fire.

We hope other house groups will be inspired to send in contributions to our future editions.

Wishing you all a Joyful Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

**Yours Team—Bob Lord, Dorothy Lusmore and
Sophie Armstrong**

Any views or opinions expressed in Yours are the views and opinions of the individual contributors and do not represent the views or opinions of The United Church unless clearly stated.

News of the United Church Family

A new baby granddaughter for the Clifford Family.

Tim and Sue Clifford have written to share the following news.



'Our daughter Anna delivered Fiorella Mae Mariani (7lbs 14 oz) at 8.04 am on 16 October in St Michael's hospital Bristol. She has brown eyes and dark hair like her father Thomas (who is Italian Australian) but we're told she might also end up blonde and fair like our daughter!



They are coping well, ably assisted by Sue who has been visiting Bristol for a few days each week – so if you don't see her much, this is why. Everybody in our family, and the in-laws in Melbourne, are of course delighted and besotted with little Fiorella. We are looking forward to the chaos of a family Christmas plus a baby.

Thanks to all for your best wishes.'

Tim and Sue Clifford

Please do let me know if you would like me to include anything in this space in future editions of Yours. You can email me on pastoral@ucw.org.uk.

Jane Lawson, Pastoral Lead

Incarnation

Jesus comes
to dwell among us
as *Emmanu-El*, a *with-us* God.
God in Christ,
the cosmic Word
announced by angels,
born of Mary,
the one who brings all things
into being
lies tiny,
fragile.
Creative divinity,
wrapped in vulnerable humanity.

There is no kudos in incarnation:
in weakness
the Christ-child
challenges power,
undermines prowess,
magnifies humility,
offering love, peace, joy
to God's people.
Good news, for all
clothed in flesh.

Howard Mellor

Joseph's Child

How could it be
This baby in my arms
Sleeping now, so peacefully
The Son of God, the angel said
How could it be?
Lord, I know He's not my own
Not of my flesh
Not of my bone
Still Father let this baby be
The son of my love.

Father show me where I fit
Into this plan of yours
How can a man be father
To the Son of God?
Lord, for all my life
I've been a simple carpenter
How can I raise a King?
How can I raise a King?

He looks so small
His face and hands so fair
And when He cries, the sun just seems to
disappear
And when He laughs, it shines again
How could it be?

How could it be
This baby in my arms
Sleeping now, so peacefully
The Son of God, the angel said
How could it be?

Michael Card

Bake Off Pushed me to Rely on Jesus

The winner of this year's *Great British Bake Off* told *Premier*



Christian News that her faith in Jesus carried her through the UK's most-watched cooking show. 'My faith has become stronger and stronger over the last year,' she told *Premier*. 'Being under the high pressure [of TV] really pushed me to rely on Jesus, on God, because there were a lot of situations where I just felt completely unequipped'.

Jasmine Mitchell, 23, is the youngest contestant in the series to win 'Star Baker' of the week five times. Her love of baking stemmed from hospitality being at the heart of her Christian upbringing. 'I've grown up in a family which gathers around food,' she shared. 'I've learnt a lot from my mum, aunts, family and friends who love bringing people together around the table.'

Jasmine recalled the Lord's Prayer being a mantra of peace during stressful times on the show: 'Walking to the tent from the green room, or waiting, I would just pray the Lord's Prayer a lot in my head. It didn't take away the stress, but I felt like God was walking along beside me with it.'

Whilst stirring up showstoppers each week, Jasmine was also studying for a medicine degree, balancing her time between filming and exams. 'I would look back at the end of the week and just feel completely held by God,' she recalled. 'It was a complete kind of miracle, to be honest, that I had managed to get through it!'

At age ten, Jasmine began losing her hair due to alopecia. Throughout her teen years, she wore wigs, saying: 'I was just so keen to look like everyone else I was around. To fit in and just not stick out, basically.' However, in her early 20s, she decided to embrace her natural look, telling *Premier* that it has been a journey of identity and faith. 'Often, I would pray for my hair back, in a

sense of: "This is what I want, this is what healing looks like to me." Ironically, healing isn't just what we ask for. God has healed me to make me more whole, and more me,' Jasmine said. 'I'm now starting to enjoy being different and just going with that. It's definitely a process of learning to see myself the way God sees me.'

Throughout the competition, Jasmine's church family has been integral to her success. She began by secretly sharing her on-show bakes with them, bringing broken-down bits of cake to have with after-service coffee. 'My showstopper for week one was this three-tiered blackberry pistachio cake. In practice, it was Sunday, and I kind of just scraped off all the fancy decoration and dismantled it, hoping that no one would actually guess that I was doing anything like being on the Bake Off, which thankfully they didn't!'

Source Premier Christian News

The Good Place

Tim preached a great sermon on 2 November beginning with the question 'Have you ever thought that it's wrong that those who don't deserve it get rewarded?'

If you weren't there or haven't already joined the service online, it's one



not to be missed. You can find it at bit.ly/3LmxmJT. The sermon starts at 25.30

Tim recommends the TV series The Good Place, which is on Netflix. (Ed.)

'My son, Eddie, has recently introduced me to the American comedy series The Good Place which we've been watching together. Although the plot evolves significantly, the show initially centres on the main character of Eleanor Shellstrop, a dead woman who is

placed in the 'Good Place', a Heaven-esque utopia designed and supervised by afterlife 'architect' Michael played by Ted Danson.

However, Eleanor knows that she does not deserve it, and she attempts to avoid being found out and sent to the hell-like 'Bad Place' by hiding her morally imperfect past behaviour while trying to become a more ethical person. The series explores some key ethical and philosophical conundrums such as how we might judge what is good and bad or who has and hasn't led a virtuous life. In other words, who 'deserves' to be in The Good Place. It's a great watch if you fancy something different, light-hearted but with some very thought-provoking themes.'

Tim

Nativity at The National Gallery



Image: Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *The Nativity at Night*, possibly about 1490

Christ Child, Mary and her husband Joseph travelled to Bethlehem to pay taxes, which the Emperor Caesar Augustus had declared that all citizens must pay. Once in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to her son in a shelter for animals and used their manger for a bed because there was no room left at the inn.

In this small devotional painting Geertgen tot Sint Jans ('little Gerard of the Brethren of Saint John') does not show the baby in traditional swaddling clothes. Instead, the tiny

naked child exudes rays of supernatural light which illuminate the night-time scene, one of the first realistically painted night scenes in Northern art.

It is so dark that we can barely make out Joseph standing behind to the right, or the faces of the ox and ass as they too look into the manger at the unexpected contents. The light emanating from the Christ Child lights up the faces of the little angels and emphasises their wonderment at his miraculous birth.

News of Christ's birth spread fast and it was not long before the first visitors arrived.

Shepherds had been keeping watch over their flocks at night when the angel of the Lord brought them news that Christ had been born.

In this painting we see the shepherds, young and old, crowding around the baby. A host of angels bear a scroll with the words they sang to the shepherds to announce the birth – Gloria In Excelsis Deo (Glory to God in the Highest).

Humble shepherds were not the only visitors who travelled to see the special baby.



Image: Guido Reni, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, about 1640

Wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, following a star. The star, positioned at the top of the painting directly above the Christ Child and the dove of the Holy Spirit, is also a symbol of God the Father.



Image: Jan Gossaert (Jean Gossart),
The Adoration of the Kings, 1510-15

In this painting, Gossaert shows the three men presenting their gifts. Their luxurious clothes contrast with the surrounding ruins. This was a common setting for paintings of this subject symbolising the collapse of the old pagan order and the beginning of Christianity.

The wise men brought gold, frankincense and myrrh, a fragrant resin used to embalm the dead and a symbol of Christ's future sacrifice. Caspar kneels

before the Virgin presenting gold coins in a chalice. Melchior stands behind him and Balthazar, the Moorish King, stands on the left.

The wise men had been sent by King Herod to find the newborn 'King of the Jews' and to report his whereabouts under the pretence that Herod wanted to go and worship the child. Fortunately, God warned the wise men in a dream not to return to evil King Herod and they departed another way.



Image: Workshop of Goossen van der Weyden, *The Flight into Egypt*, about 1516

After the wise men departed, the angel of the Lord returned to Joseph in a dream. He revealed Herod's wicked plan to seek out the young child and kill him because Herod saw the child heralded as the new 'King' and a rival to his throne.

In this painting of the Flight into Egypt, Joseph is shown following the angel's advice. In the background we see the head and torso of an old pagan statue falling to the ground, referring to the legend

that statues of pagan idols crumbled as the holy family, representing a new religious era, passed.

Near the small houses in the background a more horrific breaking of real bodies is about to take place, the massacre of the innocents, a slaughter ordered by King Herod of all children under the age of two. We see the young children being taken from their distraught parents.

Herod had hoped in this way to ensure that the baby Jesus would be killed. Fortunately the child remains safe, cradled in the arms of Mary who suckles him, while Joseph, with provisions and a straw hat where a halo might be, leads his family to safety.

George Frideric Handel

Handel was born in Germany in 1685, the grandson of a Lutheran Minister. A firm believer, he retained his Lutheran faith all his life, even after becoming an English citizen.



Handel's father originally planned that he should enter the Law, but he showed great musical talent at an early age. He learned to play the harpsichord, organ and violin, and from the age of nine began composing. For three years he wrote music each week for his local church but at eighteen he moved to Hamburg where he was employed as a violinist with the Hamburg Opera. In 1706 he moved to Italy where he became immersed in Italian opera forms.

Composing opera became his first love and he composed 47 in his lifetime. Moving back to Germany, he became Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover. Opera was very popular in England, so Handel decided to move to England and composed opera there for the next 25 years.

Queen Anne had no surviving children but many fairly close relatives who could have succeeded her. However, the Act of Succession had been passed which stated that no Roman Catholic could inherit the throne of England. On Anne's death the throne therefore passed to a distant cousin – the Elector of Hanover – who ascended the throne as King George I and Handel became composer to the Court. In 1717, at the King's request, he composed the *Water Music* for wind and strings, played as the court travelled down the river Thames.

George II then succeeded to the throne and Handel was commissioned to write four coronation anthems. The most well-

known of these is *Zadok the Priest*. This composition reflects his experience in writing operas as it is quite theatrical – a very long introduction during the monarch's preparation and leading up to the actual anointing itself as the choir begins to sing. This anthem has been sung at every coronation since.

Messiah *an Oratorio*

By 1730 opera had greatly diminished in popularity and Handel's opera company became bankrupt. It seemed that his career was over, and he might even be forced to go to debtors' prison. While he was in such trouble, he was sent a document entitled *Messiah* by

Charles Jennens, a leading member of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The text was compiled of extracts from the King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, focusing on the life of Jesus Christ and primarily intended as an evangelical piece. Handel was given funding by a group of charities from Dublin, Ireland, to compose a new work for a benefit performance that would help free men from debtors' prison – and so *Messiah* was 'born'! The first performance was on 13 April, 1742, in Dublin to celebrate Easter, and the libretto was sold at the concert venue during the première to allow the audience to follow along.

Handel often enjoyed the 'high life' and eventually became quite obese. He died in 1759 at the age of 74 and is buried in Westminster Abbey. His most popular and well-known compositions include *Water Music*; *Music for the Royal Fireworks*; *Zadok the Priest*; 'Arrival of the Queen of Sheba' from *Solomon*; and *Messiah*. Several of his beautiful songs have gained popularity in recent years, sometimes used as themes for TV programmes or films, for example 'Silent Worship' from the opera *Tolomeo* and 'Eternal source of light divine' which was sung at the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

The South Wonston House Group

SAMARITANS

Winchester & District

Christmas CAROL CONCERT

11 December 2025

7:30pm

St Peter's Church, Winchester

Conductor **John Lunt** • Adoramus Singers • Organist **Richard McVeigh**

Join us for this annual musical celebration of Christmas with well-loved carols and a sprinkling of new music, followed by mince pies and wine.

Every penny raised will help us to meet the vital running costs of the Winchester branch.

Available 24 hours a day, every day, Samaritans provides emotional support to anyone who needs us.

Every hour. Every day. Every life.



£15 General Admission • £12 Students • £8 Under 18s

Scan me to buy tickets or visit:
<https://tinyurl.com/sams-carol-25>

Limited tickets available on the door

An Advent Carol



Since the twentieth century, 'Joy to the World' has been one of the most-published Christmas carols, but it is not really a Christmas carol at all. The 'Father of English Hymns', Isaac Watts, wrote the work based on Psalm 98. It speaks of heaven and earth rejoicing at the coming of the King which the Church celebrates in Advent. There is no mention of Bethlehem, Mary, Joseph, a baby or the Shepherds. This is the Coming in Glory, not the first coming in poverty or obscurity. Verse three references Genesis 3:17–19 and speaks of Christ's blessings extending victoriously over the realm of sin.

Isaac Watts said the verses 'are fitted to any tune in common metre' but the tune we sing today has many echoes of Handel – the first four notes 'Joy to the world' are the same as 'Lift up your heads' from *Messiah* and other musical phrases from Handel's works may also be heard.

So, although not written for Christmas, we can rejoice as we look forward to a time when Christ will reign and heaven and earth will rejoice, and sin will be no more.

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;
⁵ make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,
⁶ with trumpets and the blast of the ram's
horn—
shout for joy before the LORD, the King.



Psalm 98

Dorothy Lusmore

Christmas Quiz Part 1

- 1 The United Church was formed from which three churches?
- 2 What event triggered the saying that if it rained on St Swithun's Day it would continue for 40 days?
- 3 Who was the money lender who lived opposite the United Church, lent money to Henry III, and whose taxes funded building part of Westminster Abbey?
- 4 What was the previous name of Westgate School?
- 5 What feature stands at the intersection of Upper High St and Sussex St?
- 6 What was the name of the Hotel and Coaching Inn that stood at the corner of High St and Jewry St?
- 7 Where is Dean Garnier's Garden?
- 8 Which is the oldest building in Winchester?
- 9 In which Winchester church can you find one of the oldest clocks in the country, dating from the 1500s?
- 10 Which well-known actor went to King's School and, on occasion, attended the United Church?

Answers will be available at ucw.org.uk/yours/ from 2 January. They will also be printed in February Yours. (Ed.)

Christmas Quiz Part 2

- 1 In Charles Dicken's *A Christmas Carol*, what is Scrooge's first name?
- 2 When do the 12 days of Christmas start?
- 3 How many gifts in total were given in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' song?
- 4 What popular Christmas song was actually written for Thanksgiving?
- 5 In which biblical book does it say, 'She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'?
- 6 In which biblical book does it say 'Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel'?
- 7 Why is Christmas sometimes written Xmas?
- 8 Which century were Nativity plays first performed?
- 9 The spices on mince pies represent what?
- 10 Traditionally which is the earliest date you should take down your Christmas decorations?

Christmas Quiz Part 3

Where in Winchester can you see the following buildings or features?

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



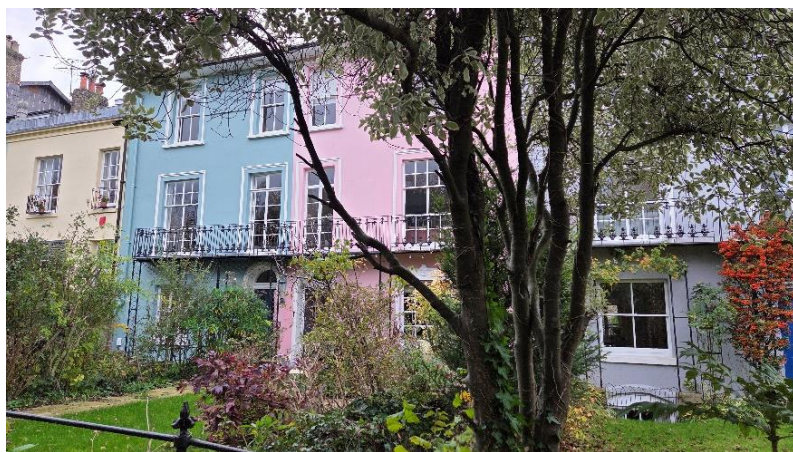
8.



9.



10.



News of the Wider Church



The construction of the **Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer** began in November after the charity behind the project reached its £40m fundraising target. The 51-metre Mobius strip-shaped monument near Coleshill, Warwickshire, will contain one million bricks, each representing a personal story of Jesus answering prayer.

Richard Gamble, former Leicester City FC chaplain and founder, said the project is 'a landmark of hope... where everyone represents a testimony, a miracle, an answered prayer'. The site will also include ten acres of green space and a visitor centre, and it will be visible from the M6, M42, HS2, and Birmingham Airport, potentially exposing 800,000 people weekly to the monument. He told *Premier Christian News* he first felt called to the project 21 years ago:

'I was carrying a cross around my county... and God said, 'build a landmark of a million bricks'. I've been on this rollercoaster journey for 11 years... it's been incredible seeing miracle after miracle. We've hit our target to start building, though we still need more funds to make the site fully operational.' He said he hopes the monument will inspire faith for generations. The project also aims to preserve Christian heritage. 'We need to reintroduce the narrative of what God has done in our country' he added.

Paul Bulkeley, who founded Snug Architects in Winchester, won a competition to design the monument some years ago. Paul is a committed Christian and worked closely with Churches Together in Winchester before moving to Southampton. For an interesting video see [Meet Paul Bulkeley, the Architect of the Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer : Transform Work](#)



King and Pope pray together for the first time in more than 600 years. King Charles has made history after becoming the first reigning British monarch to pray publicly with a pope since Henry VIII split from Rome in 1534. The event is perceived as a symbolic step in the

reconciliation between the Catholic and Anglican churches. Pope Leo, King Charles and the Archbishop of York joined together for a special prayer service in the Sistine Chapel in October.

As monarch, King Charles is the Church of England's supreme governor, whilst the Archbishop of York is acting as its spiritual head until Dame Sarah Mullally is installed in March. The ceremony opened with the Lord's prayer, read in English. The King and Pope then had a private meeting to discuss environmental sustainability; an issue which each man has spoken passionately about.



Church historian Dr Francis Young told *Premier Christian News* 'Pope Leo recognises in the King a fellow Christian leader, and that's a rare thing these days,' he said. 'There aren't many Catholic heads of state, and there are

even fewer heads of state who would be avowedly Christian in the way that King Charles is.'



Barcelona's world-famous Sagrada Família has officially become the tallest church on earth after a new section of its central tower was lifted into place in October, a milestone that marks both architectural achievement and enduring faith. The latest addition brings the basilica's height to 534

feet (162 metres), surpassing Germany's Ulm Minster, which previously held the record at 530 feet (161 metres). When completed in 2026, the central 'Tower of Jesus Christ' will reach

564 feet (172 metres), topped by a shining cross visible across the city, a symbol of the Gospel at the heart of Antoni Gaudí's extraordinary design.

Construction of the church began in 1882, and the great Catalan architect devoted the last years of his life entirely to the project. Gaudí described his vision as 'a temple that will speak of God to all nations'. Set to be finished 144 years after its foundation stone was laid, the basilica's completion will coincide with the 100th anniversary of Gaudí's death.



Illustrations of the nativity by the artist Paula Doherty feature on this year's Christmas stamps. The five designs are the Virgin and Child (1st class), Mary and Joseph (2nd class, large letter), shepherds (1st class, large letter), an angel (2nd class), and the Wise Men (£3.40).

A press release says: 'The illustrations for this year's Christmas stamps celebrate the beauty of surface and texture. The designs evoke the richness of inlaid marble, enamelling, marquetry, and collage – each suggesting a tactile, crafted quality. These techniques share a common thread: assemblage. Through various fragments brought together in harmony, Paula's work offers a fresh and vibrant interpretation of the Nativity story.'



Methodist Leaders have welcomed the appointment of Bishop Sarah Mullally as the new Archbishop of Canterbury. In a statement the President and Vice-President, and Secretary of the Methodist Conference expressed their encouragement at her appointment and the assurance of their prayers.

'We warmly welcome the news of Bishop Sarah Mullally's appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury. We pray God's blessing upon her for this profoundly important ministry. May God guide Archbishop Sarah in her leadership within our public life, within the Church of England and among the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Methodist Church and the Church of England are covenanted partners: in local communities across the country Methodists and Anglicans are growing together in responding to the gospel of God's love in Christ, enriching one another's discipleship, and sharing in worship and mission.'



URC Children's and Youth staff and volunteers have received a special word of thanks for their work at the Greenbelt Festival over the past four years. From 2021 until this past summer, the URC Youth CYDO+ Team has been central to the youth provision and programming at the arts, politics and spirituality festival. Greenbelt's Creative Director, Paul Northup, has written to say: 'We've found that working with a body of folk who already have a shared culture and understanding between them has brought a real strength and coherency to the task. We've felt really confident and comfortable with all that they've done in collaboration with us.'

Expressing gratitude, Paul said 'They've all brought a real creativity, commitment and compassion to the work. A whole cohort of teenagers has effectively grown up at Greenbelt, benefitting from and belonging to the community in the youth venue.' As part of the URC's wider partnership with Greenbelt, a large group of volunteers, led by URC Head of Comms Andy Jackson, have also been running the family café venue onsite.

Booking is open for Greenbelt 2026, on the last weekend of August, at Boughton House, Kettering. Full details at www.greenbelt.org.uk



The Church of England's *Living in Love and Faith* process, begun more than eight years ago in hopes of achieving a consensus on sexuality, has come under fire from both progressive and conservative quarters after the decisions taken at the recent House of Bishops meeting where they decided that there

must be further synodical processes for stand-alone services of blessing for same-sex couples and for reconsideration of the bar on clerics' entering into same sex marriage. In a piece published in October the Dean of Canterbury, the Very Revd David Monteith, wrote that the Bishop's statement had made him see 'that no significant change is likely in my life span ... Dealing with internalised homophobia is often a life's work for many of us, with the kindly welcome and acceptance by our Christian communities often being a key part of healing. I found my life and heart constrict as I received this news once again; being told loudly and clearly that our minority lives and loves must remain marginal, hidden and uncatered-for'.



Preaching in Southwark Cathedral, its Dean, the Very Revd Dr Mark Oakley, said that reading Dean Monteith's article had left him wanting to 'scream silently inside, because I recognised so much of it'. 'In all the church debates in over 30 years of ministry, I have to tell

you that I haven't recognised myself,' he said ... 'And I read, and I still read, and I don't see myself, nor anyone I know like me. I don't recognise my heart there, my need to be loved and to love, my longing not to spend my life alone or afraid.' 'It wasn't like that. I didn't choose anything. I discovered who I was, and it wasn't easy.'

The Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow, who stepped down as the LLF lead earlier this year after 18 months said that he had been 'dismayed to read comments suggesting the whole process has been a waste of time. The LLF process has been far from perfect ... but it was an attempt to model how people with different deeply held convictions could show love and care for one another. Society desperately needs this; and if the Church doesn't model this, our witness is seriously diminished'.

Mark Oakley's full sermon here bit.ly/3JMW7yi



Stormzy has been awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the University of Cambridge's Jesus College. In 2018 the Christian rapper and musician set up a scholarship at the university which funds the tuition and living costs of a number of black British students every year. So far, the Stormzy Scholarship has supported almost 70 students, and the university says 2025 is set to accommodate the largest cohort so far.

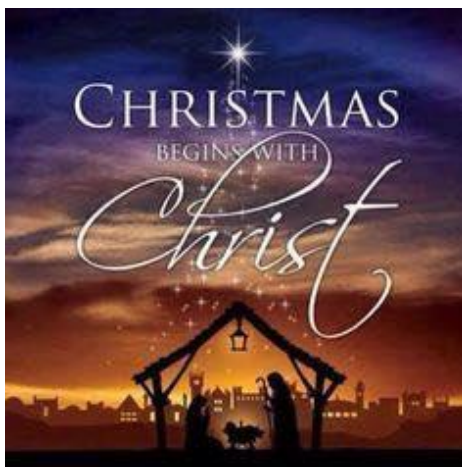
Stormzy, who's 32, was awarded the Honorary Fellowship in recognition of his cultural influence, commitment to social change and work championing educational access and equity. Earlier this year the university also awarded him an honorary Doctorate in Law in recognition of his scholarship programme.

The rapper, whose real name is Michael Ebenezer Kwadjo Omari Owuo Jr, has said his 'greatest desire is to be a great man of God'. He frequently references his faith on the public stage, including at this year's Brits. His faith-filled song 'Blinded by your grace' soared into the top ten of the UK's Singles Chart in 2017 and in 2020 he was given a Sandford St Martin award for his contribution to the public understanding of religion.

Stormzy also set up the #Merky Foundation in 2020 which pledges millions of pounds to tackle racial inequality and support justice reform and black empowerment in the UK.

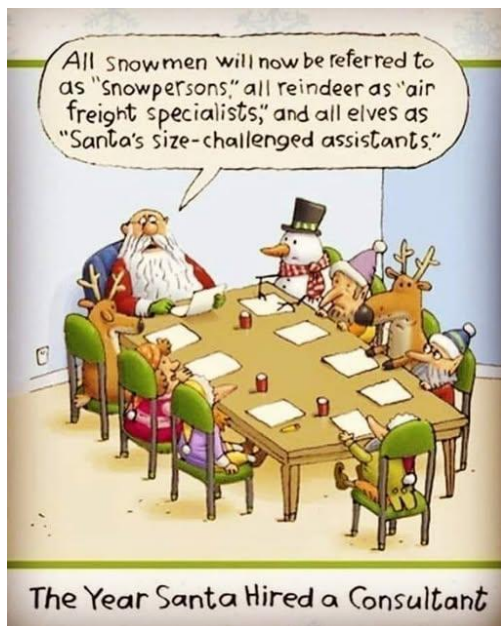
GAFCON breaks away from the Anglican Communion. The Global Anglican Future Conference is a global movement of conservative Anglican leaders and churches formed to address theological disputes and to advocate for a renewed focus on biblical truth, particularly looking at women in ministry and same sex relationships. GAFCON's break from the Anglican Communion was formalised on 16 October, 2025, when it announced it would no longer recognise the Archbishop of Canterbury's authority and would reorder the Communion with itself as the new foundation.

The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Rt Revd Anthony Poggo, said divisions 'which strain and wound the Communion' require 'urgent attention and repair'.



Comedy Corner

THERE ARE TWELVE
DAYS
OF CHRISTMAS.
NONE OF WHICH
ARE IN
NOVEMBER



The deadline for February *Yours* is **Monday 12 January**.
contributions welcome. Send to yours@ucw.org.uk.

United Church Winchester

Carols by Candlelight

Christmas Eve

4pm

Light Afternoon Tea

from 3pm

All Welcome





Services for December 2025

In-person and live-streamed

7 DECEMBER ADVENT 2

10.30 am **Morning Worship (HC)** Revd Tim Searle

14 DECEMBER ADVENT 3

9.00 am **Holy Communion** Revd Tim Searle

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Pat Fry/Andrew La Follette

21 DECEMBER ADVENT 4

10.30 am **Carols** Revd Tim Searle

24 DECEMBER CHRISTMAS EVE

4.00 pm **Carols by Candlelight** Revd Tim Searle

25 DECEMBER CHRISTMAS

10.00 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

28 DECEMBER

10.30 am **Morning Worship** tbc

HC: Holy Communion

UCW website: ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/

YouTube: tinyurl.com/ucw-services





Services for January 2026

In-person and live-streamed

4 JANUARY COVENANT

10.30 am **Morning Worship (HC)** Revd Tim Searle

11 JANUARY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Peter Castle

18 JANUARY WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHURCH UNITY

9.00 am **Holy Communion** tbc

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Churches Together

25 JANUARY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

HC: Holy Communion

UCW website: ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/

YouTube: tinyurl.com/ucw-services

