

St John's Anglican Church, 31 Avenue Carnot, Menton

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St. John's English Library President: Joanna Langhorne
Opening hours: Wednesday 14.30-17.30 Saturday 09.30-12.30
<https://facebook.com/menton>
<https://www.libib.com/u/stjohnsmenton>

**The Chapel in The English Cemetery, and
The British & Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery**
Via del Campo Santo, Bordighera

The British Association. Menton

Chair: Birgitt Nordbrink Tel: #33 (0)4 93 28 10 02
The Association meets Wednesday mornings 10.00-12.00 in the Louvre
website: <https://www.britishassociationmenton.org>

CROSS BORDER NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2024

ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, MENTON

EUCCHARIST - EVERY SUNDAY 10.30am

Celebrant: The Revd. Chris Parkman

Organist: Monsieur Benjamin Prischi

See inside for other December services

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THE CHAPEL in THE ENGLISH CEMETERY,

Via del Campo Santo, BORDIGHERA

EUCCHARIST - WEDNESDAY 11 DECEMBER - 10.30am

Celebrant: The Revd. Chris Parkman

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**THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF
THE HOLY GHOST, GENOVA**

**EUCCHARIST - EVERY SUNDAY - 10.30am HOLY
COMMUNION or SHARED PRAYERS - WEDNESDAYS 12.30**

email: chaplain@anglicanchurchgenoa.org

website: anglicanchurchgenoa.org

READINGS for SUNDAYS in DECEMBER 2024 Year C

1 December Advent Sunday Purple	1 st Reading Psalm 2 nd Reading Gospel	Jeremiah 33.14-16 25.1-10 1 Thessalonians 3.9-13 Luke 21.25-36
8 December Advent 2 Purple	1 st Reading Benedictus 2 nd Reading Gospel	Malachi 3.1-4 Luke 1.68-79 Philippians 1.3-11 Luke 3.1-6
15 December Advent 3 Purple All Age Christingle	1 st Reading Canticle 2 nd Reading Gospel	Zephaniah 3.14-20 Isaiah 12.2-6 Philippians 4.4-7 Luke 3.7-18
22 December Christmas Eve Purple	1 st Reading Psalm 2 nd Reading Gospel	Micah 5.2-5a 80.1-7 Hebrews 10.5-10 Luke 1.39-45
25 December Christmas Day White/Gold	1 st Reading Psalm 2 nd Reading Gospel	Isaiah 52.7-10 98 Hebrews 1.1-4 John 1.1-14
29 December Christmas 1 Morning Prayer Jeremy Auld	1 st Reading Psalm 2 nd Reading Gospel	1 Samuel 2.18-20, 26 148 Colossians 3.12-17 Luke 2.41-52

**BAPTISM, CONFIRMATIONS, MARRIAGES, FUNERALS
arrangements may be made by contacting the chaplain**

The Church of England invites to Holy Communion all baptised persons who are communicant members of other Churches which subscribe to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and who are in good standing in their own church. Those who are prevented by conscience or the rules of their own Churches from receiving the Blessed Sacrament are invited to receive a blessing. (1)

CHRISTMAS TIME SERVICES

TELL THE WORLD - BRING YOUR FRIENDS - ALL ARE WELCOME!

Traditional Carol Service – Saturday 7 December at 5.30pm. Christmas Refreshments following the Service.

All Age and Christingle Service - Sunday 15 December 10.30am

Christmas Eve Service – Sunday 22 December 10.30am

Christmas Day Service – Wednesday 25 December 10.30am

DECEMBER EVENTS

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

**Thursday 5th December 6.30pm
in the St. John's Library – Entry €5**

A talk given by Martin White, President of the European Cultural Route exploring the time that Stevenson spent in Menton which launched him on his extraordinary literary career

ST. JOHN'S JAZZ

BRASILIAN MUSIC in the Church

Friday 6th December at 6.30pm – Manu Carré Invite Um à Zero

Valvilene Coutinho – singing, percussion

Ricardo Anfonso – guitar

Enzo Cioffi – Batterie

Manu Carré – saxophone

Adults €15 Children/students €10

PLEASE NOTE

St. John's Library will be closed over Christmas and the New Year from 23rd December - 4th January. It will open again on Saturday 5th January.

Our chaplain Chris will be away during January and the Revd. David Houghton will be locum during that time. (2)

Reflection from our chaplain Chris God is with us

Christmas is when we celebrate the incarnation. That is, the incredible, astounding idea that God is with us. For the Jewish people, that was a deep, rupturing jolt: God until then had always been completely beyond, out there, maybe 'with us', but in a very 'difficult to believe it' sort of way.

This Advent Season as we approach Christmas, I am excited. I always love the Christmas Season. But this year I have the privilege too of looking forward to a trip back to New Zealand. As many of you know, my mother's side of the family are New Zealanders. I have lived there. It has been a formative part of my soul. I look forward with joy and hope to the visits and connections there. God will be with us.

Looking back at the year that was, I am deeply grateful for all Sarah and I have been blessed with, as well as for being given the strength in navigating the bumpier moments (part for me the death of my father). God has been with us.

But the incarnation doesn't say, 'God *was* with us'. Nor does it say, 'God *will be* with us'. It reminds us 'God is with us'! When you sit or stop to think about that, it is quite shocking. As I tap away at this keyboard now, God is with me, God is with us here in Menton. When I really stop and think about it like that, I realise it challenges me to a different way of being and living.

Here's a poem by Malcolm Guite. 'O Emmanuel', which I like:

O come, O come, and be our God with-us
O long-sought With-ness for a world without,
O secret seed , O hidden spring of light.
Come to us Wisdom, come unspoken Name
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame,
O quickened little wick so tightly curled,
Be folded with us into time and place,
Unfold for us the mystery of grace
And make a womb of all this wounded world.
O heart of heaven beating in the earth,
O tiny hope within our hopelessness
Come to be born, to bear us to our birth,
To touch a dying world with new-made hands
And make these rags of time our swaddling bands.

May this season be one in which we all are reminded God is with us, right where we are, right now.

In peace, Chris.

A Story

The following story is unattributed. I found it in: *To Heal and not to Hurt, A fresh Approach to Safeguarding in Church by Rosie Harper and Alan Wilson.* To me it's a reminder that we should all share the responsibility for protecting the vulnerable from exploitation and harm.

Jacqueline James, Safeguarding officer, St. John's, Menton

Once upon a time there were four people - Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody would do it but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody started blaming Somebody just because Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

EMMANUEL

He comes to us as One unknown,
without a name,
as of old by the lake-side.
He came to those men who knew him not.
He speaks to us the same word;
"Follow thou me!"
and sets us to tasks which He has to fulfil for our time.
He commands.
And to those who obey Him,
whether they be wise or simple,
He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings
which they shall pass through
in His fellowship
amd, as an ineffable mystery,
they shall learn in their own experience
Who He is.,

The Way I See It - Bath Salts for the Baby

I suppose in a way you've got to blame those 'Wise Men'. Their gifts to the infant Jesus – gold, frankincense and myrrh – have probably got something to do with the fact that we give gifts at Christmas.

We can't give them to Jesus on his birthday, because even Amazon can't deliver to heaven, so we give them to . . . well, Auntie Jo, grandson Reuben and the nice woman next door who takes in our parcels when we're not there. And then there's the nephews and nieces, the brothers and sisters, friends at church and of course the beloved, who always poses the biggest dilemma. 'In as much as you do it for the least of these my brothers and sisters, you do it for me', said Jesus, but as I look at my presents list it doesn't honestly look like 'the least'. My nephew works for a merchant bank and his annual bonus would probably pay off my mortgage. What do you give to the young man who's got everything?

Which brings me back to those Wise Men, who weren't all that wise, in fact – pedlars of spells and high class fortune tellers, really. But their gifts were clever. What do you give to the child who is 'born king', as they described him (rather unwisely) to Herod? Their answer was gold (because he was royal), frankincense (because he would be our great high priest) and myrrh (because he had been born in order to die). Their gifts may seem strange at first sight – and must have completely baffled poor Mary and Joseph – but they were absolutely right for the recipient: king and priest and sacrifice, as the carol says. When it comes to getting the presents exactly right, they're top drawer.

Which probably won't help much as we try to fathom out our presents list this Christmas. Do you remember John Betjeman's list of goofy gifts – 'bath salts and inexpensive scent, and hideous tie so kindly meant'? His lines make me wince every time I read them because it sounds exactly like my last minute Christmas shopping. But his wry list of inappropriate gifts is to be found in a poem about the Nativity. And in it the pathetic presents we buy and wrap up and hand over at Christmas are contrasted with God's greatest gift – 'the Maker of the sky and sea, become a child on earth for me'.

'It isn't the gift – it's the spirit in which it's given', we say. True. True, too, of that greatest gift of all, 'the baby in the manger stall'. And true, too, for the Wise Men, who got their gifts so exactly right. I reckon they'd thought hard and long about them, which suggests a truly wise approach to choosing presents. But on the whole I'd still avoid the myrrh for great-aunt Beryl (or the inexpensive scent).

David Winter, former Head of Religious Broadcasting at the BBC (5)

Have you the problem of choosing the right gift for the right person?

Here is what Francis Maitland Balfour (Scottish embryologist) suggested:-

“To your enemy give forgiveness;
to an opponent, tolerance;
to a friend, your heart;
to your child, a good example;
to a father, deference;
to your mother, conduct that will make her proud of you;
to yourself, respect;
to all men, charity.”

**THANK YOU to all who have contributed to the Cross Border in any way
MAY ALL OUR READERS HAVE A JOYFUL PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS
and A HAPPY HEALTHY 2025 !**

Thank Dickens for Christmas as you know it!

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens.

When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later.

So, for instance, in 'A Christmas Carol', Christmas is a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity(!). And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In 'A Christmas Carol' there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present.

Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported 'a pretty German toy' that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society.

(6)

December 3rd Francis Xavier
the seasick missionary who struggled with languages

Ignatius Loyala sent his friend and follower Francis Xavier (born 1506) to the Orient as a missionary. What a missionary! Imagine David Livingstone, Billy Graham and the Alpha Courses rolled into one. His mass conversions became legendary – he baptised 10,000 people in one month and in just ten years of work was credited with 700,000 conversions.

Xavier became the most famous Jesuit missionary of all time, working so hard that he had only a few hours' sleep each night. He was known as 'the Apostle of the Indies' and 'the Apostle of Japan'. He began by reforming Goa, which contained numerous Portuguese Catholics, notorious for cruelty to their slaves, open concubinage, and neglect of the poor. For three years, by example, preaching and writing verses on Christian truths set to popular tunes, Francis did much to offset this betrayal of Christ by bad Christians.

For the next seven years he worked among the Paravas in Southern India, in Ceylon, Malacca, the Molucca Islands, and the Malay peninsula. He met with immense success among the low-caste, but with almost none among the Brahmins.

In 1549 he ventured on to Japan, translated an abridged statement of Christian belief, and made a hundred converts in one year at Kagoshima alone. When he left Japan, the total number of Japanese Christians was about 2,000; within 60 years they were resisting fierce persecution, even to death.

Wherever Xavier sailed, he left after him numerous organised Christian communities. Not bad for a man who suffered seasickness and had trouble in learning foreign languages!

Xavier died in 1551, on his voyage to China. His body was preserved and enshrined for many years. His right arm was detached in 1615 and is still preserved in the church of the Gesu at Rome. He was canonized by Gregory XV in 1622, and declared Patron of the Foreign Missions by Pius XI in 1927.

His feast day is 3rd December.

**THAT THING CALLED
LOVE**

- L** = Learn to listen to each other.
Try to understand the other person's viewpoint and don't always insist on your way of doing things.
- O** = Overlook the faults and imperfections you discover in another person
Remember nobody is perfect – not even you!
- V** = Learn to Value each other.
Praise the good qualities in someone and learn to be thankful for them.
Remember God uses the awkward people to teach us tolerance.
- E** = Express your appreciation whenever you can.
Everyone could do with a little encouragement.

'Merry Christmas and Happy New Year' to help you say it to other nationalities

Apache (Western) - Gozhqq Keshmish

Croatian – Sretan Bozic

Danish – Glædelig jul og godt nytår

French – Joyeux Noel et Bonne Année!

Greek - Kala Christougenna Ki'eftihismenos O Kenourios

Irish - Nollaig Shona Dhuit

Italian - Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo!

Korean - Sung Tan Chuk Ha

Portuguese – Boas Festas e um feliz Ano Nuovo

Spanish – Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo

Ukrainian – Veseloho Vam Rizdva I Shchastlyvoho Novoho Roku

Vietnamese – Chuc Mung Giang

Life at St. James-the-Least

On how to survive Christmas in the Parish

My dear nephew Darren,

I am sorry you will have to take your Christmas Services sporting a black eye, but I have no sympathy. It doesn't matter what competition you are asked to judge – biggest marrow, best decorated shower cap, most beautiful goldfish – the winner should always be the muscular entrant with the steely glint in their eye. The meek may well be destined to inherit the earth, but they will never win the best decorated Christmas cake competition. You should have known that a lady who works at the “Rose and Crown” pulling pints and throwing clients out at closing time is not one to be awarded second prize.

Lady Bartle has won ours every year for the last 50 years – even though we all know that her French pastry chef will have spent the previous month laboriously decorating the thing. Someone once rashly asked her how she came up with such novel ideas every year. Lady B. promptly started to talk about grouse shooting with a look that made it quite clear how she would have dealt with her interrogator had she herself been feathered.

As you are now well on your way to learning, the Christmas Fair presents a minefield of potential disasters. I treasure the look on our Health and Safety officer's face each year as he sits in a corner, surrounded by fire extinguishers for every possible contingency, concentrating on the one plug in our church hall providing power for two tea urns, Christmas tree lights, amplifying equipment and mince pie warmer.

You must also make sure you spend absolutely the same sum at every stall. Five pence more on Admiral Thornton's coconut shy than on Mrs Eccles' roll-a-penny will never be forgotten – or forgiven- I sometimes think that Lord Cleethorpe's practice of arriving, dashing round every stall, showering a £5 note at each, with not the slightest interest in what he's buying or entering, then bolting back to his castle for a restorative scotch is the best policy

The arrival of Father Christmas is always a highlight, although I do feel that your new child protection policy, requiring to be in a locked room at one end of the building and the children communicating with him from one at the other end by internal telephone and video link a little over-cautious.

Our poor verger has played Father Christmas for as long as anyone can remember – until last year, when he executed his escape. He promised every child that they would receive all the gifts they wanted and encouraged them to let their imaginations rip. We had a village of tearful children on Christmas morning when they discovered they had not received private jet planes, main line railway station or

a major football team. The look of joy on the dear man's face when he was told he'd been sacked was quite touching.

So, as you carol your way through the Services, may I suggest that you hold them all by candlelight, so your shiner may be a little less obtrusive.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace.

* * * * *

28th December - Holy Innocents

The death of a very young child is perhaps the hardest grief of all to bear. So the 28th December is a very poignant day in the church calendar. It is when the worldwide Church joins with bereaved parents to grieve the loss of babies and young children. For Holy Innocents day recalls the massacre of the young male children of Bethlehem by Herod the Great.

Herod had been told by the magi, or wise men, that a great king had been born in Bethlehem, and he felt shaken. How could a child in unimportant little Bethlehem be so powerful that the stars in the night sky honoured his birth! Herod took the magi so seriously that he decided to try and kill this new young rival. He decreed that every male baby of two years and under should be killed. (Matthew 2.1-18)

Bethlehem was not a large place, and Bible commentators estimate that between six and 25 youngsters were slaughtered by Roman soldiers. Their mothers were inconsolable at the death of their babies, as indeed mothers have always been.

The death of these innocent baby boys of Bethlehem became a feast-day in the western Church by the 4th century. This was because the Church considered them to be martyrs because they not only died for Christ, but **instead** of Christ.

Down the centuries, the tragic loss of the Holy Innocents has touched the imagination and hearts of poets, preachers and artists. Though heart-broken parents still grieve today, the Church can offer them one firm assurance that young children who die to this world will undoubtedly “this day be with Me in Paradise.” The One who eagerly said '*Suffer the little children to come unto Me*' will be the last one to turn them away.

(From The Beacon)