



Link Up!

**‘A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD ; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”’
Isaiah 40:3**

Coming up in December

On Sunday 8th December our theme for the service will be the theme of ‘God speaks to us’.

Then on Sunday 15th December we will look at ‘John the Baptist’.

On Sunday 22nd December we will hold our All-Age Carol Service.

On Christmas Day we will have our usual Christmas Day Family Service which will start at **10.30am**.

On Sunday 29th December, in a slight change to our previous notices, we will be joining Parkstone Baptist Church for their ‘Looking Back, Moving Forward’ service. When we did this last year, we were asked to think about some of the highlights of the year just ending and what our hopes and aspirations are for the year to come. You might want to give some thought to that in preparation for the service if you are joining us

Christmas Publicity: There are publicity flyers in the main church lobby and also in the hall and lounge that you can use to invite family, friends and neighbours along to our special Christmas services on 22nd and 25th December. Please do use these as we can easily prepare more if needed.

St Eligius is the patron Saint of horses and cattle, as well as goldsmiths, blacksmiths, metalworkers, coin collectors, and the British Army’s Royal Electrical and Mechanical engineers. His feast day is generally celebrated on the 1st December. Legend has it that on one occasion Eligius was tasked with shoeing a demon-possessed horse. Supposedly he simply cut off the horse’s leg, re-shoed the hoof and then miraculously stuck the leg back on! I’m not entirely convinced of the truth of that story. If only life was that simple...

Whether the legend of Eligius and the possessed horse is true or not, we do know that he was a real person, who died in 660 BC. He was the Bishop of Tournai in France , a courtier to the King and was indeed a very skilled craftsman. In fact, there are artefacts in churches and palaces throughout France today which it is believed he created.

Throughout the Bible it’s clear that skilled craftspeople were really highly valued in society. The Old Testament gives several accounts of the level of attention and detail that was given to things like tents, temples, clothing, armour, weapons and equipment. We know that Jesus’ earthly father, Joseph, was a carpenter and Jesus almost certainly learnt that trade himself.

I don’t know about you, but this year I seem to be super organised for Christmas, I’ve got all my children’s presents sorted, got my wife’s present sorted. Now I just need to worry about my parents, brother, sisters, nieces, nephews, all the services I have to lead, all the food – maybe I’m not quite as sorted as I thought!

Christmas Cards: We will have the Longfleet Internal Christmas Card Post-box out on Sunday 8th December. The cards will be sorted and distributed on Sunday 15th December and 22nd December. Please make sure that all cards include surnames as well as first names so that the correct person gets your card.

Contact Group invites you to join them for their annual Carol Service on **Tuesday 10th December at 7pm**. Anyone is welcome to that event so bring your friends along as well.

On **Monday 9th December** instead of the usual Bible Study, there is the opportunity to join in a Christmas social at Carri Hall's house, 1 Arley Road, Parkstone, BH14 8DW.

More Carol Singing! On Saturday 14th December, Churches Together in Poole are holding their annual Carol Singing event outside the Spire in Poole High Street from 10am to 1pm. If you are able to join us singing even for just an hour that would be wonderful. There will be prayer cards with details about Christmas events in the Poole Churches being given out during that morning as well.

At this busy time of year it's really easy to get caught up in the material world. Toys, gadgets, clothes, stuff; whether a mass produced item from a factory in China, or a one off artisan-crafted piece from a posh Dorset garden centre. If you're anything like me, you're likely to spend the next couple of weeks rushing around looking for gifts and sorting out food and drink. And if you're anything like me, you'll also be thinking about the things you'd like to receive or what you might buy yourself in the January sales.

The radio, the TV and social media are all trying to persuade us that it is already Christmas-time and that Christmas is all about presents, food, drink and lots of stuff we should be spending money. The world seems to be pressuring us to have a stressful and complicated Christmas, in fact it wants us to have a stressful and complicated life.

However, the story of St. Eligius and the horse speaks to me about simplicity in complication. That might sound like a contradiction in terms. Simplicity in complication. But one of the promises of Jesus is that life can be simple.

During Advent I want to encourage us to take a step back from those stressful complicated things, and ask what's really important and necessary in our lives. Is there a metaphorical horse's leg which can simply be chopped off?

Rev Ken Adolphe