



# CONNECT

**NAILSEA UNITED  
REFORMED CHURCH  
MAGAZINE  
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Sing a new song to the Lord because  
He has done miraculous things.  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have gained victory for him.

Psalm 98 v 1

Minister Revd John Gray - details on Contact Page  
Church Secretary Mrs Sally Edmondson

Dear Friends,

when most people hear the phrase 'The Twelve days of Christmas' they don't so much think of the 12 days starting from Christmas Day leading to Epiphany, instead they think of the song of the same name. Undoubtedly, Christmas wouldn't be the same without it! So, the beginning of January is still within the Christmas period.

It has been suggested by a contemporary Canadian hymnologist that this song had its origins as a teaching tool for Roman Catholics to instruct young people in the meaning and content of the Christian faith. From 1558 to 1829 Roman Catholics in England were not able to practice their faith openly, so they had to find other ways to pass on their beliefs. Each element is actually a code word for a religious truth.

1. The "*partridge in a pear tree*" was Jesus Christ who died on a tree as a gift from God.
2. The "*two turtle doves*" were the Old and New Testaments another gift from God.
3. The "*three French hens*" were faith, hope and love: the three gifts of the Spirit that abide.
4. The "*four calling birds*" were the four Gospels, which sing the song of salvation through Jesus Christ.
5. The "*five golden rings*" were the first five books of the Bible, also called the 'Book of Moses'.
6. The "*six geese a laying*" were the six days of creation.
7. The "*seven swans a swimming*" were seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (Faith, Hope, Charity, Justice, Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude).
8. The "*eight maids a milking*" were the eight beatitudes.
9. The "*nine ladies dancing*" were the nine fruit of the Holy Spirit.
10. The "*ten Lords a leaping*" were the Ten Commandments.
11. The "*eleven pipers piping*" were the eleven faithful disciples.
12. The "*twelve drummers drumming*" were the twelve points of the Apostles' Creed.

'The Twelve Days of Christmas' has a cheerful tune, as it is a cumulative song, meaning that each verse is built on top of the previous verses. There are twelve verses, each describing a gift given by "my true love" on one of the twelve days of Christmas.

As its words are light-hearted, it lends itself to numerous parodies. And some of them don't seem very churchy!

The earliest known version of these lyrics was published under the title The Twelve Days of Christmas sung at King Pepin's Ball in 1780, as part of a children's book titled Mirth without Mischief. - However, there is not much evidence to support this 'Catholic Catechism Theory', particularly, because none of the enumerated items would distinguish Catholics from Protestants, and so would hardly need to be secretly encoded. What a pity! It's a good story to think about as we are hearing or singing the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' yet again over the Christmas period.

Apart from a good sing, we might want to put actual meaning and more sense to this light-hearted set of words! - Christmas is a mixture of traditions, many of which we do because we have always done them, whether or not they make a lot of sense, and also a deep and important declaration that God has become human. So let us celebrate, and celebrate into the new year as well! In the midst of the Christmas leftovers: mince pies and puddings, cold turkey sandwiches, Carols and lessons, and against the dark backdrop of Covid-19(-20-21-22) let us celebrate that God is with us in the New Year as well.

*Happy New Year! God Bless!*  
*John*

"John and Esther would like to Thank You for your Christmas cards and wish You a peaceful and Happy New Year."

# A Happy and Healthy New Year to Everyone

## Commitment for Life Prayer

Prayers by Children and Young People for Climate  
From Christ Church URC, Petts Wood

Dear God,  
Thank you for this lovely world.  
We are very sorry for not taking better care of it,  
We will make it a better place.  
*Nathanial 8yrs old*

Dear God,  
We are sorry for all the wrong we have done,  
especially destroying the amazing planet you created for us.  
You gave us a home and we are mistreating it.  
Please forgive us.  
As individuals we will try our hardest to protect and preserve Earth  
so all generations after us will be able to enjoy  
all the amazing things you gave given us. Amen.  
*Jasmine 13yrs old*

Dear Father God,  
We pray that you protect our children and keep them safe  
so they can grow healthy in mind and body.  
Please give them strength and wisdom to save our planet.  
Please help them to grow in their faith of you and  
help us to change our ways for a healthier,  
more considerate and kinder future.  
We pray for our world leaders, that you guide them to make  
good decisions for the future of our children and our planet.  
Amen  
*Anna 14yrs old*

## Communion Offering for January

### Commitment for Life

## Children's Hospice South West

Dear Sally and all our friends at the Nailsea United Reformed Church

I just wanted to get in touch to thank the congregation so much for all you have done this year to help us to continue to care for children with life-limiting conditions and their families not just at Christmas but 365 days a year.

It was very kind of the congregation to think of the children we care for and to help by donating communion offers and the proceeds of your recipe book sale to our special cause.

On behalf of all the children, families and staff at Children's Hospice South West, thank you and we wish all the members of Nailsea United Reformed Church a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

It really is thanks to your support that we have been able to continue to welcome families into our hospice, support them at home and virtually to ensure that special memories are made and cherished for a long time to come.

We are very grateful for the congregation's support. Thank you all so much for helping us to make the most of short and precious lives.

With warmest wishes

**Emma Parker**  
Area Fundraiser | Children's Hospice South West

Can you make this old money add up?

£. S. D

A leather worker  
A Type of pig  
A singer  
A part of royal headgear  
Move up and down  
A Stone  
A mode of transport  
Mars-Jupiter-Pluto  
A portion of ladies underwear  
A poorly Octopus

£31.15.2d

Sent by Mary Ponsonby

## Communion Offertories

A very big thank you to all those who have contributed to our Communion Offertories for the first three months of 2020 and the last six months of 2021. The following is the amounts sent to each charity.

Children's Hospice:	£141.50
Commitment for Life:	£424.50
Caring at Christmas:	£90.00
Nailsea Memory Cafe:	£50.00
Nailsea Cancer Cafe:	£85.00
Wellspring Counselling:	£87.00

Very grateful thanks  
Isabel

I have been asked to reproduce the following which I used in a recent service.

It is something that I found in a letter which was sent from my American Grandfather to my mother in March 1953

There are nine requisites for contented living.

- 1 Health enough to make work a pleasure
- 2 Wealth enough to support your needs
- 3 Strength enough to battle with difficulties and overcome them
- 4 Patience enough to toil until some good is accomplished
- 5 Love enough to move you to be useful and helpful to others
- 6 Charity enough to see some good in your neighbours
- 7 Faith enough to make real the things of God
- 8 Hope enough to remove all anxious fears concerning the future
- 9 Grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them

Stella

## The URC daily devotions

The URC daily devotions can be accessed via [devotions.urc.org.uk](https://devotions.urc.org.uk)  
These are approx 5 minutes long. The Sunday service can be accessed from the same site.

## Flower Rota

if you wish to provide flowers for Church would you please enter your name on the chart in the hall corridor, If you wish to just make a donation towards the cost of some flowers contact Sally or Barbara.

CHURCH EVENTS DIARY – January 2022		
<b>SUNDAY 2<sup>ND</sup></b>	<b>SUNDAY WORSHIP</b> with Mrs Stella Patterson	<b>11.00AM</b>
<b>SUNDAY 9<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>SUNDAY WORSHIP</b> with Rev.d John Gray	<b>11.00AM</b>
<b>SUNDAY 16<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>SUNDAY WORSHIP</b> with Mr Delwyn Tilke	<b>11.00AM</b>
<b>SUNDAY 23<sup>RD</sup></b>	<b>SUNDAY WORSHIP</b> with Rev.d John Gray	<b>11.00AM</b>
<b>SUNDAY 30<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>SUNDAY WORSHIP</b> with Rev.d Helena McKinnon	<b>11.00AM</b>
<b>SUNDAY 6<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>SUNDAY WORSHIP</b> with Rev.d Stephen Newell	<b>11.00AM</b>

## Door Rota

We need volunteers to welcome our friends to church and hand out our Order of service and Connect. Please speak to an Elder if you able to help