



Welcome to our First Mannofield Advent Booklet.

Advent is a time to prepare. We are hoping to use this booklet as a way for the members to feel fellowship with one another and that it is a rich way to proceed through the advent season. Thank you very much to all of the contributors who have helped to make this a special publication. You will find each contribution unique and a way to explore the advent season through the words: hope, peace, joy and love. Each Sunday is the beginning of the week and Keith and I have prepared those entries. If you have an advent ring at home, you can read the scripture and light a candle each week, and offer a prayer for the church. Blessings to you all as we progress through this season together.

We pray together: This Advent, Lord, come into the manger of our hearts. Fill us with your presence from the very start. As we prepare for the holidays and the gifts to be given, remind us of the gift you gave when you sent your Son Jesus, the first Christmas gift was the greatest gift ever.

Amen.

Amy and Keith



28<sup>th</sup> November **FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**HOPE**

**Jeremiah 16:14** The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup> In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

Today we light the first candle of Advent. This is the candle of Hope. The prophet Jeremiah reports the Lord saying 'I will fulfil the promise'. When promises are fulfilled we can be hopeful. We look for branches to spring up and righteousness to reign. We are encouraged by promises of justice and safety.

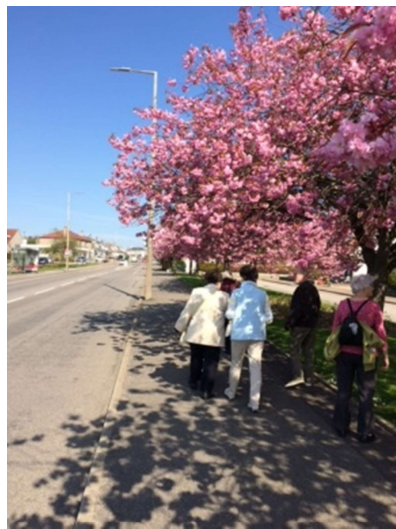
A hymn, Christmas is coming, speaks of the hope of God's promise. The first is for God's promise to put the wrong things right, and bring to earth's darkness the hope of love and light. Christmas is coming the Church is glad to sing, and let the advent candles brightly burn in a ring.

Prayer: Loving God, this Advent season allow us to be a beacon of hope for others as you are a beacon of hope for us. Allow our flames to burn brightly, sharing your light with the world in need. Amen.

## 29<sup>th</sup> November The Mannofield Strollers

### Our Hope for the Future

Our walking group meets regularly and observes the changes of the seasons as well as the gardens and even the buildings as we walk. We have observed an old building revert from a burnt out shell to a new place to live. That is **hopeful**. We also meet people along our walks that hear an encouraging word. In our **hope** for the future, we have friendship to last. Walking together strengthens our appreciation of our local area and the people we meet. We are always welcoming others and hope to see you in 2022.



30<sup>th</sup> November

The Changing Face of Christmas by John Little.

### **Hope**

1942 The first Christmas that was meaningful, I was aged 5 and living in Bearsden in Glasgow. We lived in a bungalow and a day or two before Christmas, I discovered the lounge door was locked and I wasn't able to go in. There was also a loft used only for storage accessed by a wooden ladder. Christmas day, I had my stocking with various things and suddenly I heard a knocking sound from the attic. I went to explore with my Father and he pulled down the hatch and Santa Claus came walking down the ladder. He went and turned the key to the lounge and when the door opened, there was the Christmas tree and pre-war decorations-tissue paper, concertina folds pulled across room. We also made decorations at school. I saw my Christmas present-Clockwork Hornby Train set with the carriages. And Santa disappeared as quick as he appeared. The mystery and magic and hopefulness was all around. I just couldn't figure out how he had come to my house and down from the attic. It was much later I learned that my father had invited our neighbour across the street, Billy McKee to do the needful.



1<sup>st</sup> December

Prayer Group

**A** As we enter this time of **Advent**, let us Hope, Pray and Love our World

**D** Let us **Dedicate** ourselves anew this year to the preparation for the coming of Jesus into the world, bringing Peace, Love and Joy once again into our lives.

**V** I feel God's love **very** much as I sing hymns to my Mother who has had a stroke. She responds by mouthing the **very** well-known words.

**E** An EMPEROR issues an EDICT  
EVEN EXPECTANT mothers must obey  
Mary and Joseph journey onwards  
To find EVERY door is locked

Today EUROPE'S Borders are barred  
EXPECTANT mothers still travel on  
And find like Mary no welcoming inn  
Forests or wild seas their only ESCAPE

**N** **Near** and far we all belong to You, unequal in need, security and comfort but equal in Your eyes and partakers in Your Grace. May we be provoked to get involved in Your mission and have the courage to take every opportunity to show goodness, kindness and gentleness.

**T** **Thanks** be to God for the most precious Gift...His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Our only HOPE.

Anne Thompson, Catriona Williamson, Kathleen Martin, Louise Barrack, Fiona Hunter, Margaret Stewart

2<sup>nd</sup> December

*I look up this poem every year and read it at Christmas. Pat Stalker*

### **The Oxen**

BY THOMAS HARDY

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.

“Now they are all on their knees,”

An elder said as we sat in a flock

By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where

They dwelt in their strawy pen,

Nor did it occur to one of us there

To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave

In these years! Yet, I feel,

If someone said on Christmas Eve,

“Come; see the oxen kneel,

“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb

Our childhood used to know,”

I should go with him in the gloom,

Hoping it might be so.

3<sup>rd</sup> December  
Life Group



Thanks be to God for the most precious Gift...  
His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Our only HOPE



4<sup>th</sup> December  
The Guild

November for us meant the big Christmas sale to raise as much money as possible for the Projects we were supporting. We started in August. On the big Sale Day we were all there around 9am each with our own jobs, collect money, sales tables, raffles, waitresses, 3 stalwarts running the kitchen making the much appreciated refreshments, gofers, buttering rowies delivered from Aitkens and customers. Then 2 hours of fast moving pace. Miss the buzz and camaraderie but "Looking Forward in Faith" for next year!



5<sup>th</sup> December **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**PEACE**

*Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.*

*2 Thessalonians 3:16*



This is the second Sunday of Advent when we light the candle of PEACE.

Over this Advent, we would invite you to pray that God's unexplainable peace would be evident in hearts, home and world. This year we all have faced so much chaos and uncertainty. God's peace is something we need to grab tightly onto more than ever. May God's spirit transform the days leading up to Christmas into a time to joyfully await the birth of Jesus - the one who is called the 'Prince of Peace'

Prayer for Today:

The Psalmist says you bring Peace to your people. (Psalm 29:11)  
Lord, let your presence be felt by all who seek Peace this Advent season. Turn the hearts of humanity towards you, that in Your Love, many will find an unshakable peace that even the challenges of this life cannot subdue. Amen

Young Church generated these words to describe the Advent and Christmas season

7<sup>th</sup> December

Nick Youngson (Church Officer)

After the Rev John Anderson retired he and Elizabeth moved to Montrose where we visited them quite often. During a visit in the month of January among the things we discussed was that he has written a tune for me call 'The Beadle's Reel'. I had the sheet music but not being musical he said he would record it on to a CD for me which he duly did. Bearing in mind he was very ill and sadly passed away in July of that year. He arranged for a fellow member of the church to play the violin along with John on the accordion and recorded it along with a short Introduction by John. We went back to Montrose and he played it for me and I was so moved when I heard it.

The copy of the music is framed and hangs on our wall, both of which I treasure. I am eternally grateful for our church connection.



8<sup>th</sup> December  
Anne Farquhar

### Story of the Cyclamen

A wonderful cyclamen is flowering on my windowsill at the moment and its luscious blooms are not only leaving me astounded and delighted at nature's bounty but are also awakening poignant memories.

The plant was given to my sister on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday by a friend who was the great granddaughter of a much respected gentleman who was the Member of Parliament for our area when we were growing up on the farm in the late 1930s and early 1940s. I was born on my sisters fifth birthday and she and my brother would have been a well-established twosome by the time I arrived. I'm sure a baby sister, who couldn't do anything, was the last thing either of them would have wanted at that time. My mother was nearly 44 and a busy farmer's wife with a thousand and one things to do. She would have often been saying "now you must look after your baby sister" or "Take your little sister with you" and this would have interrupted and interfered with the more interesting ploys they had in mind. However, willingly or not, they must have carried out the instructions for we grew up as a close family.

Country life was very basic then with not much money and few conveniences but we were fortunate to be part of a caring community where everyone knew everyone and cared and shared with everyone. We each has our jobs on the farm and from an early age, were part of the work force much like the nine members of the Owen family on the farm in Yorkshire, currently being shown on Channel 5 on TV.

My sister grew up to be very capable and able to do most things which was wonderful for she had to take my Mothers place when

mum died soon after being diagnosed with Leukaemia. Mum was 51, my sister 18 and I was 13.

She later married a farmer, was widowed and lived into old age being very lovingly looked after by a team of carers of which I was one. She was thus able to still enjoy living in her own home near her friends until she died peacefully in February this year.

The cyclamen bloomed through each subsequent birthday until last year when it became a poor miserable looking specimen. I told my sister I would take it home with me for some much earned TLC so that it would be ready for her birthday in 2021. However my sister did not live to see that birthday but the flower has bloomed abundantly. It has given me such peace and wonderful memories of a very special sister of a life well lived, which has brought many blessing to them with whom she came in contact and to comfort me in the sadness of parting and loss.



9<sup>th</sup> December

Finlay Blackwood

For me, advent is a time that allows me to feel the closest with God. It's a time when I can fully look towards the future and get a sense of excitement and happiness, not simply with the prospect of family and friends gathering. But a sense of excitement in the knowledge of the huge and life-changing event of the birth of Jesus. Jesus' birth marks a new beginning for humanity, a new beginning in which the goal is peace on earth, a peace that God wants to share with all creation. This is the ultimate Christmas gift in my opinion. I get a real wave of peace and tranquillity during advent because of the songs, prayers, and decorations that are brought out at this time of year for all to enjoy. The peace of advent is there to remind us of the importance of unity through faith, a unity that brings people from all walks of life together in order to revel in the peace that God provides for us. Particularly in a period that can be very hectic for everyone involved! So, this advent I will be once again enjoying the time to find peace amongst the inevitable busy moments of life. As well as appreciating the traditions and community of the church that provide so much time for peace during this season.

10<sup>th</sup> December

## **The Changing Face of Christmas, con't by John Little**

### **PEACE**

1953 I just started work and had to work as ships Draughtsman on Christmas day. It wasn't a holiday in Scotland. I worked in the shipyard as an apprentice for Charles, Connell & Co. There was a peaceful orderly early dismissal for Christmas-we did get away early. We had to wait for our turn. First, Sir Charles Connell used to go out just after lunch time. Then the company secretary, when he left that was the sign the Chief draftsman could go, then assistant chief and finally then the draftsmen and the apprentices were allowed to go out together. It was a protracted exit but we got away early.

1961 I then went to England to work for Naval Architects there. The first Christmas in England was quite a contrast. There was a tremendous difference between England and Scotland. I phoned home and told my parents, "you should see all the lights and decorations here." Of course, Scotland keeps up quite well now.



11<sup>th</sup> December  
Rhonda McColgan

The minister asked me last Christmas if I could find a song to perform for the Zoom Christmas family service

As I took my morning walk that same crisp day, looking up at the sun behind the now bare trees, I prayed to God for his help to find a text to work on. By the time I returned home I had not only the poem but each note of both the melody and harmony.

The text is a mother cradling her babe to sleep and expresses peace, contentment and her joy in the love of our Heavenly Father.

Oh my deir heart, yung Jesus sweet  
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit  
And I sall rock thee in my heart  
And never mair frae thee depeart

But I sall praise thee evermair  
With sangis sweit unto thy gloir  
The kneis of my hairt sal I bow  
And sing that rycht Balulalow

12<sup>th</sup> December **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

## **JOY**

**Zephaniah 3:14** Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!  
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!

So begins The Song of Joy in Zephaniah 3:14. Today we light the candle of joy. Traditionally this is the pink candle and it celebrates the joy of the Christ Child coming to earth. Today we pray for that priceless experience of joy as we continue in the advent season. Help us to wait and watch and wonder in amazement at this anticipated gift.

Perhaps the following hymn by Isaac Watts will be more familiar to you than the Zephaniah text. I find this verse brings joy when singing it.

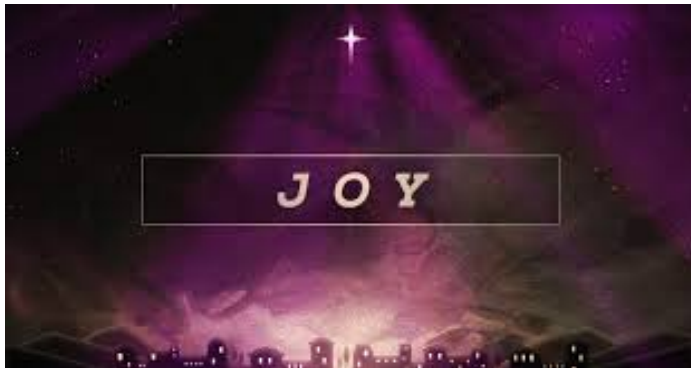
Joy to the world! The Lord is come  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Prayer:

Joyful God, maker of all creation, we come in joy this day to celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus. Name above all names, never may we cease to thank You that You came to Earth as a helpless baby to live with us giving us the greatest gift of all. Night time or daytime we know that You are with us. Thank you that even though

we are broken, Dear Jesus, You have made it possible that we can be used for good. Alleluia! Amen.

(prayer by Fiona Hunter and Amy Bender)



13<sup>th</sup> of December

*Bring Joy to patients – Angela Dyce*

Advent and the Christmas season as a nurse was an exciting time.

Any spare minute was used to make decorations for the wards, each lampshade above the patient was decorated in the Nightingale style ward and the side wards.

A theme would be decided-this particular year it was the circus, and I was able to obtain many props from a local store.

Decorations were allowed for the three days only and Christmas Eve we were very busy many of us working until 10pm to complete the makeover.

We carol sang around the wards, reversing our navy cloaks to the inside red, and carrying lanterns.

Christmas morning was very busy getting patients ready for the local mayor's visit, from which each patient received a gift. Ambulance patients could be escorted round the wards.

Lunch time was great fun. One of the consultants would dress in a ridiculous outfit to serve the turkey.

The patients were allowed alcohol!!

One of them over imbibed before matron came to do the rounds. We had to draw the curtains round him as though he was having treatment, so that she was unaware.

The sisters served all the domestics with their lunch and helped matron with the evening meals for the nurses in two sittings, at the end of a very worthwhile day, each person received a gift from the matron.

14<sup>th</sup> December

## **The Changing Face of Christmas, con't by John Little**

### **Joy**

In the early 70s, we came to Aberdeen. Christmas in Aberdeen was great fun. We had a sister and brother-in-law up at Banff, who was a minister. We would have our Christmas meal on Boxing day because my brother-in-law had the service on Christmas Day. We alternated celebrations between Aberdeen and Banff. In Aberdeen, we would go to the Watchnight service at Mannofield.

It was very busy. The church was filled and we had to use the hall for an overspill. The service was very popular with the young folk who had been in the town but had to leave after the pubs closed early. They liked to hang out in the balcony. We had to be organised with strategic stationing of stewards reminding people to be quiet, and the largest, most imposing stewards were assigned to the balcony. It was a tremendous service every year. As time passed and pubs and clubs remained open, the younger folk disappeared. Various families had members that came home. One had a very musical connection. One of the sons played on the violin, Ave Maria and brother his was on the piano and it was really tremendous. There were tears of joy from the beautiful music. We didn't have mulled wine after the service that came a lot later.

15<sup>th</sup> December

Janice Gill

The Christmas Carol that means a lot to me is "Away In A Manger".

At our School Carol Service the Nursery class ALWAYS sang it.

They were dressed as angels, shepherds etc. - I remember my younger sisters singing it when they were in Nursery.

The singing wasn't always great but they were SO cute - often waving to watching parents, picking their noses!! or worse!!!

It was always very emotional seeing the wee ones with joy and excitement in their hearts.

Every time I hear Away In A Manger now I think back to that - I have a tear just writing about it.



16<sup>th</sup> December

The month of December, and Christmas as a whole, brings memories. We recall times spent with family and friends. Amidst the busyness of the season it's good to take the time to reflect back on the experiences and encounters that have left their mark on us.

Here's a memory from Edith Youngson.....

One of my most precious memories is the time I worked at Braeside infant school as a children's supervisor and classroom assistant. On the day I retired all the children gathered in the gym hall. We then walked out to the playground where there was a photograph taken of myself and all the children sitting round about me. I glance at the picture most days when I sit in my bedroom. I really treasure it and will do for the rest of my life on this earth.

Lord God, let there be space in this season to give thanks for the memories, the people and events, that shape us. AMEN

17<sup>th</sup> December  
Life Group



In this third week of Advent we remember the gift of 'Joy' - the deep and everlasting feeling of knowing ourselves loved and cared for by God.



18<sup>th</sup> December  
John Telfer

When I was very young, I lived amongst the hills, four miles from the small town of Langholm in Dumfriesshire. The roads were not good—there were very few cars about. To get anywhere we had to walk, cycle or horse and cart. The minister visited us once per year for his ham and egg supper and I assume to collect a donation. My father would go to communion 7 miles away on his bicycle in the autumn. He could not go to the spring communion as it was in the middle of lambing season.

I remember the day war was declared in September 1939- the butcher's van on his fortnightly visit to the farm broke the news to my mother. Television had not been invented. We had no gas, electric, telephones, mains water or sewage connections. Only a very old radio operated by wet battery (batteries had to go to Langholm every fortnight for recharging).

Mother would go shopping by train from Langholm to Carlisle once a year and be lucky if she had fifteen shillings in her pocket. Money was a very scarce commodity.

Before Christmas there was great excitement about Santa Claus coming. Stockings were hung up. We always got a few pennies, an orange, an apple or sweets, a jigsaw or board game, maybe a wee toy of some sort, and always some item of clothing eg. socks, sweater , etc. The way we lived, if you didn't have the money then you couldn't buy it. We had to be careful as the world didn't owe us a living.

In later life eg. Christmas trees. I got fed up seeing young trees cut for too long before they were required in the house, then needles started coming off making the place untidy. I decided to grow my

own. A young tree once a certain size could be used for three or four years, planted in a container in the house and then back in to the open garden after use for next year. That system worked well for a good number of years until one year we were in town on Boxing Day and saw a large pile of boxes of unsold, artificial Christmas trees. I persuaded my late wife, Kay because she was against such things. I asked, What is a Christmas tree for anyway? It's just something to hang the lights on. Looking for a bargain, we purchased one and it has been used ever since. It does a fine job of holding up the lights and decorations and spreading the joy of Christmas for many years (even CO<sub>2</sub> release!!!).

We have come a long way from the early joys of my childhood Christmas, but question the commercialisation of the spirit of Christmas we now experience.

19<sup>th</sup> December **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

## **LOVE**



*Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor. Proverbs 22.9*

This is the Sunday when we light the 4<sup>th</sup> candle and think of 'LOVE' being born into the world.

There is nothing quite like the Love that is known when a child is born into your family. For us as God's family (and we mean the whole of humanity) God's gift of a child was for all of us. A gift of Love. More than that it was a gift that re-introduced into humanity the kind of Love that God so badly wants to see in His Creation, and between His people. This child would go on to reveal what this kind of Love looks like.

Time and time again in the bible God's people are called to remember those who are poor. To share what they have with others – giving of the simple, ordinary things that they have plenty of.

Prayer for Today:

God of Love, we pray for those in this country and across the world that have very little. May we use the Love we know, to Love others in ways that bring relief. Amen

20<sup>th</sup> December

Hymn 316 'Love came down at Christmas'

Edna Cromarty

- 1 Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas;  
star and angels gave the sign
- 2 Worship we the Godhead,  
Love Incarnate, Love divine;  
worship we our Jesus,  
but wherewith for sacred sign?
- 3 Love shall be our token,  
love be yours and love be mine;  
love to God and others,  
love for plea and gift and sign.



21<sup>st</sup> December

*This is my favourite Carol, first heard at school when I was teaching.*  
*Ellen Smith*

### **It was on a starry night**

It was on a starry night, when the hills were bright  
Earth lay sleeping, sleeping calm and still.  
Then in a cattle shed, in a manger bed  
A boy was born, king of all the world.

Chorus:

And all the angels sang for him,  
the bells of heaven rang for him  
for a boy was born, king of all the world.  
And all the angels sang for him,  
the bells of heaven rang for him  
for a boy was born, king of all the world.



22<sup>nd</sup> December

Mary – Chrissie Smith

It was nearly Christmas and a couple from the country came in to Edinburgh to finish their shopping. The woman, Mary was expecting and the husband was fussing that she was always leaving things to the last minute.

Suddenly, Mary felt a pain in her side and thought she needed to go to the toilet. This was a happenstance that took her by surprise. Suddenly the baby was coming. She was making quite a noise in the toilet and the shop called the Maternity Ward in Edinburgh-you never knew what was going to come in through the door. The shop keepers wanted someone sent to help the lady. I was the assistant matron at the time and had to identify someone to go help. There was only one choice-a doctor and a nurse both very large had to be sent to work in tight quarters.

Happily, the baby boy was safely born and the mother spent a few nights in hospital before being transferred to the local hospital that Christmas season.

Having the name of Mary and being at Christmas reminds us that God chooses ordinary folk to do his work.



23<sup>rd</sup> December

**A**dvent we Adore the Christ Child

**L**ove came down at Christmas

**P**eace on earth

**H**oly Night, Happiness and **H**ope

**A**mazing **J**oy

The Alpha Autumn Group 2021- Alan, Amy, Anne, Jim, Kathleen,  
Liz, Mary Clare

24<sup>th</sup> December

## **The Changing Face of Christmas, con't by John Little**

### **Love**

In the 60s our second Christmas married, we had decided to stay on in Basingstoke and have Christmas in our own house rather than going back to Glasgow. My wife Karen was cooking chicken on Christmas Eve and just after 6 police came to the door and said can you phone Kilearn Hospital in Glasgow about Mrs. Dick. We thought they had perhaps got it wrong because her father had been unwell. We didn't have a phone in the house, but there was a phone 50 yards up the road. The nurse in charge answered the phone on the ward and said she was really sorry to have to say this, but Mrs. Dick was knocked down by a bus and pronounced dead at the scene. We were distraught and turned to walk back home from the phone box. Just as we were returning, a car pulled up. Our long-time family friends I had met at a church through Boy's Brigade, Nobby (given name of Wilson) and Joyce had just driven up. They had come to tell about my father because we weren't on the phone. They reported that my dad was seriously ill, and the doctors was trying to stop the bleeding. Nobby and Joyce offered to take us to Heathrow. "The last flight goes at 11. If you don't get on that we will cancel our Christmas and drive you up to Glasgow." That is true family love- such a sacrifice to drive all that way, but we made it on the plane. Having to come off the plane at half past midnight with everyone wishing Happy Christmas while we were on the way to the hospital and had to arrange a funeral was tough.

The years may change, and what we consider normal along with that, but the constant throughout is that Christmas is about the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Christmas will never change in terms of that. It is that chance to celebrate and to sing carols and



hymns and meet friends and take part with those who have returned home. There may be changes in format, but at heart of it all, the love at the birth of Jesus remains constant.



## Advent word search 2021

e	o	h	c	s	o	m	e	i	e
l	e	m	r	d	m	a	l	n	n
t	u	e	j	r	l	o	b	n	e
t	n	o	j	e	y	u	a	k	s
a	y	r	o	h	x	m	t	e	i
c	v	h	l	p	g	j	s	e	a
s	s	s	l	e	g	n	a	p	r
r	a	t	s	h	s	g	v	e	p
t	k	d	s	s	g	v	j	r	t
f	l	o	c	k	s	k	q	f	c

angels

cattle

flocks

innkeeper

joy

myrrh

praise

shepherds

stable

star

\_\_\_\_\_

This puzzle is a word search puzzle that has a hidden message in it.

First find all the words in the list.

Words can go in any direction and share letters as well as cross over each other.

Once you find all the words. Copy the unused letters starting in the top left corner into the blanks to reveal the hidden message.

## Extras

### A Christmas Day Joke – Are you in the right job? By Jim Ruxton

A senior solicitor in the town was hosting a Christmas Day lunch in his large house for friends and family. During the meal he felt the room was getting colder so he went to check the boiler. It was completely dead and it couldn't be coaxed into life. He went to the Yellow Pages to see if he could get a heating engineer to come. Being Christmas Day he didn't have a lot of luck but after umpteen phone calls he finally tracked down a man who would come. "I am not cheap and it is Christmas Day" said the engineer. "That's no problem says the solicitor – just come" and he gave the address. The engineer turned up in about half an hour and was shown the boiler room.

After 2 hours the engineer reported that the boiler was fixed and the heat was coming back in the house. "Many, many thanks" said the solicitor "what am I due you?" "That will be £400" said the engineer. "£400?" exploded the solicitor. "That's £200 an hour. I'm a solicitor and I don't make that money"

"AND NEITHER DID I WHEN I WAS A SOLICITOR" SAID THE ENGINEER.

## A Disappointing Christmas by Jim Ruxton

I am going back to Christmas 1940. Some of you may remember it but many of you will not. The Second World War had started and the adult population was getting used to gas masks and food rationing. As a child this didn't mean much to me but I can still remember the wail of the air raid sirens – an up and down sound for the alert and a continuous sound for the all-clear. I can also remember the Christmas present that arrived on Christmas Day. It was a Hornby clockwork train set. I don't think it came in a box. I think it came in separate packages. A package for the rails, a package for the engine- a little tank engine – and other packages for the goods wagons. I was excited when my father and elder brother put the layout together. It was supposed to be an oval with curved rails at both ends and straight rails in between. However there was a snag – a curved rail was missing and there was an extra straight rail. The oval could not be made. I was a very disappointed wee boy. My father went to the shop as soon as it opened but all the model railway bits and pieces were gone and no more would be forthcoming as the factor has gone over to war work. So how could I use the useless toy. The problem was solved by joining up the rails into one long line that stretched right across the living room. I then wound up the engine, fitted the wagons, put them on the rails, released the brake and the train shot across the room to bump into the skirting board on the opposite side. I then went to that side and repeated the exercise. And that is how I played with the train set for the rest of the war. When the war ended the missing rail was never replaced and I had lost interest in my train set. I was now heavily involved with my brothers Meccano set and this kept me quiet until I progressed to model aeroplanes. This is a hobby that I do right up to the present day. Yes Christmas 1940 was a bit disappointing.