



**The Priory Church of St Mary**  
**Keep in Touch**  
**December 2023**



**Advent Reflections from Diocese of Monmouth**

I was asked this question recently - "Sell it to me, tell me how and why I should be convincing volunteers at my church to take on and do more..."

A hard question perhaps, should we ask for more from people who are already stretched thin as it is? But simply put, stewardship isn't about doing more, it's about living out our faith fully as Christians. Championing stewardship is about ensuring our churches are at the heart of their communities, where they belong. It is about caring for and using all our assets to their utmost potential - be they buildings, tools, people, or finances.

Stewardship is rooted in who we are called to be; it is a core tenant of our faith. We are God's stewards. It is our privilege to serve him and share his love with others.

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.

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**1 Peter 5:2**

I invite you to reflect on this verse. Are you willing? Who is in the flock? Where is the field? Do those who know you, know you are a servant of God? Do they know you are his precious child? Do they know they are too? How do we tell them?

The languages of stewardship are gratitude and generosity. It is from our gratitude to God for all the gifts he grants us that we in turn share those gifts generously. We give however we can - in time, in talents, and in money. And through this generous spirit, you give the gift of faith to those who witness. You show them love without limits. You show them Him.

We are called **'to live as thankful and generous people'** To be His people.

Stewardship matters. It deepens our connection as disciples. It protects creation. It uplifts our communities. It equalises us all. To be a steward is to be Christian. Let's show the world what that truly means.

**Zoe Ward (Church Resource Officer)**

Poem shared by Reverend Sally:

When we offer a glass of water to a thirsty person  
 It is Christmas  
 When we cloth a naked person with a gown of love  
 It is Christmas  
 When we wipe the tears from weeping eyes  
 It is Christmas  
 When the spirit of revenge dies in me  
 It is Christmas  
 When in my heart I want to love my neighbour  
 It is Christmas  
 When I am buried in the being of God  
 It is Christmas

O Saviour, whose coming the prophets proclaimed: fill us with your Spirit, that we may prepare the way of the Lord and make his paths straight.

Teach us to do justice, love and mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Amen

*William Ingle-Gillis*



### Community Carols

The annual coffee and mince pies morning was a great success with everyone enjoying company of new and old friends. Thank you for your support as over £250 raised towards a new carpet for the back of church.

### ECO Group

To be better at caring for creation through eco-friendly and sustainable choices, consider having a greener Christmas this year.

Wrap presents with kindness for the environment. Shiny, foil wrapping and ribbon can't be recycled and will go to landfill. Try wrapping gifts in beautiful scarves or reusable cloth bags, or even newspaper tied with wool. Also, remember that glittery cards aren't recyclable. And please make sure to recycle any paper used.

(An extract from an article from All Saints, Batford)



This  
Christmas  
end a quarrel.  
Seek out a forgotten  
friend. Dismiss suspicion  
and replace it with trust.

Write a letter. Give a soft answer.

Encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty  
in word and deed. Keep a promise. Forgo  
a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Apologize. Try to  
understand. Examine your demands on others.

Think first of someone else. Be kind. Be gentle. Laugh  
a little more. Express your gratitude. Welcome a stranger.  
Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and  
wonder of the earth.  
Speak your love, and  
then speak it again.

Howard W. Hunter

MindfulChristianityToday.com

### What an amazing weekend.

Thank you to everyone who supported the activities on the first weekend in December.

The decorations in church together with the warm welcome from our volunteers was fantastic.

Lantern making with the children was very special followed by a packed church singing together to welcome the festive season.



### Priory Church of St Mary 'Thank you'

Your generous food donations will be shared with the Usk Food Kitchen and Raven House Trust



We will continue to have a collection box inside church for donations over the winter.

### THE SNOWPERSON

Hello, hello, hello, hello,  
I'm a person made of snow  
I don't have skin  
I don't have bones  
My arms are sticks  
My eyes are stones  
I don't have toes  
I don't have feet  
I don't like rain  
I don't like heat

So

When the sun shines in the sky  
It's time for me to say goodbye.

### WINTER

...my nose  
is froze  
and so's my toes

I suppose  
that's the way it goes  
in winter  
when it snows...

Thank you to Dee Bury who shared these poems written by her sister- in law a poet living in the West Midlands, working as a poet by the library.