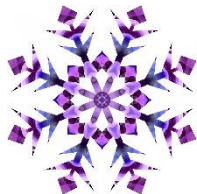




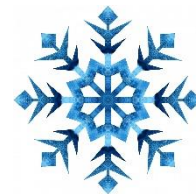
# CONNECT

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE CHURCHES OF IPSWICH AND EAST



**WINTER EDITION**

DECEMBER 2022 to  
FEBRUARY 2023



## EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to this, the first edition of our quarterly Ipswich and East Pastorate newsletter, "Connect". We hope that by sharing our news with one another, in this way, we will gain a stronger sense of togetherness.

Welcome back also to Revd David who resumes his work, as part of the team with Revd Adam, following his sabbatical. During his time away David has taken part in a refreshing but demanding silent retreat at St Beuno's Retreat Centre in Tremeirchion, North Wales. The retreat house is surrounded by the beautiful countryside with space to walk and reflect.



Later David was able to visit friends and family in Australia with journey breaks on the way out and on the way home exploring parts of the world that were new to him. I am sure that David will be sharing more of his experience of his sabbatical over the coming months so watch and listen out.

## ADVENT THOUGHTS

This edition of Connect initially finds us at the beginning of the Christian Year as we journey through the season of Advent – a time of preparation, of waiting and of expectation. It can be a frantically busy time for some as we ramp up to Christmas.



Chocolate filled calendars and candles seem to feature highly in the ways that folk choose to mark down the days of Advent. In our churches we will be lighting candles on Advent wreaths, with an additional candle added for each Sunday until we arrive on Christmas Day. This year the churches have been encouraged to use a song to mark each of the candles. Below are the words we will be using over the coming days. You might like to use them as you light a candle or candles or your own.

### **Advent 1 – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

Advent candles tell their story

As we watch and pray,

Longing for the Day of Glory,

'Come, Lord, soon,' we say.

Pain and sorrow, tears and sadness

Changed for gladness

On that day.

## Advent 2 – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Prophet voices loudly crying,  
Making pathways clear,  
Glimpsing glory, self-denying,  
Calling all to hear.

Through the message, challenged, shaken,  
Hearts awoken:  
God is near!

## Advent 3 – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022

John the Baptist, by his preaching  
And by water poured,  
Brought to those who heard his teaching  
News of hope restored:  
'Keep you vision strong and steady  
And be ready  
For the Lord.'

## Advent 4 – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Mary's gift, beyond all telling,  
Was to give Christ room.  
She gave God a human dwelling  
In a mother's womb.  
Who could guess the final story?  
Cross and glory;  
Empty tomb!

## Christmas Day – 25<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Advent candles tell their story  
On this Christmas Day.  
Those who waited for God's glory:  
They prepared the way.  
Christ is with us: loving, giving,  
In us living,  
Here today!

In addition, to enable everyone to join in the Advent journey, Revd Adam has prepared five online services which will be made available on the pastorate YouTube Channel and via the photo frames. If you are able, you can access these services via this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOzxr oGvzAuxUHFeKF8oaIg>

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

### SAXMUNDHAM URC



We have been rather busy over the last few months with the help of some excellent trades-persons and Revd Adam, we have been able to advance a number of practical projects. We have decided to hold our regular Sunday services, throughout the year, in the Church Hall, making use of the main sanctuary only on special occasions when more space is needed.

The Hall has received considerable attention with a complete redecoration in bright and attractive new colours. We have added some features to enhance the hall as a worship space including the introduction of a wall mounted panel with a cross and display shelf and two window shaped mirrors which follow the pattern of the existing window frames.



Some of the wooden panels in the hall "porch" have been removed and replaced with polycarbonate glass making the space more welcoming and bringing more light into the hall.



In addition, all the old fluorescent tubes in the hall light fittings have been replaced with modern LED tubes which are much more efficient and cost effective and have a life of up to 25 years.



At the front of the church, we have replaced our ailing wooden notice board (which was near to collapse), with a smart modern one. We hope this will help ensure people are aware that we are still here and still active in serving God and the community in which we are placed.

The church yard, behind the church, has also seen much improvement with extensive work carried. This includes lowering and reducing the hedges, managing the encroaching rambles (whilst retaining some in line with Eco-Church aims) and other clearance to make the space more accessible. A smart new, recycled plastic, bench has been donated and we hope that folk will feel welcome to visit the space for quiet reflection.

Our next challenge for the building is to get the heating fully functioning again. We are hoping, following some recent good news and with recommendation of a heating engineer by Castle Hill Church, to have it back in action soon.

At present we are also working to develop collaboration with Leiston United Church with whom we have been working in various ways over the years. Watch out for our new, joint church, bi-monthly newsletter and, coming soon, a joint church website.

## LEISTON UNITED CHURCH



Our location, at the heart of Leiston, makes the church building and the

splendid Church Square Garden development, which was officially opened in June with worship led by Revd David and Eastern Synod Moderator Revd Lythan Nevard, a focal point for many and varied activities.



Church Square has become a much used and appreciated meeting and sharing space. There are often events held there including impromptu and scheduled performances by musicians. The area is

also available to hire for community events and performances with the church's hall providing space for serving refreshments and hosting various indoor activities with easy access to and from the square.

The church's food bank, which operates each week on a Friday and Saturday morning, continues to be an important part of our social mission. Whilst we would hope that the need for a food bank will diminish over time we are here and willing to help folk as they need. We receive regular and generous donations towards the cost of food as well as food donations from specific shops and suppliers for which we are grateful. The foodbank is an independent project and does not require people to be referred when they need to make use of it.

When the foodbank is open we also have the church hall open to serve teas and coffees

with many folk regularly calling in to socialise.

We are currently hoping to be part of an art project led by Chris Newson, local artist and owner of the Art studio adjacent to the church. This will see an attractive cloud and sky mural painted on the currently rather unattractive wall end of Chris's shop property and part of the church building where, in the past, a building was "attached" leaving a flaking painted area. It is a very interesting project which will enhance the passage way next to the church on the opposite side to Church Square.

We are looking to develop joint working with Saxmundham URC as mention in their news section. We are also introducing (for a trial period initially) an afternoon service, in place of the morning service, perhaps once a month. Some of our older members struggle to be up and ready to attend services in the morning. We will also aim to have these services, where possible, when one of our ministers is leading at Saxmundham in the morning so they can reduce travel costs and be part of both times of worship. The afternoon services will be shorter, less formal and will be followed by tea. They will be open to all.

Our first afternoon service, on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 2:00pm, will be a Christmas event entitled "Carols, Cake, Music & Mince Pies". A fun sing-a-long with popular carols and songs as well as prayers, a reading and some poetry.

*Christ was content with a stable when he was born so that we might have a mansion when we die.*

## FELIXSTOWE URC



Our biggest news at this time is of the missional project that the church has embraced offering a "permanent" hub for Ukrainian hosts and guests in partnership with Ukraine 2 Felixstowe (U2F). At an extraordinary (additional) church meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> August, following our morning service, it was agreed to proceed with making the Meeting Room (former choir vestry) available for this purpose with the church committing time and resources to preparing the space and supporting the ongoing work.

Work began shortly after that meeting to remove items from the room, including furniture, which were no longer needed. Since that point work has proceeded at varying rates but in recent weeks, thanks to the hard work of our property steward Brian with help from several others, a great deal has been achieved. The final excess furniture was removed, areas of carpet replaced, new light fittings, sockets and heating controls were installed and the whole space has been redecorated. A new fire escape door was also recently completed meaning the room can now be used for the intended purpose.



The project has meant some changes in the use of space in other areas of the building. The back of the stage area is now being used to store the large toys which are used by the "Parents and Toddlers" group which meet each Tuesday morning during term time. We are about to hang some new curtains on the stage to smarten things up.

A short time of prayer and dedication for the room was included in our morning worship on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November with church members having the opportunity to view the finished space. This was followed by a celebration gathering for the Ukrainian guests and hosts to mark this transition.

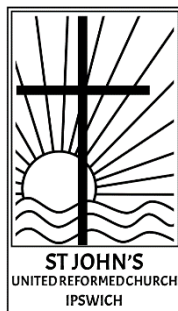
In other news, thanks to a generous legacy, we have been able to purchase a much larger screen (75") for the main church. We were grateful to Adrian Cubitt (St John's) and his son for assisting, with a van, to transport it from the Manse in Ipswich (where it had been delivered) to the church.



The smaller screen that we previously used in the church has now been relocated to the small hall where it will be useful for various meetings and groups. It will also be very useful when we hold our services in the small hall during the winter months at the start of 2023, to help save money on heating the main sanctuary.

Back in September (which seems such a long time ago) the church took part in the Ride & Stride project, welcoming a number of visitors during the day. This coincided with the Felixstowe Heritage Weekend, so we were able to open the church to visitors, serve refreshments and share a number of displays and activities. One which proved popular was an "eye-spy" trail; folk were provided with a series of pictures showing items and features around the church which they were then encouraged to search. It was a good day for all. The organ was even put through its paces by Revd Adam.

## ST JOHN'S URC



One key feature of our church and community life, which we were able to celebrate at our November elders' meeting, is the three key groups associated with the church offering opportunities and learning for children. We are blessed to be able to accommodate the St John's Playtime Preschool in our main, upstairs hall, with additional outdoor spaces next to the main entrance of the church. We also heard from the 40<sup>th</sup> Ipswich Brownie Unit and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hamilton Rainbows Unit.

The pre-school were pleased to report a return to more normal ways of working following the Covid period including the opportunity to welcome parents back into the setting. The pre-school also now offer places to children from 18 months old, previously 2 years.

The Brownies continue to engage in a lively range of activities and learning opportunities following the new materials provided by the national organisation. In December 2021 the group were proud to share in the presentation of the Suffolk Gold Service Certificate to Snowy Owl and a Girlguiding Thanks Badge was presented to her husband Eagle Owl.



For a time in Autumn 2021, due to reduced numbers of girls participating, the group went through a very challenging period. More recently things have been looking up with additional girls joining and with the ability to use the large upstairs room again,



more enthusiasm. Numbers now sit at 11 with some girls on the waiting list.

The elders acknowledged, with gratitude, the tremendous work and commitment of the staff of the pre-school and the leaders of the Brownies and Rainbows. The elders affirmed their commitment to the groups and made recommendation to the November Church Meeting to offer ongoing support, including with resources, especially with the pressures of increased costs of national subscriptions for the Brownies and Rainbows.

If you would like to read more about these fabulous organisations then take a look at the December 2022 edition of the St John's magazine "Advance". The full reports of each the groups are included in this edition and make for interesting reading.



In other news, along with all the churches in the group, St John's were pleased to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Reformed Church in October. Our service, led by Revd Adam, was a joyful occasion and was

followed by the enthusiastic consumption of cake. Although it will shortly be replaced, we have had a celebration display in the church entrance area.

The buildings group have been hard at work on the hall fire escape. The platforms for this have been replaced and the church's team have been removing copious quantities of surface rust in preparation for painting.

With support from our friends at Castle Hill we have now been able to install the

necessary equipment to allow services to be livestreamed from St Johns. The first service making use of the equipment was, of course, the ordination and induction of Revd Adam in July. Since then, a number of members have been working with the Castle Hill team to learn the necessary skills for us, in future, to go it alone. We hope soon to be able to live stream the service from St John's as the main pastorate online worship opportunity at least once each month.

## CASTLE HILL URC



Life at Castle Hill continues to be action packed with great use being made of the building. There is a rich variety of groups and activities including the popular Lunch Club.

Back in July the church was pleased to be able to host the Holiday at Home with the theme of Jubilee. There were lots of things to get involved with including art, crafts, chair exercise, bingo, a jubilee presentation and a visit the Ukulele Group "What No Cake". We also enjoyed hearing the Christie organ played by Revd Adam – it certainly sounded like he was enjoying himself!



We enjoyed celebrating the URC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a service on the Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>

October and an evening of fun, fellowship, music and dance as well as fabulous food. A ploughman's platter and Jubilee cake was shared and Revd Adam, along with his wife Gillian, brought us some musical entertainment.



The Girl's Brigade resumed, in the Autumn, with renewed enthusiasm and have seen a positive increase in the numbers attending. Gillian and Revd Adam have been supporting and encouraging us on the way. In the first half of the Autumn term the focus was on Harvest and Sharing with a considerable number of games and activities around this theme including plenty of food.

In the second half of the Autumn Term our theme has been "Joy" and we have focussed on different festivals and celebrations. We started looking at All Saints Day and made saint gingerbread people. We then looked at Guy Fawkes, the idea of a friendship celebration before segueing into Advent and Christmas. This has included ringing handbells led by Gillian Earle.

The 27<sup>th</sup> October saw the launch of a new activity related to our Eco-Church (Caring for Creation) programme. We welcomed 11 children and some parents to the first "Wonderful World" gathering. This is a creation focussed activity for children and families which we plan to hold during each of the school holiday periods. For our first gathering we focussed on leaves (being Autumn there were plenty of them around). Having revisited the story of creation and discussed how science and religion need not exclude one-another, we then collected, sorted and examined a wide variety of leaves with the aid of a digital microscope. We also enjoyed meeting two friendly bearded

dragons and took part in some games and art activities. Our next gathering will be in February half term.



At our Church meeting on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>

November, members agreed to support Len Green and the other members of our Castle Hill "Caring for Creation" team in completing the evidence gathering and application process to achieve an Eco-Church Bronze Award. The award requires considerable commitment to the promotion of and action related to ecologically positive thinking and working.

After six years (two terms) in the role, Mick Barnes will be stepping down as Church Secretary at the end of December 2022. We would like to express our grateful thanks for all he has done and contributed to the life of the church during his tenure. We hope he will enjoy the additional time he will have available as a result. Mick will continue to be part of the Resources Group for the coming year.

Whilst the increasing cost of gas brings significant pressures on the church's running costs we were pleased to be able to install a new boiler during the Summer months. The new boiler is significantly more efficient than the one it replaced so consumes less gas and is better insulated. Whilst our costs will rise, we can at least see that the new boiler is going to have some positive impact on the budget as well as keeping us warm.

**George:** My dad is very rich, so I don't know what to get him for Christmas. What do you give a man who has everything?

**Harry:** A burglar alarm?



# CHRISTMAS ACROSS THE PASTORATE

## SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10:30 CASTLE HILL  
Sunday Worship led by Revd Adam

10:30 FELIXSTOWE  
Sunday Worship led by Revd John Cook

10:45 ST JOHN'S  
**Toy Service**  
led by Sara Pells

11:00 SAXMUNDHAM  
Sunday Worship led by Revd David

14:00 LEISTON  
**"Cake, Carols, Music & Mince Pies"**  
**Christmas Celebration**  
led by Revd Adam

16:00 FELIXSTOWE  
**Family Carol Service**  
led by Revd David & Revd Adam

## SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10:30 CASTLE HILL  
**Festival Service**  
**"The Doctor, The Daleks  
& The Dazzling Day"**  
led by Andrea Rumsby and CHAPS

10:30 FELIXSTOWE  
**Carol Service**  
led by Revd David

10:30 LEISTON  
**Carol Service**  
led by Revd Adam

10:45 ST JOHN'S  
**Carol Service**  
led by Peter Dawson

11:00 SAXMUNDHAM  
**Carol Service**  
led by William Glasse

18:30 CASTLE HILL  
**Carols by Candlelight**  
led by Revd David & Revd Adam

## SATURDAY 24<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER CHRISTMAS EVE

16:00 CASTLE HILL  
**Family Carol Service**  
led by Revd David & Revd Adam

18:30 LEISTON  
**Community Carols in  
Old Post Office Square**  
led by Revd David & Revd Adam  
with Leiston RBL Band

23:30 ST JOHN'S  
**Watchnight Service**  
led by Peter Dawson

## SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER CHRISTMAS DAY

10:30 CASTLE HILL  
**Christmas Family Worship**  
led by Revd David



10:00 FELIXSTOWE  
**Christmas Day Worship**  
@ Trinity Methodist Church

10:00 LEISTON  
**Christmas Day Worship**  
led by David Sillett  
with pre-recorded address by Revd Adam

10:30 ST JOHN'S  
**Christmas Family Worship**  
led by Revd Adam

10:00 SAXMUNDHAM  
**Christmas Day Worship**  
a pre-recorded service  
led by Revd Adam

## PASTORATE BIBLE STUDY



On the second Tuesday of each month there is the opportunity to join in the Pastorate Bible Study via Zoom (online) or via telephone.

The forthcoming dates for this are:

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December:** bring your thoughts about the joy and meaning of the Christmas story in our day and age and your choice of Bible reading.

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January:** The main passage for study will be John 1:29-42, telling of the baptism of Jesus and the beginning of his ministry.

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February:** The theme will be shared nearer the time.

When logging on the meeting ID is 889 953 6542. If you have no internet, you can use your phone by dialling 02034815240 or 01304601196 and when prompted enter the number 889 953 6542.

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## OTHER NEWS

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### CARING FOR CREATION



As part of our working together as a pastorate, the “Caring for Creation” project is an established and ongoing feature. We hold regular meetings with representatives from each of the churches and work to encourage and support one another in developing our action and commitment to Eco-Church principles. We met in August and again in October.

With the work and encouragement of Len Green, we were able to include an Eco-Church insert in many of our church newsletters. This gave updates on various projects and sharing ideas about how we can become increasingly eco-friendly in our day to day lives.

With the Christmas season upon us, here are a few hints and tips to help make our celebrations more sustainable and eco-friendly, with acknowledgement to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) website:

1. When buying gifts think “less but better” to avoid the “unwanted gift” scenario.
2. Think about materials – ensure wood and paper gifts are made from recycled or Forest Stewardship Council certified materials.
3. Avoid single-use plastics.
4. Buying pre-loved and refurbished items is a good option and these are often less demanding on your finances.

5. Try and find gifts with little or no packaging and where packaging is necessary look for the recyclable kinds.
6. Look for cards and wrapping paper which is recycled and recyclable. Avoid plastic ribbon and tape or foil-back wrapping paper. Avoid foil or glitter.
7. If you're struggling for a gift idea there are many "alternative-gift" ideas making a contribution to a charity on behalf of the recipient.
8. Plan your menu carefully to avoid food waste.
9. Many Christmas crackers are not recyclable with gifts and toys inside which are also made of plastic. Alternatives to crackers such as reusable mini-gift bags are available and it can be fun gathering your own jokes and mottos.
10. LED Christmas lights use less energy, last longer and look just as good. Switch off lights before retiring to bed (especially those outdoor ones) to reduce energy use.
11. Make your own decorations – there are numerous ideas out there and many can be produced from recycled materials.

I wonder how many other ways you can think of to make Christmas Green. We'd love to hear your ideas. Why not let Revd Adam or Len Green know so we can continue to share these and support one another to be good stewards of creation.

## WELCOMING CHURCH



In his last pastoral letter before heading off on sabbatical, Revd David called us to consider what it means to be a truly welcoming church. This is the focus of our latest pastorate wide initiative considering how we can support one-another in growing our understanding and skills in being welcoming and inclusive.

On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October we held an initial meeting to discuss ways forward. The meeting, held at Castle Hill, was attended by representatives of each of the five churches and was both moving and encouraging.

We began by considering the Parable of the Good Samaritan drawing out various ideas including the truth that we are called to love everyone with no caveats – challenging but important. We considered the range of topics and themes that welcome may encompass and looked at some of the skills, understanding and expertise that we already have available within the pastorate.

We hope that, as we continue to work together, we will be able to draw up a pastorate wide "Welcome Charter". We also are looking to offer learning opportunities for all who would like to find out more about different aspects of diversity, need and support. Keep an eye out for future "Welcome Church" events and activities – everyone is welcome to get involved.

*"Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world."*

C.S. LEWIS

# PASTORATE WORKING & TEAM MINISTRY



Now we have two ministers in post we have the opportunity to implement the long-awaited team-ministry approach across the Ipswich and East pastorate. Following the meeting of the Advisory Group in October, Revd Adam circulated a number of questions to each of the churches' elders' meetings, focussed on how we can work together as a joint pastorate and what team-ministry could look like. The key questions were as follows:

- a. What do you see as the advantages of working in partnership with the five churches in a joint pastorate?
- b. What are the concerns or potential difficulties that may arise as a result of working in joint pastorate?
- c. What specific considerations would you suggest need to be taken into account when drawing up a pastorate working agreement?
- d. What do you understand by the term "Team Ministry" and what are your hopes and expectations from the Pastorate sharing ministers as they have been appointed and deployed for this purpose?

Whilst the two ministers are appointed as ministers of all five churches, in due course, and aware that we want to "work smart" each of our ministers will take Primary Contact Responsibility for certain churches. In this way both will fulfil certain responsibilities within the church. This will

avoid duplication and help the ministers to work efficiently.

These further questions were also asked:

- e. What would you envisage the specific role of the Primary Contact Minister for each church would entail?
- f. Are there any other considerations or thoughts that you would like to express with regard to the development of joint pastorate working and shared team ministry?

If you have any thoughts or ideas regarding these questions that you would like to be considered please let Revd Adam have them in a written form which you could either hand to him directly or email to [revaje@outlook.com](mailto:revaje@outlook.com) before the end of 2022.

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## SEASONAL THOUGHTS

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### CHRISTMAS TIME

Advent brings us to the feasting time of Christmas. This is, of course, when we celebrate the incarnation – the birth of God's Son, Jesus Christ, in remarkably humble circumstances. Jesus, equivalent to Joshua, means "God is Salvation". We also refer to Jesus as Emmanuel meaning "God with us!" Both have powerful implications – Jesus is both 100% God and 100% human. This may be mathematically challenging but its true none-the-less. Jesus is also the means of salvation by which we can be brought back into right relationship with God.

We have all sorts of festive traditions and customs but the reasons or meanings behind

some have faded into the mists of time. Here are a few thoughts to pick up some of those again.

### **Mince Pies**

The quantity of mince pies that are made, sold and consumed each year is staggering but they are more than just a tasty treat. Originally, they contained actual minced meat (not just the fruity blend we enjoy today) with spices and other additions. Traditionally they were oval in shape and said to represent the manger in which Jesus was laid. The tasty filling was a representation of the rich gift of Jesus. The tops were a lattice of pastry – representing the hay on which Jesus rested.

### **Baubles**



There's something quite splendid about baubles hanging on a Christmas Tree. They add colour and reflect light in the most captivating way. It is said that they stem from the roman tradition of hanging fruit from trees by way of decoration. The real fruit, especially apples, have been replaced with baubles over time. Of course apples hanging on a tree resonates with the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden and may remind us of the need for Christmas and the need for a Saviour.

The first baubles were created in sixteenth century Germany in the alpine town of Lauscha. The town became famous for its glass-blowing skills. By the 1800s, the founder of the first glassworks in Lauscha, Hans Greiner, began producing fruit and nut shaped glass ornaments. Other glassworks

followed suit and the area became the main producer. On a visit to Germany the famous F. W. Woolworth discovered these and distributed them widely and the rest, they say, is history.

## **EPIPHANY**

January brings us to the season of Epiphany. Some of our Christian family, including those from the Orthodox tradition, celebrate Christmas on this date and for many Epiphany is a significant date. An epiphany is a moment of sudden insight or understanding. With wise men, representing the world of the gentiles, this was the moment when Christ was revealed to the wider world.



There are a number of great traditions associated with Epiphany. One is the "Galette Des Rois" (King's Cake) popular in France. This is a delicious puff pastry filled with almond frangipane and scored to produce a pleasing decoration.

The cake is often topped with a golden cardboard crown. Hidden within the cake is a small ceramic trinket known as a fève. Whoever receives the slice containing the fève is then crowned "king". If you fancy making one of these to enjoy on the 6<sup>th</sup> January there are numerous recipes available online.

**HAVE A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS,  
NEW YEAR & EPIPHANY**

**The next edition of Connect will be  
Published in March 2023.**