



**The Chapels Royal of St Peter ad Vincula and St John the Evangelist  
HM Tower of London**

Dear friends,

This is the last Newsletter of 2023 and Barbara and I would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and every blessing in 2024. Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard throughout December; Cortland, Colm and the choir, the Stewards, the Sextons and, not least, Debbie our Chapel Administrator. It's been a busy month with over 2,000 people passing through the chapel, I hope that many of them will have caught a glimpse of God, and felt the prayers echoing from the walls down the centuries.

Service details for the Christmas weekend are enclosed and please note, we begin again on 7th January 2024 with our Epiphany service.

I hope you enjoy the selection of photographs in this Newsletter which were taken during 2023.

**A Christmas Message**

On that first Christmas, over two thousand years ago, the air was full of the voices of a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, '*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!*' How fervently we need to hear those words today as we see so many conflicts and so much innocent suffering in so many nations, not least in the land of Jesus's birth. The birth of Christ assures us that goodness is the fundamental truth, that love is stronger than hate, that life continues beyond death, and that hope is more profound than fear. Indeed, through the eyes of faith, we know that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it.

When we hear the words of the angels and speak the truth we have received, we help bring these messages of joy and hope into our daily lives, for there is much good in the world. There is a lot to be thankful for and speaking of our gratitude to God should always be our first instinct. We must never cease to strive for justice and to have the courage to speak out against injustice whenever and wherever we see it. The angels announced their message of great joy to the world. The shepherds then went with haste to make known to others the good news they had been told. We must do likewise.

When we see Christ in our neighbour, when we speak well of each other and focus on what we have in common and on our shared values, when we choose the language of Faith, Hope and Love: then we are speaking the truth. Let this become our reality and let our words and actions this Christmas and throughout the coming year be those of peace and goodwill.

With my best wishes and prayers for you all, Roger.

**Poem of the Week**

Clement Clarke Moore (1779-1863) was an American writer and scholar, perhaps best known as the author of the classic and much-loved festive poem '*A Visit from St. Nicholas*', more widely known by its opening line '*'Twas the Night Before Christmas*'. Moore studied at Columbia College in New York and became Professor of Oriental and Greek Literature, as well as Divinity and Biblical Learning, at the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the same city. He later had a long and successful career as a professor of literature. Moore wrote his famous poem for his children, Mary and Benjamin, in 1822. It was first published anonymously by a friend in a

newspaper the following year. It was only in 1837 that Moore took credit for the poem publicly, after it appeared in a collection of his poetry.

### **Twas the night before Christmas**

Twas the night before Christmas, when all  
through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;  
The children were nestled all snug in their beds;  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;  
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,  
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,  
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below,  
When what to my wondering eyes did appear,  
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-deer,  
With a little old driver so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment he must be St. Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:  
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! On, Cupid! On, Donner and Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"  
As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;  
So up to the housetop the coursers they flew  
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too—  
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.

As I drew in my head, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.  
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;  
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.  
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,  
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;  
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath;  
He had a broad face and a little round belly  
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;  
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;  
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight—  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

**Clement Clarke Moore 1779 - 1863**



## The Chapel's Year – 2023













## Christmas State Parade 2023





## Jigsaw

The polar bear at the Tower of London. <https://www.jigsawplanet.com/?rc=play&pid=0202493821ae>



## Chaplain's Christmas Joke



## **Prayers**

Please continue to remember those on our sick list, some of whom are very ill, amongst whom we name:

Norma, Ann, Mark, Dan, Ian, Patti, Florence, Jeff and Kofi.

## **RIP**

Derek Newman

## **Please continue to pray for Ukraine, Israel and Palestine:**

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine, Israel and Palestine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace,  
for wisdom, discernment, and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,  
that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of peace. Amen

With best wishes to all, Roger.



Canon Roger J Hall MBE  
Deputy Priest in Ordinary to HM The King  
1 Tower Green  
HM Tower of London  
EC3N 4AB  
07908 413045  
[Roger.Hall@hrp.org.uk](mailto:Roger.Hall@hrp.org.uk)  
Twitter @RogerHall53