

Roundabout



**The Cotteridge Church
Witnessing at the Heart of the Community**

January 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

A Happy New Year to you all! Indeed, January marks the start of the year and a new chapter for many. Some of us have made New Year's resolutions, while others are not so keen on them and start the year a little differently. Whatever your preferred way of starting a new year, it is my hope and prayer that 2026 will be a year of growth, peace, joy and love.

Although it is the start of the new year, for many it might not feel like it, given the continued political tensions in our world, wars, disasters, the poor and marginalised, and the list goes on. For some of us, it may be a little more personal than that, from ongoing immigration issues to poor health and many other things we may not be able to voice.

One thing stands out from the season we have just come out of. Christmas. Jesus steps into that world, their world, our world, not because it was perfect, far from it. It was broken, with many wounded and afflicted, from the national to the personal level.

You might be wondering why I'm referring to this. Well, it's because when the prophecy of his birth was given, 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel' (Isaiah 7:14), two things stood out:

1. The impossible became possible when the Virgin Mary gave birth to a baby they called Immanuel - God with us
2. Throughout his ministry, Jesus showed that beyond 'Christmas' he was indeed with the people who were broken-hearted, marginalised, in chains, and in need of healing...

While Christmas may be in our rear-view mirror, those two things remain constant. Firstly, our God remains the God of the impossible, for he will make the impossible possible (Matthew 19:26). Secondly, Immanuel, He is God with us. Not just those who have started this year on a high, but also us

- Us who are heartbroken and sick
- Us who are not sure and scared
- Us who have been hurt
- Us who feel too young or too old
- Us who are watching and dismayed by this broken world
- Us who fight for human rights and freedoms

God continues to be with us in the ordinary, and we can go to him with the impossible. So, when we put our decorations and Christmas trees away, let us remember that truth and keep hold of the gifts of hope, peace, love and joy and continue to share them throughout the year.



With every blessing, Tariro

Friends & Family.

Happy New Year to everyone.

Katie Fox has died. We send our prayers and condolences to her family and friends. Revd Ros Murphy has spent some time in hospital, & had an operation for appendicitis. She was discharged, and is now staying with her daughter in Berkhamsted to recover. We send her our love & best wishes.

Rachel H. had a fall recently, and broke a bone. She is recovering in a convalescent home. We send her our love and best wishes too.

Tuesday Fellowship is a group which is open to all. We meet on the 2nd and the 4th Tuesday of each month at 2.00 pm in the Cotswold Room and below is a list of dates with the speakers /activities. Please feel free to come and join us.

Thank you. Linda Mann

TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP DATES -January 2026

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>OPENER</u>
January 13th	A.G.M.	L.M.
27th	Peter Childs: Birmingham Museum	H.P.
February 10th	Don Hazzard: Birmingham 1,000 years ago	D.H.
24th	Diana Evans: Samaritans	J.M.

Services for January and February

	4th January	11th January	18th January	25 January
10:30 am	Revd Barbara Calvert All age Worship	Revd Roger Collins HC	Revd Steve Faber	Revd Tariro Mukoja HC
	1st February	8th February	15th February	22nd February
10:30 am	Revd Barbara Calvert All age Worship	Revd Farai Mapamula HC	Revd Roger Collins Morning Worship	Revd Israel Selvanayagam

Service types: HC - Holy Communion: P - Parade LA - Local Arrangement.

Communion Services are normally held each week at 10.00 am on Tuesdays.

Revd Steve Faber is Moderator of the West Midlands Synod of the URC.

Revd Dr Israel Selvanayagam is the Minister at the Methodist church in Broadway.

The week of prayer for Christian Unity.

This is from Sun 18th January - Sun 25th Jan 2026. There will be a mid-week service for churches together B30 at the Cotteridge church on Wednesday, the 21st of January. Everyone is welcome. If you would like to read or say prayers, please send me an email: tariro.mukoja@thecotteridgechurch.org.uk



Boys Brigade



Tommy has now completed his President's course and will be presented with his award and certificate at the Church Parade service on Sunday 1st February.



At the Church Christmas Fair we raised £84 on our Tombola stall. Many thanks to everybody who supported the BB.



Our Junior section has been bringing items every Friday for the Cotteridge Foodbank and they were given to them before Christmas.

Bob Hotchkiss



Robins and Christmas



The association of robins with Christmas probably arises from the fact that postmen in Victorian Britain wore red jackets and were nicknamed "Robins"; the robin featured on the Christmas card is an emblem of the postman delivering the card!

In the 1960s, in a vote publicised by *The Times*, the robin was adopted as the unofficial national bird of the UK. In 2015, the robin was again voted Britain's national bird in a poll organised by birdwatcher David Lindo, taking 34% of the final vote.

Web site "talesofnature.com" says "One day, about 2,000 years ago, one of the brown birds was perched on the branch of a tree when it saw Jesus being pulled through the streets of Jerusalem, bent under the weight of a heavy cross. A crown of thorns pierced His head making it bleed. The small brown bird felt sorry for Him and flew down. To ease the pain a little it plucked out a thorn from His head. On the thorn was a drop of blood which fell onto the breast of the small bird. That red stain is there to this day." As thanks for the efforts of that *one* small brown bird to ease Christ's suffering, all the small brown birds, male and female, were given a red breast by God. They are so pleased with their fine red breast, that they always proudly fluff it up as if to say to onlookers, "Look at just how beautiful I am!" It was the striking colour of this bird's breast that led to people referring to it as the "redbreast". The robin has become one of the most well-known and well-loved of all birds, though that story would favour it being associated more with Easter.

Celia Lester

To Lighten your Day

So much of our daily news now is about the depressing times we are living through - warfare, knife and gun crime, and other inhumane activities. I think we all need something, cheering, uplifting, or amusing to hear about.

So I have collected a few amusing/excruciating cracker jokes to start off our New Year.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. What do you call a Snowman's temper tantrum? | 1. A meltdown |
| 2. Who is Rudolph's favourite pop star? | 2. Beyon-sleigh! |
| 3. Why did the elf quit his job roasting chestnuts? | 3. Because it was driving him nuts! |
| 4. What did the sea say to Santa? | 4. Nothing - it just waves! |
| 5. How do the sheep greet each other at this time? | 5. Happy Christmas to EWE! |
| 6. What did Adam say the day before Christmas? | 6. Happy Christmas, Eve |
| 7. Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing? | 7. They keep dropping their needles |
| 8. Who hides in the bakery? | 8. A mince spy |
| 9. Why was the turkey in the pop group? | 9. He was the only one with drumsticks |
| 10. How did the Mistletoe become famous? | 10. It went to Holly-wood |

It would be lovely to have a little something happy or amusing to include in each Roundabout during 2026, so if you think of anything, please let me know.

C.L.

Some New Year Thoughts.

There is something about a new year that inspires fresh starts. People make resolutions and set new goals. You may be one of those people. New beginnings always inspire some measure of hope. It might be hope that things will be better than the previous year! Let us welcome the new year with renewed hope and determination, striving to turn aspirations into achievements.

The Guru meditating in his Himalayan cave opened his eyes to discover an unexpected visitor sitting there before him—the abbot of a well-known monastery.

“What is it you seek?” asked the Guru.

The abbot recounted a tale of woe. At one time his monastery had been famous throughout the western world. Its cells were filled with young aspirants and its church resounded to the chant of its monks. But hard times had come on the monastery. People no longer flocked there to nourish their spirit, the stream of young aspirants had dried up, the church was silent. There was only a handful of monks left and these went about their duties with heavy hearts.

Now this is what the abbot wanted to know: “Is it because of some sin of ours that the monastery has been reduced to this state?”

“Yes,” said the Guru, “a sin of ignorance.”

“And what sin might that be?”

“One of your members is the Messiah in disguise and you are ignorant of this.” Having said that the Guru closed his eyes and returned to his meditation.

Throughout the arduous journey back to his monastery the abbot’s heart beat fast at the thought that the Messiah—but the Messiah himself—had returned to earth and was right there in the monastery. How is it he had failed to recognise him? And who could it be? Brother Cook? Brother Sacristan? Brother Treasurer? Brother Prior? No, not he; he had too many defects, alas. But then the Guru had said he was in disguise. Could those defects be one of his disguises? Come to think of it, everyone in the monastery had defects. And one of them had to be the Messiah!

Back in the monastery he assembled the monks and told them what he had discovered. They looked at one another in disbelief. The Messiah? Here? Incredible! But he was supposed to be here in disguise. So, maybe. What if it were so-and-so? Or the other one over there? Or...

One thing was certain: If the Messiah was there in disguise it was not likely that they would recognise him. So they took to treating everyone with respect and consideration. “You never know,” they said to themselves when they dealt with one another, “maybe this is the one.”



When the eye is unobstructed,
the result is sight.

When the ear is unobstructed,
the result is hearing

When the mind is
unobstructed,
the result is truth.

When the heart is

The result of this was that the atmosphere in the monastery became vibrant with joy. Soon dozens of aspirants were seeking admission to the Order—and once again the Church re-echoed with the holy and joyful chant of monks who were aglow with the spirit of Love.

Roger Collins

Of what use is it to have eyes if the heart is blind?

The 12 Days of Christmas

A general knowledge quiz asked recently "How many Lords were a -leaping", and - of course, I could answer that one, but it got me thinking.

Shakespeare wrote a play called Twelfth Night.

Is there anything special about having 12 days of Christmas? We all know we must take down the decorations after that, but why then? We all know the song too.

So I looked it up with the ever useful internet.

Let's start with the song. The version we know best - words from an illustrated children's book "Mirth without Mischief" published in 1780, and the music from 1909 by Frederick Austin. Often the first Day of Christmas is thought of as Boxing Day.

On the first Day of Christmas, my true love sent to me- A partridge in a pear tree.

On Day 2 I got another partridge, and 2 turtle doves making 3 gifts

On Day 3 I got the partridge, & doves, again, and 3 French Hens making 6 gifts.

On Day 4: 6 gifts plus 4 calling birds, making 10 gifts

On Day 5: 10 gifts plus 5 go-old rings, making 15 gifts

On Day 6: 15 gifts plus 6 geese a-laying, making 21 gifts

On Day 7: 21 gifts plus 7 swans a-swimming, making 28 gifts

On Day 8: 28 gifts plus 8 maids a-milking, making 36 gifts

On Day 9: 36 gifts plus 9 ladies dancing, making 45 gifts

On Day 10: 45 gifts plus 10 lords a-leaping, making 55 gifts

On Day 11: 55 gifts plus 11 piper pipings, making 66 gifts

On Day 12: 66 gifts plus 12 drummers drumming, making 78 gifts.

So, altogether I now have $1+3+6+10+15+21+28+36+45+55+66+78 = 364$.

That is amazing! and leaves just Christmas Day as the 365th day of the year for it all to start again!

This period has been recognised as a festive and sacred season since before the middle ages, with the twelve days from Christmas to Epiphany having first been proclaimed as such all the way back in 567AD. There are numerous minor variations in the wording such as "calling" was formerly "colly", meaning coal black.

If any of this interests or amuses you look up The Twelve Days of Christmas on Wikipedia.



THE
TWELVE DAYS
OF
CHRISTMAS.
Sung at King Pepin's Ball.



THE first day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
A partridge in a pear tree

From "Mirth without Mischief"

Celia Lester

Memories of summers past

One of the activities in an art class I attended recently used autumn leaves to make decorations. It reminded me of a flower press my wife had about 40 years ago. She found the press, opened it and we were surprised to see it still held some flowers. I used them to make a picture to remind us of our garden



Bob Burton

COTTERIDGE

If you have a few minutes to waste:

How many words can you make from the letters in Cotteridge, which begin with a "D"?

[Words which are NOT abbreviations, or personal names or slang]

Answers below.

Words in Cotteridge:- Answers
die dig doc doe dog dot
deco deer dice diet dirt doer doge dote dree dreg
decor deter dicer dirge
deceit detect direct



Christmas Tree Fayre

In September a small group met to plan events to celebrate Christmas at The Cotteridge Church. We needed to meet this early to ensure we had gathered all the information together about the Fayre, Services, Catering...and all the celebrations that go on in the lead up to Christmas for a flyer to be distributed around Cotteridge.

We included in our plans a rethink about our Christmas decorations. Sarah did a splendid job ordering the trees, new lights and a star for the window above the entrance into the Pennine Way. From high up the star of Christmas shone its light over Cotteridge.

The Christmas Tree Fayre on Saturday 6th December was great fun. The day before there was a hive of activity as different groups - St Andrew's Methodist Church, our church gardeners, Guides, Brownies, Rainbows and Boys' Brigade, Knit and Natter, Saplings, local tradespeople ... and many more decorated their trees. The room looked beautiful with so many trees





Christmas Tree Fayre

In the centre were tables laden with goods to sell...Celia's Preserves, plants, C2U craft goods, books, Fairtrade, the BB Tombola...and so on.



Father Christmas had a decorated throne to rest on as he chatted to visitors young and old.



The cafe volunteers were worked off their feet serving Turkey, baps, mince pies, cakes the catering staff having worked very hard the day before preparing all the food.



It was a great event and not only a lot of fun welcoming old friends and new, but we also raised £1,425.59 to support the work of the church in serving the community.



Thank you to so many people who helped to make the event such a success.
Barbara Calvert



An Advert to make you think?

When I first saw one of the Tesco Christmas TV adverts I didn't quite know what to make of it - but after a few times it began to make more sense. If you didn't catch it I'll tell you about it. The scenes are families having arguments, going through the motions of Christmas get togethers but not really enjoying it. The slogan at the end says, "Christmas isn't perfect, that's what makes it Christmas." Well, that didn't make too much sense to me either.

Then I began to think more about the word 'perfect'.

When Jesus was born among the animals in Bethlehem that wasn't 'perfect'.

The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem - (over 80 miles) with Mary pregnant, that wasn't 'perfect', especially as Joseph knew this wasn't his son.

The shepherds in the fields were cold and exhausted and being woken from their sleep and frightened out of their wits, that wasn't 'perfect'.

No doubt the Wise Men were mocked by their colleagues when they said they were going to follow a star to find a king - not a 'perfect' reaction - and Herod, well, he wasn't in any way 'perfect'.

No, those first moments weren't 'perfect' but they started a journey that led to something that really was and is perfect. As we say in the Communion service

"He opened his arms upon the cross and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin"

Rita Sutton

Dame Elizabeth Cadbury - Blue Plaque

[ex BBC Midlands news 4 Nov 2025]



A Victorian philanthropist who led an "extraordinary life" campaigning for women's and children's rights to health and education is to be honoured with a blue plaque.

The memorial to Dame Elizabeth Cadbury will be unveiled at Birmingham's Bournville Junior School, on Thursday 6th November. She opened the school in 1906. Daniel Callicott, heritage manager at Bournville Village Trust, said: "She blazed a trail at a time when it was incredibly difficult for women to stand up for themselves, let alone others, and this is reflected in the vast variety of roles she took on."

Dame Elizabeth worked with her husband, chocolate maker George Cadbury, to change people's lives in the city, he said.

Dame Elizabeth was born into a "socially aware Quaker family" in south London in 1858. She visited

workhouses with her mother and volunteered at children's hospitals, the trust said.

She married George Cadbury in 1888 and moved to Birmingham. The couple had six children.

The trust said her campaigning work continued in the city and included opening the Woodland Hospital, (now the Royal Orthopaedic), building a holiday home for children from inner city slums and campaigning for medical inspections in schools.



Elizabeth and George Cadbury pictured with refugees at their home during World War One

Dame Elizabeth also led efforts to provide housing and schooling in Birmingham for young refugees from Serbia and Austria after World War One and worked with Belgian refugees during World War Two.

In 1922, she became chair of Bournville Village Trust, the organisation founded by her husband, opening its 200th house.

"Dame Elizabeth was a pioneer who enriched the lives of so many women and children in the city," said Mr Callicott.

He added that her "extraordinary life" included leading the UK delegation to the World Congress of the International Council of Women in 1936 when she was in her 70s.

The Birmingham Civic Society's Heritage Committee, which is working with the trust, has installed blue plaques to commemorate people in the city since the 1950s.



Co-chair Nicola Gauld said Dame Elizabeth's campaigning and practical work "impacted the lives of many and a blue plaque to recognise her achievements is long overdue".

THE CHALLENGES FACING YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY



A LISTENING EVENT WITH AL CARNS MP

All Welcome

FRIDAY 9TH JANUARY
7PM - 8:15PM

ROWHEATH PAVILION
CHURCH

Heath Road, Bournville, B30 1HH

Hosted by Churches Together in B30 with Al Carns MP

The speakers are:

Christina Thatcher [Head of Faculty, Kings Norton Girl's School],
Footsteps Intern and recent BCU Design for Future Living graduate,

Dave Baker [Senior Youth Worker with the FTB-STICK team]

[FTB is Forward Thinking Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health NHS Trust]

The Holy Innocents.

In her sermon on the 7th of December, Barbara reminded us that Jesus was a refugee, threatened with death, as so many people are today. He was able to escape to Egypt with his parents, but Herod ordered all the male babies under two years old, living near Bethlehem to be slaughtered. The story is told in the Gospel of Matthew 2 v 16-18. In Western Christian churches, we remember these unfortunate babies on 28th December.

Welcome to the
Cotteridge
Church
7th December
2025
Second Sunday in
Advent



***The Virgin and Child
surrounded by the Holy
Innocents or The Virgin and
Child with Angels***

is a 1616 oil painting by Peter Paul Rubens, showing the Virgin and Christ Child with the Holy Innocents.

The story is not mentioned in any of the other Gospels, and it is difficult to determine the number of children involved, but Bethlehem and the surrounding area was not highly populated, so the numbers are unlikely to be greater than 100. The event marks the vindictive and cruel nature of Herod, and his fear of being overcome by a more powerful ruler. It is very similar to the Exodus story, in which the pharaoh is concerned about the numbers and strength of the Israelites in Egypt, and ordered the slaughter of all the male babies born to the Israelites - a fate from which Moses escaped.

The Coventry Carol, which dates from the sixteenth century, refers to the massacre of the innocents, and takes the form of a lullaby sung by mothers of the doomed children.

*“Lully, lullay, thou little tiny child,
Bye bye, lully, lullay.
Thou little tiny child,
Bye bye, lully, lullay.*

*Herod the king, in his raging,
Chargèd he hath this day
His men of might in his own sight
All young children to slay.”*

It was performed during the Coventry Mystery Plays, notably “The Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors”

On Christmas Day 85 years ago, just weeks after the devastating Coventry Blitz, a group gathered in the cathedral ruins for a service, which was broadcast live to the nation. It concluded with the choir singing The Coventry Carol.

The carol of peace based on a Biblical massacre



Celebrating our volunteers in style



The Cotteridge Church is only able to give so much support to the local community because we have such an amazing band of volunteers to run various groups, serve on the coffee bar and maintain our building and garden.

It has become the custom to show our appreciation each year with a volunteers' Christmas lunch. This year's celebration was the biggest and best yet, with about 30 volunteers enjoying an absolutely delicious three

course meal prepared by our kitchen team, in the Clent Room beautifully decorated by Sarah. The atmosphere was warm and friendly as people that support different activities across different days met, chatted and made (or remade) connections.

This year we had a special guest, local MP Al Cairns, join us to give his personal thanks to all our volunteers and staff. He stressed how important the community work of the Cotteridge Church is in supporting those in need locally and in building stronger a community at a time when divisions are all too clear in society. We state publicly and boldly 'The Cotteridge Church Welcomes Everyone' and clearly the staff and volunteers who interact with the many people who benefit from our services each day are critical to making that statement a

day-to-day reality.



alcarns Last week, I was delighted to join the Christmas lunch at Cotteridge Church and spend time with the incredible volunteers who give so much to our community all year round 🎄



So, on behalf of the Community Services Committee, I would like to add my thanks to all our volunteers for the time, effort and welcome that they offer throughout the year.

Pam Waddell



Roundabout is the bi-monthly newsletter of The Cotteridge Church.
Large print issue is available to download from our web site.

Your Editor from January 2017 is Celia Lester

Please send copy for the March 2026 edition before 20th February 2026 to
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