

THE VOICE



MERROW METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE

**December 2024
& January 2025**

Christmas Message

from Peter Hills

Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat.
Please put a penny in the old man's hat.
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do.
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you!

Yes, it is that time of year again. The Church's year is built around two cycles, one, probably the older, around the fifty days from Easter to Pentecost, and the other between 25 December and 6 January, the so-called Twelve Days of Christmas. Advent and Lent are the kids on the block, as it were, having been added later. Together, these two cycles, from Ash Wednesday to Pentecost and from Advent Sunday to Epiphany (some churches carry on to Candlemas on 2 February) take up more than a third of the year. The new liturgical year begins on Advent Sunday, when Mark's gospel gives way to Luke, as the main Sunday gospel. The cycle begins again.

Advent is interesting: It is a period in which Christmas has already started in schools and shops and television studios, and Christmas decorations are all around us. Christmas parties and Christmas concerts take place at this time, though the Christian festival – and the statutory holidays – don't take place before Christmas Day (which technically begins the night before). And then it's all over, except in the churches and homes which keep Christmas to the end. More of that later. Advent, which, as you probably know, means 'coming', is in two halves, as we celebrate it these days. For two weeks we remember the exalted Christ, and the promise of his second Coming; then we look forward to Christmas – the celebration of the Incarnation:

*Our God, contracted to a span;
Incomprehensibly made man.*

Advent is the time of nativity plays and carol services, but also of pondering the meaning of the Christmas story, with the help of the great prophets of the Old Testament and the accounts of Matthew and Luke, and the wonderful poem which opens John's gospel. Christmas Day is a day to joyfully sing, as we do on Easter Day, not to think, so much as to wonder, and laugh and dance (metaphorically, at least). And we go on rejoicing until we celebrate the Epiphany, and the Baptism of Jesus.

I've never said this before, but Advent is, in a sense, part of Christmas. It is our time to think, to wrestle with what it all means, for us, and for this damaged, warring, unforgiving world, that 'God has spoken to us by a son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds,' and

that this Son would be poor and insignificant, a carpenter (or perhaps housebuilder!); who would perform amazing acts, all of them acts of love, who would teach a way of service and self-sacrifice for the sake of others, who would give new meaning to love of God and love of neighbour, who would die rejected and be raised from death. A human being, like us, born as a baby, as we were. Yet, as an old hymn reminds us, 'O Son of man, O more than man.' As I indicated in a recent Circuit letter, there is a common perception that the Christian festivals are simply the old pagan festivals taken over by the Church. Well, there was an ancient Roman pagan festival of the birth of the sun on 25 December, and it is possible that the western church did move Christmas – which was originally celebrated on 6 January – to oppose the pagan cult. It is true that that ancient pagan festival is still observed: but not in December. It is now known as Hallowe'en! Nor does Christmas Day fall on the Winter Solstice.

No, Christmas is Christmas, and always has been.

Even our commercial 'Christmas' has a Christian basis. The carols piped in the shops and on the radio still tell of a miraculous birth, of a baby in a feeding trough, of shepherds and angels, of wise men and dreams; and it is a time when people do put a penny in the old man's hat. A time of generosity and thoughtfulness and, yes, love.

Whether Christmas will be merry or sad for you this year, may it bring comfort and joy, healing and hope.

*O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by your advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel!*

Blessings,

Peter

EDITORIAL NOTE



A Christmas Poem

The trees stand proud against the wintry sky;
Leaves fallen to the earth;
Strong trunks and branches, bare, in silhouette,
Await re-birth.

Our Advent waiting leads to Christmas joy.
The Saviour, Christ, is born
To lead us from the old into the new
On Christmas morn.

A message to all our readers

HAPPY CHRISTMAS
&
ALL GOOD WISHES
for
2025

Any items for inclusion in the February 2025 issue of "The Voice" should be sent to me by: **January 23rd**

via email: gillianbrierley13@gmail.com

by hand:

or by post to: Gillian Varley - 4, Merrow Croft, Guildford. GU1 2XH

USEFUL ADDRESSES

SUPERINTENDENT MINISTER:

REV. DR. PAUL GLASS **01483 575667**
revpaulglass@gmail.com

MINISTER: returning Jan.2025

REV. GEORGE QUARM **01483 575432**
unclegeorge.quarm@gmail.com

CHURCH OFFICE:

Bushy Hill Drive, Guildford, GU1 2SH. **01483 537655**
office@merrowmethodistchurch.org.uk

PROPERTY LETTINGS

ADMINISTRATOR: **01483 537655**
lettings@merrowmethodistchurch.org.uk

PRAYER SUPPORT GROUP:

This is a small group willing to put time aside for praying each day for special needs within the Church community. Your request will be passed on to other members of the group, where it will remain confidential.

The prayer contact for December will be:

ANN CARPENTER **01483 535282**
and for January

PAULINE DANIELS **01483 958905**

EDITOR – ‘The Voice’

GILLIAN VARLEY **01483 495567**
gillianbrierley13@gmail.com

Important: It is our practice at Merrow to publish THE VOICE on the website. This is an important source of information about the life of our church and we want to share it with others. However, if you feel uncomfortable with a mention on our web page we will be happy to omit your name and any other personal details in any future issue if requested to do so. Please advise at the time of submitting the copy.

It is also important that you only submit non-copyright material.

WHAT'S HAPPENING in December/January

Stewards for Sunday worship:

Date	Time	Vestry	Worship Leader	P.A/A.V.	Door
Dec 1 st	10.30am Advent 1.	Hugh Bradley		Jane Vinall	Wendy Bradley Ruth McCulloch
Dec 8 th	10.30am HC Advent 2 4.30pm 'From loss to light'	Iris Walker Helen Belsham	Doreen Siame	Cari Rayner Glenys Magill	Julie Wallis Joyce Goodall Julie Wallis
Dec 15 th	10.30am Advent 3	Suzanne Burnham		Jane Vinall	Jan Marshall Maggie Woolcock
Dec 22 nd	10.30am Carol Service	Joan Wells		Cari Rayner	Joyce Goodall Ruth McCulloch
Dec 25 th	10.30AM	Helen Belsham		Glenys Magill	Jan Marshall Maggie Woolcock Joyce Goodall
Dec 29th	There is a Circuit	Service at 10.30am	at WOKING	METHODIST	CHURCH
Jan 5 th	10.30am Ruth McCulloch	Hugh Bradley	Gillian Varley	Jane Vinall	Wendy Bradley Ruth McCulloch
Jan 12 th	10.30am	Iris Walker		Cari Rayner	Sheila Shackleton Joyce Goodall
Jan 19 th	10.30am 6.30pm HC	Hugh Bradley Suzanne Burnham		GlenysMagill GlenysMagill	Wendy Bradley Jan Marshall
Jan 26 th	10.30am 6.30pm HC	Joan Wells		Jane Vinall	Maggie Woolcock Julie Wallis

Communion stewards:

	Preparation	Assisting
Dec.8 th	Doreen Siame	Julie Wallis
Jan. 5 th	Suzanne Burnham	Hugh Bradley
Jan 19 th 6.30pm	Glenys Magill	

Flower Rota:

Dec. 1 st	Sheila Shackleton
8 th	Jan Kemp
15 th	Cari Rayner
22 nd	Gordon McConnell Iris Walker; Gill Vinall, Margaret Hills
Jan 5 th	Glenys Magill,
12 th	Wendy Bradley
19 th	Pauline Daniels
26 th	Ruth McCulloch

Sunday Morning Coffee Rota:

1st Dec. - Pauline Daniels and Sheila Shackleton

8th Dec. - Joan Wells and Jan Walker.

15th Dec.- Julie Wallis and Helen Belsham

22nd Dec -Gill Vinall and Jan Kemp

29th Dec. (*no service at*

Merrow).....

5th Jan Maggie Woolcock and Margaret Hyam

12th Jan Ruth McCulloch and Margaret Hills

19th Jan Pauline Daniels and Sheila Shackleton

26th Jan Glenys Magill..

Charity Collections

Transform Trade

MHA

Embrace the Middle East.

Bible Society

Coffee Funds

Action For Children

Transform Trade

JMA

Women's Fellowship Carol Service

Monday 2nd December at 2pm

led by Rev. Darlene McCarley

followed by Christmas cake and mince pies

There will be a collection for Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice.

All are welcome to come and join the celebration

Monday 6th January 2.30 pm 2025 will be a members afternoon.

Suzanne

Our two **Church Bible Study** groups are open to all.

Morning Bible Study

at Lavender Cottage, Marlyns Drive, Burpham.

On Tuesdays Dec.10th; January 14th & 28th at 11.00am

Evening Bible Study

at Merrow Methodist Church

December 19th & January 18th at 7.30pm

Weekly Coffee Morning

Thursdays from 10.30 - 11.45 All are welcome – no charge.

Drop in for a drink and a chat with others from the church and local community

However

Each month, usually on the 2nd Thursday, we raise money for a different charity, when you can come along and enjoy a choice selection of cakes to accompany your coffee

(see next page for the Dec. Charity Coffee Morning)

Charity Coffee Morning

in aid of

The Number 5 Project and Mulberry House

Thursday 12th December 2024

from 10.30 – 12.00

Merrow Methodist Church

Number 5 provides short term temporary accommodation with support for people who are sleeping rough in Guildford. Aged 18 and over.

Mulberry House (run by the Salvation Army) is a supported housing development providing accommodation in Guildford and support for 15 vulnerable single women aged 18 and over.

Please come and join us for coffee and home-made cakes and support these charities.

Donations of men's scarves, gloves for the Winter months and toiletries for both men and women are always welcome.

Shoe Boxes for Samaritans Purse.

In the past as a Church we collected Shoe Boxes for Samaritans Purse.

We can still do so individually on line at

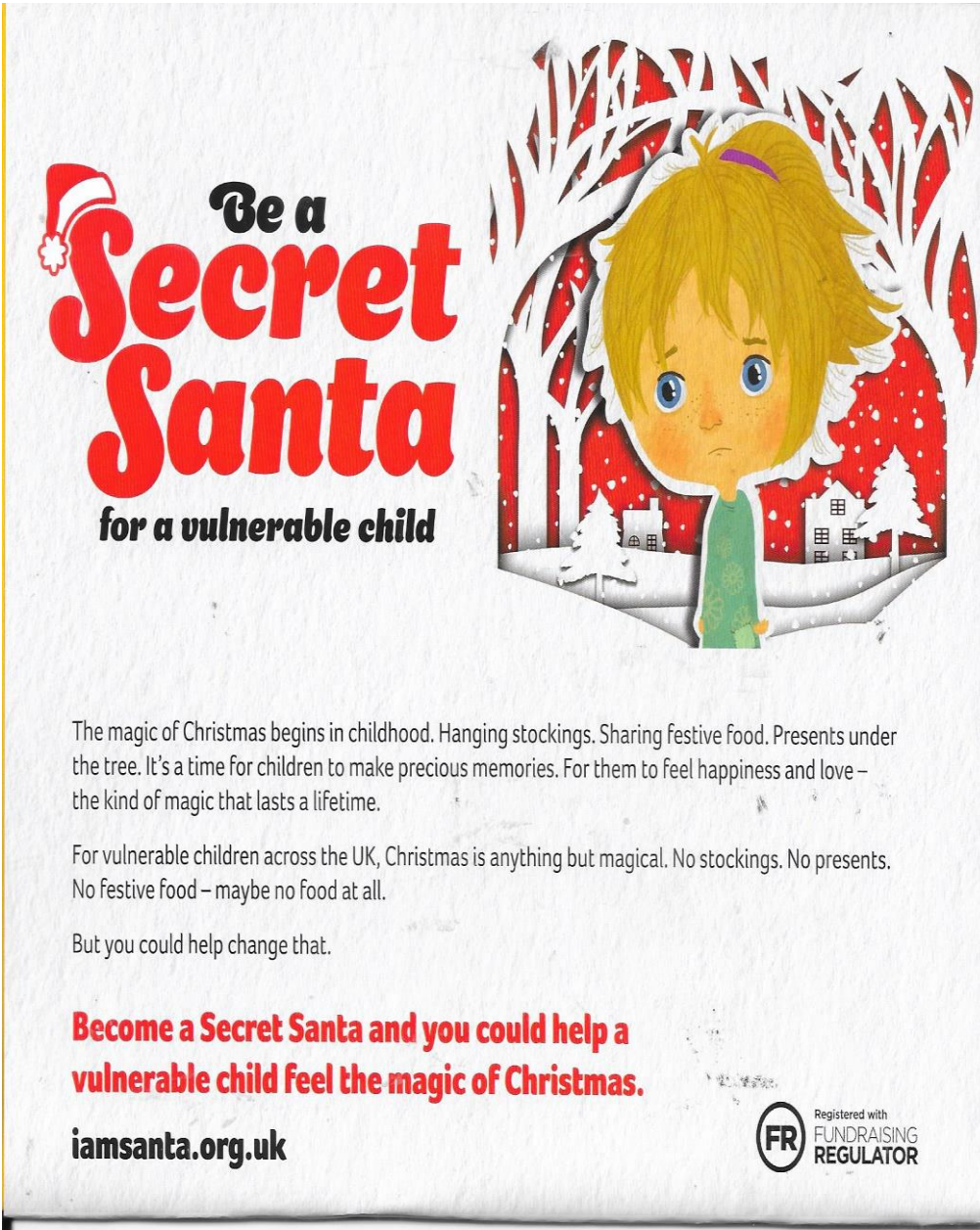
Shoebonline.samaritans-purse.org.uk



Pack a shoe box on line for £20 which includes projects costs of £5

Suzanne

Action for Children
- the Methodist Church Children's charity -



**Be a
Secret Santa**
for a vulnerable child

The magic of Christmas begins in childhood. Hanging stockings. Sharing festive food. Presents under the tree. It's a time for children to make precious memories. For them to feel happiness and love – the kind of magic that lasts a lifetime.

For vulnerable children across the UK, Christmas is anything but magical. No stockings. No presents. No festive food – maybe no food at all.

But you could help change that.

Become a Secret Santa and you could help a vulnerable child feel the magic of Christmas.

iamsanta.org.uk

Registered with
FR FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

Or you could buy a card One4all which can be purchased either at a post office or Sainsbury's (minimum £10).

I will be collecting them on at the morning services on 1st & 8th December. They will be delivered, once again, to the Fostering Wessex at Fareham before Christmas.

Either way please help me make a vulnerable child feel the magic of Christmas.

Suzanne

Sunday 8th December 2024 ¶
at 4.30pm ¶
Merrow Methodist Church ¶

From Loss to Light ¶



Take this opportunity to pause and remember
those who are no longer with us. ¶

The 'From Loss to Light' service is an 'All Souls' style service which will be led by Rev. Dr Paul Glass. It will provide an short time to pause and remember those who are no longer with us. Names can be written on stars which will be hung on a Christmas tree. These will be prayed for over the Christmas season. Refreshments will be served after the service.

Dates for your Diary

**Board
games**

Jigsaws



Church Family Afternoon Party

Sunday Jan 12 2025

2.00 - 4.30pm

Do you have a favourite board game that you haven't been able to play for a while because there aren't enough people in your home? Well, we have the answer! Bring it along on **Jan 12 at 2pm** to the church hall and find some friends who will play the game with you, as we invite everyone from MMC to an afternoon of games followed by tea and cake.

Not fond of board games? There will also be some jigsaws, jenga and cards games available or you can just sit with your friends and catch up with all the latest news whilst enjoying an afternoon tea.

If you have any questions, or need a lift, please speak to
Glenys Magill, Helen Belsham, Maggie Woolcock or Julie Wallis

**Please bring along your
favourite game**

Where did you get that hat?

A selection of photographs from the Women's Fellowship
November meeting



JUNIOR PAGE – for the young and young at heart

A Winter Crossword

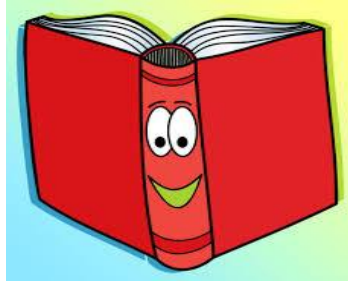
¹ C	² H	R	³ I	S	⁴ T	M	A	S
	A		C		R			
	⁵ P	R	E	S	E	N	⁶ T	S
	P				E		I	
⁷ B	Y	R	E		⁸ S	I	N	G
E				⁹ E			S	
¹⁰ R	E	¹¹ D		¹² A	N	G	E	L
R		E		S			L	
¹³ Y	E	W		¹⁴ T	W	O		

Clues Across:

- 2 Down & 1 – A seasonal greeting.
- You hope Santa Claus will bring these.
- An Old English barn or cowshed.
- You may join a group to go out and - - - - carols.
- The colour of a berry or a nose.
- A heavenly messenger.
- An ancient, long-lived, poisonous evergreen tree.
- How many turtle doves joined the partridge?

Clues Down:

- See 1 across.
- Frozen snow.
- Christmas - - - - - come in a wide range of shapes, sizes.
- A Christmas decoration.
- A round, red fruit.
- The Magi saw a star here.
- Droplets of this can be seen on leaves and grass in the morning.



Story time

The Lion and The Mouse

When a lion was resting in the jungle, a mouse began racing up and down his body for amusement. The lion's sleep was interrupted, and he awoke in a fury.



The lion was going to eat the mouse when the mouse begged him to let him go. "I assure you, if you save me, I will be of immense help to you in the future." The lion, amused by the mouse's self-assurance set him free.

A group of hunters arrived in the forest one day and captured the lion. They had him tied to a tree. The lion began to roar as he struggled to get out.

Soon, the mouse passed by and spotted the lion in distress. He dashed up to the poor lion, biting on the ropes to free him. Once free the two hurried off into the woods, safe from the hunters.

MORAL: Small acts of kindness will be rewarded greatly.

Gill's trills



Seasonal musings

Christmas draws on apace, so much to do;
So many preparations still to make;
More cards to write and post, the tree to buy;
The Christmas pudding and a Christmas cake
This year, shop bought, but who will realise?
And supermarkets sell such good mince pies!

Ken's Pen

Mother Theresa told a story about a 6-year-old orphan boy. The Sisters had rescued him from the streets of Calcutta, where he was dying of fever. They nursed him back to health.

As he was leaving for another home, he was given a packet of sugar; a quarter of a kilo being equivalent to a day's wages.

As the lad walked away, he saw another child being brought in, obviously ill. The lad walked to the Sisters and handed the sugar back, saying he wanted the sick child to have it. Mother Theresa asked him why he had done so. He replied "I think that is what Jesus would have done."

Wouldn't it be wonderful if, when we looked back at our deeds and words at the end of each day, we could all say "That's what Jesus would have done."

.....

A young minister was in the supermarket, when an attractive lady waved at him. Surprised, he said "Sorry, do I know you?"

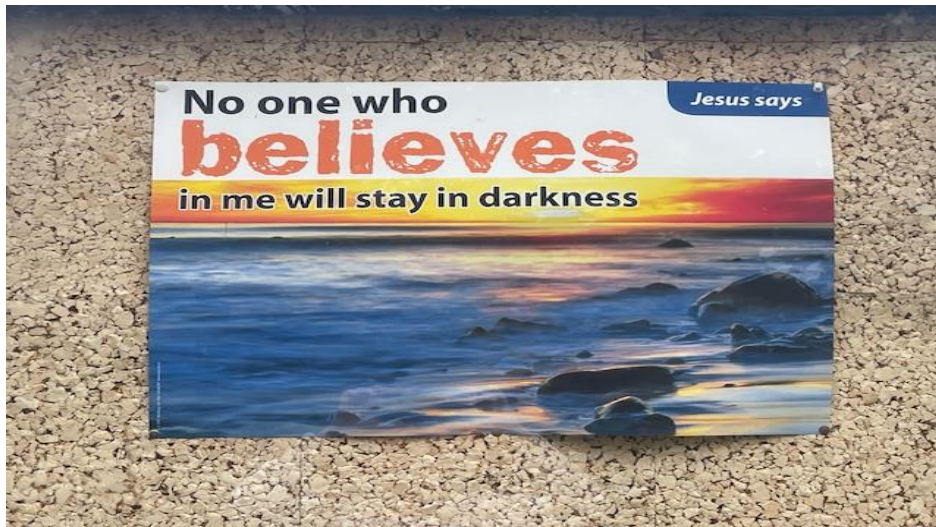
"I may be mistaken" she said, "but I thought you might be the father of one of my children." He thought of his pre-conversion misspent youth and said "Were you the girl I met at the disco?" "No, I'm your son's English teacher" she said.

.....

"When I was your age, I had only bread and dripping to eat" Granddad said as his young grandson refused to eat his cabbage. "Well, you're much better off now you've come to live with us, aren't you" he replied.

With greetings from Puddletown. Have a lovely, and loving Christmas. Ken Mills

JULIE'S NEWS



Walker's Talk

FESTIVE

BRAIN

TEASERS

During the festive season do you enjoy quizzes and puzzles?

We are social members of Hindhead Golf Club and every year another lady member has compiled a quiz to raise money for a project at her Church in Elstead. The 2024 version is not available yet and will come too late for The Voice so I'm providing a previous version from 2022. The 2023 version was extremely difficult, and, after many remonstrations, we are told that 2024 will not be as taxing. Phew!!

Ask me for a copy of the 2022 version if you are interested. They are fun!
Answers in the next edition of The Voice."

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one now.

If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.

A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk I have a work station.

Where there is a will I want to be in it.

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

In filling out an application form, where it says, "In case of emergency, notify," I answered, "A doctor."

Why do Americans choose from just two people to run for President and fifty for Miss America?

POETRY CORNER

A Christmas Carol, by Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

What sweeter music can we bring,
Than a carol, for to sing
The birth of this our heavenly King?
Awake the voice! Awake the string!
Heart, ear, and eye, and everything.
Awake! the while the active finger
Runs division with the singer.

Come and see
The cause, why things thus fragrant be:
'Tis He is born, whose quickening birth
Gives life and luster, public mirth,
To heaven, and the under-earth.
The darling of the world is come,
And fit it is, we find a room
To welcome Him

A New Year Poem Anonymous

Farewell Old Year.
Your joys, your tears,
Leave them behind.
Speak words of peace.
Give friendship's hand.
Be not unkind.
Look now ahead,
With hope renewed,
Fresh joys to find.

SCAMS

The NCSC is urging shoppers to look out for:

Shoppers are being reminded that as scams are increasingly convincing, it is even more important to have basic security measures in place when it comes to email security, including switching on 2-step verification (2SV) and have a strong password made up of three random words.

Where possible, use a credit card when shopping online as this will offer you more protection if anything goes wrong, and follow our practical advice to help you shop online safely.

One in ten have first-hand experience of an electrical fire or shock caused by an electrical product they've bought online.

Online marketplaces, like eBay, Amazon Marketplace, Facebook Marketplace and Wish, are not currently required by law to check the safety of products sold on their sites, in the same way that traditional high street shops, such as John Lewis and Currys are.

The 'Don't Be Electricked' campaign is raising this issue as a matter of national urgency.

If you are not sure exactly who is communicating that text, email or phone call PLEASE do not respond

- Report suspicious text messages by forwarding them to 7726 (it's free of charge). 60,000 malicious websites have been removed as a result of suspicious text messages reported by the public.
- HMRC will never send notifications of a tax rebate or ask you to disclose personal or payment information by email. Received a suspicious email claiming to be from HMRC? Report it by forwarding the email to: phishing@hmrc.gov.uk

Prayers worth sharing



A New Year Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for making all things new!

As another new year begins, help me live each day for You.

Give us the wisdom to make the best choices, fill us with a desire to seek after you more than anything else in this world.

Let your Spirit and power breathe in us, through us, again, fresh and new.

May I continually have a new song in my heart to sing to You, no matter what comes my way.

I trust in You because I know that Your mercies are new every morning, and nothing ahead of me will take You by surprise.

In Jesus' Name

Amen.

Crossword Answers

Across:

Christmas; Presents; Byre; Sing; Red; Angels; Yew; Two

Down:

Happy; Ice; Trees; Tinsel; Berry; East; Dew