

# Connecting *the* Faithful

Newsletter | December 2020  
**Issue 7**

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## RIDDLE

Santa was having problems with his legs and was unable to walk so he went to the hospital to ask the doctor if he could recommend something for him. What did the doctor give to Santa to help him to walk?

*Answer from the last issue: Your Age  
Answer this issue: A Candy Cane*

Brought to you by: Offaly County Council, Offaly Public Participation Network, Offaly Age Friendly Alliance and Local Community Development Committee.

Dear all,

Welcome to the 7th edition of our Connecting the Faithful Newsletter. Offaly Age Friendly Alliance are delighted to be able to connect with you through the Newsletter. We hope you enjoyed the variety of articles and other regular features. It has been a year like none other. Covid 19 has challenged us all. I would like to commend your resilience during these trying times.

Offaly County Council continue to deliver our full range of services including the **Community Call Helpline 7 days a week from 9am - 5pm Monday to Sunday. 1800 818181** Offaly County Council staff are on hand to take calls and redirect you to the supports and services that you may require. This is a confidential service and we encourage you to contact the helpline if you need to do so. The Community Response Forum are the umbrella group that have organised the network of agencies & services available to provide supports to the Helpline staff. We can get through these challenging times by working together while staying apart.

On behalf of Offaly Co. Co., I wish you a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and happy 2021.



*\*Cover photo credit: Paul Moore*

## 'Chatters and Matters' - A Sunday Morning wake up call to brighten your day: 8am – 9 am every Sunday on Midlands 103

Offaly Older Person's Network was the brainchild behind this programme. Tired of hearing dreary information on Covid, they brought the idea to Offaly Age Friendly Alliance. This grew into a Tri County initiative with Westmeath & Laois coming on board. The working group that helps keep the programme fun and engaging are : Offaly Older Person's Network; Offaly/Laois & Westmeath Age Friendly Alliance and OPC's, Offaly Public Participation Network; Offaly County Council and Offaly Local Development Company. The programme, Chatters & Matters, has been broadcast from 8.00 - 9.00am on Sunday mornings, since November 1st. Some of the programme topics will be information sharing about health, fitness, gardening, cooking, a talent contest, story-telling, interviews with interesting people, music and a weekly notice board.

### Oh Holy Night

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,  
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
'Til He appear'd and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;  
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming,  
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.  
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,  
Here come the wise men from Orient land.  
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger;  
In all our trials born to be our friend.

Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;  
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.

Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother;  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name.

Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;  
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.

O Holy Night" is originally a French poem (titled "Minuit Chrétiens") written in 1843 by Placide Cappeau in Roquemaure, France to celebrate the renovation of a local church. French composer Adolphe Adam set the poem to music sometime between 1843 and 1847 (according to conflicting reports). The poem was translated into English in 1855 by Unitarian minister John Sullivan Dwight. His translation differs slightly from the literal English translation of "Minuit Chrétiens," but it quickly gained popularity due to its more upbeat and encouraging lyrics than the original. Chrétiens," but it quickly gained popularity due to its more upbeat and encouraging lyrics than the original.



### Motor Tax Opening Arrangements

Public Counter operating hours 9.30am to 1pm daily.

Closing on 23rd December at 12 noon.

Public Counter reopening 30th December at 9.30am to 1pm

Closing on 31st December at 12 noon.

Public Counter reopening 04th January at 9.30am to 1pm

Alternatively, please visit [www.motortax.ie](http://www.motortax.ie) to tax your vehicle.



## A message from Offaly Fire & Rescue Service. Fire Prevention at Home

Coming up to the festive season, we would like to remind people to be even more mindful of fire safety in the home. It's important to know how to prevent a fire, what to do in the event of a fire and to know your escape route. Be sure to test your smoke alarms at least once a week. Remember one socket one plug. Every night put out candles and naked flames. Place a spark guard in front of open fires and keep your way out completely clear. A fire safety check only takes a few minutes but it could make all the difference.

### Make sure to

- Use a proper holder for candles.
- Use a spark guard with open fires.
- Repair or replace faulty electrical appliances immediately.
- Complete a fire safety check before you go to bed.
- Unplug all electrics (except the fridge) at night.
- Close all doors at night.
- Keep a suitable fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the kitchen.
- Clean your chimney and service your heating system at least once a year.
- Keep your gas cylinder outside, on solid ground and away from anything hot.
- Empty ashtrays before you go to bed.
- Run the contents under the tap before you empty them.

### Christmas Trees and Decorations

- Remember never leave your Christmas tree lights plugged in when going to bed or leaving your home, even for a short time.
- Make sure to avoid hanging decorations above or near to an open fire or stove. Keep your Christmas tree at least 4 feet away from heat sources such as heaters, fires and candles.
- If you have a real Christmas tree, keep it in a pot of water to stop it from drying out and becoming highly flammable. Try not to purchase a tree with brown needles, as these will fall out quickly and become a fire hazard.
- If you purchase an artificial Christmas tree, be sure it has a CE safety mark and is flame retardant. Only purchase lights that have the CE safety mark

### Don't

- Smoke when you are in bed, tired or on medication.
- Leave the room when there are candles burning.
- Leave young children alone near an open fire or cooker.
- Run electrical appliances from a light socket.
- Leave matches and lighters where children can get them.
- Use electric appliances that do not work properly. Overload electric sockets - one socket, one plug.
- Use a heater or the cooker to dry clothes.
- Stand too close to fires or heaters.
- Use petrol or paraffin to light a solid fuel stove.
- Leave the room when a chip or frying pan is on even for a minute.

### Carbon Monoxide

- If you have a fossil fuel-burning appliance, including an open fire - make sure to have a carbon monoxide alarm installed. You should have one in every room that contains a stove or open fire.

### Christmas Holiday Arrangements 2020

Closing on the 23rd of December at 1pm  
Public opening hours 9.30am to 1pm 30th and 31st of December.  
Reopening the 4th of January at 9.30am

For further information visit [www.offaly.ie](http://www.offaly.ie)  
Telephone 057 93 46800



## Offaly County Library Services

Hello and welcome to December from all the team at Offaly libraries. We are now well into the winter season and hopefully Christmas this year will bring some much-needed cheer. With that in mind, we hope you enjoy our Connecting the Faithful contribution. Enjoy and Keep Well!

With Christmas just around the corner, we thought it might be a nice idea to share a recipe of a traditional Christmas cake, which has passed down through the generations. Have a read through and see what you think. We guarantee you will not regret trying it.

### Christmas Cake:

#### Ingredients:

Half a pound of margarine  
Half a pound of brown sugar  
12 oz of plain flour  
6 medium eggs  
4 oz of peel  
4 oz of cherries  
1 and half pounds of sultanas  
Half a teaspoon of nutmeg  
Half a teaspoon of cinnamon  
2 oz of ground almonds  
Half a glass of whiskey  
1 capful of almond essence  
1 teaspoon of baking powder  
A lined cake tin with baking paper



#### Method:

Preheat your oven to 120 degrees Fahrenheit  
Cream the margarine and brown sugar together.  
Sieve in the flour and baking powder and mix through  
Add the eggs and whisk again  
Stir in all your dried fruit.  
Stir in the nutmeg, cinnamon and ground almonds  
Add the almond essence and whiskey and mix through  
Line your cake tin with greaseproof paper and add the cake mix  
Cook on a very low heat for 3.5 hours. Leave to cool and turn out on to a wire rack.  
Bore a few holes in the cake and every second week add a little whiskey that will absorb through the cake.  
And Enjoy!

### The Winter Solstice

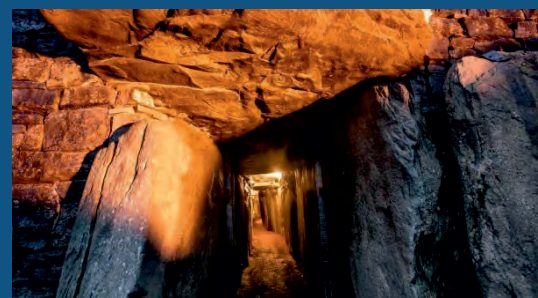
The Winter Solstice is the day with the shortest period of daylight and the longest night of the year.

Traditionally the winter solstice is seen as the middle of winter and usually occurs on the 21st December. After the winter solstice days start to become longer and nights shorter as spring approaches. This is a significant time of the year in many cultures and is usually marked by festivals and rituals. The Pagan celebration of Winter Solstice (also known as Yule) is one of the oldest winter celebrations in the world.

### Newgrange

Newgrange is a Megalithic passage tomb in County Meath. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and it predates the Pyramids in Egypt and Stonehenge in Britain. At sunrise on the 21st December (The Winter Solstice) the inner chamber of Newgrange is filled with a mystical golden light. The sunlight shines through the roof box over the main entrance to the tomb and creeps along the passage where it hits the inner chamber and illuminates it.

A lottery determines who the people will be in the inner chamber and the Irish weather determines whether there will be sunlight or not. Whether the chamber is illuminated or not, people feel privileged to be present for the Pagan festival. It is awe-inspiring to think that our Irish ancestors knew so much about astronomy and engineering. Using this knowledge, they were able to build this ancient temple as a place of astrological, spiritual, religious and ceremonial importance, much as present day cathedrals are places of prestige and worship.





## Offaly Libraries Book Review and Recommendation

**Staff Member:** Claudia at Clara  
Library

**Title:** *The Memories of Us* by  
Vanessa Carnevale



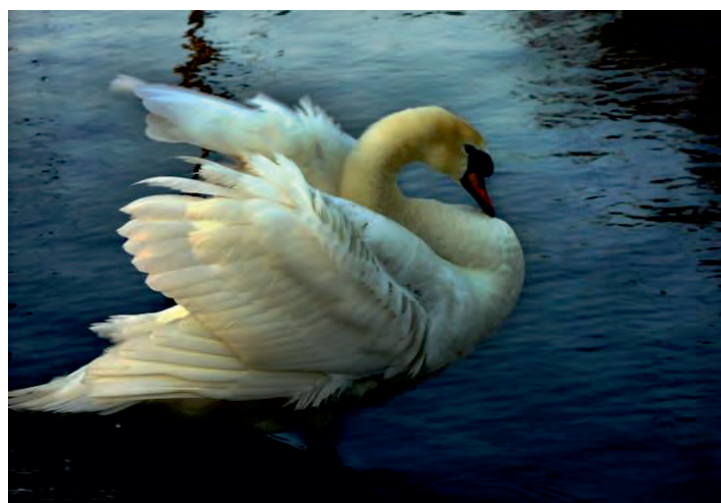
Can one moment change your life?  
When Gracie Ashcroft wakes after a  
crash with severe amnesia, she  
must choose whether to live a life through other  
people's memories or to start a new life all her  
own.

Discovering her late mother left her an old flower  
farm, Gracie leaves her fiancé, best friend and the  
home full of forgotten memories behind, hoping to  
learn who she is now.

Torn between wishing she could remember and  
afraid of losing what she now has, Gracie starts to  
wonder: if you had your time over, would you live  
the same life twice?

What might simply be seen as running away is  
actually a very brave thing to do not knowing if  
your memory will ever return. There are moments  
in the book, which are very moving with some  
comical moments. I found this book thoroughly  
enjoyable and well written with empathy,  
understanding and an appreciation of the truly  
important things in our lives and one I would  
highly recommend.

*All at Offaly libraries hope you have a lovely  
relaxing and enjoyable Christmas.*



### The Wild Swans at Coole

By: W B Yeats

The trees are in their autumn beauty,  
The woodland paths are dry,  
Under the October twilight the water  
Mirrors a still sky;  
Upon the brimming water among the stones  
Are nine-and-fifty swans.

The nineteenth autumn has come upon me  
Since I first made my count;  
I saw, before I had well finished,  
All suddenly mount  
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings  
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant  
creatures,  
And now my heart is sore.  
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,  
The first time on this shore,  
The bell-beat of their wings above my  
head,  
Trod with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,  
They paddle in the cold  
Companionable streams or climb the air;  
Their hearts have not grown old;  
Passion or conquest, wander where they  
will,  
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water,  
Mysterious, beautiful;  
Among what rushes will they build,  
By what lake's edge or pool  
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day  
To find they have flown away?

Yeats talks about his time spent in Coole in  
Co. Galway and how the swans on the lake  
represent memories of his youth and the  
pain of the passage of time.

Find WB Yeats on our Borrowbox app  
through the link on our digital library



Borrow, download  
and enjoy here  
Your library in one app.



## The Story of Christmas Word Search

### The story of Christmas

J	W	W	B	S	Q	F	J	B	R	J	T	L	P	G	J	C	K
T	R	I	X	Z	T	R	M	E	G	W	S	N	S	A	E	U	I
M	H	S	M	A	U	A	L	T	A	O	A	A	A	L	S	W	N
Y	L	Q	A	G	S	N	R	H	N	X	V	Z	Z	I	U	F	G
R	A	G	N	C	H	K	D	L	A	F	I	A	D	L	S	G	D
R	D	F	G	U	E	I	A	E	T	Y	O	R	A	E	Z	A	M
H	Y	H	E	Q	P	N	P	H	I	P	U	E	S	E	T	B	M
Z	E	K	R	L	A	C	C	E	V	G	R	T	J	T	X	R	V
X	A	R	X	T	R	E	J	M	I	O	B	H	L	Y	O	I	A
T	I	K	O	I	D	N	S	I	T	L	J	D	S	L	L	E	W
P	S	O	W	D	S	S	J	G	Y	D	N	J	W	R	Q	L	R
Y	J	A	A	J	O	E	F	J	A	W	I	S	E	M	E	N	C



BETHLEHEM  
FRANKINCENSE  
GABRIEL  
GALILEE  
GOLD  
HEROD  
JESUS  
KING  
MANGER  
MYRRH  
NATIVITY  
NAZARETH  
SAVIOUR  
SHEPARDS STAR  
WISE MEN

## Quiz Time

### Christmas Knowledge

1. How many ghosts show up in A Christmas Carol?
2. Which country started the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree?
3. According to the song, what did my true love give to me on the eighth day of Christmas?
4. How do you say "Merry Christmas" in Spanish?
5. Three of Santa's reindeer's names begin with the letter "D." What are those names?
6. Which character declares "Merry Christmas, one and all!" in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol?
7. Who wrote, "Christmas doesn't come from a store, maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more?"
8. What was the first company that used Santa Claus in advertising?
9. What is the best-selling Christmas song ever?
10. What are the two other most popular names for Santa Claus?
11. Where was baby Jesus born?
12. Which fairy tale was the first gingerbread houses inspired by?
13. Where did there arise such a clatter?
14. The movie Miracle on 34th Street is based on a real-life department store. What is it?
15. What did the other reindeer not let Rudolph do because of his shiny red nose?

1. Four 2. Germany 3. Eight 4. Feliz Navidad 5. Dancer, Dasher + Donner 6. Tiny Tim 7. Dr. Seuss 8. Coca-Cola 9. White Christmas By: Bing Crosby 10. Kris Kringle + Saint Nick 11. In Bethlehem 12. Hansel + Gretel 13. On the lawn 14. Macy's 15. Join in any reindeer games

## Recipe: Spicy Christmas biscuits

Homemade biscuits smell and taste wonderful and are better value than bought biscuits. Spoil yourself and your family this Christmas with this delicious recipe.

### Ingredients

225g / 8 oz. of plain flour  
175g / 6 oz. of low-fat, unsaturated margarine  
1 teaspoon of cinnamon  
½ teaspoon of grated nutmeg  
60g / 2 oz. of castor sugar  
A little extra castor sugar for dusting

### Method:

Heat oven to 180°C / 350°F / Gas Mark 4  
Weigh out flour and sieve on to a plate  
Weigh out margarine and sugar and place in a large mixing bowl  
Add cinnamon and nutmeg and beat together till smooth and creamy  
Add sieved flour, one tablespoon at a time and mix until all the flour is incorporated. Use your hands to get the dough to come together into a ball  
Place the ball of dough on a floured worktop and flatten slightly. Roll it out to about 1 cm / ½ inch thick  
Cut shapes with cookie cutters - this is especially nice if you can find star or holly shaped cutters  
Place the cookies on a greased baking tray and bake for 10 to 15 minutes until a very pale golden  
Remove from baking tray on to a cooling rack and sprinkle with a little more castor sugar. Cool completely and store in an airtight tin

### Serving Suggestion

These festive little treats can be made in any Christmas shapes you like and will keep really well in an airtight container



Healthy Ireland  
at your Library

These recipes and many more are to be found on <https://www.safefood.net/>

## Recipe: Turkey pie Christmas Leftovers

This pie is a brilliant way to use up leftover turkey or chicken and really is very simple to prepare.

### Ingredients

500g / 1lb of cooked turkey, cut into chunks  
225g / 8 oz. of puff pastry  
1 x 400g can of mushroom soup  
145g / 5 oz. of frozen peas, defrosted  
2 tablespoons of lemon juice  
2 medium onions  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
1 tablespoon of semi-skimmed milk, to glaze the pastry

### Method:

Mix the turkey, soup, peas, lemon juice, onions, salt and pepper together and add to a casserole dish. Add a little water or low-fat milk if there is not enough sauce  
Roll out the pastry to about ½ cm thickness and cover the casserole  
Glaze the pastry with milk  
Bake in the oven at 200°C / 400°F / Gas Mark 6 for 25 minutes  
Serve hot

### Serving Suggestion

Serve with your favorite vegetables or a light and crispy side salad





# HELP IS AT HAND FOR YOUR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



## EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ambulance / Fire / Gardaí: **CALL: 112 or 999**

HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT:

**Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore: (057) 93 21501**

MIDOC GP OUT OF HOURS SERVICES: **1850 302 702**

## NATIONAL SUPPORTS

SAMARITANS (emotional Support service)

**FREEPHONE: 116 123 or email: [jo@samaritans.ie](mailto:jo@samaritans.ie)**

CRISIS TEXT LINE: Free 24/7 text service providing support for people going through a mental health or emotional crisis

Text: **YMH to 50808**, anytime day or night | **[www.text50808.ie](http://www.text50808.ie)**

PIETA 24/7 Free therapeutic support: **1800 247 247 /**

**Text HELP to 51444 / [www.pietahouse.ie](http://www.pietahouse.ie)**

AWARE HELPLINE: **1800 804 848 (10am-10pm)**

**[www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)**

ALONE support for older people: **0818 222 024**

LGBT Ireland Helpline: **1890 929 539 / [www.lgbt.ie](http://www.lgbt.ie)**

## LOCAL SUPPORTS

Offaly Community Call number: **1800 81 81 81**

Citizens Advice Centres: Tullamore Centre: **076 1076 290 |**  
Birr Centre: **076 1076 260 |** Edenderry Centre: **076 1076 280**

Family Resource Centres: **[www.familyresource.ie](http://www.familyresource.ie)**

Tullamore Centre: **057 93 20598 |** Clara Centre: **057 93 31928**

SVP Offaly: Tullamore: **057 93 22072 |**

Birr: **085 880 4028 |** Edenderry: **087 908 9900**

Offaly Traveller Movement: **057 93 52438 / [www.otm.ie](http://www.otm.ie)**

Offaly Local Development Company: **[www.offalyldc.ie](http://www.offalyldc.ie)**

Tullamore: **057 93 52467**

MABS Money Advice and Budgeting Service:

**(076) 107 2000 / [www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie)**

Midland SIMON Community: **[www.midlandssimon.com](http://www.midlandssimon.com)**

Regional Office: **090 644 4641 /**

Tullamore Accommodation Centre: **087 6359 760**

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

GROW: **1890 474 474 [www.grow.ie](http://www.grow.ie)**

SHINE: **[midlands@shine.ie](mailto:midlands@shine.ie)**

## HSE INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Covid-19: **1850 241 850 / email: [hselive@hse.ie](mailto:hselive@hse.ie)**

Mental Health: **1800 111 888 / [www.yourmentalhealth.ie](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie)**

HSE - DRUG & ALCOHOL LINE: **1800 459 459 / [www.drug.ie](http://www.drug.ie) /**  
**[www.drinkaware.ie](http://www.drinkaware.ie) / email: [helpline@hse.ie](mailto:helpline@hse.ie)**

HSE PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE (emotional support and advice)  
**email: [mlmpsychosocial@hse.ie](mailto:mlmpsychosocial@hse.ie)**

## COUNSELLING SUPPORT

A.C.T. (Accessible Counselling Tullamore): **Tel: 057 93 52879 /**  
**Mobile: 086 355 5951 / [www.accessiblecounselling.ie/](http://www.accessiblecounselling.ie/)**

ONLINE Support and counselling **[www.turn2me.org](http://www.turn2me.org) /**  
**[www.mymind.org](http://www.mymind.org) / [www.suicideorsurvive.ie](http://www.suicideorsurvive.ie)**

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

JIGSAW Offaly: **057 93 52871 / email: [offaly@jigsaw.ie](mailto:offaly@jigsaw.ie) /**  
**[www.jigsawonline.ie](http://www.jigsawonline.ie)**

Barnardos Tullamore: **057 93 26803 / [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)**

CHILDLINE: **1800 666 666 Free (24/7)**

Text 'Talk' to 50101 / **[www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)**

Spunout: youth information website: **[www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)**

## BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Irish Hospice Foundation: **1800 807 077 (10am-1pm)**

Midland Living Links: **086-1600 641**

**[www.bereaved.ie](http://www.bereaved.ie) / [www.childhoodbereavement.ie](http://www.childhoodbereavement.ie)**

Suicide Bereavement Liaison Officer (PIETA):

Midlands: **086 418 0088**

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT

SEXUAL VIOLENCE HELPLINE (men and women)  
**1800 778 888**

WOMENS AID: **1800 341 900 (24/7) / [www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)**

MEN'S AID: **(01) 554 3811 / email: [crisis@anyman.ie](mailto:crisis@anyman.ie)**

Domestic Violence Service: National Helpline: **1800 341 900**

Offaly Domestic Violence Support Service:  
**057 93 51796 / [www.odvss.ie](http://www.odvss.ie)**