



The Diocesan Board of Education

The Ven Dr Justine Allain Chapman
Chair, Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education

December 2023

Dear Friends –

Have you made any Christmas presents this year or written cards or gift tags by yourself? I have heard grown-ups often say that they really love to receive gifts children have made themselves.

At Christmas time I love to look at the crib scene with the baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph and see the shepherds and wise men. I like to see what animals are in the stable. The animals were there first, I think.

On that first Christmas Day the animals gave the baby their own gifts. They didn't wrap them up in paper. You could say they were homemade because the ox and ass made room in their home, the stable, for Mary and Joseph after their long journey. The donkey carried Mary all the way. That was his gift. The cows gave their manger and some hay. Sometimes I see a dove in the stable too who is just there reminding everyone of peace.

This year I wonder if you might give some presents which aren't wrapped up but are like the ones the animals gave – making someone feel at home like the ox and ass, carrying or helping like the donkey, sharing like the cow, or just being there, like the dove.

Edward King House – Minster Yard – Lincoln – LN2 1PU
01522 504010

ellen.cross@lincoln.anglican.org – www.lincolndiocesaneducation.com

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This Christmas, as you give and receive, I hope and pray that God will touch your hearts with love and our world with the peace that the Christ child came to bring.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justine Allain Chapman". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Justine" being the most prominent.

The Ven Dr Justine Allain Chapman, Archdeacon of Boston
Chair of Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education