

Welcome to St Mary's Apsley & St Benedict's Bennetts End



and welcome to our services today

15th December, 2024
Third Sunday of Advent

If you need anything during the service, please ask someone sitting nearby, they will be pleased to help. Please stay after the service for refreshments and a chat in the Refectory at the back of the church.

This Week at St Mary's & St B's

Today

9.00am Bellringing at St Mary's
9.30am All Age Eucharist at St Mary's
11.15am Parish Eucharist at St Benedict's

Monday

9-10.30am Little Bears at St Benedict's
10.00 -12.00 Working Party at St Mary's
8.00pm Bellringing practice at St Mary's

Tuesday

9.30am Buzzy Bees at St Mary's
12.30-2.30pm St Mary's Foodbank & Community Café
7pm Advent Group at the Vicarage
Women of the Nativity

Wednesday

9.30-11.30am Foodbank at St Benedict's

Thursday

9.30 - 3.30 St Mary's Church open for private prayer
9.30am Eucharist at St Mary's
10.00 – 12.00 St Mary's Foodbank & Community Café
10.15am Study Group in St Mary's Vestry
8pm **No** Home Study Group
Joining Tuesdays at the Vicarage

Friday

10.00 -12.00 Working Party in St Mary's Church & Churchyard

Saturday

10.00 -12.00 Saturday Community Café at St Mary's

Sunday 22nd December

9.30am Lay Led Service at St Mary's
11.15am Parish Eucharist at St Benedict's



Dear Friends

Today is Gaudete Sunday, the 3rd Sunday of Advent, which takes its name from the Latin for 'Rejoice!'. Today we light the pink candle on our Advent wreath as a sign that we are joyfully anticipating the coming of Our Lord, with a real focus on the joy! Today is a day for doing something that symbolises joy to you, I wonder what that might be? How might you give yourself a little treat today as a reward for making it this far through Advent. I am thinking here of that familiar meme about doing a challenge in December, called 'December', in which we just try to make it through December.

John the Baptist has some challenging words for us in today's Gospel, his is the voice crying in the wilderness 'Prepare the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight'. His is a challenging message, but it is ultimately a hopeful one. It can be hard to have hope that Jesus' coming will really change anything for our 'weary world' and our weary hearts.

I have often fallen for the temptation to expect big changes. I think our God is a God of the small and the quiet; think of the mustard seed and the small coin, the lost sheep, the grain of wheat. The Kingdom of God is coming to us in ways which we might overlook if we are only looking out for grand gestures from God. Jesus is coming not as a great King with a royal retinue, but a tiny baby, the most vulnerable and tiny form of human being that there is.

How might you look out for small joys in the week ahead? How might you let God speak to your heart in quiet? How might God surprise you, if you are ready to let him?

Yours in Christ
Mother Alice

Sunday's Collect and Readings (Year C)

The Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming sent your messenger
to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your
mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the
wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in your
sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

A reading from the book of Zephaniah

3.14-end

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
The Lord has taken away the judgements against you,
he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.
On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.
The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.
And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord.

THANKS BE TO GOD!

A reading from Philippians 4.4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say,
Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone.
The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in
everything by prayer and supplication with
thanksgiving let your requests be made known to
God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all
understanding, will guard your hearts and your
minds in Christ Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord.

THANKS BE TO GOD!

Hear the Gospel

According to Luke

3.1-6

GLORY TO YOU, O LORD!

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius,
when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and
Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip
ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and
Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood
of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to
John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into
all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a
baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as
it is written in the book of the words of the prophet
Isaiah,

'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." '

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PRAISE TO YOU, O CHRIST!

Thursday's Readings (Year C)

A Reading from the book of Judges 13:2-7, 24-end

There was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. His wife was barren, having borne no children. And the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, 'Although you are barren, having borne no children, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, or to eat anything unclean, for you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor is to come on his head, for the boy shall be a nazirite to God from birth. It is he who shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines.' Then the woman came and told her husband, 'A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like that of an angel of God, most awe-inspiring; I did not ask him where he came from, and he did not tell me his name; but he said to me, "You shall conceive and bear a son. So then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the boy shall be a nazirite to God from birth to the day of his death."'

The woman bore a son, and named him Samson. The boy grew, and the Lord blessed him. The spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

This is the Word of the Lord

THANKS BE TO GOD

Psalm 71, 3-8

3 Be for me a stronghold to which I may ever resort; ♦
send out to save me, for you are my rock and my
fortress.

4 Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, ♦
from the grasp of the evildoer and the oppressor.

5 For you are my hope, O Lord God, ♦
my confidence, even from my youth.

6 Upon you have I leaned from my birth, ♦
when you drew me from my mother's womb; ♦
my praise shall be always of you.

7 I have become a portent to many, ♦
but you are my refuge and my strength.

8 Let my mouth be full of your praise ♦
and your glory all the day long.

Contact Information

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General Enquiries: Please contact the Benefice Office
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A reading from the Gospel according to Luke 1.5-25

GLORY TO YOU, O LORD!

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.'

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 'This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PRAISE TO YOU, O CHRIST!

Notices

Please send any input for next week to Sue in the Benefice office on info@beneficeoflangelei.org.uk by noon on Wednesday and copy it to StMarysApsleyEnd@gmail.com.

Appointment of Team Vicar

We are delighted that The Revd Dr Diana Stretton has been appointed to the team with special responsibility for Holy Trinity, subject to completion of the legal formalities.

Diana's Licensing and Installation service has been scheduled for Thursday 24th April, 2025 at 7.30pm. Please save the date and remember Diana and her husband Chris in your prayers.

Advent Group - Women of the Nativity

This year in Advent we will be looking at Paula Gooder's book 'Women of the Nativity'. Join us at the Vicarage on Tuesday 17th December at 7pm for discussion and reflection, ending with Compline (or night prayer). Festive refreshments provided! Everyone is welcome, and there is no need to have a copy of the book.

Nine Lessons and Carols at St Mary's Sunday 22nd December at 9.30 am

A lay led service with the Church wardens. Come and join in with your favourite Christmas Carols and listen to the readings.

The Midnight Service on Christmas Eve at St Mary's needs you...

Please let a Churchwarden know if you are able to help light the candles before the service and/or snuff them out after the service. This is a time-consuming activity but as they say "many hands make light work"! Also, if you have a candle snuffer that we could borrow that would be great. Thank you.

Dates for your diary

Sun 15th Dec	Messy Church at 3 pm at St Mary's
Tues 17th Dec	'Women of the Nativity' 7pm The Vicarage
Sun 22nd Dec	Lay-led Nine Lessons & Carols 9.30 am at St Mary's
Tues 24th Dec	Christmas Eve Crib Services at 3pm St Benedict's and at 4.30 pm at St Mary's
Tues 24th Dec	Midnight Eucharist 1.15 pm at St Mary's
Wed 25th Dec	Christmas Day service 9.30 am at St Mary's and 11.15 am at St Benedict's

St Mary's QR Code for Donations



Foodbanks at St Mary's and St B's

St Mary's foodbank is open 12.30-2.30 on Tuesdays and 10.00 -12.00 on Thursdays with a community café serving simple hot food. St Benedict's foodbank is open Wednesdays 9.30-11.30.

Donations of in date non-perishable, unopened food or household essentials are much appreciated eg LL Milk, Pasta Sauce, Tin Meat/Beans & Sausages or see needs list: either to the church or to Dunelm gratefully received.

Assistance at all foodbanks gratefully received. If you can help, do come and see us.

Welcome Boxes for Nascent House

Thank you to everyone who has donated items for the welcome boxes. We are currently in need of packets of sweets, toothbrushes, pocket tissues, bars of soap, nail brushes, notelets, pens and boxes with lids (17l -25l). Please note items must not contain alcohol. If you would like further information about this scheme, please speak to Susan or Viv.

Sponsorship for our organists



Our organist today, Mark Terry, is sponsored by an anonymous person.

If you enjoy having the organ accompany our worship you too can be a sponsor. You can mark a Birthday, Anniversary or a notable event or just because.

Please contact one of the churchwardens – Harry G-B or Sylvia Low for more information.

Just A Cappella and BURP Concert

Saturday 18th January at Holy Trinity
7 for 7.30pm. Tickets £15. Save the date!

Rotas - Who's doing what when		
	15th December	22nd December
	9.30 Eucharist 3pm Messy Church	9.30 Lay Led Nine Lessons & Carols
Music	Mark Terry	Mark Terry
Warden	Harry G-B	Tim Ward
Sides duty	Ann Wiggins	Pauline Buck
Welcomer	Colin Rivett	Laura G-B
Reader	Sue Jakeman	Melanie Henley
Prayers/ Intercessions	Sue Jakeman	Ian Dixon
Offertory	Melanie Henley & Viv Hagel	N/A
Chalice	Susan Rivett	N/A
2nd Counter	Klajdi Ceci	Klajdi Ceci
Refreshments	Susan & Colin Rivett	Sylvia Low & Sarah Bernard
Sunday School	N/A	N/A

Sue Bassett 12/12/2024