

Welcome to St Mary's Apsley



and welcome to our service today

24th December, 2023

Fourth Sunday in 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.

Dear Friends,

Happy Christmas Eve! It feels, suddenly, as though Christmas has been a long time coming. Perhaps because we have been dwelling so richly in Advent, at our Advent discussion group and in our congregational consultations about our vision for St Mary's. We have been honing our longing for the world that is to come, a world which we must wait for, and which is mysteriously already here among us.

I am so proud of the ways in which the true spirit of Christmas has been captured here. I cannot wait to see us host a free meal for around 40 people on Christmas Day, and I have been particularly encouraged by the huge numbers of people coming forward from the local community to offer their help and support, either on the day or with donations. Apparently, when St Mary's was mentioned in Llyod's Bank the other week, the cashier said "Oh, the one with the Foodbank?". Yep, that's us! That's exactly how we want people to associate us.

It will be a joy (it always is a joy, no matter how tired we feel or how sore our throat is or how last minute everything is) to worship the Christ child today and tomorrow and in the days and weeks to come. Joy will find us, somehow. The delight of it will creep into a corner of our soul and dwell there, casting at least a little light into the darkness.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness is powerless to overcome it. Happy Christmas.

Mother Alice



This Week at St Mary's

Today

9.00am	Bellringing
9.30am	Eucharist at St Mary's
4.00pm	Bellringing
4.30pm	Crib service
10.45pm	Bellringing
11.15pm	Midnight Christmas Eucharist

Monday

9.00am	Bellringing
9.30am	Joint Eucharist Service at St Ms
11.00am	Free Community Christmas Lunch (Please book your place)
10.00 - 12.00	No Working Party
8.00pm	No Bellringing practice

Tuesday

9.30am	Buzzy Bees on Holiday. Back on January 9th
--------	---

Wednesday

10.00am - 1.00pm	Young@Herts Bellringers Masterclass
------------------	--

Thursday

9.30 - 3.30	Church open for private prayer
9.30 - 12.00	Foodbank and Community Café
9.30am	No Eucharist at St Mary's
10.15am	No Study Group in the vestry
8.00pm	Virtual Study group on Zoom
	All welcome (link on website/calendar)

Friday

10.00 - 12.00	Working Party
---------------	---------------

Saturday

10.00 - 12.00	Saturday Community Café
---------------	-------------------------

Sunday 31st December

10.30am	NO Service at St Mary's Team Service at All Saints
---------	---

Sunday's Collect and Readings (Year B)

The Collect

God our redeemer,
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of your Son:
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our
saviour,
so we may be ready to greet him
when he comes again as our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

A reading from the Second Book of Samuel 7.1-11,16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.'

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

This is the Word of the Lord.

THANKS BE TO GOD!

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans 16.25-end

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

This is the Word of the Lord.

THANKS BE TO GOD!

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke 1.26-38

GLORY TO YOU, O LORD!

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PRAISE TO YOU, O CHRIST!

Thursday's Collect and Readings (Year B)

A reading from Jeremiah

31.15-17

Thus says the LORD:

A voice is heard in Ramah,

lamentation and bitter weeping.

Rachel is weeping for her children;

she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

Thus says the LORD:

Keep your voice from weeping,
and your eyes from tears;

for there is a reward for your work,
says the LORD:

they shall come back from the land
of the enemy;

there is hope for your future, says
the LORD:

your children shall come back to
their own country.

This is the word of the Lord.

THANKS BE TO GOD!

A reading from Psalms 124

1 If the Lord himself had not been on our side,
now may Israel say;

2 If the Lord had not been on our side,
when enemies rose up against us;

3 Then would they have swallowed us alive
when their anger burned against us;

4 Then would the waters have overwhelmed us
and the torrent gone over our soul; over our soul
would have swept the raging waters.

5 But blessed be the Lord who has not given us
over to be a prey for their teeth.

6 Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of
the fowler; the snare is broken and we are
delivered.

7 Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who has made heaven and earth.

This is the word of the Lord.

THANKS BE TO GOD!

A Reading from the first letter of Paul To the Corinthians

1.26-29

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

This is the word of the Lord.

THANKS BE TO GOD!

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

2.13-18

GLORY TO YOU, O LORD!

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PRAISE TO YOU, O CHRIST!

Contact Information

Vicar:	Mthr Alice Jolley	01442 615246	mthr.AliceJolley@outlook.com
General Enquiries:	Please contact the Benefice Office		Monday – Friday 8.30am – 12.30pm
Administrator/ Benefice Office:	Sue Bassett	01923 266596	SaintsKL2@tiscali.co.uk
Facebook:	St Mary's Apsley End	Twitter:	@StMarys1871
Churchwardens:	Sylvia Low	07742 610932	SylviaLow@gmail.com
	Harry Graham-Brown	07918 071542	Harry.GB63@gmail.com
Safeguarding:	Susan Rivett	07908 644600	SusanRivett55@gmail.com
	Katharine Harper	07881 602024	KatharineHarper23@gmail.com
Website/calendar:	www.BeneficeofLangelei.org.uk/StMarys		

Notices

Please send any input for next week to Sue in the Benefice office on SaintsKL2@fiscali.co.uk by noon on Wednesday and copy it to StMarysApsleyEnd@gmail.com.

Thank You

Many thanks to those fifteen people who came to sing carols outside Sainsbury's last Saturday for one hour.

A total of just over £164 was donated by shoppers towards DENS which will help the homeless in the area have a bed and food over the Christmas period.

Welcome Boxes for Nascent House

Susan and Viv would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported and given so generously, during the year. This has enabled us to provide many welcome boxes for new clients arriving at the house.

New tables

We are planning to purchase 5 new square tables for the church at a cost of £50 each. If you would like to sponsor a table or make a donation towards these, please speak to our treasurer Peter. Many thanks, Viv

Foodbanks at St Mary's and St B's

St Mary's foodbank is open 9.30-12.00 on Thursdays with a community café serving simple hot food too. We continue to need donations and assistance at both foodbanks (St Mary's and St B's). If you can help, do speak to Mthr Alice.

Could you be our next Safeguarding Officer?

The PCC is seeking a candidate to take over from Susan Rivett when she steps down in the spring of 2024. Please consider prayerfully whether God might be calling you to take on this highly important role in the life of our church. It will be possible to shadow Susan for a few months if early notice of interest is given!

Dates for your diary

Mon 25th Dec Joint Christmas service at St M's 9.30am
 Mon 25th Dec Free Community Christmas Lunch at 11am – stmarysapsleyend@gmail.com to book
 Sun 31st Dec Benefice Service at All Saints KL 10.30am
 Sun 7th Jan Christingle service at Epiphany
 Sun 21st Jan Messy Church

Sponsorship for our organists



Our organists at Christmas are sponsored by:

Peter Lipman at the Crib Services by Viv and Bern to celebrate and give thanks for the arrival of their grandson

Leo in Australia.

Bruce Boardman at the Midnight Christmas Service is sponsored by The Rivetts 'to celebrate family times' and on Christmas Day Eucharist by Melanie and Ralph in memory and celebration of loved ones. We wish you a Happy Christmas.

If you would like to sponsor the organist, perhaps in memory of a loved one, please email Janet on janet@apsleyend.co.uk.

Rotas - Who's doing what when			
	24 th December	24 th December	25 th December
	9:30 Eucharist	11.15 Midnight Christmas Service	9.30 Joint Christmas Service at St Ms
Music	Melanie & Steve (flute & piano)	Bruce Boardman	Bruce Boardman
Warden	Tim Ward	Harry G-B	Dan Shirley
Sides duty	Rosemary Bladon	Colin Rivett & Laura G-B	Pauline Buck
Welcomer	Melanie & Ralph Henley	Sylvia Low	Fiona Shirley
Reading	Melanie Henley	Susan Rivett	Fiona Shirley
Intercessions	Katharine Harper	Laura G-B	Dan Shirley
Offertory	Not Needed	Sylvia Low & Jasmine	tba
Chalice	Not Needed	Susan Rivett & Peter Bladon	Janet Wright
2nd Counter	Colin Rivett	Not Needed	Not Needed
Refreshments	Laura & Harry Graham-Brown	Not Needed	Not Needed
Sunday School	Laura G-Brown		

Sue Bassett 21/12/2023