

**ALL SAINTS CHURCH BOYNE HILL
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Dear Parishioners and Friends of All Saints, Boyne Hill,



“Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart”
(Luke 2:19)

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, shepherds from the fields came down into Bethlehem and found his mother Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus in a manger. The shepherds told Mary and Joseph how an angel had appeared to them in the fields saying “I bring you good news of great joy, for to you is born this day a Saviour who is the Messiah, the Lord.”

And we are told “Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”

This Christmas-time we can do no better than to emulate Mary – to treasure the words of the Christmas story set out for us in our readings and carols, and to ponder them in our hearts. To mull on the meaning for us of those events of 2,000 years ago which quite literally changed the world for ever.

We are providing many opportunities to do just this at All Saints over the next two weeks, starting this coming Friday with an Advent Quiet Morning where we will be thinking about the role of Mary in the stories of the birth of Jesus using an Icon of the Annunciation.

The service of Nine Lessons and Carols next Sunday at 6.00pm is an opportunity to listen afresh to the Christmas story set out in beautiful music and well-known readings from the Bible, followed by mulled wine and mince pies. Many say that this service brings them peace and joy, and that Christmas can’t be Christmas without it. Different in style is the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, when we gather in a Church full to overflowing for the excitement and fun enjoyed by many, many children and adults every year. We celebrate Christmas itself with Midnight Mass - come and be enveloped in the mystery and wonder of Christmas as we celebrate and sing together of the birth of Jesus Christ, the light who comes into our darkness. If you prefer, come on Christmas Morning at 10.00am to greet the Christ-Child with joy, to take him into your heart and into your life. Or come to both – we’d be delighted to see you. Stay awhile in quietness before or after one of the

services, and reflect in peace in front of the crib. Light a candle, say a prayer. For Jesus Christ is with us now, even as he was with us in the flesh 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem.

So do think about joining us to celebrate the wonder and mystery of Christmas this year. Plan it into your own personal and family Christmas celebrations. Treasure the story of the birth of the one who is Messiah, God-with-Us, and ponder its meaning – and find within it the love and hope, the joy and peace, that is Christ’s gift to you.

“Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”

Are you like your dog ? Many of you will know that my rescue dog Mac had to be put to sleep recently, at the age of 14. I often wonder how close the parallel might be between our relationship to the family dog, and God’s relationship to us. Both are certainly relationships of mutual love and devotion, with care and protection being bestowed upon the ‘junior’ member of the relationship.



I took to musing along these lines when Mac went missing on a walk in the woods near Stubbings church last year, and I wrote the following for a parish magazine in a another place. I reproduce it here in fond memory of Mac.

“One minute we were happily walking together, with Mac enjoying some off-lead freedom as he trotted too and fro. And then..... He stopped, lifted his head, his nose twitched a couple of times, and he was off through the woods in a flash!! I wasn’t too concerned at first, but he didn’t respond to my calls; it began to get dark, and then it started raining.

To cut a long story short, Mac was found a while later by a friendly person and we were reunited. I asked where he had been found? Mac had been in the middle of the Henley Road, with traffic stopped in both directions - sniffing around at some road-kill, and completely oblivious to the dangers. The next day I purchased an extending dog lead, and for now Mac’s adventures are more flexi-lead than off-lead.

This made me think about the importance of free will for us humans, and how to use it well. God, I’m sure, loves us to use our freedom, our skills and our talents, and our intelligence in creative ways. And wow, the possibilities are endless – in science and technology, music and the arts, gardening, cooking, loving relationships, showing care and compassion for one another, and a myriad of other ways. We enjoy it, and I’m sure God does too – just as I enjoy watching Mac getting pleasure from running around doing doggie things. But sometimes we wander from what is best for us, often because we are overtaken by short-term pleasure at the expense of our longer term well-being. Just like Mac was overtaken by the impulse to follow that smell, regardless of the consequences.

God doesn’t want us to be constrained by a metaphorical lead all the time, as if we were puppets on a string dancing to his tune. No, he enjoys seeing us being creative and using our God-given talents. Every time we wander off he will call us and search for us, and bring us gently home again. But maybe it would help if sometimes we stopped and listened to God, or to our conscience, before we ran off in a wrong direction following a lesser instinct, and towards things that can harm us. And the more time we spend just trotting alongside God, enjoying playing or a walk together, the easier it will be for us to recognise his voice when he calls, and the stronger will be the instinct to return to him because we will know him as the source of our safety

and well-being, a place of warmth and love. And maybe sometimes we need to be a bit more flexi-lead than off-lead for a while, as we rebuild that stronger bond with God – to enable us to use our freedom better next time we're off-lead.

Sometimes, of course, we are called to play the part of that friendly stranger, to rescue someone who has gone astray or is in difficulty, and to help reunite them with the love of God.”



There is still time to sign up for the **Advent Quiet Morning** in church on **Friday 16 December**. We will begin at 10.00am and finish with a Eucharist at 12.30 followed by a light lunch for those who wish to stay. I will be delivering three short addresses inspired by an Icon of The Annunciation. This is an opportunity to enjoy a little quiet time in our beautiful church on the journey towards Christmas, and an ideal preparation for our Eucharist this coming Sunday which focusses on the role of Mary in the incarnation of Jesus. You will find the sign up sheet at the back of church, or drop me an email on revjohnnainslie@gmail.com

Fr John

RESOURCES FOR THE WEEK

- Thursday 15 December** 7.30pm Choir Rehearsal for Nine Lessons & Carols
- Friday 16** 10.00am **Tiny Saints Toddler Group in the Parish Centre**
10.00am **Quiet Day led by Fr John**
- Saturday 17** 2.30pm Rehearsal for Young Saints Nativity Production
7.00pm Christmas Crackers Concert
See p 5 and poster attached to email
- Sunday 18** 10.00am **The Parish Eucharist with Children's Nativity Production**
The Fourth Sunday of Advent
Celebrant: Fr Jeremy
Refreshments after the service will include traditional Iranian sweets and tea provided by our Iranian friends
- 6.00pm **Nine Lessons & Carols**
Followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the Parish Centre
- Wednesday 21** 10.00am **Eucharist**
Celebrant: Fr John
11.00am *Tai Chi Class in the Parish Centre*
11.30am *Christmas Service at Normanhurst Care Home*
2.00pm *Christmas Service at Larchfield Care Home*

ADVANCE NOTICES

Christmas Services

Saturday 24 December 4.00pm Crib service – please encourage children and their families to join us for this beautiful Christmas service with carols. The Open the Book Team will be presenting the Christmas story

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Sunday 25 December 10.00am Christmas Morning Eucharist for the Nativity of Our Lord

Wednesday 28 December 10am Eucharist – The Holy Innocents – Fr Jeremy

Sunday 1 January 10.00am The Second Sunday of Christmas – Fr Jeremy celebrating and Brian Graves giving a talk on the meaning of a Christmas Carol

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We pray for our Christmas Services: for the service of Nine Lessons and Carols, for the Crib service, and for our Midnight Mass and Christmas Day Eucharist. We pray that through our worship we would be drawn deeper into the mystery of the Incarnation, and into the mystery of our redemption. We pray for the Christmas services in our care homes at Normanhurst and Larchfield, and for those who will receive Communion this Christmas in their own home.

We pray that many will be drawn by God to come to our services, and that they will find a warm welcome, a feeling of peace and belonging, and the grace and presence of God. We pray for all those who have a ministry of welcome in our church at this busy time, and we give thanks for their dedication and service in welcoming all into our life and worship.

We continue to pray for peace and justice throughout the world, remembering especially the Ukraine, Iran and the Holy Land at this time. We pray for Christians who are persecuted for their faith and those who are unable to practice their faith openly.

We pray for those in any kind of need, trouble or distress, especially those of our Parish and congregation and those known personally to us. We pray for those for whom this Christmas will be a difficult time, including those who will be alone and those who mourn the loss of a loved one at this time, and those whose relationships are under stress. Help us to be aware of those for whom we can be a 'good neighbour' at this time, and to respond willingly, sensitively and graciously.

We pray by name for Michael, Kirsten and Maddy; for Suzette, Danielle, Paul Latham, Jenny Chua, Doris Winn, Birmta Zadinane, Kirsty Banner, Harrison Hawkes, Heidi Webb, Florence Harrison, David Stewart, Tadeusz, Teresa, Leigh Hutchison-May, Soheila, Silvia Denison, Cheryl Brookes, Marnos, Gordon Kerrison, Lorraine Ansell, and Gerald Newth. May they know the healing peace and presence of Christ, and we pray and give thanks for those who bring them care and comfort.

We pray for the recently departed: Tyrone Rahman and Peter Dyer. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

May we all be blessed with God's love this week.

Fr John

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 18 DECEMBER THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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

O T READING Isaiah 7: 10 - 16

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, 'Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.' But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.' Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.'

GOSPEL Matthew 1: 18 - 25

The birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,' which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

MUSIC

Prelude: A Virgin Most Pure *E Thiman*

Opening Hymn: AM 45 O come, O come Emmanuel

Advent Candle: AM 26 v 4 Mary's gift beyond all telling

Gradual: AM 395 With Mary let my soul rejoice

Offertory: AM 315 Sing we of the blessed Mother

Communion: AM 313 For Mary, Mother of the Lord

Closing Hymn: AM 318 Ye who own the faith of Jesus (omit vv4, 5, &6)

Postlude: Fugue on 'Magnificat' *J S Bach*

Bucks Symphonic Wind Ensemble Christmas Concert 7.00pm in Church Saturday 17 December

We are hosting a concert of Christmas music performed by the Bucks Symphonic Wind Ensemble. The ensemble will be conducted by Rob Wiffin who is Professor of Conducting at the Ministry of Defence. With an emphasis on Christmas seasonal music this concert is sure to be a treat. The Ensemble has performed mainly in the Bucks area but, due to a local connection, it is keen to spread their wings to All Saints.

In addition to being an enjoyable musical event, the Ensemble will be donating surplus funds to All Saints Church Fund. Adult tickets £12, Concessions £10.

Please spread the word to encourage as large an audience as possible.



Thank you to Anne Clark and all the volunteers who made the Christingles. It enabled us to celebrate a joyous Christingle service. Thank you as well for the donations which will go to support the work of The Children's Society.

CALLING ALL CAROLLERS

We will be singing carols with the residents and staff at Larchfield care home at 2.00pm on Wednesday 21st December. If you would like to join us please speak to either Jeanette or Fr Jeremy.

CHURCH POSTBOX

If you wish to exchange traditional greetings with other members of the congregation the postbox is now in situ at the back of the church.

WE'RE STILL DREAMING OF A GREEN CHRISTMAS but last week the green gremlins waylaid our third tip so this week you get two for the price of one!

WEEK 3: CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

It wouldn't feel like Christmas without exchanging presents. But with a little thought, we can organise great presents in a more sustainable way.



You could consider experiences or charity gifts rather than 'things' – and if you are buying gifts, take a look in charity shops and on their online stores. Or buy gifts that go on giving over time, like a house plant. What about making your own gifts and decorations. Whether you love baking, sewing or painting, why not get creative this season! They are more personal – and may cost less than ready-made gifts.



WEEK 4: CHRISTMAS CATERING

Christmas is a time for entertaining and sometimes it can be hard to know how much food to buy.

Try not to over-cater and have food going to waste. When planning your food shopping, reflect on how you would use up left-overs if you do over-estimate. Another option is to use a food waste app such as [Olio](#) to connect you with people in need in your local area. Recycle or compost any scraps left over too.



Buying the ingredients for your meal from local stores and markets will not only reduce your carbon footprint but will also help you to show your support for local businesses. This won't work for everything but there will be some things you can swap for local – or Fairtrade ones. Co-op do a good range of Fairtrade wines.



And there are some great vegetarian and vegan options around if you or your guests don't eat turkey! For example, https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/vegan_nut_loaf_99997.

Cheers!

NO PARISH NEWS

There will be no Parish News the week after Christmas so any notices for events up to and including Wednesday 4 January need to be with me by lunchtime Tuesday 20 December please.

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FOODSHARE

In these hard times, and with Christmas around the corner Foodshare are more in need of our help than ever. Each week in the Maidenhead Advertiser there is a list of items most wanted.