



The Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice

“Mirroring the hospitality of God”

Sunday 29th November Advent Sunday

Vicar: The Rev'd Norma Fergusson. Tel 01793 784338

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Licensed Lay Minister: Mr Richard Fergusson. Tel 07788 436831



Sunday 29th November Advent Sunday

11.00am Holy Communion. Live on [Facebook](#).

5:00pm Advent Carols. Watch on [Facebook](#).

Rev'd Norma Fergusson is giving this week's sermon.
Watch on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#) from 9am.

Monday St Andrew the Apostle

Richard Fergusson's reflection for St Andrew's Day.

Watch on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#) from 9am.

Tuesday

9:00am Morning Prayer. Live on [Facebook](#).

Wednesday

9:00am Shrivenham, St Andrew
Morning Prayer. Also on [Facebook](#).

10:30am Advent Bible Study Course.
Live via Zoom. More details on page 2.

2:00pm Shrivenham, St Andrew
ASK Holy Communion.
Also on [Facebook](#).

Thursday

9:00am Matins (BCP). Live on [Facebook](#).

7:45pm Shrivenham, St Andrew
Compline during Advent

Saturday 5th December

10:00am Bourton, St James
Family Service

Sunday 6th December

9:00am Compton Beauchamp, St Swithun
Holy Communion (BCP)

9:30am Longcot, St Mary
Morning Prayer

9:30am Watchfield, St Thomas
Morning Prayer (BCP)

10:00am Shrivenham, St Andrew
Family Service

10:00am Ashbury, St Mary
Holy Communion

11.00am Holy Communion. Live on [Facebook](#).

6:30pm Shrivenham, St Andrew
Compline and Benediction

All links, orders of services and readings
are posted on the services page of our website
www.shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk

Clergy Days Off

Rev'd Fergusson is off duty on Monday
Canon Richardson is off duty on Monday & Tuesday

Ashbury Cycle of Prayer

Please pray this week for all who live and work
in Ashbury Hill.

Christmas Carols



Although we are not allowed to sing them in church this year, if you asked friends or family to name their favourite Christmas Carols, I suspect you would get similar answers – O Come all ye Faithful, Hark the Herald, O Little Town of Bethlehem and Joy to the World would feature highly.

Of course, music scholars might argue that these are actually not carols at all. The word 'carol' is derived from the Greek *choraules* (a flute-player for chorus dancing). In medieval times, 'carol' meant a round-dance with song. A soloist often sang the verse with everyone joining in the refrain, during which the singers might hold hands and dance round in a circle.

As a result, there is hardly a carol service in the UK where the congregation will sing a genuine carol, mostly these are now left to the choir – minus the hand holding and dancing!

The majority of what most of us call Christmas Carols today were either originally composed or arranged after 1840, a result of the Victorian revival of Christmas. The old form of carol, almost forgotten in England was reinvented and became Christmas themed hymns about the Nativity. Alongside the old 'carol' there were also many new ones. However, many of the new carols that we sing today were actually new texts set to old tunes or new settings of old texts.

I, like most people, have been hearing and singing carols for as long as I can remember – it is hard to avoid them. However, the words of the carols took on a new meaning for me two years ago when I was lucky enough to visit Bethlehem. The words that I had sung for more than forty years came to life as I stood in the historic city and looked down into the surrounding fields, trying to work out where the shepherds may have tended their sheep.

For me though nothing says "Christmas" in the same way as Once in Royal David's City, sung by the choir of Kings College, Cambridge just after 3pm on Christmas Eve. Whatever has gone before, that is when Christmas starts for me.

We are still a few weeks away but when we do get there may I wish you a Happy Christmas.

Alex Peal

**Advent Carols from St Thomas, Watchfield
Sunday 29th November at 5pm**



Led by Canon Paul Richardson, this specially recorded service includes contributions from the Benefice Choir, Pinewood School Choir and the St Andrew's Handbell Ringers. Watch on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) or the [Benefice website](#) from 5pm on Sunday 29th November.



The Benefice Choir in 2019

Churches Open for Private Prayer

Our churches will be open for private prayer once a week as follows:

Ashbury 10am – 4pm on Thursday
Compton Beauchamp 9am – 5pm on Sunday
Longcot 10am – 3pm on Wednesday
Shrivenham 9am – 5pm on Sunday
Watchfield 10am – 4pm on Wednesday

Fernham church remains closed to allow Annabelle's pre-school exclusive access during term time.

Face coverings are mandatory, and you should either scan the NHS test and trace QR code or use the sign-in sheets on entering. Hand sanitiser is available and remember to maintain social distancing.

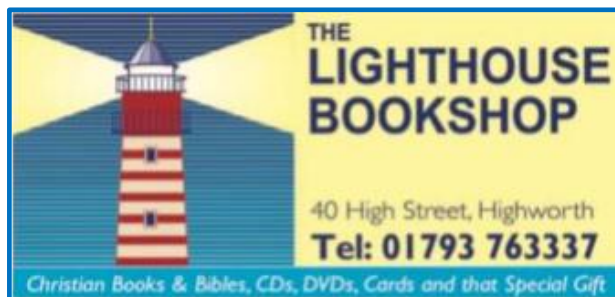
Please do not come into church if you think you may have symptoms of Covid 19.

A Call to Prayer for the Nation

Our Archbishops and leaders of other denominations have together called for a month of prayer for the nation during this second Lockdown.

In response to this call, there will be a short time of prayer live on our Benefice Facebook page at 6.00pm each evening until 2nd December. Please join us.

Advent Calendars & Christmas Cards for Sale



The Lighthouse Christian Bookshop in Highworth will be re-opening next Wednesday, 2nd December. It is well stocked with Christmas cards from various Christian Charities such as Samaritan's Purse, Tearfund, Leprosy Mission and others. They also stock Advent books, Advent Calendars (including the Meaningful Chocolate Co) and Advent Candles.

The opening hours are:
Mon – Thurs 9am – 3pm.
Friday CLOSED
Saturday 9am – 1pm

And if you don't want to drive to Highworth

Margaret Hern has a good selection of their Christmas Christian charity cards and Advent calendars. If you would like a socially distanced browse Margaret will put them out in her garage in Shrivenham. Ring 01793 782100 to arrange a time to visit.

Advent Bible Study Course

In the coming four weeks we will be running an online Advent Bible Study each Wednesday between 10:30 and 11:30am via Zoom.

Each week we will be looking at biblical passages about the "Light of Christ" and reflecting on how we might respond to God's call on our lives during the Covid-19 pandemic. The four parts are based around four words which have been central to many people's experience during all the upheavals of 2020:

Distance - Trust - Safe - Normal

Please contact Jane and David Ahern for details of how to take part.

01793 783521 thestable@protonmail.com

Shrivenham Village Crossword Puzzle

First prize £20 - closing date 10th January 2021

You may know the answers, which refer to places or items visible in the village, or you may have to walk around to find them! Some of the clues are cryptic. Set by the people who organised the Treasure Trail.

Entry is £5 for the crossword and clues.

Available from Shrivenham Post Office
David Watson 783405 or Julian Stevens 782065
In aid of St Andrews Church Restoration Project

Our condolences

to the family and friends of Maria Moczydlowski who died on Tuesday 24th November. Please keep them in your prayers.