



# Church Matters...

**Sunday 18 December - Fourth Sunday of Advent**

## **Welcome**

We are so pleased to welcome you to our services today. If you are new to the parish or worshipping with us for the first time, then please do make yourself known to the person leading the service.

## **Parish Diary**

### **Sunday 18 December**

10am - Parish Communion - St Mary's, Easton  
with Revd Peter  
*organist David Duffin*

5pm - Carols by Candlelight - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy  
with Revd Peter  
*organist Ian Waring-Green*  
*see [back page for more information](#)*

### **Tuesday 20 December**

6.30pm - Carol Singing in Itchen Abbas  
*see [back page for more information](#)*

### **Christmas Eve**

4pm - Crib Service - St Mary's, Easton  
11.15pm - Midnight Communion - St Mary's, Avington

### **Christmas Day**

10am - Family Communion - St John's, Itchen Abbas

### **New Year's Day**

4pm - Café Church - St John's, Itchen Abbas  
*see [back page for more information](#)*

## 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.

## Psalm 146

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord, my soul.

**I will praise the Lord all my life;  
I will sing praise to my God as  
long as I live.**

Do not put your trust in princes,  
in human beings, who cannot save.

**When their spirit departs, they  
return to the ground;  
on that very day their plans come  
to nothing.**

Blessed are those whose help is the  
God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the Lord their  
God.

**He is the Maker of heaven and  
earth, the sea, and everything  
in them—  
he remains faithful forever.**

He upholds the cause of the  
oppressed  
and gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets prisoners free.

**The Lord gives sight to the blind,  
the Lord lifts up those who are  
bowed down,  
the Lord loves the righteous.**

The Lord watches over the foreigner  
and sustains the fatherless and the  
widow,  
but he frustrates the ways of the  
wicked.

**The Lord reigns forever,  
your God, O Zion, for all  
generations.**

**Praise the Lord.**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now,  
and shall be for ever. Amen**

## Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

## Matthew 11:2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you."

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

# Notice Board

**Carols by Candlelight (NB 5pm)** - We are looking forward so much to this special service, with carols sung by the choir or congregation, interspersed with six readings from the Bible and from contemporary poetry. Parking is available in Texas Field and will be clearly signposted. Can we recommend that you bring a torch and wear outside footwear but also bring a change of shoes if you intend to go to the Manor afterwards. We are so grateful to John and Nicky Barber for their offer of some Christmas hospitality after the service.

**Itchen Abbas Carol Singing** - please join Tim Tyler's choir for some communal carols in Itchen Abbas on Tuesday (20th). We will be starting on the green in Little Hayes Lane at 6.30pm where we will sing some favourites before moving down to Hazledene Gardens where we will sing for the residents before moving to the corner of Old Station Road (approximately 7pm) to sing some more. We will be collecting for our Christmas charities (see below).

**Giving this Christmas** - we are supporting the following charities this Christmas - Winchester Basics Bank, Trinity and the Nightshelter. The collections taken at our Christmas services will be donated to these charities and you can also donate to them from [this link](#).

**New Year's Day Café Church** - we are so aware that New Year's Day can be a quiet time for many so why not join us at St John's, Itchen Abbas for our next Café Church from 4-5pm. The theme will be "Looking Back, Looking Forward". **Everyone is welcome**, come and meet new friends and old. There will be activities for all ages or just an opportunity to come along and read the papers with tea and cake! (If you are able to make a cake, please let Beccy know).

**From the Rectory** - Georgie and I wish to thank you for your cards and good wishes and want, by return, to wish you every blessing as you celebrate Christmas with your family and friends. We both enjoyed being part of the CAMEO Christmas lunch and carols, and being able to sense for the first time something of what a pre-Covid Christmas might have been like in the Itchen Valley (last year was not quite the same...) ! So we are also looking forward to experiencing the Carol-Singing in Itchen Abbas on Tuesday and the Crib Service in Easton on Christmas Eve.

The coming of Christ means we do not live in a lonely, God-forgotten world, but in a world filled with the potential for love, meaning and purpose. So, with good reason we can truly but humbly assert that (imitating the words of a famous advertising slogan!) "Christmas is probably the best news in the world". Indeed it is! A HAPPY CHRISTMAS to you all!

## For Your Prayers

For the Christian community in Ukraine and for all Ukrainian refugees celebrating Christmas away from home.

For the Christian community in the Holy Land, especially in Bethlehem.

For peace and goodwill in our own nation at this time of uncertainty.

For those who are ill or suffering at the moment.

For the local charities we support and for those they are helping.