



EAST TELFORD BENEFICE
Praying, Giving, Loving and Serving our Communities

Sunday 21st December 2025
4th Sunday of Advent

Sunday 28th December 2025
Holy Innocents & Christmas 1





DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD

Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad







“We believe in **inclusive church** – a church which **celebrates and affirms every person** and does not discriminate.”

INVITE A FRIEND THIS CHRISTMAS.....



Did you know that your friends may be more willing to be invited to church this Christmas than you are to invite them? It's true. Research says that lots of non-church people are open to receiving an invitation, while many church people are anxious about asking.

It's a beautiful thought that God can use you and me to invite people into his love this Christmastime – So, who will you invite?

Services Sunday 21st December

Holy Trinity Oakengates

9.30am Morning Worship
6.00pm Carols by Candlelight

St Peter's Priorslee at Holy Trinity Academy

11.00am Carol Service

St Georges Telford

9.30am Holy Communion

Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood

11.00am Holy Communion

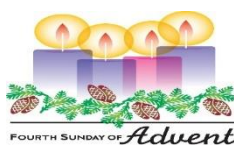
St Matthew's Donnington Wood

11.00am Morning Worship
3.00pm All Age Carol Service

St Mary & St Leonard's Wombridge

Please note No Morning service
6.00pm Carols by Candlelight

Please note: Dates and times are correct at time of going to print but are subject to change.



Let us pray for



"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." - John 3:16

"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son to be born of a woman, so that he would be born under the law, in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons." - Galatians 4:4-5

God of love and promise, on this fourth Sunday of Advent we light the candle of love.

We remember Isaiah's words: "Look, the young woman is with child, and shall bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel."

Come, Lord Jesus, God with us, dwell among us in love.

We hear the angel's message to Joseph: "Do not be afraid...

for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

Give us courage to trust Your word, to follow where You lead, and to welcome Christ with open hearts.

Come, Lord Jesus, make us faithful to Your call.

May this candle remind us that Your love is stronger than fear,

Your presence nearer than we imagine and Your promise sure and everlasting.

All: Come, Lord Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

Readings 4th Sunday of Advent

Canticle Magnificat

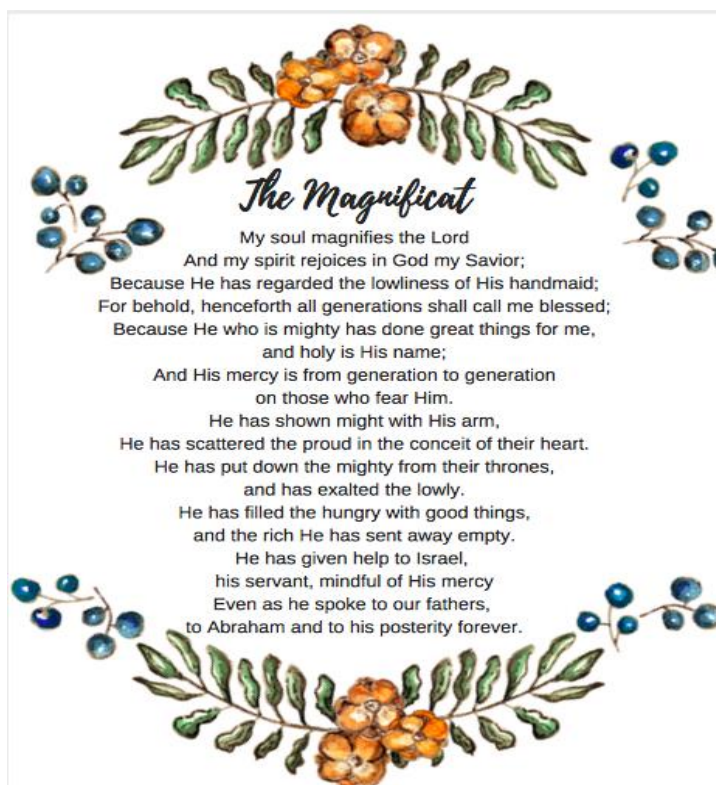
1st Reading Isaiah 7.10-16

2nd Reading Romans 1.1-7

Gospel Matthew 1.18-end

Collect - 4th Sunday of Advent

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.



Services Christmas Eve 24th December

Holy Trinity Oakengates

11.30pm Christmas Eucharist Mass

St Peter's Priorslee at Priorslee Scout HQ

4.30pm Christmas Eve Carol Service

St Georges Telford

4.00pm Family Crib Service

6.30pm Carols by Candlelight

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Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood

2.00pm Nativity Service

11.30pm Christmas Eucharist

St Matthew's Donnington Wood

3.00pm Family Christmas Service

9.00pm Bethlehem Mass Eucharist

St Mary & St Leonard's Wombridge

6.30pm Carols around the Tree

Readings

Christmas Eve

Psalm

98

1st Reading

Isaiah 52.7-10

2nd Reading

Hebrews 1.1-4

Gospel

John 1.1-14

Christmas Day

97

Isaiah 62.6-end

Titus 3.4-7

Luke 2.[1-7] 8-20



Collect - Christmas

Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth: accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you, our Saviour and our eternal God. Amen.



Let us pray for



The Christ Candle

God of glory and light, today we light the Christ Candle.

All our waiting finds its fulfilment, for unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.

Come, Lord Jesus, light of the world, shine in us.

We rejoice that Emmanuel has come— God with us in weakness and wonder, in love and in mercy. Your Word has become flesh, dwelling among us full of grace and truth.

Come, Lord Jesus, make Your home in our hearts.

May this candle remind us that the darkness is overcome, that hope, peace, joy, and love are fulfilled in You.

Come, Lord Jesus, our Savior and our King. Amen.

Services Christmas Day 25th December

St Georges Telford

9.30am Benefice Family Communion *Please note: No Services in any of the other churches*

Collect – Holy Innocents

Heavenly Father, whose children suffered at the hands of Herod, though they had done no wrong: by the suffering of your Son and by the innocence of our lives frustrate all evil designs and establish your reign of justice and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Collect - The First Sunday of Christmas

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



Services Sunday 28th December

St Matthew's Donnington Wood

10.30am Benefice Holy Communion *Please note: No Services in any of the other churches*



Services New Years Day 1st January 2026

St Georges Telford

12.00pm Welcome to the New Year Service



Readings	1st Reading	2nd Reading	Gospel
21 Dec Advent 4	Isaiah 7.10-16	Romans 1.1-7	Matthew 1.18-end
24 Dec Christmas Eve	Isaiah 52.7-10	Hebrews 1.1-12	John 1.1-14
25 Dec Christmas Day	Isaiah 62.6-end	Titus 3.4-7	Luke 2.1-20
28 Dec Holy Innocents	Jeremiah 31.15-17	1 Corinthians 1.26-29	Matthew 2.13-18
<i>1st Sunday of Christmas</i>	Isaiah 63.7-9	Hebrews 2.10-end	Matthew 2.13-end

Daily Readings

Morning

Evening

Monday	22/12	Matthew 19.1-12	2 Peter 1.1-15
Tuesday	23/12	Matthew 19.13-15	2 Peter 1.16—2.3
Wednesday	24/12	Matthew 19.16-end	Revelation 1.1-8
Thursday	25/12	Matthew 1.18-end	Luke 2.1-20
Friday	26/12	Acts 6	Matthew 23.34-end
Saturday	27/12	1 John 2.1-11	1 John 5.1-12
Monday	29/12	Colossians 1.1-14	John 1.1-18
Tuesday	30/12	Colossians 1.15-23	John 1.19-28
Wednesday	31/12	Colossians 1.24—2.7	John 1.29-34
Thursday	01/01	Romans 2.17-end	Acts 3.1-16
Friday	02/01	Colossians 2.8-end	John 1.35-42
Saturday	03/01	Colossians 3.1-11	John 1.43-end



Regular Dates for Diaries (For participation or prayer)

- Mon 8.00pm Compline via Zoom
- Tue 9.00-10.00am Prayer Group at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood
7.00pm Whist in aid of Holy Trinity Oakengates (1st Tue of month) at Maddocks Club
- Wed 8.45-10.30am Tea & Toast (Place of Welcome) at HT W/Wood (Term time only)
9.00-11.00am Food Bank & Clothes Bank at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood
9.15am Morning Prayer at Wombridge Church
10.30am Midweek Service at St Matthew's Donnington Wood
11.30am Bible Chat session at St Matthew's Donnington Wood
11.00am Midweek Service at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood (No service 24th Dec)
- 12.00-2.00pm Place of Welcome at Holy Trinity Oakengates (No meeting 24th & 31st Dec)
7.00-8.00pm Prayer Group meeting at St Georges (4th Wed each month - not in Dec)
- Thu 1.00-3.00pm Pray Bake Read at Lantern Academy Ketley Bank (Only during School Term)
1.00-3.00pm Place of Welcome at Priorslee Scout HQ (No meeting 25th Dec & 01st Jan)
- Fri 12.30-2.00pm First Friday Free Lunch at Wombridge Parish Centre (1st Friday)
8.00pm Compline via Zoom
- Sat 4.00-5.30pm Messy Church at HT Wrockwardine Wood (2nd Saturday of month)
11.00-1.00pm Welcome Saturday at St Matthews Donnington Wood (3rd Saturday of month)

Additional Dates for Diaries

- Thur 18/12 WW Juniors in Church at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood
- Fri 19/12 WW Infants in Church at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood
- Fri 19/12 10.30am Funeral Service of Natasha Watton at Wombridge Parish Church
- Wed 24/12 Christmas Eve - **No** Place of Welcome at Holy Trinity Oakengates
- Thur 25/12 Christmas Day - **No** Place of Welcome at Priorslee Scout HQ
- Fri 26/12 Boxing Day
- Wed 31/12 New Years Eve - **No** Place of Welcome at Holy Trinity Oakengates
- Thur 01/01 New Years Day - **No** Place of Welcome at Priorslee Scout HQ

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Sad News

We were very saddened to hear of the passing on Sunday 30 November of Tom Worrall. May he Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory. Please hold Gell Worrall, Tom's wife & Churchwarden at Wombridge Church in your prayers. Both Tom and Gell have been faithful servants of our Lord at Wombridge for many years. Our condolences and prayers go out to Gell, Joanne, Estelle and their children at this difficult time. (Funeral arrangements will be published in due course).

Those in need of our prayers

Please pray for the families of Alan Brice, Peter Tudor, Tom Worrall, Natasha Watton and all who are grieving the loss of loved ones at this time.

Merciful God, be close to all who mourn.
May they know the hope of your promises
and the comfort of your love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

In our prayers we remember the Church, its members and our community. We pray for those who are unwell, either at home or in hospital and those who are adjusting to changes in their lives. We also remember those who can no longer join us physically in our church buildings for worship or fellowship.

At this time please pray for:

- Those struggling to look forward to Christmas
- All living on the streets as winter kicks in
- Those affected by the weather through wind, rain or flood
- Pastoral care within the Benefice
- Those who are struggling with illness, injury or mental health issues
- Our Church PCC's as they plan for the future
- Peace in our lives, our country and our world
- Those suffering as a result of violence and unrest
- Those living with dementia
- Eco Church and environmental issues
- All who find the need for Foodbanks



Those whose years mind we keep

Priorslee

21/12 John Corbett, Edward Corbett, Norman Callear, Kathleen Matthews

28/12 Iain Franklin, Leslie Webster, John Griffiths, Gwendoline Guy, Edith Parfitt, Kelly Jennings, John Stubbs

Oakengates

21/12 Jesse Vaughan, Donald Stanley, Evelyn Harris, Sarah Croft, Dorothy Thomas, Bill Gregory, Oswald Smith, William Dyke, Basil Jarvis

28/12 Freda Jones, Lillian Anderson, Peter Broadhurst, Ethel Rigby, Jack Lowe, Marjorie Walters, Florence Jarvis

Wrockwardine Wood

21/12 Donald (Don) Williams, William (Bill) Davies, Harold Price, Philip Moody, Mary Lindores, Melvern Ball, Frederick Mansell, Beryl Hope, Margaret Brown, Patrick Mahon, Alice Nock, Herbert Guest, Joan Pickering, Edna Biddulph, James Talbot, John Cotterhill, Leonard Fenn, Charles Locke, George Alderson, Gladys Harris

28/12 Dorothy Evans, George Addison, Edward Foulkes, Frank Lowe, Violet (Vi) Alderson, Andrew (Don) Bra, Ethel Ore, Dennis Bates, Diane Huggan, Harriet Hipwell, Stephen J. Cheshire, Marjorie Walters, John Hale, Edna Pownal, Lilian Cooper, Jane (Jean) Caldwell, Noah David Walters



Can we take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and safe New Year, to thank you for all that you have done in the name of Christ during this year and to pray that all of us will have a joy filled Christmas and a Peace filled 2026, that we will continue to seek and to spread God's love in our communities and seek to serve all people in the name of Jesus Christ – who came that we know love in our hearts, fulness of life and peace in God's kingdom for ever.

May you know God's blessings in this holy season. *The Ministry Team.*



Revd Lynne and her husband Geoff would like to let everyone know they are settling in well in their new home in Shrewsbury and would like to send Christmas greetings to everyone in the Benefice via this newsletter. *Revd L & Geoff x*

BAPTISMS WEDDINGS & FUNERALS IN CHURCH

We are always excited to be able to celebrate Baptisms, welcome you for your Wedding or help you through a difficult time arranging a Funeral within our Churches. Funerals are welcomed in Church or at the Graveside and Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood are able to livestream funerals. Please telephone Kerry, Benefice Administrator to discuss arrangements.

Our Ministers are also available for Services at the Crematorium, please speak with your Funeral Directors to make arrangements.

TEA & TOAST

The weekly Tea & Toast Place of Welcome continues at Holy Trinity Wrockwardine Wood on Wednesday mornings, 8.45am -10.30am during Term Time. Please note it will not be taking place on 24th & 31st December.

SAFEGUARDING

For all the churches in our benefice, the safeguarding, safety and security of each person is of the upmost importance. We have across all our churches committed to safeguarding and have adopted the national and diocesan safeguarding policies.

Please do not hesitate to contact one of the Coordinators, Churchwardens or the Benefice Admin office if you have any questions and concerns and understand that everyone has a role to play to ensure we achieve our aim of being a benefice who cares and protects all who visit.

For more information:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/national-safeguarding-standards>

<https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/safeguarding/safeguarding.php>

To report a Benefice concern please contact admin@easttelfordbenefice.co.uk and Kerry will direct you to the relevant safeguarding officer.

IMPORTANT.....BE AWARE!!!

Please be careful!

We have received reports that there have been scam phone calls and emails being sent to people seeking to extract money with a highly plausible and well-informed story from clergy and others with positions of responsibility in parishes.

At this time of year, such scams are rife. It is likely that churches and their congregations will be targeted again. It bears repeating that the stories are highly plausible: please beware and make others aware.

(Seasonal) phone scam warning



PRAYING AT HOME

As we get older our involvement in local church life changes, and we find we have less time for physical activity but more time for prayer! We are a community of prayer – at home and in church. As a Benefice we are grateful to Nigel who hosts Compline (Evening Prayer) via Zoom (extremely easy to join on a mobile phone with internet access) at 8pm on Monday and Friday evenings. For more information please contact Nigel at Nigelcollins8561@gmail.com Come, pray with us!

BIBLE CHAT GROUP

The Bible Chat Group meet weekly at St Matthew's Church Donnington Wood on Wednesdays at 11.30am. The group uses the themes from the Everyday Faith App as a basis of their weekly discussion. If you would like to join these discussions please do attend as new friends are always welcome.

Contact Details

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Ecumenical Coordinator & Lay Funeral Minister:
Sue Rawlings
07715173634 Suerawlings12@gmail.com

EVERYDAY FAITH APP

Everyday Faith is a Church of England app offering daily readings, reflections, responses and prayers under various themes; recent themes have included: Journeying with others, Days of small things, Glimpses of Glory, and Generous Words, with each theme looking at where and how we meet God as we go about our lives. Faith is found in our joys and cares, in our challenges and conflicts as we lean into God's presence and guidance. Faith informs our thinking and our actions as we discern how God might be using us in his work. Faith is an ongoing encounter with God - an **Everyday Faith**, an everyday existence with the God who holds all things together. You can download Everyday Faith from your app store.

ECUMENICAL GATHERINGS

We would like to thank everyone who has attended the ecumenical services and quiet mornings through the year and we look forward to meeting again in the New Year.

For more information about Ecumenical events please contact Sue Rawlings.

WEBSITE UPDATE

The East Telford Benefice website has recently been updated and the weekly newsletter can now be found there. Each of our churches do use www.achurchnearyou.com where you can access individual church information.

EASY FUNDRAISING

For those who shop online it is possible to help fundraise for your Benefice Church, by using the easy fundraising website to make your purchases from many of the well-known retailers. Why not use this website at no cost to yourself but a money earner for the church!

For more info:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stpeterspriorslee>

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/holytrinitywrockwardinewood>

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/holytrinityoakengates>

EMAIL NEWSLETTER

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email regularly please contact newsletter@easttelfordbenefice.co.uk requesting you would like to receive it weekly, or can be found on our Website at WWW.Easttelfordbenefice.co.uk



What? Crafts Games Stories
Fun and Food

Where ? Holy Trinity Church
Wrockwardine Wood TF27AH

When ? Saturdays 4.00-5.30pm

Dates for your Diary

13th of December
10th of January
14th of February
14th of March
11th of April
9th of May
13th of June
11th of July

Come and join our Messy
Church Team as we craft
and learn about God
finishing up with some
singing and food

Messy Church needs your help!

Our Messy Church takes place for the benefice on the 2nd Saturday of the Month at Holy Trinity Church Wrockwardine Wood. Fiona and Kerry are looking to draw up a rota of helpers who would be able to help and oversee a craft table and talk about God/Jesus to those who attend.

We have some wonderful parent helpers who are just at the beginning of their Christian journey and hope to have some of our wonderful congregation members come along and support them and help us out.

If you think you would like to be part of the team why not come along to the next one on the 13th December at 4pm and see what we do and maybe explore how you could fit in. Just speak to Kerry or Fiona to find out more.

Our aim is to build a team so we can continue to run this as a monthly service, rather than taking it to a quarterly event.



Wombridge Tree of Light

will be available in Church
from Saturday 6th December

Names can be added in memory of
those we love but see no more

All names will be read out at our
Carols by Candlelight service on
Sunday 21st December 6pm

For more information please
contact
Chris on 07930245773

ST GEORGE'S PARISH CHURCH CHRISTMAS SERVICES ALL WELCOME



24 December - 4.00pm Family Crib Service
6.30pm Carols by Candlelight

25 December - 9.30am Family Communion

1 January - 12 Noon New Year Dedication

Happy Christmas

JOY

Wombridge Parish Church Christmas services and events

Sun 21st Dec 6pm: Carols by Candlelight

Wed 24th Dec 6.30pm: Carols around the tree



St Peter's Christmas Services

Carol Service

Sunday 21st Dec 11.00am

Holy Trinity Academy Chapel



Christmas Eve Carols

Wednesday 24th December 4.30pm

Priorslee Scout HQ

St Matthew's Church

CHRISTMAS EVENTS
The Joy of Christmas

Sunday 21st 3.00 p.m.

All age Carol Service

Christmas Eve

Family Christmas service in Church.

3.00 p.m.

Dress for the season – Christmas hats & jumpers.

9.00 pm

Bethlehem Mass with Eucharist, join us as we
celebrate Jesus' birth as Christmas Day
celebrations begin in Bethlehem.

Christmas Day

No service at St Matthew's. Christmas day

Benefice service at St George's

Sunday 28th 10.30 a.m.

Benefice Eucharist at St Matthew's

There will be a warm welcome at all the planned events, and the Churchyard reflections will be accessible throughout Advent. Please feel free to bring along a prayer ribbon to attach to the stable whenever you visit. Sunday worship will continue to take place at 11.00 a.m. during Advent.



PRAY BAKE READ

PRAY....INTENTIONALLY FOR YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL

BAKE....A CAKE FOR STAFF EVERY HALF TERM

READ....1:1 WITH A STUDENT ONCE A WEEK

Would you like to support children at The Lantern Academy, Ketley Bank by spending 1-2 hours a week with pupils listening to them read on a 1:1 (Thursday afternoons 1-3pm, Years 1 & 2 infants).

Why do we want to do this?

As Christians, the Bible teaches us to love our neighbour. Our church and the many schools in our Benefice are close neighbours in our community and we want to show God's love to them by serving them in a practical way. It really is that simple.

If you are interested please speak to Julia Ayers, or contact newsletter@easttelfordbenefice.co.uk and your details will be passed to the organiser.



Leave your lights on

With the darker night's drawing in we are sharing simple ways to protect your home. It is much easier for burglars to operate using the cover of night and they embrace the longer hours of darkness, but you can help yourself from being a victim of crime.

When the evenings are dark, this gives burglars a clearer understanding if a property is unoccupied. They are more likely to pick one that seems empty without lights on than one that has. If you leave a light on, or even have a light set on a timer, you will reduce the risk of an opportunist burglar targeting your home.

More crime prevention advice here: <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/>



THE GRUMPY OWL AND THE Joy OF Christmas

Nativity Service
24th of December - 2pm

Holy Trinity Church Wrockwardine Wood

Come dressed and join the fun

Join the joint congregations

Of East Telford Benefice at

St Matthew's Church Donnington Wood

On Sunday, 28th December 2025

At 10.30 am.

For our final joint Eucharist of 2025

To be led by Revd Richard Walker-Hill and
with organist Chris Harris

Enjoy free refreshments and friendly
chatter after worship

PLACES of WELCOME at HTO, HTWW & St PETERS



This outreach is something which has helped bring our community together and we are always pleased when new people attend. The format is simple – a short service, a shared breakfast/lunch (toast, soup and roll or sandwiches), chat/board games/puzzles/craft etc.

Please do let your friends and neighbours know about these Places of Welcome especially those who live alone or those who are looking for a place to meet new people. You will find a warm welcome at each of these Places of Welcome. We look forward to meeting you!

Please note St Peters meets at: Priorslee Scout HQ, Snedshill Way, TF2 9QQ



**Wednesday
12 - 2 pm**



From the Deanery & Lichfield Diocese

As a Deanery we would like to wish you all a very blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.

Telford Deanery : Shaping for Mission



FOLLOWING JESUS : LOVING TELFORD : RENEWING CHURCH : GROWING YOUNGER



HOLY INTERRUPTION

Craig Newton, new director of Shallowford House, our diocesan retreat centre, mulls the season of mistletoe and wine.

There's a certain stillness in the air as the year begins to draw to a close. It's a quiet that sits beneath the busyness of December, beneath the shopping lists and Christmas parties, beneath the deadlines and the expectations. It's the solemn quiet of winter. Of early nights and frosted mornings. Of candles lit against the dark.

If we allow ourselves to listen, Advent has a different rhythm to the world around it. Where the world demands we speed up, Advent invites us to slow down. Where the world grows loud, Advent gently whispers. Where the world requires more, Advent offers rest. Advent, in its truest sense, is a season of holy waiting. A time not to strive, but to receive.

In the Gospel stories, before the multitudes of the heavenly host praised God, there was silence. Before the light of a star broke into the night sky, there was anticipation. Before God came close in the vulnerability of a child, there were ordinary people going about their ordinary lives. It was in that stillness, unnoticed by most, that Heaven touched earth.

This is the fulfilment of Advent: God interrupting the ordinary. The Incarnation is the great holy interruption; the Creator entering creation, the Eternal One stepping into time, Heaven colliding with earth. It didn't arrive with prestige or power, but in the stillness of the night, in a place where most weren't looking.

This is how God so often moves. Not through the sensational and spectacular, but through quiet, unassuming moments. A whispered prayer. A small act of kindness. A pause in the rush of the day. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer once wrote, "We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God." Perhaps this Advent, we might learn again how to make room for those interruptions. To pause, long enough to notice where the light breaks in. To listen, for the whisper beneath the noise. To create for ourselves and for others, spaces of stillness in which the God who came at Bethlehem might meet us again.



Craig Newton, Director of Shallowford House, our diocesan retreat and conference centre

From the Church of England

More information can be found about the Christmas Theme this year "The Joy of Christmas" at <https://www.churchofengland.org/>

This is the national website where you can find out about the Church of England and associated information.

Week Beginning 21st December 2025

Lichfield Diocese Prayer Diary: Issue 296

We pray for the implementation of our diocesan strategy 'Seeking the Kingdom', within the context of the varied roles and ministries across the Diocese. As 'People of Hope,' we remember those impacted by natural disasters; those in Ukraine suffering grievously and we pray for the people & leaders of Russia; and for a lasting peace for the people of Palestine, Israel and the wider Middle East.

discipleship
vocation
evangelism

Sunday 21st December:

Lord, on this last Sunday before Christmas, we pray for all the churches holding Carol Services and similar services today. We thank you for all the people visiting your house this week, and pray that they may receive a warm welcome and that hearing your story will sow seeds so that they want to soon return.

Monday 22nd:

Today we pray for the churches of Shifnal and Sheriffhales, St Andrew's and St Mary's respectively. We thank you for the positive work going on in partnership with the Methodist Church and with the local community, and pray that their various initiatives may continue to flourish.

Tuesday 23rd:

We conclude our prayers for Edgmond and Shifnal Deanery by praying for the Benefice of Albrighton, Boningale, and Donington - and specifically the churches of St Mary Magdalene's, St Chad's, and St Cuthbert's. Please bless the ministry taking place in these villages between Telford and Wolverhampton, both in this special season and beyond.

Wednesday 24th: (Christmas Eve)

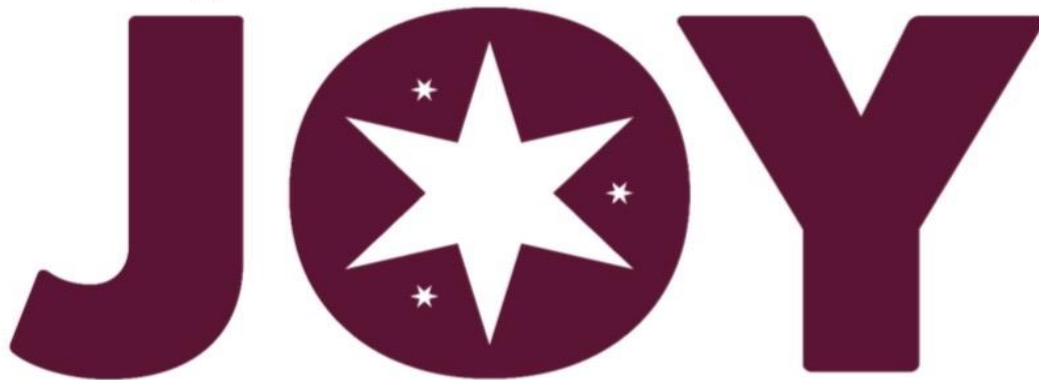
Lord, we thank you for all the churches holding special services today, be they christingles, crib services, midnight communions, carol services, or any other celebrations. Please help each of us with things to prepare for tomorrow to get them completed, but also for us to find time to reflect on 'the reason for the season'.

Thursday 25th: (Christmas Day)

HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYBODY! HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS!

A prayer from Common Worship;

Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth: accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you, our Saviour and our eternal God. Amen.



Friday 26th: (Stephen, Deacon, First Martyr)

On St Stephen's day we pray for all the churches in the diocese dedicated to him; in Bentilee, Fradley, Great Haywood, Wolverhampton, and Willenhall. We pray for your hand of blessing to rest on all of these churches and the communities they serve.

Saturday 27th: (John, Apostle and Evangelist)

On St John the Evangelist's day we pray for all the churches in the diocese dedicated specifically to his full title; in Bishopswood, Colemere, Essington, Heath Hayes, Hollington, Knypersley, Lawley, Muxton, Oulton, Swindon, Tipton, and Trent Vale. We pray too for St John the Divine in Horninglow, and for all those just dedicated to 'St John'; Abbey Hulton, Alsagers Bank, Barlaston, Berkhamstych, Chase Terrace, Cotton, Keele, Maesbrook, Marchington Woodlands, Pleck, Reapsmoor, Stretton, Walsall Wood, West Bromwich, Weston Rhyn, Whitgreave, and Wolverhampton.

We pray for your hand of blessing to rest on all of these churches and the communities they serve.

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Lichfield Diocese Prayer Diary: Issue 297

We pray for the implementation of our diocesan strategy 'Seeking the Kingdom', within the context of the varied roles and ministries across the Diocese. As 'People of Hope,' we remember those impacted by natural disasters; those in Ukraine suffering grievously and we pray for the people & leaders of Russia; and for a lasting peace for the people of Palestine, Israel and the wider Middle East.

discipleship
vocation
evangelism

Sunday 28th December: *(The Holy Innocents)*

The first of a number of prayers for the next fortnight written by and for Alstonefield Deanery;

Lord, today we pray for the whole Alstonefield Deanery Mission Area Team, its Ministry Team, priests, readers and locally commissioned lay ministers, and all the parish teams involved in supporting the ministry and mission of 18 churches, in the beautiful, rural area of the Southern Peak District. We pray that, by working together as one team they can bring the wisdom, the love of Christ and the individual strengths of each small village into one mutually beneficial shared missionary endeavour, keeping the light of Christ alive and flourishing in the tiny and isolated villages, hamlets and farms of the area.

Monday 29th: *(Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1170)*

Lord, we pray today for the Longnor Family Group of Churches, St Bartholomew Longnor, St Paul Newtown, St Paul Quarnford, and St Luke Sheen, as they continue their ministry whilst in vacancy, working courageously to sustain the vision of the late Father John, to maintain their ministry to the people of their villages, to the tourists who spend so much time in the area and to each other in their still raw grief and loss. May your hand uphold them in their work.

Tuesday 30th:

Lord, we pray for the other family group of churches in vacancy in the Mission Area Team, the Waterfall Family Group, who have had over 12 months without a priest and whose spirits remain strong despite the challenges they have faced. We pray for St Mary Calton, St Mary and St Lawrence Cauldon, All Saints Grindon and St James and St Bartholomew Waterfall. We give thanks for their efforts, and pray that a new priest will feel called to minister with them in the New Year.

Wednesday 31st: *(John Wyclif, Reformer, 1384)*

As the year comes to an end, we lift before you all the various gatherings taking place around the diocese and beyond, and for a safe and positive experience for everyone involved. We pray especially for St John's Walsall Wood's evening with Jo Enright, and that those people who come to see her may receive a warm welcome and want to again visit St John's for other things.

Thursday 1st: *(The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus)*

A prayer for the New Year from the Church of England; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose years never fail and whose mercies are new each returning day: let the radiance of your Spirit renew our lives, warming our hearts and giving light to our minds; that we may pass the coming year in joyful obedience and firm faith; through him who is the beginning and the end, your Son, Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Friday 2nd: *(Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus, Bishops, Teachers of the Faith, 379 and 389.*

Seraphim, Monk of Sarov, Spiritual Guide, 1833. Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, Bishop in South India, Evangelist, 1945)

Today 'Stats Shepherds' all over the diocese should have received an email asking them to report back on how many people are attending our churches by various measures. Lord, we thank you for all those faithful people ploughing through what can be a difficult task. We pray too for wisdom in discerning the picture the Stats for Mission present, and for a renewed heart and vision to see more people coming to our churches that need to be counted. We pray for the encouragement of upwards-tilting graphs as more people come to know you.

Saturday 3rd:

We return to our prayers for Alstonefield Deanery; Lord we ask for your blessing on the fourth Family Group of Churches in the Deanery Mission Area Team as they prepare for a vacancy in April. As enthusiastic supporters of the Deanery approach the churches are buoyed up and sustained by the support of colleagues across the Deanery. We pray for St Leonard Ipstones, St Luke Onecote, St Bartholomew Butterton, St Lawrence Warslow and St John the Baptist Elkstones. We give thanks for the way Warslow and Elkstones are integrating into the new family group and embracing the vision of God in Community and Community in Church that has underpinned the ministry and mission of the Family Group over the past few years.

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