



# St NICOLAS' CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

---

**Sunday 29 November 2020**

**First Sunday of Advent**

**WORSHIP**

Isaiah 64.1-9

Ps 80.1-8, 18-20

1 Corinthians 1.3-9

Mark 13.24-end

**Collect:** Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Message from Fr Paul**

Dear Friends

Today's Collect is a favourite of mine: '...give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and to put on the whole armour of light, now in this mortal life...'. This year it speaks more powerfully than ever into the world's chaos and uncertainty, reminding us that we are people who can, despite everything, live and walk in the light of Christ. It is the Light of Christ, which we prepare to celebrate at Christmas (yes, even in 2020!). And the season of Advent which begins today points us to that light. It points us also to the great hope we have in Christ's Incarnation at Christmas and the time when He shall return and come again in all his glory.

I am very pleased to say that at the time of writing we are able to plan to be back in church from next Sunday 6 December, the Second Sunday in Advent, which is also our Patronal Festival. There will be a celebration of Holy Communion to mark this important day in our year, and I am grateful to Bishop Henry who will preside and preach.

At the time of writing we await any further regulations relating to Covid-19 in places of public worship – which may be different prior to the Lockdown of 5 November. This is because of the 'tier system' yet to be announced in our own area. Once this is available, an update will be issued.

Much has been said about the celebration of this forthcoming Christmas and with whom we can or cannot meet. The media has been full of it! There is no doubt Christmas will be very different this year. Yet, in the same way that HM the Queen described Easter 2020, so this year, 'we need Christmas more than ever'. For the lost, the lonely, and the forgotten it will be one of the hardest Christmas Seasons. This is why we need to

remember and celebrate its truth and not collude with any idea that it is cancelled. The truth we celebrate is the birth of Jesus, the Word made Flesh, the Light of the World, who came for the lost, the lonely, and the forgotten. We shall have a Carol Service with readings and recorded carols on Sunday 20 December at 11.15am, and on Christmas Day, there will be a service of Holy Communion at 10.00am. We will find that it is in the birth of Jesus, in our various circumstances, that we can still find 'Comfort and Joy'.

Finally, we are delighted that the announcement of the new Bishop-designate of Dorchester, the Venerable Gavin Collins was made on Tuesday. Please do remember him in your prayers.

*With love and blessings,*

*Fr Paul*

## CHURCH NEWS

Following the recent Government decision Parish churches are currently **closed** for public worship. The Clergy Team will record a Service which will be made available to view through the Parish Resources page: [https://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/Parish/P\\_resources.html](https://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/Parish/P_resources.html)

However, we hope all three churches will be open on Sunday 6 December. Our Service pattern in December will be:

December 6: St Nicolas Day – 11:15 am Holy Communion, Bishop Henry Scriven

December 13: Third Sunday in Advent – 8 am Holy Communion (BCP)

Revd David Bevington

December 20: Fourth Sunday in Advent – 11:15 am Carol Service, led by Revd Paul Smith

As before, the Service will happen under Covid regulations and members wishing to attend will have to book:

For St Nicolas:

- ❖ 8.00 am - Holy Communion (1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays) – St Nicolas' Church  
Register with Jan Lawrence [jil129@live.co.uk](mailto:jil129@live.co.uk) or 01235 203144
- ❖ 11:15 am – Holy Communion (2nd) & Service of the Word (4th Sundays)  
Register with Andrew Coker [andrew.r.coker@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.r.coker@gmail.com) 01235 539929

**Please see the [website](#) for details of how to book for all three Churches in the Parish.**

We will make the 11:15 am Service at St Nic's available, live, via Zoom and extracts from the Service will also be loaded onto the [St Nic's website](#) (<https://stnicolasabingdon.org.uk/download.html>) as soon as possible during the day.

We believe churches will be **Open for private prayer:**

- St Nicolas': Mondays 10 am – 1 pm.
- St Michael's: Thursdays 11 am – 1 pm.
- St Helen's is not open in November



We give thanks for the life of

**Fred Mafabi** who died on Monday 23 November.

We remember in our prayers Hilda, Crispin, Calum and Nadene and all who mourn.

**From 2 December the Parish Office** will be open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 9am-1pm. Or you can contact the Parish Administrator as usual on [administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk](mailto:administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk), leave a message on the office phone 01235 520144 or use the office mobile: 07395 943957.

The Bishop of Oxford has announced the appointment of the Venerable Gavin Collins, currently Archdeacon of Meon, as the **next Bishop of Dorchester**. It is expected that he will be consecrated on 28 January 2021. More information can be found on the diocesan website. Please pray for Gavin Collins through the weeks ahead as he prepares for this new ministry.

The **December Faith Forum** talk on Sunday 6 December will be on Zoom only. There will be **no gathering** in the parish centre. Please also note that the start time for the December talk has been **changed to 9 am**. A link to the Zoom session will be circulated nearer the time. For those unable to join the Zoom session, a recording will be made available on-line following the event.

**Stars and angels in the windows.** Some of us across the parish thought it would be good if we could place angels or stars in our windows in the run up to Christmas - rather like the rainbows of lockdown 1. It would be something for children (and adults) to look out for and a subtle reminder of the religious nature of the festival. If you hate the idea of being creative, a star covered in tin foil would look great, or for the more adventurous there are lots of templates of angels and stars available online.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**Annual CiA Bereavement Service.** This year, due to Covid restrictions the annual Bereavement Service – hosted by All Saints & Trinity Churches – is available **online**.

**Homeless Charities:** In November St Nicolas' usually holds a special collection for charities working with local homeless people. Obviously we have not been able to do so this year. As Christmas and the colder weather comes many charities are looking for our support, but the attached leaflet gives information on three local homeless support charities which you might like to consider in your giving this year.

**Write for Rights:** Each year, Amnesty runs a campaign in Nov. and Dec. on behalf of individuals and groups in countries around the world who are victims of injustice. This year, the campaign is taking place on line. Case studies and suggestions for action can be found on their web-site - <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights>. At present, there are four case-studies, but others may be added later.

**Foodbank:** as well as Christmas items, the foodbank is also requesting donations of tinned peas, carrots and potatoes. Donations may be taken to Christ Church on Tuesdays or Fridays between 9 am & 1 pm or given at Waitrose and the Co-Op in Abingdon. If these options are not convenient collection from your door can be arranged – contact Eluned on Ab 529462 / [eluned@hallas.org.uk](mailto:eluned@hallas.org.uk). *Thank you.*

**GUIDED MEDITATIONS led by Revd Eileen Appleyard, All Saints Church Abingdon** – a meditation group, initially by Zoom, under the auspices of a group within the Methodist church called TakeTime ([taketime.org.uk](http://taketime.org.uk)). At its heart the style of the group is based around a short period of quiet meditation in which individually we each have chance to imagine being with Jesus in a particular setting based on a Gospel reading

and to have time to be in his presence and simply 'be' there. And unless anyone wishes to engage in a conversation with me at a later time no questions will be asked! Prior to the meditation itself there is a time of approach in which we are invited to relax our bodies and I find that also serves to quieten our minds of some of the clutter and worry we carry especially in these pandemic days.

Eileen is running two 'taster' evenings in December and then a five week introductory session during January and/or February and would welcome members from across the Church in Abingdon. Provisional dates for the 'taster' sessions are Dec 3rd & 10th; and for the 5 introductory sessions Jan 7, 14, 21, 28 & Feb 4, all Thursdays. For more details contact [eileenapleyard13@gmail.com](mailto:eileenapleyard13@gmail.com) before the end of November if possible.

### FOR YOUR PRAYERS

- For our keeping of Advent that we may find time to watch and wait;
- For the Ven Gavin Collins, Bishop-designate of Dorchester, his wife Christina, and their family;
- For all those affected in our town and parish by the ongoing pandemic;
- For local schools, especially those closing early this term;
- For the homeless in our parish and beyond especially as Christmas approaches and for all agencies supporting them;
- All those in positions of authority or influence;
- John Orridge, recently appointed Diocese of Oxford Director of Finance as he prepares to take up his post in January 2021;
- All suffering in body, mind or spirit and those suffering, throughout the world, from the health, economic and political effects of the coronavirus;

### WORSHIP & OTHER RESOURCES

The [Parish resources](#) page contains links to Sunday's Service at St Helen's, plus an archive of Parish resources.

The [St Nicolas' website](#) has recordings of our 11:15am Services.

**ONLINE:** [Diocesan Church at Home](#) (Live-streamed). The order of service, together with links to view or listen to the service will be posted on the Diocesan [website](#) on Saturday.

[Oxford Cathedral on-line services](#) (includes service booklets and sermons)

An archive of cathedral services and sermons is available on Soundcloud <https://soundcloud.com/user-867515242>

### CONTACT US

Team Rector	The Revd. Dr. C Miller	01235 520144
Team Vicar	The Revd. Paul Smith	01235 534654
Associate Priest	The Revd. Charles Masheder	01235 520959
Church Wardens	Mr Paul Rast-Lindsell	07876 277363
	Mr Andrew Coker	01235 539929
Parish Office	Mrs Jenny Balshaw	01235 520144
Website	<a href="https://www.stnicolasabingdon.org.uk/">https://www.stnicolasabingdon.org.uk/</a>	
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/stnicolasabingdon">https://www.facebook.com/stnicolasabingdon</a>	

You can contact the Parish Administrator on [administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk](mailto:administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk) leave a message on the office phone [01235 520144](tel:01235520144) or use the office mobile: [07395 943957](tel:07395943957)

***Please send any information for next week's pew slip to  
[eluned@hallas.org.uk](mailto:eluned@hallas.org.uk) by Wednesday***