



St NICOLAS' CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

Sunday 13 December 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11

Psalm 126 or Magnificat

1 Thessalonians 5.16-24

John 1.6-8,19-28

Collect: O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Message from Fr Paul – Gaudete Sunday:

Dear Friends

We have already reached the Third Sunday of Advent! This particular Sunday in this season of penitence, waiting, and expectation has a particular significance and emphasis. The word 'Gaudete' is from the Latin meaning: 'Rejoice'. Traditionally, it goes back to the time when (just as on the Third Sunday of Lent there is a similar tradition) the acts of penitence and fasting could be relaxed. In some churches for this Sunday alone, the liturgical colour was changed from purple to rose pink.

The Epistle set for today incites this theme of 'rejoicing' and bids us prepare in this way to meet the coming Saviour: 'Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances....' (1 Thess 5.16-18a) To live out that exhortation of rejoicing and giving thanks is always a challenge with what life throws at us. But that sense of challenge is heightened in these days when so much has been changed by the pandemic. And yet we have all known, and indeed testified, to the truth that there has been much to give thanks for in these demanding times. We have known too, perhaps in a more striking way during this Advent of 2020, what it means to wait actively and use the opportunities of stillness and quiet which have been afforded us to 'pray without ceasing'.

In this third week of Advent as we move ever more closer to Christmas, perhaps one way to rejoice and to 'give thanks in all circumstances' is to adopt a spiritual discipline which helps achieve this. (Forgive me if some of you are already doing this)! That discipline could be to intentionally look for those things which both give you joy and for which you can offer thanks during the day.

It is something I have sought to adopt and I have been very surprised by what I have discovered! In doing so, I believe we fulfil all three exhortations from today's Epistle. Our Christmas celebrations are published in this pewleaflet. Please do take note of them, including our Service of Christmas Carols and Readings next Sunday 20 December at

11.15am. It is important that you book your place for the services you wish to attend with Andrew Coker. Places will continue to be limited to observe appropriate safety for us all under the Covid-19 regulations.

I look forward to seeing you next Sunday. Meanwhile 'Rejoice always....'

With love and blessings,

Fr Paul

CHURCH NEWS

All three churches in the Parish are now open for Sunday worship in line with Covid-19 restrictions within our own Tier 2 in this area. Details of Christmas Services across the parish will be on the church websites, but at St Nicolas':

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

led by Revd David Bevington

Wednesday 16 December 10:30am Holy Communion, in the Parish Centre
(Numbers will be restricted, please contact the office to book a place).

December 20: Fourth Sunday in Advent – 11:15 am Christmas Carols and Readings

led by Revd Paul Smith

December 25: Christmas Day – 10am Holy Communion led by Bishop Henry Scriven

December 27: No Service at St Nicolas' but at St Helen's and St Michael's

As before, worship takes place under Covid-19 regulations and members wishing to attend will have to book:

For St Nicolas:

- ❖ 11:15 am & Christmas Day – Andrew Coker 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 December

There will be a **CHRISTMAS CRIB and CHRISTINGLE service** on Zoom at 3.30 pm on Christmas Eve [to get the code email AoT.Christingle@gmail.com before 24th December]; it will be also available on the website from 4:30 pm; see details on website. Christingle kits will be handed out from the West porch 1:30-3:30 pm each weekday 16th-23rd December also 10:30-12:30 am on Saturday 19th December.

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.

Thanks: The Poppy Appeal collection box in St Nic's raised over £100.

[Issue 10 of 'A Candle in the Window'](#) is now available! The last this year.

Correction to Issue 10: the Radio 4 producers have rescheduled the book of the week readings from **John Barton's A History of the Bible** to the week after Christmas, that is, beginning on 28 December and ending on New Year's Day.

December Faith Forum hear *The Revd Dr Emma Percy talk on Ministry and Motherhood:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2Vjzj6cn0Y&feature=youtu.be>

Watch and learn: Online courses from the Diocese for 2021 Spring courses from the Diocese are out now. These courses are for anyone with a passion to learn more about their faith, about God and our place in his world. Find out more: [Equipping for life](#)

Christmas Carols in Abingdon: As we head into this Christmas season, the Church in Abingdon has teamed up with Abingdon Town Council to promote a community wide sing of the carol Silent Night at 8pm on Thursday 17th December. There will be a track released closer to the time to sing along to. See attached flyer with the words

In Oxfordshire: Communities across Oxfordshire are coming together to celebrate Christmas! Join BBC Radio Oxford, 5.40pm on Sundays throughout December, by singing along at your front door and lighting a candle to hold while singing. Download words to the carols, invites for the neighbours, and a Christmas lantern craft from:
<https://www.oxfordchristmas.co.uk/>

COMMUNITY NEWS

The **Church-In-Abingdon Christian Aid Walk 2021** will be 'self-service' this year and can be done anytime during January, singly or in household/wider groups and must follow the COVID guidelines in place at the time the walk is completed. Visit 9 CiA churches to find a single letter [on poster] at each church to make an anagram of a word connected with Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal. Participants will be asked for the 'word' they have found. Sponsors are invited to make a donation via the Just Giving page.

BRF Trustee Vacancy: the Abingdon based Bible Reading Fellowship is offering an opportunity to play a key voluntary role in a Christian organisation dedicated to empowering and resourcing individual Christians and local churches in their faith and mission. They are looking for a treasurer to join their board of trustees, who will maintain an overview of the charity's affairs, ensuring its financial viability and that proper financial records and procedures are maintained. Reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed. For full details, please download the [applicant pack](#) .



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

- For our keeping of Advent that we may find time to watch and wait;
- For all schools entering the last week of term, especially at St Nicolas School, for Andy Spooner and his staff, and especially for teachers nearing exhaustion;
- For all children deprived of the usual Christmas diversions;

- For the care homes in our parish, for all residents, families and staff at Bridge House and Old Station House, with whom we have special links;m
- For the Ven Gavin Collins, Bishop-designate of Dorchester, his wife Christina, and their family;
- For all shops, restaurants and pubs in our town in this time of anxiety and uncertainty;
- 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, especially for our Prime Minister and Government;
- 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 11:15 am 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

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	Mr Andrew Coker	01235 539929
Parish Office	Mrs Jenny Balshaw	01235 520144
Website	https://www.stnicolasabingdon.org.uk/	
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/stnicolasabingdon	

You can contact the Parish Administrator on 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 by Wednesday