



The Magazine for the Parish of Chigwell & Chigwell Row

December 2025



£1

where sold,
online free!

St Mary's Church, Chigwell Village
All Saints' Church, Chigwell Row
St Winifred's Church, Chigwell



The Churches in Chigwell and Chigwell Row, open & online

St Mary's Church

High Road, Chigwell IG7 6QA www.stmaryschigwell.org.uk

Churchwarden: Joy Madeiros 07976 803887

Sunday Services: 9:15am – traditional CofE service
10:45am – service on a big screen with a blend of informality and liturgy, and our children's group, Treasure Seekers, during term time.

Morning Prayer: 9:00am on Wednesdays



All Saints' Church

Romford Road, Chigwell IG7 4QD www.allsaintschigwellrow.org

Churchwardens: Helen Ellis-Poole 07887 731320
Cindy Barber 07506 387070

Sunday Service: 10:00am

Morning Prayer: 9:00am on Thursdays

Holy Communion: 9:15am, on 18th December, in lieu of Morning Prayer



St Winifred's Church

Manor Road, Chigwell IG7 5PS www.stwinifredschurch.org.uk

Churchwarden: Daniel Forshaw 07591 857657

Sunday Service: 11:15am with Tiga Club
on the 2nd & 4th Sundays

Morning Prayer: 9:00am on Tuesdays



Morning Prayer is online as well as meeting in person as above. It is hosted on the Parish of Chigwell & Chigwell Row Facebook page at 9:00am on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Watch live or later.

The Parish of Chigwell & Chigwell Row is part of the [Vale of Roding](#) benefice, alongside the parishes of Lambourne with Abridge, and Stapleford Abbotts.



Joy to the World

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King!
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room,
and heav’n and nature sing,
and heav’n and nature sing,
and heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing.”

Isaac Watts

I hope you like the Church Christmas posters this year? **JOY!**

As I write in the closing days of November, we are just beginning to hear again the wonderful words and tunes of the Christmas Carols that those of us who have grown up in this country know so well. I love them and the deep spiritual truths they explain. One of my favourites is *Joy to the World*.

Surprisingly *Joy to the World* was not written for Christmas. Rather, Isaac Watts wrote it as a poem in 1719 rephrasing some words from the Ancient Scriptures: *Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing..... Psalm 98 verses 4 and 5.*

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;
make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing...

Shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

Verses from Psalm 98, The Bible

As we ponder these prophetic words, written a thousand years before Christ’s birth, we begin to understand that they perfectly capture the significance of His coming into this world as that tiny baby born in a stable. Jesus came and He

still comes to give us the opportunity of a fresh start and to enable us to live a life of joy and freedom. Joy, not necessarily in the sense of feeling happy all the time, but joy by giving us a sense of purpose, fulfilment and belonging. And freedom to be the people we were born to be.

As you can see in the pages of this Christmas edition of *Unity* magazine, there will be plenty of opportunities to shout and sing for joy in the coming weeks. Starting with the *Let’s Make Music* group leading the singing at the switching on of the Christmas Lights at All Saints’ on

Advent Sunday to the chances to get involved in our Community Carol Singing events in local pubs and care homes in the Parish, with local schools coming to our churches to celebrate the Nativity, concerts, and our own special Christmas services there is plenty to look forward to and enjoy.

The call to all of us is: **“Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room.”** The Christian faith is about having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And like any relationship we need consciously to make space for it in our lives. But how often do we, like the innkeeper of Bethlehem, find our hearts too crowded with cares and concerns to give any room to the King of Kings?

Christmas can be a challenging for all of us too. Whether we are living with loss, illness, financial worries or separation, Jesus understands. The last verse of the carol says **“He rules the world with truth and grace”** and the tune to the carol, Antioch, is derived from various melodies from Handel’s *Messiah*. The *Messiah* is often performed at Eastertime when we remember that thirty-three years after his birth, Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for all the wrongdoing in history, creation and for our personal shortcomings.

Christmas can be difficult for many of us because it can bring into focus difficulties we have lived through and the emotional baggage we carry. Christ rose from the dead and is eternally alive and wants to be involved in our everyday. So, my prayer for us all of us this Christmas is that as we make space for Him in our hearts, it will be a season of reconciliation in our relationships; human and divine, and a time for spiritual and physical healing. As we let go of the spiritual clutter, may we all make space for Him and, as a result, be filled with joy and peace! Happy Christmas!

With my love and prayers, as ever

Paola

Team Vicar



JOY

Sunday 21st December:

5:00pm Carol Service - St Mary's

**6:30pm Nine Lessons & Carols -
All Saints'**

Christmas Eve at all churches:

4:00pm Christingle

11:30pm Midnight Communion

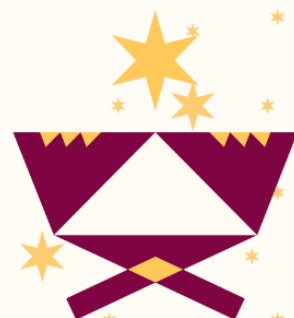
Christmas Day

10:00am Family Worship - St Winifred's

10:00am Holy Communion - All Saints'

10:30am Holy Communion - St Mary's

 **THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**





We celebrated the Wedding of

Kenyatta McKay &
Bhavesh Leelah

22nd November St Mary's



We mourned the loss of ...

Stuart Peter Dredge	19 th October	Burial of Ashes	St Mary's Churchyard
Beryl Edith Dredge	19 th October	Funeral	St Mary's Church & Churchyard
William Arthur McNally	27 th October	Funeral	St Mary's Church & Churchyard



Prayer for Christmas 2025

Dear Father,
Christmas is coming. It's all such a rush – planning, shopping, spending, wrapping, posting, stressing! What's it all about?

Lord, help us, in all the rat-race busyness, to make time to focus on that baby at the centre of it all. That baby who is Your Son, who was with You in the beginning and who, with You, created all things; that baby who brings life and light and hope and salvation; that baby who was and is Jesus, God, made man.

Lord, we thank You for that baby-gift to us – the greatest gift there has ever been. Thank You that because He came, grew up, lived, died and rose again, there is light in the darkness of this world's mess – light that can never be put out, that evil can never overcome.

Jesus is the Light of the World. Putting our trust in Him, we thank You Lord, for Christmas – for Your grace and love for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

by Daphne Kitching

Bishop Guli's Christmas Message 2025

*'Fear not said he for mighty dread had seized
their trouble mind.'*

These words from the famous carol, *While Shepherds Watched*, will be sung again this year in churches, schools, on village greens and in pubs all around the country. Since the 1700s, this faithful rendering from Luke's account set to a simple tune, has stood the test of time. Indeed, the description of the shepherds' fear when the angels appear speaks directly to our own time.



Fear is all around. Many live in fear of uncertainty; too many live in fear of domestic violence and abuse; in fear of failure, rejection, inadequacy. In our national life, fear of the outsider has led to deeply troubling rhetoric and policy proposals on immigration, with the fear of financial disaster making scapegoats of some of the most vulnerable in society. Nor is the church immune. Differences of perspectives in our internal debates, as well as our weighty responsibility in seeking to atone for past mistakes, can all too easily lead to a culture of fear.

But it is into all this that the angels arrive with their message, directly confronting the reality of our lives. It is right that we should take peoples' fears seriously, neither diminishing nor belittling them; moreover, working to overcome them. Yet in the midst of fear we encounter the gentle angelic rejoinder which paralysed the Shepherds. *FEAR NOT* ... because good news is brought to us, news of great joy for all people.

Sometimes we need encouragement to hear again the message of the angels. There is joy to be found in the stable scene in Bethlehem. There is joy in the angelic chorus that lifts us, as it did the shepherds, from crouching fear to the glory of the Highest Heaven. There is joy unbounded through the coming of the Christ child, in the love he proclaims and which Christians are called to share.

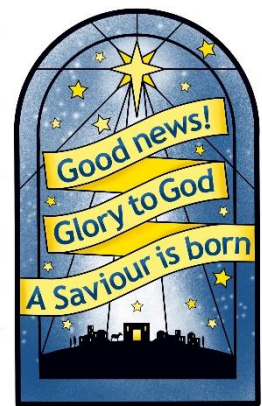
So this Christmas will we allow the singing of the angels to overwhelm our fear so we can hear again the message of joy? Will we, like the Shepherds, leave the place of fear and *go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.*

+ Guli Chelmsford

The Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani,
Bishop of Chelmsford

Canon Paul Hardingham considers the Christmas story.

Christmas Unwrapped!



All of us have received unwanted gifts at Christmas. For Joseph the gift of a child, as recorded in Matthew chapter 1, was not something he really wanted. Although he was engaged to Mary, her pregnancy would be grounds for divorce. Not surprisingly, with the associated social disgrace, Joseph wanted to divorce Mary quietly (Matthew 1:19). However, God intervened in a dream: *'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means, God with us.'* (1:23). In a scary and uncertain world, what does the message of **Immanuel** say to us today?

God is present with us

God assured Joseph that He was working in all that Joseph was going through. The eternal and creator God entered time and space as a baby. This baby is both uniquely divine but also fully human. This means that we can know God personally, not just know about Him. The Holy Spirit is committed to making Jesus' life and character real in us, and bringing meaning to our circumstances, just as He worked in Mary's life.

God is on our side

Christmas touches some raw nerves in our lives, including stress, family rows, loneliness and financial pressures. However, God does not remain aloof from our experiences. In Jesus He enters our world of hopes and fears, joys and disappointments. He understands what we are going through, as He is alongside us. By the cross and resurrection, He gave His life that we might know His love, joy, peace and forgiveness.

For Joseph, as well as us, the Christmas message is one of hope in an uncertain world. It is a time to re-consider the claims of **Immanuel** (*'God with us'*) as we entrust ourselves to Him for the coming year.



The Children's Society

Times change, memories fade, but it was a long time ago when the Chigwell Committee was formed, by the capable hands of Muriel Miles, Dorothy Walker, Alan and Jean Cronquist.



At first, very few money-making events were arranged, but interest and contributions increased, and The Children's Society became a substantial charity in Chigwell, not only making money at coffee mornings among other functions, but important for meeting friends and interested newcomers keen to know more about the charity.

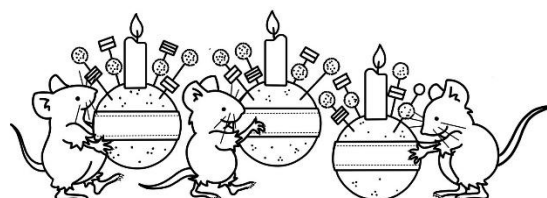
As the years passed and many capable committee members came and went, the number of events increased considerably including Chigwell School was host for lunches, dinners and musical performances. The Committee's Chairman attended a Royal Garden Party on behalf of the Children's Society, and at the 140th celebration dinner at Chigwell School, Mark Russell, the Society's Chief Executive, was Guest of Honour.

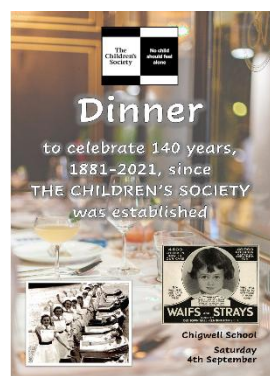
For well over 30 years, the Chigwell Committee has raised in excess of £221,000 for the many children and young people who find themselves in need of care and protection, and The Children's Society has stepped in to provide the very necessary and valuable help needed.

The Christingle service prior to Christmas, when oranges with candles are circulated round the church, is a worldwide event for the Society and greatly anticipated.

Unfortunately due to various circumstances, the Chigwell Committee no longer exists.

Rosemary Sweet





Christmas Eve, 4:00pm, all our churches

Our series on the Nicene Creed concludes this month (not last!), as Canon Paul Hardingham considers a bedrock of our Christian belief: that the Church has an eternal future.



The Nicene Creed: Trinitarian Faith

In the last of our series on the Nicene Creed, we want to ask about its significance today. The original Creed dates from 325 AD but was expanded at the Council of Constantinople in 381. Over the last months we have seen how the Creed provides a ‘*big picture*’ of who God is and challenges our commitment to him. Its value can be seen in three main areas:

The Nicene Creed stresses the need to believe the right thing:

Sadly, we often hear Christian leaders and churches denying the essential articles of the Christian Faith. To be a part of orthodox Christianity, we must believe in what is affirmed in the Nicene Creed. ‘*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*’ (1 Corinthians 15:3-5).

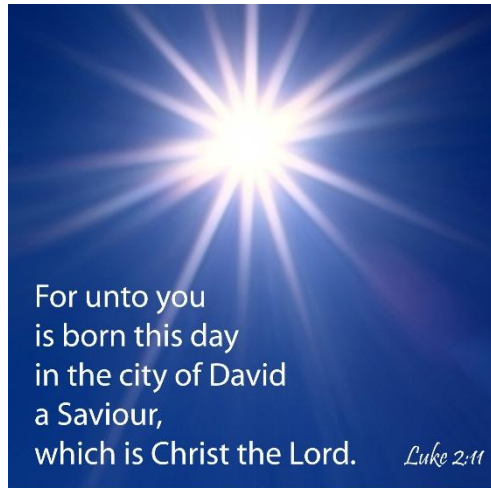
The Nicene Creed affirms the importance of the Trinity:

Generally, Christians give little thought to the Trinity, and many churches rarely teach on the subject. However, by regularly reciting the Nicene Creed, people are reminded of the doctrine about the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It protects the truth about the Trinity, especially in opposition to Arianism, which sees Jesus as the first and greatest of God’s creatures, but not the same as God the Father.

To be a Christian is to be baptised in the triune name and to worship God, who is three persons in one Godhead: ‘*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*’ (Matthew 28:19).

The Nicene Creed focuses on God's salvation:

At the heart of the Nicene Creed is the good news that Jesus came down from heaven *'for our salvation'*. It understands Christianity as essentially being about sin and salvation, judgment and forgiveness, and new life in Jesus Christ.



This theme is very relevant at Christmas, when we celebrate the baby born in Bethlehem as our Saviour. As the angels said to the shepherds: *'Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'* (Luke 2:11,12).

Archbishop Designate, Sarah Mullally, sets out her hopes for the Church

Shortly after the announcement of her nomination as the next Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Sarah Mullally delivered an address at Canterbury Cathedral, reflecting on her calling, the challenges facing the Church, and her hopes for its future.

Rooted in her early vocation as a nurse and shaped by her ministry in London, she spoke of “washing feet” as a guiding image of Christian service, and of finding hope in the quiet faithfulness of churches, chaplaincies, and communities across the Anglican Communion. She addressed the Church’s responsibility in safeguarding, the need to confront power dynamics, and the importance of standing against hatred and antisemitism.

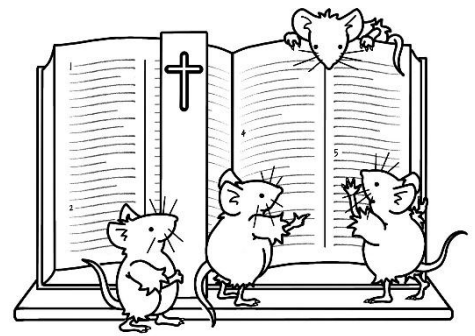
She said she would seek to be “a shepherd who enables everyone’s ministry and vocation to flourish,” and expressed her desire to nurture confidence in the Gospel. “Held fast by the Lord’s hand,” she concluded, “please pray for me as I will pray for you.”



Canon Paul Hardingham continues
his series on the books of the Bible.

What's the Big Idea?

An Introduction to Books of the New Testament: Philippians



This letter was written to Christians in the Macedonian city of Philippi when Paul was in prison, probably in Rome (60-62 AD). His primary purpose in writing was to thank them for the gift they had sent him upon learning of his imprisonment. However, he also uses the letter as an opportunity to report on his situation; to encourage the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of circumstances; to exhort the church to live in humility, fellowship, and unity; to commend Epaphroditus and Timothy to them; and to warn them about false teaching. This included Judaizers who were persuading the Philippians to submit to circumcision.

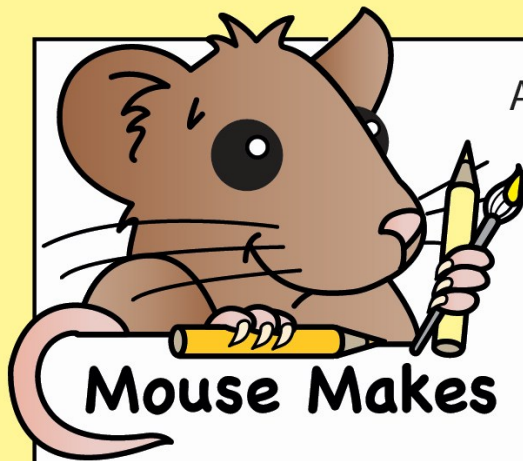
The central message of Philippians focuses on joy (the word occurs some 16 times!). For Paul, joy isn't simply an emotional response to favourable circumstances. True joy is to be found through a relationship with the resurrected and glorified Christ. Death ceases to be an enemy, because through it we can more fully enjoy the presence of Jesus. This joy is also rooted in an expectation of the return of Jesus, which gives urgency to the task of sharing the gospel. So, Paul begins his letter by thanking the Philippians for their partnership together in the work of the gospel through the offerings they have sent.

Paul also powerfully appeals to the Philippians to be of '*one mind*' in pursuing humility and unity. He gives the example of Jesus himself '*who made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant*' (2:7) to the point of dying the death of a common criminal. '*Therefore*', say Paul, '*God exalted him to the highest place*' (2:9). This 'Jesus attitude' is the one that all believers should share.

... he **humbled** himself
and became **obedient**
to the point of **death** —
even **death on a cross.**

PHILIPPIANS 2:8, NRSV





At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus,
God's Son and our Saviour
coming into the world as a baby,
and we look forward to the time
when Jesus will come again,
not as a baby but as the
King of kings and Lord of lords!

read

John 14:3

A baby needs clothes
to keep warm like
a snugly sleep suit
or a vest and nappy.

What were you dressed in?

Jesus was wrapped in

.....

.....

read Luke 2:7

A baby needs somewhere
to be born like at home
or in a hospital.

Where were you born?

Jesus was born
in a stable in

.....

read Luke 2:1-6

A baby needs
somewhere
to sleep like
a crib or a cot.
*What did you
sleep in?*

Jesus slept in a

.....

read Luke 2:7

A baby needs
a name.

*What name were
you called?*

Jesus was given
a special name
that had a
special meaning.

read

Matthew 1:21-23

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ★ NOLLAIG CHRÌDHEIL ★ NOLLAG SHONA
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN

By the Rev'd Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director.



This Christmas, do you have enough?

At the opening of Bach's Cantata No. 82 a solo bass voice begins to sing the aria 'Ich habe genug' - (I have enough) - a paraphrase of Simeon's Song 'Now Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace... for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'

Simeon - the bass voice - realises that he is complete, he has enough, now he has beheld the infant Jesus, even though our salvation has yet to be completed in the adult Christ. Bach's paraphrase, slow and meditative, takes, as it were, the words out of Simeon's mouth into the witness of the singer, reminding all who listen that this is a timeless truth: in Christ I have enough.

The rest of the cantata - another four movements covering a total of about 25 minutes - takes up the theme of longing to being united fully with Christ. That is enough, that is completion.

Enough. Complete. These words probably rarely fall from our lips as an experienced truth, either in relation to what we have, what we want, and importantly, who we are. And yet we've assented to this concept of the all-sufficiency of God in countless hymns that we've sung Sunday by Sunday since, well.... forever. Christ 'my all in all'.

At best it remains an aspiration, for we live at a time when the whole weight of our culture is to divert our baptism promises, our reliance on God into reliance on *stuff*, gewgaws in infinite variety.

No more so than at Christmas, when we are urged to splurge, and then splurge some more. 'Is this present good enough for our Jo? Maybe I should buy him something else as well.... And do you think a turkey *and* beef will be enough? Maybe another two dozen pigs in blankets?'

I'm not trying to be a kill-joy here. Our best times are around food, with friends, and Christmas is the one time of the year that we make an effort to be with friends and family. But the whole of so-called western civilisation is posited on the fact that *we have to have more*, and it reaches its anxious climax at Christmas.

Any advert you happen to catch will convince you of this truth; western capitalism depends on **you** buying stuff, needed or not. It tells us: "You will never feel complete, be complete, unless you have this product. And then let me draw your attention to *this*, a '**must have**'"...

But the fantasy world which supports this compulsion to '**must have**' is that the earth has infinite resources, and we can go on forever fulfilling the fantasy of *all* our wants being satisfied from Amazon or Temu or wherever. We're unwilling to face the fact of the earth's finite resources, either for ourselves or our grandchildren. It is only God who has infinite resources.

As Christians we're supposed to be alive to this lie, that the novelties of this world can fulfil us. But many of us still get sucked into the myth of *stuff* as being the be-all and end-all of life.

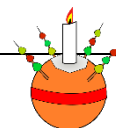
Thank God, then, for the irritant of our faith in this materially obsessed world. It reminds us that *in Christ 'I have enough'*. Let me just slow down and take that in again. *In Christ I have enough*. From Genesis to Revelation the message is 'God will provide, and *I will have enough*'.

I often pray the words of St Teresa of Avila as a reminder, as a brake on my own unfettered wants. It's more needed than ever at Christmas, when God disturbs all our complacencies by breaking into this world in human form, and proving to us in the life of Jesus that God is enough. If we're counter-cultural enough to call ourselves Christian, maybe it's a prayer we all take to heart, to mind, to soul.

Let nothing disturb you, nothing affright you; All things must pass, God never changes. Patience achieves all things. Those who have God lack nothing- God alone suffices. (Teresa of Avila)

Sunday Services & Readings for December

Sunday 30th November Advent Sunday & Safeguarding Sunday	Isaiah 2:1-5 Matthew 24:36-44
St Mary's: All Saints': St Mary's: St Winifred's:	9:15 Holy Communion 10:00 Holy Communion 10:45 Morning Worship 11:15 Morning Worship
Sunday 7th December 2nd Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 11:1-10 Matthew 3:1-12
St Mary's: All Saints': St Mary's: St Winifred's:	9:15 Holy Communion BCP 10:00 All Age Holy Communion 10:45 All Age Morning Worship & Toy Service 11:15 All Age Morning Worship & Toy Service
Sunday 14th December 3rd Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 35:1-10 Matthew 11:2-11
St Mary's: All Saints': St Mary's: St Winifred's:	9:15 Holy Communion BCP 10:00 Morning Worship & Toy Service 10:45 Holy Communion 11:15 Holy Communion
Thursday 18th December	
All Saints' House	9:15 Holy Communion
Sunday 21st December 4th Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 7:10-16 Matthew 1:18-25
St Mary's: All Saints': St Mary's: St Winifred's: St Mary's: St Winifred's:	9:15 Holy Communion 10:00 Holy Communion 10:45 Morning Worship 11:15 Morning Worship 5:30 Carol Service 6:30 Nine Lessons & Carols
Wednesday 24th December Christmas Eve	
All churches:	4:00pm Christingle 11:30pm Midnight Communion
Thursday 25th December Christmas Day	
St Winifred's: All Saints': St Mary's:	10:00 Family Worship 10:00 Holy Communion 10:30 Holy Communion
Sunday 28th December 1st Sunday of Christmas	Hebrews 2:10-18-18 Matthew 2:13-23
All Saints': St Mary's: St Winifred's:	10:00 Holy Communion 10:30 Holy Communion 11:15 Holy Communion



Sunday 4th January Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1-6 Matthew 2:1-12
St Mary's:	9:15 Holy Communion BCP
All Saints':	10:00 All Age Holy Communion
St Mary's:	10:45 All Age Morning Worship
St Winifred's:	11:15 All Age Morning Worship

Christmas



All heaven waited with bated breath
As the Lord sent Gabriel on ahead
To break the news to the young Jewish girl,
'You will be with child' was all he said

'How can this be?' Poor Mary cried,
'I am a maid and know no man.'
'With God all is possible' came the reply;
This child would fulfil redemption's plan

News spread fast when the baby was born,
Shepherds were alerted by a heavenly host,
Glory to God and peace on earth,
God was coming to redeem the lost.

This Christmas day we celebrate,
Like the shepherds and wise men we play our part,
As they bring their gifts we worship Him too,
But the one gift He longs for is our heart.

by Megan Carter

Parish Diary

For Sunday services, please see the Sunday Readings page.



Date	Time	Event	Venue
Mondays	8:00pm	Hour of Prayer	circulates around the benefice
Tuesdays	9:00am	Morning Prayer	St Win's Church
Wednesdays	9:00am	Morning Prayer	St Mary's Church
	10:30am	'Open House'	St Mary's Church
	6:15pm	Time 2 De-stress	All Saints' House
Thursdays	9:00am	Morning Prayer	All Saints' House
	10:30am	'Open House'	St Mary's Church
There are no weekday services 21 st December – 3 rd January except Christmas .			

Sunday 30 th November	12:30pm	Christmas Parish Lunch	St Mary's C/rooms
	5:30pm	Lighting Up Chigwell Row	All Saints' Church
Monday 1 st December	8:00pm	Hour of Prayer	Lambourne Church
Wednesday 3 rd	10:00am	Ladies' Coffee & Chat	St Win's Church
Thursday 4 th	10:00am	Hour of Cleaning	All Saints' Church
Saturday 6 th	6:00pm	Lighting the Christmas Tree	Station Green, Chigwell Village
Sunday 7 th	3:30pm & 6:30	Chigwell School Carol Services	St Mary's Church
	4:00pm	Christmas Concert NRW	All Saints' Church
Monday 8 th	8:00pm	Hour of Prayer	All Saints' House
Thursday 11 th	7:30pm	Thursday Club	Cindy's home
Saturday 13 th	7:00pm	Carol Singing	Three Jolly Wheelers
Monday 15 th	8:00pm	Hour of Prayer	Stapleford Church
Tuesday 16 th	2:30pm	Time 4 Tea	All Saints' House
Wed 17 th	7:30pm	Carol Singing	The Two Brewers
Thursday 18 th	9:15am	Parish Holy Communion	All Saints' House
Saturday 20 th	8:00am	Men's Breakfast	All Saints' House
	8:30am	Ladies' Breakfast	St Mary's C/rooms
Sunday 21 st	5:00pm	Carol Service	St Mary's Church
	6:30pm	Nine Lessons & Carols	All Saints' Church

Wednesday 24th Xmas Eve	4:00pm	Christingle	All churches
	11:30pm	Midnight Communion	
Thursday 25 th Xmas Day	10:00am	Family Worship	St Winifred's
		Holy Communion	All Saints' Church
	10:30am		St Mary's Church
Friday 9 th January	7:00pm	Benefice 12 th Night Party	Abride Village Hall

Keep up to date with the Parish Calendar on GCal: bit.ly/3H5LXS7
Please contact the Parish Office for further information about any events.

**Twelfth Night
Party**

HAPPY
Epiphany

**The Vale of Roding Benefice Party
Friday 9th January, 7:00pm
at Abridge Village Hall, RM4 1UD**

All welcome

Churches are building 'coalitions of goodwill'- Archbishop of York

Churches bring people together in a world that can become 'too easily' polarised, the Archbishop of York has told a major conference highlighting the value of church buildings.



Archbishop Stephen spoke of the contribution that churches make to social cohesion, and called on the Government to make the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme – covering VAT on repairs – to be made permanent, saying that churches are "incredibly anxious" about the future of the "lifeline" scheme.

He said churches are not only places of worship but centres of social support, working with or providing a "staggering" number of social action projects – more than 31,000 - building coalitions of goodwill with people of all faiths and none, hosting services such as food banks, warm spaces, drop-ins and debt counselling.

He said there continued to be a need to "make the case" to Government over the Listed Places of Worship Grant scheme – which provides grants covering the VAT on repairs of more than £1,000. He said this had been a "lifeline" since it was first introduced more than 20 years ago by the then Chancellor Gordon Brown.

The LPWG scheme gives grants covering the VAT on repairs of more than £1,000 for listed places of worship. In January, the Government announced a one-year extension of the scheme but reduced the total amount of money available and introduced a £25,000 cap on the amount that can be claimed by a place of worship.





CAROL

Singing

Saturday 6th December 6:00pm
Lighting the Christmas Tree
Station Green, Chigwell Village

Saturday 13th December 7:00pm
The Three Jolly Wheelers
Woodford Green

Wednesday 17th December 7:30pm
The Two Brewers
Chigwell Row

Attendance at Church of England churches rises for the fourth year in a row

Attendance at Church of England churches grew for the fourth year in a row last year, statistics have confirmed. The overall number of regular worshippers across the Church of England's congregations rose to 1.009 million in 2024, a rise of 0.6 per cent, according to the annual Statistics for Mission findings.

It was the second year in a row in which the Church of England's "worshipping community" – the combined number of regular members of local congregations – has stood above a million since the Covid-19 pandemic.

All age average attendance on a Sunday also rose 1.5 per cent to 581,000 in 2024, extending rises over recent years. And overall attendance across the week edged upwards by 1.6 cent in a year, and stood at just over 702,000 last year, according to the figures.

The increase was driven by a recovery in attendance by adults (over 16), among whom average Sunday attendance was up by 1.8 per cent and weekly attendance rose by 1.8 per cent.

The 2024 figures showed that adult baptisms rose to 8,700 in 2024 compared to 7,800 the previous year. There was also a rise in the number of young people, aged between 11 and 17 years old who were baptised, from 2,100 in 2023 to 2,400 last year. Confirmations also rose by 5.3 per cent from 10,700 to 11,300.

While the overall figures show that in-person attendance has not fully reached pre-pandemic levels, the figures suggest it is moving closer to the projected pre-pandemic trend and in some cases has risen above the levels that might have been expected had there been no pandemic.



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke chapter 2 verses 8 to 20

Shepherds were paid to look after the flocks
out on the hillside. Uneducated and rough,
they were usually avoided, or overlooked.



Bishops pray Gaza ceasefire deal brings immediate relief and comfort

A group of bishops with a close interest in the Holy Land have welcomed the recent Gaza peace deal, praying that it will "bring immediate relief and comfort".



The Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun, the Church of England's lead bishop for the Middle East, together with the Bishops of Chelmsford, Gloucester and Norwich, said that what had happened in Israel and Gaza "must never be allowed to happen again, anywhere" and pledged to continue to stand in solidarity with the Churches of the Holy Land.

They said: "After two years of unimaginable death and destruction now is the time for all parties to turn away from war and commit to peace.

"A credible peace must start with a ceasefire, but it will not last without a fundamental shift in the attitudes and behaviours that, for too long, have maintained Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory and thwarted Palestinian self-determination and statehood. The settler violence in the West Bank must cease and the settlement-expansion programme must be reversed.

"We call on our own Government and the wider international community to now work tirelessly in order for Hamas, and for other Palestinian factions, to fully commit to decommissioning their arms and dismantling their military capabilities, while at the same time securing the necessary commitments from Israel to end the occupation in accordance with the International Court of Justice's ruling of 19th July, 2024.

"We continue to hold that the only path to a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians, is a two-state solution that provides for a safe

and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

“To that end, we will continue to stand in solidarity with the Churches of the Holy Land in ensuring that their people’s voices, including their hopes and their anxieties as to the future, are not ignored in the weeks and months ahead.”

The Rt Revd Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford

The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester

The Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich

The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark

Update on Living in Love and Faith

The House of Bishops has recently made a series of key decisions on the future direction of the Church of England’s Living in Love and Faith process, which explores questions of relationships, sexuality and marriage. Final decisions will be taken in December.



At its residential meeting, the House reviewed detailed theological and legal advice on outstanding questions following the landmark 2023 Synod vote which led to the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith (or PLF). The PLF are a set of prayers, readings and liturgical material which, for the first time, enable same-sex couples to come to church for public prayers of dedication, thanksgiving and asking for God’s blessing as part of a regular church service.

Since then, the Church has been exploring whether special ‘bespoke’ services using the PLF could be introduced and whether clergy could legally enter into same-sex marriages. There has also been extensive consideration of possible new arrangements for how the Church is organised including so-called ‘Delegated Episcopal Ministry’.

The bishops reviewed advice both from the Church of England's Legal Office and the Faith and Order Commission (all of which will be published in due course).

While final decisions will be made by the House in December, the bishops agreed in principle that both bespoke service and clergy same-sex marriage would need formal synodical and legislative processes to be completed before they could be permitted.

As a result, they also concluded there is currently no need for a new code of practice setting out special arrangements such as Delegated Episcopal Ministry.

Although there remains a wide range of views within the House on questions of sexuality and relationships, there was strong consensus on the need for unity, transparency and proper process alongside pastoral care. Despite personal convictions across traditions, the House of Bishops recognised these were the procedural realities to effect any future change.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, chair of the LLF Programme Board, commented: "As we continue prayerfully to navigate this important work on behalf of the Church, we believe these are the right decisions following further legal and theological advice.

"However, we recognise that for some, they will be difficult and disappointing. I continue to pray for God's grace and gentleness for all as we continue to discern a way through these questions."



Holy Days: 6th December: What's in a (Christmas) Name?

What do your family call him, that cheerful old man in a red robe and floppy hat who pops up everywhere at Christmas? Sometimes he's Father Christmas, sometimes Santa Claus, and in parts of Europe he's Saint Nicholas. That's his real name, abbreviated to 'Santa Claus' by Brits and Americans who don't like to follow the Europeans, and then turned into a more homely, cuddly kind of name for the children.

Whatever he's called, his function is the same – delivering presents to children at Christmas.



The first St Nicholas was bishop of Myra, in the country we now call Turkey, in the fourth century. He was known as the friend of the poor, and especially



poor or abused children. At (or just before) Christmas he went around handing out presents to them, as well as rescuing some from dreadful circumstances. The red robe our modern Santa Claus wears may be a vague representation of a bishop's garment, and the floppy hat is his mitre!

The original good bishop from 1600 years ago is remembered by the Church on 6th December, and the lucky children in Belgium and the Netherlands get their presents then.

Holy Days: 24th December: Christmas Eve

How do you celebrate Christmas Eve? It has its own customs, the most popular of which is going to Midnight Mass, or the Christ-Mas. This is the only Mass of the year that is allowed to start after sunset. In Catholic countries such as Spain, Italy and Poland, Midnight Mass is in fact the most important church service of the entire Christmas season, and many people traditionally fast beforehand.

In other countries, such as Belgium and Denmark, people dine during the evening, and then go on to the Midnight Service.

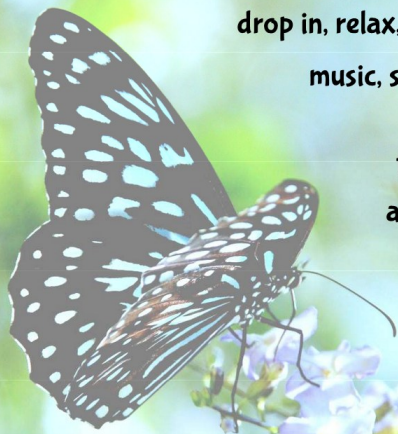
The British are behind some countries when it comes to exchanging presents: in Germany, Sweden and Portugal the custom is to exchange on Christmas Eve. But the British are ahead of Serbia and Slovakia, where the Christmas tree is not even brought into the house and decorated until Christmas Eve.

Yule logs are not so popular since the decline of the fireplace, but traditionally it was lit on Christmas Eve from a bit of the previous year's log, and then would be burned non-stop until 12th Night (6th January). Tradition also decreed that any greenery such as holly, ivy or mistletoe must wait until Christmas Eve until being brought into the house.

Time 2 Destress ...

drop in, relax, slow down ...

music, silence, prayer,
meditation on
the Scriptures,
a time of peace



Wednesdays, 30 mins of relaxation from
6:15pm, House opens at 5:30pm

All Saints' House, Chigwell Row

Further info from Rev'd Paula Preston 020 8501 5226

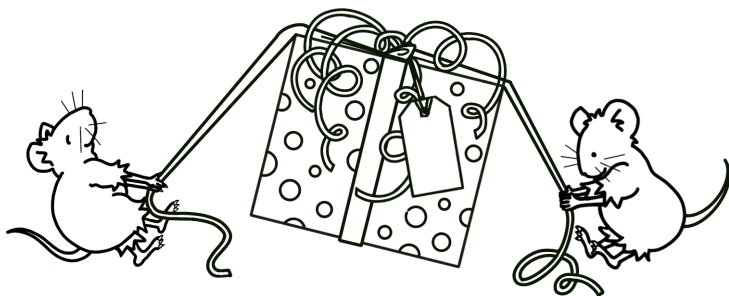
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all faiths or none.*

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Romford Road, Chigwell Row.

More info from
Rochelle 07817 862053
(Chigwell Row Parish
Councillor), or
Hazel 020 8500 0355
(All Saints' Church)

*Time 4 Tea is an initiative supported
by Chigwell Parish Council and
All Saints' Church, Chigwell Row.*



Breakfast!

Saturday

20th December

8:00 men at

**All Saints' House
with Bishop Adam**

8:30 ladies at

St Mary's Churchrooms



**A little bit of
Time 2 Destress,
discussing spirituality,
with light refreshments.
Open to all.**

**4th Tuesday of each month,
2:00pm at All Saints' House,
Chigwell Row.**

Further info from Rev'd Paula Preston
020 8501 5226, 07743 534647 reupaulapreston@gmail.com

WORDSEARCH – Prophecies about Jesus

Did the Old Testament expect Jesus to come? Yes indeed! Here are just some examples of OT prophecies:

He would be born of a virgin. 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son and will call Him Immanuel.' (Isaiah 7:14)

He would be born in Bethlehem. 'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel...' (Micah 5:2)

His lineage would be of the line of David. 'I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.' (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

He would bring healing. 'Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.' (Isaiah 35:5-6)

He would be crucified. They pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. (Psalm 22)

He would rise from the dead. 'You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay...' (Psalm 16: 8-11)

Words to search for:

born	virgin	Immanuel	Bethlehem
ruler	Israel	David	king
just	right	healing	blind
deaf	lame	mute	crucified
pierce	hands	feet	gloat
rise	dead	abandon	decay
realm			

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Know what?

As we were putting out cookies for Father Christmas one Christmas Eve, I accidentally dropped one. I picked it up and dusted it off before placing it back on the plate. "You can't do that," argued my four-year-old. But I assured him that Father Christmas would never know.

He shot me a dubious look. "So, he knows if I've been bad or good all year, but he doesn't know if you dropped his cookie on the floor?"

Nativity set

A man visiting his daughter and her family for Christmas was admiring the beautiful nativity set in her hallway. His young granddaughter came up to him, and he asked her if she knew what it was.

"Sure I do," she replied. "It's breakable."

Keep it a surprise

Three-year-old Lily was helping her mother wrap a present for her father. While wrapping, her mother told Lily about keeping the present a secret so it would be a surprise. After the present was wrapped, Lily proudly put it under the tree.

When her father asked her if he could shake it and guess what's inside, she said very seriously, "No, that's not possible. T-shirts don't rattle."

Santa's sleigh

Father Christmas nervously went for his sleigh-driving test. He came rushing back in a thunder of reindeer and pulled up in front of the toy factory. "At last!" he shouted, "No-el plates!"

At 3pm on Christmas Day

Many people will stop everything at 3pm on Christmas Day to listen to His Majesty's annual address to the nation. But ever wonder what the King calls his Christmas Broadcast? Could it possibly be 'The One Show'?!

Oops!

A vicar gave his daughter a puppy for Christmas. An hour later, he found her in the kitchen, looking sadly at a puddle in the centre of the floor. "Look Dad," she said, "My pup runneth over."

Weird Christmas

Christmas is weird – at what other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat sweets out of your socks?

Let's play

Four-year-old to her two-year-old sister: "Let's play Christmas. I'll be Father Christmas, and you can be a present and I'll give you away."



Sara preferred to let people work out the hymns for themselves

Answers



Crossword

ACROSS: 1, Jehoiachin.

7, Endured. 8, Eased. 10, Rash.

11, Startled. 13, Easier.

15, Rubric. 17, Impurity.

18, Feet. 21, Eye at. 22, Ready to.

23, Holy Spirit.

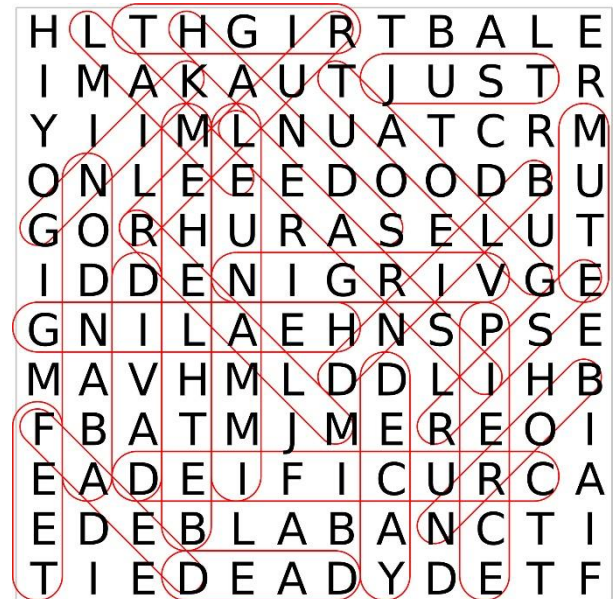
DOWN: 1, Judas. 2, Harm.

3, Is duty. 4, Cheerful. 5, Insular.

6, Jezreelite. 9, Dedication.

12, Secretly. 14, Supremo.

16, Stir up. 19, Egypt. 20, Hair.



We've got online carol-singers again!

All contributions to the Parish Mag gratefully received, no later than the 15th of the month. Post: c/o Parish Office (as below) Email: sandie.forshaw@btinternet.com Tel: 07749 258616	To advertise in the magazine, please contact the Parish Office. Parish Calendar on GCal: bit.ly/3H5LXS7 
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Contact phone numbers for hiring our church halls are on the back page under 'Hall Bookings'.

Ministry Team

Team Rector:	Rev'd Charlie Kosla (<i>rest day Friday</i>) St Mary's Rectory 66 High Road, Chigwell IG7 6QB Tel: 020 8501 2077 Email: charliekosla@gmail.com
Team Vicar:	Rev'd Paula Preston (<i>rest day Saturday</i>) All Saints' Vicarage Romford Road, Chigwell Row IG7 4QD Tel: 020 8501 5226 / 07743 534647 Email: revpaulapreston@gmail.com
Associate Team Priests:	Rev'd Lorraine Smart (<i>parish duties: Sundays, Mondays, & Thursdays</i>) Tel: 020 8502 2017 Email: lorraine.smart@btinternet.com Rev'd Ann Kosla Tel: 020 8501 2077 Email: annkosla@gmail.com
Licensed Lay Minister:	Mrs Sandie Forshaw (<i>rest day Monday</i>) Tel: 07749 258616 Email: sandie.forshaw@btinternet.com

USEFUL CONTACTS

	St Mary's	All Saints'	St Winifred's
Breakfasts etc	Men's Breakfast & Group - Paul Preston 07546 656659 Ladies' Group (The Thursday Club) - Cindy Barber 07506 387070 Ladies' Breakfast - Rev'd Ann Kosla 020 8501 2077		
Bookstall	n/a	Cindy Barber 07506 387070	n/a
Brownies, Guides & Rainbows	Email: chigwellgirlguiding@gmail.com or website: girlguiding.org.uk		
Cubs	Geoff Dunk 020 8500 2375		
Electoral Roll	Alison Jordan 01992 610717	Helen Ellis-Poole 07887 731320	Janice Randall 07512 085546
Flowers	c/o Parish Office 07835 721815	Cindy Barber 07506 387070	c/o Parish Office 07835 721815
Gift Aid	Philip Gittins 01992 814519	John Barber 020 8500 4085	Janet Remon 07946 349410
Hall Bookings	Tricia Johnson 020 8500 5759	All Saints' Office 020 8500 0914	Alison Sheppard 07907 460278
Magazine	Alison Jordan 01992 610717	All Saints' Office 020 8500 0914	Daniel Forshaw 07591 857657
Magazine	Advertisements: c/o Parish Office - 07835 721815 Editorial: Sandie Forshaw - 07749 258616		
Parish Office	07835 721815		
Scouts	Tom Emmett 07799 335815 Anthony Fautley 07903 291452		
Explorer Scouts	Dan Greaves 07891 652492 Michael Greaves 07890 400987		
Safeguarding	Vanessa Watling 07810 120877	Emma White 07984 187590	Daniel Forshaw 07591 857657
Secretary	Alison Jordan 01992 610717	Sandie Forshaw 07749 258616	Sandie Forshaw 07749 258616
Sunday Children's Groups	Andrew Barnes 020 8501 4792	Rev'd Paula Preston 020 8501 5226	Juliet Smith 07966 244472
The Children's Society	Rosemary Sweet 01992 846028		
Tower & Bells	Graham & Maxine	Jill Leftwich 07967 820688	n/a
Treasurer	Philip Gittins 01992 814519	John Barber 020 8500 4085	Janet Remon 07946 349410
Worship Group	Janet Stanton 020 8501 1629	Zoe Sims 020 8500 5787	Andy Lambell 07738 664177

From the Editor:

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