

UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY 30TH NOVEMBER

ADVENT SUNDAY

DORCHESTER ABBEY – 10:30AM TEAM SERVICE

DORCHESTER ABBEY – 5:00PM SPECIAL SERVICE OF
WATCHING AND WAITING

WARBOROUGH – 6.00 PM HOLY COMMUNION BCP

SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER

ADVENT 2

STADHAMPTON – 9:30 AM FAMILY SERVICE CHRISTINGLE

WARBOROUGH – 11.00 AM PARISH EUCHARIST

SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER

ADVENT 3

WARBOROUGH – 11.00 AM MORNING SERVICE

STADHAMPTON – 5.00 PM CAROL SERVICE

WARBOROUGH – 6.00 PM HOLY COMMUNION BCP

FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER

CHISELHAMPTON – 7:00 PM CAROL SERVICE

SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER

ADVENT 4

WARBOROUGH – 8.00 AM HOLY COMMUNION BCP

STADHAMPTON – 9.30 AM FAMILY EUCHARIST

WARBOROUGH – 6.00 PM CAROL SERVICE

NEXT WEEK'S BIBLE READINGS

Isaiah 11.1–10

Romans 15.4–13

Matthew 3.1–12

NOTICES

Advent Course

Berinsfield Church
Thursdays, 10am-11:30am
27 November
4, 11, 18 December
Email Revd Jane: to begin in Berinsfield - or just come along! (janeclaremanser@gmail.com)

Stadhampton Church
Mondays, 7:30pm-9pm
1, 8, 15, 22 December
Email Revd Emma: to begin in Stadhampton - or just come along! (revemmafirth@gmail.com)

We warmly invite you to join our Advent discussion groups, based on Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani's new book, in which she links music, scripture and life experiences - and invites us to make connections with the themes of Advent.

You can join the daytime stream, the evening stream or a mix of both.
The book is available on Amazon or Eden.co.uk but it is not necessary to buy your own copy.

Team Rector- Revd Jane Willis

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Curate

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*Newington, Stadhampton with Chiselhampton,
Warborough and Shillingford*

PEWS NEWS

St Laurence Church, Warborough

SUNDAY 30TH NOVEMBER

ADVENT SUNDAY

THE COLLECTS

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.

Amen

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

BIBLE READINGS

Isaiah 2.1–5

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ²In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. ³Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ⁴He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. ⁵O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Romans 13.11–14

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became

believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; ¹³let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Matthew 24.36–44

‘But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴²Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

THE POST COMMUNION PRAYER

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we await the coming of your Son our Lord; that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

keep your Church awake to your presence and ready for your coming. Guard us from complacency, distraction, or fear, and teach us to live each day in the light of Christ. When our faith grows dull, stir us. When we lose sight of your kingdom, refocus us. When we feel overwhelmed by the world, steady us with your peace.

God of the nations, in a world that longs for justice and peace, awaken our leaders to the responsibilities entrusted to them. Where conflict rages, bring calm; where people live in fear, grant protection; where communities are torn apart, plant the seeds of reconciliation. Help us all to work for the good of our neighbours and to live as people who anticipate the coming of your kingdom. God of compassion, Jesus calls us to be ready not with anxiety but with lives shaped by love. So we pray for all who feel unprepared for what life has placed before them: those living with uncertainty, those waiting for news, those carrying hidden burdens, and any who fear the future. Surround them with your tenderness and give them courage for today.

God of hope, be close to those who watch and wait—those waiting for test results, for healing, for reconciliation, or simply for strength to get through another day. May they sense your nearness in their waiting, and may their hearts be lifted by the promise that you are already at work in ways they cannot yet see.

Healing God, we bring before you all who are suffering in body, mind, or spirit. In your mercy, bring relief where there is pain, companionship where there is loneliness, and reassurance where there is fear. Bless those who care for others—professionals, volunteers, family members—and give them patience and compassion.

God of eternity, we remember before you those who have died and those who grieve their loss. Hold the bereaved in your gentleness and give them the hope of your unfailing love. Teach us all to live in readiness, not frightened by the future but trusting that, in life and in death, we are held in your hands.

Amen.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

Faithful God, as we enter this season of Advent,

Views from the Pews: Jen’s Lens

To put it politely, this week has had its challenges. Every single day has seemed to present a new mountain to climb, a fresh disaster to avert, or an unexpected setback to negotiate. And then, just when I thought the week had run out of surprises, the email landed on my desk this morning cancelling the much-awaited Team Vicar interview on Monday. *Disappointed* doesn't even cover it.

And yet, perhaps because the week has felt so heavy, the readings for this first Sunday of Advent land with a greater force. The Collect captures the mood perfectly: *"Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light."* In other words: take a deep breath, gather yourself, put your big-girl pants on and look once more for the joy.

Advent Sunday is, after all, the Church's great reset button: it is the season of beginning again, of daring to hope, of lighting candles in the darkness. Isaiah's vision speaks of a world where swords are beaten into ploughshares, where nations learn war no more, where people *"walk in the light of the Lord"*. It is a picture of peace breaking into a weary world.

Paul, writing to the Romans, urges something similar but in very practical terms: *"The night is far gone, the day is near... put on the Lord Jesus Christ"*. Not optimism for optimism's sake, but readiness, a conscious turning toward the light, even when life feels dim.

And then in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus reminds us that we do not know when the Lord will come - only that we are called to be prepared and watchful in the way a household prepares for a beloved guest: with expectation, with hope, with hearts open.

Together, these readings sketch a posture for Advent: watchful, honest about the darkness, yet confident that dawn is on its way. C.S. Lewis once wrote, *"We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him."* Advent teaches us to notice that presence again and to see the small gleams of light that insist on breaking through, even in difficult weeks.

And despite everything, the last seven days have held pockets of light. Problems have been resolved (eventually). There have been moments of grace that meant more than I realised at the time: a conversation with Revd Myles reminding me to be grateful for the goodness woven through our community; a message from an old friend at just the right moment; an unexpected offer of help with a project I've been struggling to complete. Tiny glimmers, but real ones.

Perhaps that is Advent's quiet wisdom. It does not ask us to pretend that nothing is hard, or that disappointment doesn't sting. Instead, it invites us to notice the small brightnesses that persist in spite of everything. To trust that God does not wait for tidy circumstances before coming close. To believe that even the faintest flicker of hope is enough to begin again.

As we step into a new liturgical year, we do so not with naïve cheerfulness but with a resilient hope that has lived through difficult weeks. Light is real, even when it is small. God is faithful, even when plans collapse. Joy can be rediscovered sometimes almost in spite of ourselves.

And so, in the spirit of Advent, and borrowing words from Albus Dumbledore that feel remarkably fitting: **"Happiness can be found in the darkest of places, if only one remembers to turn on the light."**

I wish you all a wonderful weekend and week ahead.

Jen