

# St Mary's Newsletter

30<sup>th</sup> November 2025



## The Vicar Writes...

Our headings have changed colour – that means we are now in Advent (well, we will be on Sunday). A season of waiting and preparation. It is very easy to get caught up in the preparation and forget that the waiting is an important part of being ready.

I remember a friend being absolutely furious with her husband for organising a surprise birthday party. She felt robbed of the anticipation and expectation that was, for her, as much a part of the enjoyment as the actual day. She would have enjoyed counting down the days, waking up each morning to feel a little closer to the event. She would have enjoyed cleaning her home in preparation for welcoming her friends and family into it. She would have enjoyed shopping for a dress and getting her hair done.

What helps you to wait?

What do you like to do in preparation?

Let's take time during Advent to count down and build our anticipation of Christ coming. Let's make our lives ready to welcome him again, to offer hospitality to him. And let's prepare ourselves to worship the God who is Emmanuel – God with us. If not, we rob ourselves of the depth of the season.

## Sunday Services

### **Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent**

8.30 Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.30 Morning Worship

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

8.30 Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.30 Café Church



## Family News and Events

What a joy to formally welcome **Hayden** to the big family of God last week and thank you to Heather for feeding us all.

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On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> we welcomed a **Tree of Hope** to the parish, thanks to the work of the Greener Greenham Group. There was a very good turnout despite the weather and Gail very much enjoyed blessing her first tree!



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You may have seen in the news that **Bishop Steven** has announced his retirement, which will take effect on 31<sup>st</sup> July next year. His final service will be 31<sup>st</sup> May in the Cathedral.

**Bishop Gavin** will become the Acting Bishop of Oxford and in preparation for that busy time Bishop Gavin will be on sabbatical during December, January and February.



## Family News and Events cont

Becca, Jutta, Philippa and some others are planning to go to **New Wine Women 'RESET'** day on Saturday 7th February. This will be a day of hearing from God and one another, a time to rest, refresh and perhaps re-energise. There is space in cars for those who need a lift. Tickets are £25.

Tickets are selling fast so please get in touch with Becca by 7<sup>th</sup> December.

<https://new-wine.org/reset-book-tickets/>

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The Men's Breakfast in November went so well that there is another foodie morning planned. Join us as we gather together for some time socialising, chatting and laughing together. This month we are planning on **Mince Pie tasting** and voting to select our recommended choice.

13<sup>th</sup> December 10 till 11.30 in the church hall.

We hope to have a selection of Mince Pies from various outlets for us to taste and score.

If you would like to supply a pack of Mince Pies, please let me know and I will suggest a shop to make sure we don't have duplication. If you would like to submit your own baked goods, we will be as gentle as possible

Please can you let me know if you are able to attend so we have a good supply. [Tony@stmarysgreenham.org](mailto:Tony@stmarysgreenham.org)



## Faith in Action

Gail went along to the 1st week of the **Foodbank at Greenham Community Centre** and met the volunteers and guests. She will be there most weeks. If you feel you have time to give then either speak to Gail or contact the Foodbank directly.

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Bishop Steven has launched an **appeal to help the people of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands** after Hurricane Melissa devastated the area last month. The campaign will be Bishop Steven's [annual Advent appeal](#).

The storm left thousands homeless and countless buildings destroyed or damaged. Four churches were completely destroyed and 23 other churches and schools need substantial repair.

Bishop Steven said: "As a diocese, we are in regular contact with Bishop Leon Golding and his team. We are the only link diocese for Jamaica and the Cayman Islands worldwide and this is a moment for us to step up and support disaster relief and ongoing reconstruction.

"There are many, many connections already between our two dioceses and these will grow stronger in the future. There is much that Oxford has to learn from Jamaica. But the need is critical now for our sisters and brothers."

[Find out more](#) and [donate online](#).

## Local Community

Please see attached information for a **free lantern making** event at Greenham Community Centre on Saturday 29th November.



# Discipleship

## Learning Hub study groups

Two January study groups are available to book now. The courses combine weekly group tutorials via Zoom, onsite study days, and online resources to work through at your own pace on the Learning Hub. [Book now via Eventbrite](#)

- ***Opening up the Bible***

Opening up the Bible can be trickier than it looks – as many of us have discovered when we come to study it in depth, prepare sermons and Bible studies or use the Bible in any other ministry contexts. This course helps us learn from reliable guides not only so we can understand what we read but also to help others to unpack the biblical texts for our faith, mission, and ministries.

- ***Jesus and Salvation: A Deeper Dive***

Have you ever wondered who Jesus truly is? His question to His disciples, "Who do you say I am?" continues to challenge believers today. Join us on a transformative journey as we explore the depth of His love, sacrifice, and eternal significance. There will be a diverse group of guests and perspectives.

## Housegroups

We have 2 already but the Tuesday evening group is at capacity so from January Gail will start a new group running either on a Monday or Wednesday evening (depending on who comes). Speak to Gail if you are interested, or if you know someone who isn't ready to come to church but might like to talk about the Bible.

# Readings

## Matthew 24:36-44

(New International Version)

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.