

St Mary's Newsletter

8th January 2026



The Vicar Writes...

Happy New Year!

This week we begin a series of sermons drawn from the book of Exodus. We are in for a real treat as each week a different preacher draws wisdom for us on what it means to be God's people getting ready for change. We have 2 guest preachers as well as our 3 in-house ones.

As we look at these iconic stories, the ones we are so familiar with, can I encourage you to bring to mind the stories from your lives and our life as a community? Look at how you tell them, who too and why. What do you learn from them, how have they changed in the telling, how do they bring change. Stories are very powerful things and as we begin to consider and pray about the next chapter of our story as St Mary's the stories of the past will have a big impact so we should take time to look carefully at them. That way we can be alert to God's voice as we step into the future.

Sunday Services

Sunday 11th January – Baptism of Christ – 1st Sunday of Epiphany

10.30 All Age Communion

Sunday 18th January – week of prayer for Christian unity – 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

8.30 Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.30 Morning Worship with All Stars

no 4pm service this month

Family News and Events

Chris Simons continues to recover and is currently staying with his daughter and her family. Please do keep them all in your prayers.

Do you have thoughts, feelings or wishes about what we need in or from our new Diocesan Bishop? If so then please share them. The Vacancy In See committee is the group who will drive the process and they want to hear from everyone.

Please take about 10 minutes of your day to complete this short survey which has only 4 questions.

<https://oxford.anglican.org/consultation>



Discipleship

One of the things we are asked to do is to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. One way to do this is to commit to keeping the more vulnerable members of our community safe.

'Safeguarding' can be seen as an administrative burden, but it is a way to show real abiding love for those around us and so every month we will be exploring what you can do every day to love others as you love yourself.

Part of our Safeguarding plan is that everyone in church should know where to find support and guidance. So here is the link to our Diocesan information page. You don't need to read it but you might want to keep this newsletter somewhere you can access them in case you ever have any worries about things.

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/safeguarding/>

If you do have concerns about someone's safety then please speak to Gail or to Liz Jones in the first instance (unless they are in immediate danger when you should call 999).

Reading

Exodus 3:1-14

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.² There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.³ Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up.'⁴ When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.'⁵ Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'⁶ He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings,⁸ and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.⁹ The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them.¹⁰ So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.'¹¹ But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'¹² He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

¹³ But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?'¹⁴ God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I am has sent me to you."