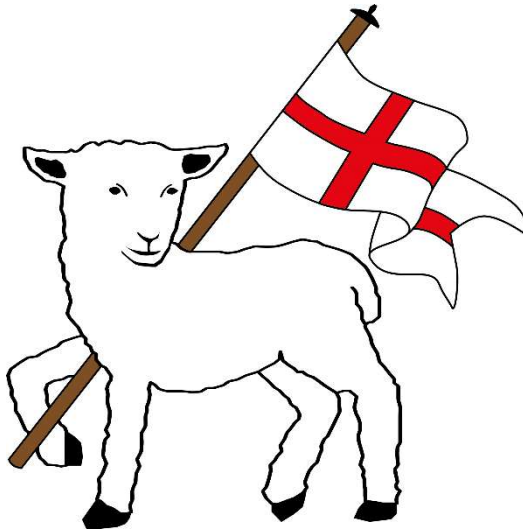


DECEMBER 2025

**The Parish of Kidmore End
& Sonning Common**

The Lamb and Flag



The parish magazine of

**St John the Baptist Church, Kidmore End
and
Christ the King Church, Sonning Common**

70p

CONTACTING THE PARISH, CLERGY AND CHURCH OFFICERS

Benefice Administrator – principal contact for enquiries		
Mrs Jo Winch	Telephone Email	0118 972 1383 rks.benefice@gmail.com
Rector		
Revd James Stickings	Telephone Email	07522 042735 revjstickings@gmail.com
James normally takes Mondays off		
Associate Priest		
Revd Sarah van der Watt	Telephone Email	07508 898515 revsvdwatt@gmail.com
Sarah is available to contact on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays		
Licensed Lay Minister and PCC Minutes Secretary		
Karen Broadbent	Telephone Email	07837 151196 karenbroadbent@hotmail.com
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Nick Room	Telephone Email	07973 513883 churchwardennick@gmail.com
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PCC Secretary		
Peter Blake	Telephone Email	0118 304 3409 kesc.pccsec@gmail.com
PCC Treasurer		
Nick Room	Telephone Email	07973 513883 kesctreasurer2019@gmail.com
Musical Director – St John's		
Frances Brewitt-Taylor	Telephone Email	0118 948 2743 francesbt@hotmail.com

The parish website can be found on <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/166>

FROM THE RECTORY

Dear Friends

One of the things people most frequently say to me at this time of year is, ‘You’re just starting your busy season, aren’t you?’ For all of us, it’s a congested time of year, with many events, social and family gatherings and (let’s not forget!) church services. My prayer for us is that we will be able to experience the peace and joy of Advent in and through all this activity, as we prepare hearts and minds (and tables, too) for the Christmas feast.

It was a great joy to celebrate Karen Broadbent’s licensing as a Reader (a Licensed Lay Minister) by the Bishop of Dorchester at the Cathedral at the start of November. As an LLM, Karen will officiate at Evensong, preach in all three churches of the Benefice, and continue to minister amongst us in so many different ways. She is a huge asset to our common life, and I think as there are now three of us (myself as Rector, Sarah as Associate Priest, and Karen as LLM) we are justified in using the term ‘Ministry Team’!

Have a very happy Christmas when it comes. Until then, may we make these words of Charles Wesley our own:

*Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.*

God bless

James

WHERE TO JOIN A SERVICE IN DECEMBER

Date	CTK	SJB	All Saints
7 December	09.30 Eucharist	18.00 Evensong	10.30 Sung Eucharist
14 December	09.30 Eucharist	11.15 Sung Eucharist	10.30 Sung Eucharist
	17.00 Second Sundays		
18 December	19.30 Parish Carol Service		
21 December	09.30 Eucharist	11.15 Sung Eucharist	09.00 Holy Communion
			10.30 Peppard Praise
24 December	16.30 Christingle Service	23.00 Midnight Mass	17.00 Carols on the Common
25 December	09.30 Christmas Day Eucharist	11.15 Christmas Day Eucharist	09.00 Holy Communion
			11.00 Carol Service
28 December			10.30 Benefice Communion Service

Please check the weekly bulletins in case any of the planned arrangements are changed.

INSTALLATION OF THE 106TH ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

The Installation of the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, will take place at Canterbury Cathedral on Wednesday 25 March 2026, the Feast of the Annunciation. Historically known as an enthronement, the Installation marks the

symbolic start of the Archbishop of Canterbury's public ministry in the Church of England and across the Anglican Communion.

Rooted in centuries of tradition, the service will look forward with the hope of Jesus Christ - and celebrate the diversity of the Church of England, the nation and the Anglican Communion today.

Archbishop Sarah will be installed on the Cathedral Chair (Cathedra) as the Diocesan Bishop of the See of Canterbury, the oldest diocese in the English church. Following this, she will be installed on the Chair of St Augustine (St Augustine Cathedra) as Primate of All England, which also symbolises her ministry in the Anglican Communion.

The Feast of the Annunciation celebrates the day the Angel Gabriel told Mary she would be the mother of Jesus. Details about the Installation service will be shared in the lead up to the service.

Bishop Sarah remains Bishop of London until her Confirmation of Election at St Paul's Cathedral on 28 January 2026, at which she will legally become the Archbishop of Canterbury. Until then, as well as preparing to begin her ministry as Archbishop, Bishop Sarah is fulfilling her remaining commitments as Bishop of London.

WHAT IS IN THE LECTIONARY FOR JANUARY?

The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus on 1 January. The Epiphany falls on Tuesday 6 January, but the feast may be celebrated on Sunday 4 January. On 11 January the Baptism of Christ is celebrated, and the Conversion of Paul is celebrated on Sunday 25 January.

Other commemorations include, William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1645 on 10 January, Aelfred of Hexham, Abbot of Rievaulx, 1167, on 12 January, Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, 1095 on 19 January, Timothy and Titus, Companions of Paul on 26 January, Thomas Aquinas, Priest, Philosopher, Teacher, 1274 on 28 January, and Charles, King and Martyr, 1649, on 30 January.

WHERE DID THE HYMN ON JORDAN'S BANK THE BAPTIST'S CRY COME FROM?

Many people consider that the Advent Season brings with it some excellent hymns and anthems. And this is good cause for there to be Advent Carol services or Advent

Sequence services. This hymn is much liked and is regularly sung during Advent. The lyrics find their inspiration from John the Baptist's exhortation to 'prepare the way of the Lord' (as told in Matthew Chapter 3, verse 3). John gives voice to the teaching in Isaiah 40, verse 3, *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

The hymn originated as Latin verse, the work of Charles Coffin, (1676 – 1749) – *Jordanis oris praevia*. Charles Coffin was born in the Ardennes, France and pursued most of his education in Paris. In 1701 he was appointed to a supportive role to Charles Rollin, an historian who was Principal of Beauvais College. When Rollin was dismissed in 1712, Charles Coffin succeeded him and he remained at the college for the rest of his life. From 1727 onwards Coffin published many Latin poems and hymns and the Latin text for this hymn appeared in 1736. Fast forward to 1837 and we find John Chandler (1806 – 1876) publishing his volume of *The Hymns of the Primitive Church, now first collected, translated and rearranged, 1837*. And within this volume appeared this hymn. John Chandler was one of the earliest and most successful translators of Latin texts. He gained a BA at Corpus Christi College, Oxford in 1827, an MA in 1830 and was ordained a priest in 1832.

And on now to 1861, and the hymn was included in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* with the tune, *Winchester New*, modified by the music editor, William Henry Monk. The tune originated in Germany in 1690 and prior to Monk's arrangement others were involved in bringing the tune to England and adapting it. William Henry Havergal published his version in 1847 and that may be where Monk found the tune and used it as a setting for *On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry*. This is another tune so well known that you can probably hum it whilst you're doing your pre Christmas chores.

Allen Harris

WALKING YOUR DOG IN THE CHURCHYARD

If you take your dog through the Churchyard please take a moment to read the guidance note on page 40. Also, would you please encourage other dog walkers to take note of, and comply with, these requirements? Sue Jones has arranged for laminated signs to be displayed in the Churchyard. Please help us to ensure that the Churchyard is a safe environment at all times for everyone who walks through the Churchyard and for those who carry out tidying duties throughout the year.

PARISH SHARE AT ARCHDEACONRY LEVEL AT 31 OCTOBER 2025

Archdeaconry	Amount paid	Outstanding	% Paid
Berkshire	£ 4,738,223	£ 1,176,960	80.1
Buckingham	£ 4,980,746	£ 1,846,108	73.0
Dorchester	£ 4,855,060	£ 1,370,723	78.0
Oxford	£ 1,328,817	£ 476,328	73.6
Totals	£15,902,846	£ 4,870,119	76.6

The summary table above shows how each of the four archdeaconries have contributed to their assigned parish share amounts at 31 October 2025. At this stage last year the aggregate contributions totalled £15,522,932. Henley Deanery has contributed £493,483 which is 72.3% of the assigned amount and there is £189,362 outstanding. By 31 October 2024 Henley Deanery had contributed 63.4% of the 2024 assignment.

A REVERSE HALLOWEEN

I hadn't put a pumpkin outside our house on 31 October and had no expectation than we would be visited by 'trick or treaters'. However, the doorbell rang in the early evening just as my husband and I had sat down to our evening meal. The unexpected visitor was an acquaintance carrying a bag over his shoulder. Delving into his bag he said, “I don't like trick or treat but this is a reverse trick or treat.” He handed me a bar of milk chocolate. I thanked him very much and returned smiling to my meal. What a lovely idea! Wouldn't it be great if it caught on?

Sue Nickson

A CHRISTMAS LESSON FROM ST PAUL

Many are very familiar with services of lessons and carols at Christmas. Within the Liturgy there is of course the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols as offered every Christmas Eve by Kings College, Cambridge. What may be less well known is that there is also a Service of Lessons and Carols with lessons according to the Gospel of Luke. This version concludes with an extract from the NT Book of Titus in which St Paul provides wise counsel. These verses, from Titus 2. 11 – 14, and 3. 3 – 7, are sometimes heard as part of the lessons on Christmas Day. So here it is so we can all reflect on Paul's message.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright

and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Allen Harris

THE COLLECT FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

Almighty God,
you have given us your only-begotten Son
to take our nature upon him
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:
grant that we, who have been born again
and made your children by adoption and grace,
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

INDUCTION OF KAREN BROADBENT AS A LICENSED LAY MINISTER

There was an air of excitement and eager anticipation in the crowd of parishioners who gathered outside Sonning Common village hall just after 9 a.m. on Saturday 1 November to board two minibuses to go to Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford for the Induction of Karen Broadbent as Licensed Lay Minister.

The minibuses were driven by John Pearman, Bus Manager of the FISH Volunteer Centre, and Frances Woolaway, CEO of the Ways and Means Trust on Peppard Common, both of whom gave up their free time on a Saturday and the use of their charity's buses for our outing. Altogether 32 members of the three churches

travelled on the minibuses and many other supporters of Karen made their own way to the Cathedral.

Excitement built when we arrived outside the gates to Christ Church precincts and made our way around the quad to find Karen and the five other candidate LLM's waiting by the doors to greet us. The special service was led by the Rt Revd Gavin Collins, Bishop of Dorchester, and the congregation included many members of the clergy and the supporters of each of the six LLM's. It was a very special moment to be able to partake of the Eucharist in the magnificence of Christ Church Cathedral.

The blue skies and sunshine as we emerged from the Cathedral seemed symbolic of the hope and joy we all felt at the beginning of Karen's ministry among us. Many happy photographs were taken, some of which you can see below.



The ministry team



Karen with mum and dad, Rosemary and David Doidge



Karen and Paul

After a swift transportation back to Sonning Common in the minibuses, we all met together again at 3p.m. at Christ the King for a Reception in Karen's honour. Banners and balloons had been put up, sandwiches, cakes and biscuits had been purchased or made, and tea and coffee were brewing when we all arrived. A special cake saying "Congratulations Karen" had been procured (it was decided that we could hardly ask Karen in this particular instance, to make the celebratory cake!). Rev. James made a heartfelt speech saying how very pleased we all were to welcome Karen as a Minister amongst us and Karen made a splendid ad hoc speech in reply.



Time for a well- earned tea.

A card and a gift of a picture by Hannah Dunnett of a beautiful valley with areas of the landscape inscribed with the words of Psalm 23 were presented to Karen. Helped by Elliott, her grandson, Karen then cut the cake. A very happy time of eating, tea drinking and chatter ensued.

This memorable day would not have been possible without the planning and efforts of many people: Sue and Fred Nickson for the organisation of the transport and the collection for charity; Nick Room and Alan Wilson for the decoration of CTK hall; Revd James and Revd Sarah for their contributions; and Paddy Lunn for the provision of teas and coffees. I know that help was also given by Bev Allen, Sue Nickson and Revd Sarah in serving the refreshments. I am sure I have missed out others so please forgive me if I have not named you personally. I have been informed that as a result of the collection made last Saturday, we were able to give FISH £100 and the Ways and Means Trust £100.

I asked Karen what duties she can and cannot not undertake as a Licensed Lay Minister. She said that she is permitted to lead worship, preach, provide pastoral

care, teach and conduct funerals. However, she cannot take weddings or baptisms or preside over the Eucharist.

Karen has still to undertake training over the coming year and she has opted to train for funeral ministry, schools/youth ministry, pastoral care and rural ministry, in addition to compulsory training in preaching, ethics and scripture.

Lay Ministers can give communion by extension (i.e. where the bread and wine have previously been consecrated) but this is only in an emergency. They can also administer home communions, again using pre-consecrated bread and wine.

Shirley Horne

THE LAY MINISTERS LICENSED AT CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL ON ALL SAINTS' DAY



Newly licensed lay ministers, Joe O'Neill, Eve Hitchens, Karen Broadbent, Linda Hobbs, Rachel Moss, Mike Murray

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AT ST JOHN'S 9 NOVEMBER 2025

The Act of Remembrance and wreath-laying took place in the Churchyard at St John's prior to the 'in church' service. Licensed lay minister, Karen Broadbent led the events joined by Brian Theobald, Parish Deacon from St Michael's RC Church

Sonning Common. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, the Parish Councils of Kidmore End and Sonning Common, and Kidmore End and Sonning Common Primary Schools and Maiden Erleigh Chiltern Edge School. David Gray, trumpeter, played the *Last Post*. Once again, we are very grateful to Caroline McAslan for providing us with several photos from the events.



Gathering for the Act of Remembrance.



Lest we forget poppy display on the Memorial



David Gray, trumpeter.



The Two minutes silence



Colonel Alastair McAslan bows his head.



School children lay their wreath



The Remembrance Service

FAMILY-FRIENDLY CAROL SERVICE AT CHRIST THE KING CHURCH SONNING COMMON, THURSDAY 18 DECEMBER AT 7.30PM

Children from Sonning Common Primary School and Kidmore End Primary School who like singing, and their parents, have been invited to join the choir for this service, which will feature accessible and tuneful carols from around the world, with some instrumental accompaniment. There will also be plenty of familiar carols for all to sing.

All are very welcome.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH, KIDMORE END ON SATURDAY 3 JANUARY 2026 AT 3PM.

This will be a fun, festive afternoon of Christmas and other cheerful seasonal music by choir, singers and instrumentalists. Refreshments will be served. Admission is free but generous donations in support of St John's Fundraising Appeal will be much appreciated.

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS – KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

If you tune into BBC Radio 4 on Christmas Eve for the live broadcast, or the recorded event on Radio 3 on Christmas Day, do bear in mind that the College publishes the service booklet on the College website a few days before Christmas Eve. This booklet can be read on screen or downloaded, and this can add to the enjoyment of the service. The College usually commissions a new choir carol and details of this can be found on the College website a few weeks before Christmas Eve.

The College also produces a booklet for the Carols from Kings BBC television broadcast although the recording may be shorter than the actual event and there may be some reordering of the musical pieces.

Finally, the Dean of Chapel, the Revd Stephen Cherry retires in January 2026, and he will be succeeded by the Revd Dr Hueston Finlay, Vice Dean of St George's Chapel, Windsor and Warden of St George's House.



*Christ the King, Sonning Common
St John the Baptist, Kidmore End*

Christmas Fair

Grand Raffle | Tombola | Homemade Soup
Mince pies | Cakes | Crafts | Books & more...
Come along and enjoy the Festive Fun!

SAT 6th DEC
12 - 2pm

CHRIST THE KING
CHURCH,
SEDGEWELL RD

CHRISTMAS FAIR 2025

We're getting into the festive spirit and looking forward to the Parish Christmas Fair on Saturday 6 December from 12pm – 2pm. Please do come along and bring your friends and family!

This year we will once again have a huge range of homemade crafts for sale on the 'Made in Kidmore End & Sonning Common' stall – something for everyone. The ever-popular bottle tombola will be there – get your tickets before they run out! And, of course, there's the Grand Raffle – your chance to win one of many prizes, including the main prize of a Christmas hamper with almost everything you could possibly need for your festive table!

As the fair will be taking place over lunch time, we've made sure to include plenty to eat and drink. In our 'Christmas Café' there will be delicious warming homemade soup and rolls to enjoy, or why not buy a mince pie, slice of cake, biscuit or sausage roll from our happy festive helpers in the kitchen to go with a cup of tea or coffee?

There will be lots of other things to see and do – browse the books and puzzles stall, buy a cake, have a go at winning a bottle of champagne or a hand-decorated Christmas cake, or just take some time to sit and relax and chat with friends in the newly refurbished Christ the King Hall and Church.

The Christmas tree will be in place and the Christmas lights will be twinkling. So, put on your best Christmas jumper (not compulsory!) and come along to enjoy the day and help raise funds for the parish: you can be sure of a warm, festive welcome.

Karen Broadbent - karenbroadbent@hotmail.com

ST JOHN'S PROJECT – PHASE 1

PCC met on Tuesday 11 November and accepted the proposal and costs relating to the rewiring, heating, lighting, window repair and redecoration works which constitute Phase 1 of our project.

We have selected a contractor, and we are now in the detailed planning stage. And we believe we have provided everything the Diocese needs to clear the way for the job to start in the New Year.

The Church Buildings Team is awaiting final responses from consultees. And, all being well, we should be able to put up the required Public Notice. If there are no objections, we are still on course to close St John's to enable contractor access for works to begin in January.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed, and continues to contribute, towards the Appeal. We haven't stopped fundraising for church fabric improvements, and the next phase will be the extension and reordering at the rear.

I will keep readers informed as we proceed. As we expect St John's will be closed for several months, our clergy will make alternative arrangements to ensure there is a regular pattern of worship in the Parish.

Nick Room – Treasurer

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL'S MEETING OF 11 NOVEMBER

Here are a few snippets from the Council's latest meeting.

- With regard to CTK, resurfacing, marking the car park and installation of EV charge points is scheduled to commence in Spring 2026. There is no date yet for the bi-fold doors, nor a formal handover of the building. Good progress is being made with the sound system proposal and remote heating control is being organised.
- With SJB, work outlined in Nick's note will start as soon as the Faculty has been granted. Project costs appear to be within the available budget.
- Intercessions and lesson reading – the Rector hopes to hold a benefice-wide training session on 17 January 2026 at 10am. This recognises the importance of this ministry. The Rector plans to resume three lessons at the Eucharist services.
- A card highlighting the Christmas services will be widely distributed in the parish; Sue Jones is publicising events via various channels including Facebook.
- A Benefice "Quiet Day" is to be organised in 2026, following the success of the Deanery Quiet Day.
- Lent lunches should resume in 2026; Jill Pound is coordinating the arrangements with others across the Benefice.
- Safeguarding – the Rector will display the relevant policy in both churches.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

It's a very busy few weeks for most people. To help us all keep track of what's going on here is an 'at a glance' diary of events. Enjoy!

Date	Event	Where and when
29 November	Carols and refreshments	SC Village Hall 11.30 – 12.30
29 November	Wine and Song Evening	KE School 18.00 – 21.00
30 November	Advent Service (candlelit)	All Saints' 18.30
6 December	Christmas Fair and café	CTK – 12.00 – 14.00
13 December	Benefice festive drinks party	CTK – 15.00
18 December	Parish carol service	CTK – 19.30
24 December	Christingle service	CTK – 16.30
24 December	Midnight Mass	SJB – 23.00
25 December	Christmas Eucharist	CTK – 09.30
25 December	Christmas Eucharist	SJB – 11.15
28 December	Benefice Eucharist	All Saints' 10.30
3 January	Parish concert	SJB – 15.00

CHURCHES IN READING DROP IN CENTRE

2025 marks the 35th year that CIRDIC has been providing its vital services to vulnerable and homeless people in Reading and surrounding areas. Coinciding with this anniversary year the main site at St Saviours Church Hall has seen some much-needed internal improvements with new doors, some fresh plastering work and decoration, and a fire alarm system, all funded by the many television appearances made earlier this year to promote CIRDIC's work by centre manager Mabel Boyd.

With the coming of the colder weather CIRDIC's provision of hot meals, hot showers and warm clothing etc will be even more important than usual, which makes our ongoing support even more important. Men's clothing - and in particular men's underwear and socks, as well as toiletries such as deodorants, shampoos and toothbrushes - are much in demand, and this year they have sufficient storage space to take duvets and sleeping bags. Contributions in support of their kitchens are also most welcome, with sugar and coffee being the fastest moving items on a day-to-day basis.

If you can provide any of the items above over the coming months CIRDIC will certainly be sure to put them to good use. Please take what you can spare to the donation boxes provided in the porches of St John's in Kidmore End, and Christ the King in Sonning Common. If you have any questions, please call Linda Scottorn 07919 355745 or Peter Blake on 07749 369725.

Thank you for your ongoing support which is much appreciated by those who use CIRDIC's services and by the many dedicated volunteers (70 at the last count) who ensure its smooth running.

Peter Blake

CHRISTMAS AND ST LUKE' GOSPEL

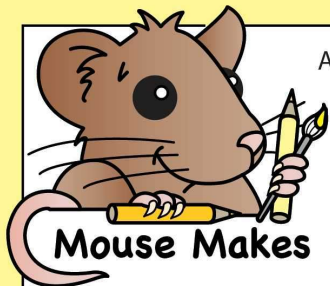
It is to St Luke's wonderful gospel that many Christians turn as the year draws to a close and Christmas approaches, for it is to St Luke that we owe the fullest account of the nativity.

Luke alone tells us the story of Mary and the angel's visit to her and has thus given the Church the wonderful Magnificat of Mary.

Luke alone tells us the story of Simeon's hymn of praise, thus giving us the wonderful Nunc Dimittis. Imagine an Anglican evensong without the Nunc Dimittis.

Luke alone tells us the story of how the angels appeared to the shepherds and how the shepherds then visited the infant Jesus. So – imagine Christmas cards and nativity scenes every year without the shepherds arriving to visit baby Jesus. Imagine school nativity plays without children dressed as shepherds or sheep. So – thank you, Luke!

What makes it so amazing is that Luke was not a Jew! The man who wrote the fullest nativity story, and indeed more of the New Testament than any other single person, was a Gentile!



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 snuggly 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!

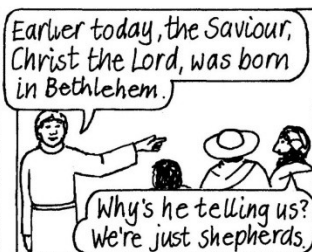
NADOLIG LLAWEN ★ NOLLAIG CHRÍDHEIL ★ NOLLAG SHONA
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN

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.



LAMB AND FLAG MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

A loose-leaf form is being distributed with this magazine to make it easy for you to renew or take out a subscription for the magazine for 2026.

THE BISHOP OF OXFORD IS RETIRING



Bishop Steven announced that he is retiring as Bishop of Oxford on 31 July 2026.

His last service will be on 31 May at 5pm at Christ Church Cathedral Oxford. During the vacancy, the Bishop of Dorchester, the Rt Revd Gavin Collins will be Acting Bishop of Oxford. With his wife Ann, Bishop Steven plans to move to St Albans to be close to members of his family including several grandchildren. In retirement he hopes to continue writing, offer

ministry and take on some element of work.

TAUNTON, IN THE DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS, HAS A NEW BISHOP AND IT'S.....



.....the Venerable Fiona Gibson, Archdeacon of Ludlow.

Fiona was ordained deacon in 2011 and priest in 2012. She served her curacy and first incumbency in the Diocese of St Albans, before her appointment as Archdeacon of Ludlow.

Speaking in advance of the 22 October announcement, Fiona shared her excitement in becoming the 14th Bishop of Taunton: "I am absolutely delighted to be coming to Bath and Wells as the next Bishop of Taunton. As a child and teenager, I visited family friends in Porlock for holidays nearly

every year and I have many happy memories of exploring Exmoor and further afield in Somerset. To be able to return to such a beautiful place, while serving its people as Bishop of Taunton, is both deeply humbling and a great joy. Having ministered in both urban and very rural settings, I hope this will help me serve its diversity of people - from those in the beautiful city of Bath to the smallest hamlet on Exmoor, those living along the coast and in the towns, and everywhere else in between. I am very much looking forward to coming to learn and to share with Bishop Michael¹ and all God's people as we seek the paths where God will lead us in the coming year and live out our common calling to share the timeless truths and hope of the Christian faith in our ever-changing world."

¹ The Rt Revd Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells.

NEW LEAD SAFEGUARDING BISHOP



The Bishop of Tewkesbury, Robert Springett, is to be the Church of England's new Lead Safeguarding Bishop, taking over from Bishop Joanne Grenfell who leaves the role at the end of March 2026, when her three-year term ends. Bishop Robert will work closely with the National Director of Safeguarding, Alexander Kubeyinje, and other members of the National Safeguarding Team which provides specialist expertise on casework, policy development, training, evaluation and survivor participation. The Church of

England is continuing to strengthen its safeguarding practices by committing to independent scrutiny and improving delivery. This includes implementing recommendations from the Makin review, the Charity Commission, and insights gained from independent safeguarding audits.

ALPHA YOUTH COURSE

A reminder that this course gets underway in January on Tuesdays at Christ the King at 5pm. It's for anyone aged between 11 and 18. Please get in touch with Sarah, email, revsvdwatt@gmail.com.

EGLANTYNE JEBB – FOUNDER OF ‘SAVE THE CHILDREN.’

This remarkable lady is remembered (with good reason) in the Lectionary on 17 December.

Eglantyne did not begin as an obvious ‘mover and shaker’ of people. Born in Shropshire in 1876, she grew up in Ellesmere, studied history at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, taught at Marlborough, and then resigned as she was not physically robust.

Eglantyne moved to live with her mother in Cambridge, and it would have been so easy to settle for a life of peaceful obscurity. But she was a Christian, and at Oxford she had developed a passion for social concerns, so this compassion now drove her to act. She began in 1906 by publishing research on the poverty she’d found in Cambridge.

Then in 1912 the Balkan Wars broke out, and Eglantyne left Cambridge for Macedonia. Her months among the refugees led her to decide that long-term constructive aid was more effective than short-term handouts.

The First World War left Eglantyne horrified by the prolonged Allied blockade on Germany and Austria-Hungary, which even after Armistice meant starvation for millions of civilians, especially children. And so, in 1919, Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy Buxton helped found the ‘Fight the Famine’ Council, which wanted to end the blockade and establish a League of Nations.

One day during a rally in Trafalgar Square, Eglantyne was arrested for distributing a leaflet showing starving children which read: “Our blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death.” She ended up in court and was fined, but the judge was so impressed with Eglantyne’s commitment to children that he himself paid her fine. His money became the first donation to Save the Children, the new charity just set up by Eglantyne and Dorothy.

Save the Children was officially launched at the Albert Hall in May 1919, with the aim of helping the starving civilians of central Europe. It was a success, raising £400,000 in that first year alone.

When in the autumn of 1921 Russia was facing famine, Save the Children chartered a cargo ship, the SS Torcello, to carry 600 tons of lifesaving food and medical supplies to Russia – saving hundreds of thousands of lives.

By 1922 Save the Children had become one of Britain's biggest charities. Eglantyne's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1923, was adopted by the League of Nations the following year. The present-day UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is derived from it.

But ten years of running Save the Children had sapped Eglantyne's fragile strength, and she died in Geneva in 1928, aged only 52.

Footnote – *In the Century since Eglantyne and her sister founded the charity Save the Children organisations have been established in 29 nations as part of Save the Children Association. Members lead on activities within their home territory and work with donors to develop programmes abroad, which are coordinated and delivered by a central body - Save the Children International - via teams on the ground in each country. Save the Children International also oversees humanitarian responses.*

Globally, Save the Children's workforce is made up of around 24,000 staff working in 93 countries. This includes 30 Member Countries as well as Save the Children International.

As of December 2024, Save the Children UK had 931 members of staff, and more than 3,351 people working in a formal volunteering role.

DOMESTIC ABUSE IN THE UK

Thames Valley Police began using a newly developed tool, Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) at the start of November. This tool is designed to assist officers better recognise risk – particularly patterns of controlling and coercive behaviour – and to take action sooner to protect victims. This change reflects TVP's ongoing commitment to improving the support they offer to victims and survivors. DARA enables officers to make faster, more informed decisions, helping to prevent further harm and ensure every case is treated with the seriousness it deserves.

The Office for National Statistics provides reports on domestic abuse. They note that whilst women are more likely to experience some form of domestic abuse, it can affect anyone regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, background or circumstance. In the year ending March 2025, ONS estimated that 3.8 million people experienced abuse in the reporting year (2.3 million women, and 1.5 million men). Police intervention is improving with the number of charges/summons

outcomes rising to 348,910 from 303,556. The March 2025 estimate of 3.8 million adults suffering abuse is broadly the same as the previous year.

A separate report by the National Centre for Domestic Violence reported that one in four teenagers (age 13 – 17) in intimate relationships experienced violent or controlling behaviour in England and Wales in 2024.

Domestic Abuse consists of any of the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse

where the victim and perpetrator(s) are aged 16 or over and are “personally connected” to each other. It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct. (*Domestic Abuse Act 2021*)

Help is available locally:-

Victims First – 0300 1234 148

Flag DV – free legal advice in the Thames Valley regarding domestic abuse 0800 731 0055.

Police – non-emergency for advice – 101, emergencies 999.

Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS) – 0800 731 0055.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND NEWLY COMMISSIONED CHORAL SETTINGS FOR THE ADVENT ANTIPHONS

The Church of England has published a series of newly commissioned choral settings of the Advent Antiphons, enriching its seasonal resource O Come Emmanuel: Reflections on the Advent Antiphons.

Seven contemporary composers have created original music for the ancient texts, which date back over a thousand years and are traditionally used in the final days of Advent.

The new settings are by composers Philip Moore (*O Wisdom*, 17 December), Sarah Cattle (*O Adonai*, 18 December), Thomas Hewitt Jones (*O Root of Jesse*, 19 December), Tamsin Jones (*O Key of David*, 20 December), Esther Bersweden (*O Morning Star*, 21 December), David Ogden (*O King of the Nations*, 22 December) and Bernadette Farrell (*O Emmanuel*, 23 December).

The recordings are available to stream and will feature in the Church of England's Everyday Faith app throughout Advent, alongside reflections from leading theologians including Jane Williams and David Hoyle, Dean of Westminster. The antiphons will also be included in the audio Evening Prayer services on the Daily Prayer app from 17 to 23 December.

These musical settings form part of *O Come Emmanuel*, a full-colour Advent resource published by Church House Publishing, which also includes newly commissioned reflections and original artwork. The full range of resources are available via cofe.io/OComeEmmanuel.

OH ALL RIGHT – WHAT ARE THE ADVENT ANTIPHONS?

The Advent Antiphons have been part of the Church's liturgical tradition at least since the early Middle Ages. Their roots go back to sixth or seventh-century practice. These antiphons or refrains all begin with 'O ...' and were sung at Vespers (Evening Prayer) on the seven days preceding Christmas Eve (17–23 December). The Antiphons are addressed to God, calling for him to come as teacher and deliverer. They contain a tapestry of scriptural titles and pictures that describe God's saving work in Christ. Each antiphon calls on Jesus using a title – Wisdom, Key of David, Morning Star, and so on. Each title reveals something of Jesus' divine identity and saving mission.

Each of the titles at the start of the antiphons is drawn from the Old Testament prophets. Each one speaks to a different aspect of Christ's identity. Taken together, they create a rich mosaic of expectation and promise. When read in reverse, the first letters of each title (Sapientia, Adonai, Radix, Clavis, Oriens, Rex, Emmanuel) form an acrostic – ERO CRAS. This is Latin for 'I will be [with you] tomorrow'.

It is not known when the antiphons were composed, or by whom, but they were already in use by the eighth century. These antiphons have inspired one of the most beloved Advent hymns, 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel'. Each verse is a poetic

rendering of an O Antiphon, translated and versified in the nineteenth century from earlier Latin texts.

A CHRISTMAS POEM

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.

Megan Carter – Parish Pump

THE INCARNATION – FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

*My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed
body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them
came to be. Psalm 139:15-16*



Newly fertilised human egg (Licence CCO 1.0 Universal Alan Handyside – Source - Wellcome Collection)

You began life as a single cell. For a few hours you were a miniscule but highly complex blob of jelly, until it began to divide: two cells, four, eight, sixteen, a ball, a hollow ball, and then something more recognisably like a living organism. You were still tiny, but developing a nervous system, a head, a body, arms and legs.

Until recently I hadn't thought much about Jesus being an embryo. Somehow, I find that thought even more shocking than His birth. How could God, who made the universe, have become something so completely and utterly vulnerable? Maybe in the past, when the development of a child happened in 'secret', it was possible just to let that part of the Christmas story go untold.

Today, when we see images of a developing child, or even embryos outside the womb, it is harder to ignore the process of Jesus developing into a baby. The incarnation meant that God's Son went through all the stages in the diagram in my developmental biology textbook: 'zygote', 'morula', 'blastocyst', implantation, and so on.

Jesus was there in the beginning, and all life owes its existence to Him. But instead of remaining aloof, He chose to become one of us. The Son of God shared the same kind of DNA as every other organism on the planet. He knows what it feels like to

have a body, to feel hungry and thirsty, pain and pleasure, and experience dark and light.

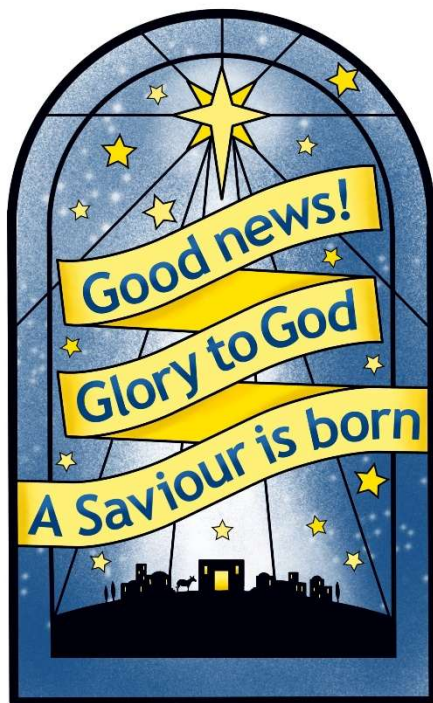
In Psalm 139, the writer is meditating on God's intimate knowledge of him, which began when he was an embryo. There is nothing God doesn't know about him, and even darkness cannot obscure him from God's sight. The incarnation means that God's intimacy with us now extends even further. He became one of us, lived alongside us, and shared our very fragile material nature.

The transcendent God is also immanent, longing for us to relate to Him as Father. He became as fragile as we are so He could rescue us from the messes we so often find ourselves in. With His help, we can remember what it means to be fearfully and wonderfully made.

Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge.

FACTS ABOUT CHRISTMAS TREES TO SHARE AROUND THE TABLE ON CHRISTMAS DAY

- Even before the time of Christ, evergreen trees were seen in winter as a symbol of fertility.
- It was the 16th century monk, Martin Luther, who is credited with the idea of having lights on Christmas trees. He added candles to his tree, to look like stars in a forest.
- Windsor Castle got its first Christmas tree in 1800, bought by Charlotte, wife of George III.
- It was in 1835 that the term 'Christmas tree' was first used in English.
- It was in the 1840s, when Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, began bringing trees inside, that led to their popularity throughout the UK.
- It was Woolworths who first sold manufactured Christmas tree ornaments – back in 1880.
- The tree in London's Trafalgar Square has been a gift from the city of Oslo, Norway since 1947.
- The world's tallest Xmas tree, at 221ft high, was erected in a Washington shopping mall in 1950.
- In a survey of the nation's favourite smells, real Christmas trees came eighth, just behind the sea, but ahead of perfume.
- About five million real Christmas trees are sold in the UK each year.



Peace and joy to everyone at Christmas

AND FINALLY – THANK YOU

So, here we are at the end of another year's Lamb and Flags.

And it's therefore time to say, "thank you." My task of assembling the magazine is made all the more motivational by the regular flow of parochial articles and ever splendid photographs. Thank you to all the contributors and special thanks to Caroline McAslan and Shirley Horne for capturing events with their photographs.

The production is a team effort, with Peter Blake reviewing the artwork, Sian Lovett printing the copies with great care, and Neil Scott who expeditiously places a copy of the magazine on the Parish website. It's so good that those outside the Parish can access the online version to see what's going on from month to month. Finally, thank you to the magazine readership for your kind support.

I am now focussed on January – on we go!

Allen Harris

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Nick Room – 07973 513883

PARISH GUIDE

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Magazine articles	Please send to Allen Harris - the deadline is 22nd monthly or a little before if the magazine is full.	AHa3588066@aol.com
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WALKING YOUR DOG IN THE CHURCHYARD

We ask you politely to:

PLEASE keep your dog on the lead or under control

AND clear up any mess it makes.

Children walk through the Churchyard to and from School;
and a working party tends the Churchyard every Wednesday.

PARISH DIRECTORY

The Parish Directory is omitted from this online accessible version of the Lamb and Flag. This is to comply with General Data Protection Regulations.

Kidmore End & Sonning Common Parochial Church Council is a registered charity. The Charity Commission registration number is 1209778.

SERVICES AND PRINCIPAL SERVICE LECTIONARY

Date	St John's	Lessons	Christ the King
7 December – Second Sunday of Advent		Isaiah 11. 1 - 10 Matthew 3. 1 - 12	09.30 Eucharist
	18.00 Evensong	1 Kings 18. 17 – 39 John 1. 19 - 28	
14 December – Third Sunday of Advent	11.15 Sung Eucharist	Isaiah 35. 1 - 10 Matthew 11. 2 - 11	09.30 Eucharist
		Special lessons	17.00 Second Sundays
18 December			19.30 Parish Carol Service
21 December – Fourth Sunday of Advent	11.15 Sung Eucharist	Isaiah 7. 10 - 16 Matthew 1. 18 - end	09.30 Eucharist
24 December – Christmas Eve		Special lessons	16.30 Christingle
	23.00 Midnight Mass	Isaiah 52. 7 – 10 John 1. 1 - 14	
25 December – Christmas Day	11.15 Sung Eucharist	Isaiah 9. 2 – 7 Luke 2. 1 - 20	09.30 Eucharist
28 December – The Holy Innocents		Jeremiah 31. 15 – 17 Matthew 2. 13 - 18	

The lessons are those recommended in the Common Worship Lectionary for the Sunday principal service, and in the case of the Evensong service, the lessons are those recommended in Common Worship Second service (Evening Prayer). Lessons may be varied for special services or at the discretion of the Minister.

Services at All Saints'

7 December – 10.30 Sung Eucharist

14 December – 10.30 Sung Eucharist

21 December – 09.00 Holy Communion (BCP said), 10.30 Peppard Praise

24 December – 17.00 Carols on the Common

25 December – 09.00 Holy Communion (BCP said), 11.00 Christmas Carol Service

28 December – 10.30 Benefice Communion Service