

HARPSDEN PARISH NEWS

DECEMBER 2025

AND

JANUARY 2026



Associate Priest:

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Pam's Ponderings

As a new church year begins, 2026 beckons and it's going to be all change at the rectory

These ponderings come in the context of great expectations ...

Advent calls us to see ourselves within God's big picture of his Kingdom, the ways divine presence and guidance have been revealed to people, God's expectations of how we respond to his grace and love. The Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament, declare God's intention to be known through creation, prophets, priests, kings and judges; provisions as signs of expectation that we will seek to know the holy.

Christmas calls us to see ourselves in the vulnerability of God, a relationship of trust and care in which God invites Mary and Joseph, as his people, to be responsible for nurturing the very revelation of God's presence, God's expectations that this is possible. In Jesus the holy is on show through a life that touches all aspects of humanity.

Epiphany calls us to pick up the mantle of all who accept baby Jesus as the revelation of God. We have been invited to present God's gift to the world but it starts with those around us, like Anna and Simeon, never too old and just where they would normally be, doing what they usually did. The opportunity, and later Jesus' commission, is to share the wonder of God's presence with us – Emmanuel.

No sooner have these church seasons, these celebrations, passed then we will offer our welcome to Rev Jane Wright as our new priest-in -charge. Together our lives will be that latest sign of God's Kingdom. The question for us all will be how we have recognised and responded to God's expectations for peace, love, joy, hope, forgiveness, compassion, healing ... the fruit of the Holy Spirit in real time and in real places. Trusting that in her response to God's call to move to the Benefice, and its invitation to her, there is a key to exploring more of God's great expectations - to know, show and share his extravagant and radical love.

I pray that we each will be open to how God meets us through the liturgical seasons and the next chapter of church life and service with Rev Jane in the rectory.

**With every blessing for God's grace, day by day
Shalom**

Pam <><



New Priest in Charge

We're delighted to announce that, subject to legalities, Jane Wright has accepted the offer to join us as our new Priest in Charge.

Jane says she is delighted with the invitation to become the new incumbent and she so appreciated the warmth of welcome received on interview day, along with a sense of excitement about entering a journey of discipleship together.

Jane has spent seven years as Rector of five rural parishes in North Oxfordshire, preceded by three years as a self-supporting curate in a similar context in Suffolk, and lay ministry before ordination, in rural and urban settings. She has also worked as a music teacher. Her husband, Alan, is a retired hospice chaplain and Methodist minister.

Jane and Alan say of themselves that they are people-people, and very much look forward to becoming immersed in the worship, fellowship and life of the wider communities of the benefice.

**Jane's Installation will take place at Dunsden on Monday 9th March
2026 19:30**

Christmas is not cancelled but we celebrate slightly differently this year ...



As the interregnum continues, we are adjusting which services we are able to offer.
Sunday School meets every Sunday @ 9.30 in St Margaret's, Harpsden.

Each church will have a Sunday carol service ... a rich variety of styles ...

on 7th @ 11am – Dunsden,

on 14th @ 6pm – Harpsden

on 20th @ 3pm – Shiplake

... see the posters, weekly notices and web site for more details.

Tuesday 9th, a short Holy Communion service @ 2pm before Prayer Group at Albert Court, all invited.

Thursday 11th, a short holy Communion service @ 2pm before the Anna Tea at All Saints, Dunsden, all invited.

December 20th, The Longest Night service of music, prayer and reflection, especially for those for whom Christmas is not all tinsels and parties, @ 3.30pm in St Margaret's Harpsden. [It is also known as a Blue Christmas service]

December 24th, Christmas Eve, Sung Holy Communion at **10am** in St Margaret's, Harpsden.

December 24th, Christingle @ **4pm** at Harpsden.

December 24th, Midnight Eucharist, @ **11.30pm** at All Saints Dunsden.

December 25th, Christmas day, Holy Communion @ **9.30 am** in St Margaret's, Harpsden.

December 25th, Christmas day, Worship for all @ **11am** in St Peter and St Paul's Shiplake.

For those unable to attend church for Holy Communion,
please contact Revd Heather Turner who organises services at home.

Christmas is a church season not a single day ...

December 28th, Holy Innocents, 1st Sunday of Christmas, Benefice Holy Communion with the ministry of Wholeness and Healing @ **10am** in Shiplake.

In all the busyness of the season, may you find the peace of the Christ child, the hope of

His Kingdom and the power of His love. Shalom <><

SERVICES IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY

Wednesday 3 rd December	10.00 am	Holy Communion with Wholeness & Healing	Harpsden
Sunday 7 th December	9.30 am	Holy Communion and Sunday School	Harpsden
	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Shiplake
	11.00 am	Carol Service	Dunsden
Wednesday 10 th December	10.00 am	Holy Communion	Harpsden
Thursday 11 th December	4.15 pm	BCP Holy Communion	Dunsden
Sunday 14 th December	9.30 am	Sunday School	Harpsden
	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Shiplake
	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Dunsden
	6.00 pm	9 Lessons and Carols	Harpsden
Wednesday 17 th December	10.00 am	Holy Communion	Harpsden
Saturday 20 th December	3.30 pm	Longest Night	Harpsden

Sunday 21 st December	9.30 am	Holy Communion and Sunday School	Harpsden
	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Dunsden
	3.00 pm	3 rd Sunday Carol Service	Shiplake
Wednesday 24 th December	10.00 am	Christmas Eve Holy Communion	Harpsden
	4.00 pm	Christingle	Harpsden
	11.30 pm	Benefice Midnight Holy Communion	Dunsden
Thursday 25 th December	9.30 am	Christmas Day Holy Communion	Harpsden
	11.00 am	Christmas Day Family Service	Shiplake
Sunday 28 th December	9.30 am	Sunday School	Harpsden
	10.00 am	Benefice Holy Communion with Wholeness and Healing	Shiplake
Wednesday 31 st December	10.00 am	Holy Communion	Harpsden
Sunday 4 th January	9.30 am	Epiphany Holy Communion and Sunday School	Harpsden
	11.00	Epiphany Holy Communion	Dunsden

Wednesday 7 th January	10.00 am	Holy Communion with Wholeness & Healing	Harpsden
Sunday 11 th January	9.30 am	Morning Praise and Sunday School	Harpsden
	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Shiplake
Wednesday 14 th January	10.00 am	Holy Communion	Harpsden
Sunday 18 th January	9.30 am	Holy Communion and Sunday School	Harpsden
	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Dunsden
	3.00 pm	3 rd Sunday at 3	Shiplake
Wednesday 21 January	10.00 am	Holy Communion	Harpsden
Sunday 25 th January	9.30 am	Sunday School	Harpsden
	10.00 am	Benefice Holy Communion with Wholeness & Healing	Dunsden
Wednesday 28 th January	10.00 am	Holy Communion	Harpsden

The Spiritual crib, by Fr. Vidal Banazek

DECEMBER 1 – THE STABLE

Frequently during the day, offer your heart to the little Infant Jesus. Ask Him to make it His home.

Sweet Jesus, take my heart and make it meek and pure.

DECEMBER 2 – THE ROOF

See that the roof of the stable is in good condition, so that the Infant Jesus is protected from rain and snow. This you will do by carefully avoiding every uncharitable remark.

Jesus, teach me to love my neighbour as myself.

DECEMBER 3 – CREVICES

Carefully stop every crevice in the walls of the stable, so that the wind and cold may not enter there. Guard your senses against temptations. Guard especially your ears against sinful conversations.

Jesus, help me to keep temptations out of my heart.

DECEMBER 4 – COBWEBS

Clean the cobwebs from your spiritual crib. Diligently remove from your heart every inordinate desire of being praised. Renew this intention at least three times today.

My Jesus, I want to please You in all I do today.

DECEMBER 5 – FENCE

Build a fence about the crib of your heart by keeping a strict watch over your eyes, especially at prayer.

Sweet Jesus, I long to see you.

DECEMBER 6 – MANGER

Fix the best and warmest corner of your heart for the manger of Jesus. You will do so by abstaining from what you like most in the line of comfort and amusement.

Dear Mother Mary, use these sacrifices to prepare my heart for Jesus in Holy Communion.

DECEMBER 7 – HAY

Supply the manger of your heart with hay, by overcoming all feelings of pride, anger or envy.

Jesus, teach me to know and correct my greatest sins.

DECEMBER 8 - SOFT STRAW

Also provide your manger with soft straw by performing little acts of mortification: for instance, bear the cold without complaints; or sit and stand erect.

Dear Jesus, Who suffered so much for me, let me suffer for love of You.

DECEMBER 9 – SWADDLING CLOTHES

Prepare these for the Divine Infant by folding your hands when you pray, and praying slowly and thoughtfully.

Jesus, help me love you more and more.

DECEMBER 10 – BLANKETS

Provide the manger of your crib with soft warm blankets. Avoid harsh and angry words: be kind and gentle to all.

Jesus, help me to be meek and humble like You.

DECEMBER 11 – FUEL

Bring fuel to the crib of Jesus. Give up your own will: obey your superiors cheerfully and promptly.

Jesus, help me do your will in all things.

DECEMBER 12 – WATER

Bring fresh, clean water to the crib. Avoid every untruthful word and every deceitful act.

Dearest Mary, obtain for me true contrition for my sins.

DECEMBER 13 – PROVISIONS

Bring a supply of food to the crib. Deprive yourself of some food at mealtime or a treat.

Jesus, be my strength and nourishment.

DECEMBER 14 – LIGHT

See that the crib has sufficient light. Be neat and orderly about your person; keep everything in its place in your room.

Jesus, be the life and light of my soul.

DECEMBER 15 – FIRE

Take care to have the crib of your heart warmed by a cozy fire. Be grateful to God for the love He has shown us in becoming man: behave with grateful respect towards your parents and relatives.

Jesus, how can I return Your love: how can I show my gratitude to You?

DECEMBER 16 – THE OX

Lead the ox to the crib. Obey cheerfully without making excuses and without asking "why"

I will obey for love of You, Jesus.

DECEMBER 17 – THE DONKEY

Bring the donkey to the crib. Offer to the Divine Infant your bodily strength; use it in the service of others.

Jesus, accept my service of love; I offer it for those who do not love You.

DECEMBER 18 – GIFTS

Gather some presents for the Divine Infant and His Blessed Mother. Give alms for the poor and say an extra decade of the rosary.

Come, Jesus, to accept my gifts and to take possession of my heart.

DECEMBER 19 – LAMBS

Strive to bring some little lambs, meek and patient. Do not murmur or complain.

Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine.

DECEMBER 20 – SHEPHERDS

Invite the shepherds to pay homage to our newborn King. Imitate their watchfulness; stress in your speech and thoughts the idea that Christmas is important because Jesus will be born again in you.

Jesus, teach me to love You above all things.

DECEMBER 21 – THE KEY

Provide the stable with a key to keep out thieves. Exclude from your heart every sinful thought, every rash judgement.

Dear Jesus, close my heart to all that hurts You.

DECEMBER 22 – ANGELS

Invite the angels to adore God with you. Cheerfully obey the inspirations of your guardian angel and of your conscience.

Holy Guardian Angel, never let me forget that You are with me always.

DECEMBER 23 – ST JOSEPH

Accompany Saint Joseph from door to door. Learn from him silently and patiently to bear refusals and disappointments. Open wide your heart and beg him to enter with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Saint Joseph, help me to prepare for a worthy Christmas Communion.

DECEMBER 24 – THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Go to meet your blessed Mother. Lead her to the manger of your heart and beg her to lay the Divine Infant in it. Shorten your chats and games and spend more time today thinking of Jesus and Mary and Joseph.

Come, dear Jesus, Come: my heart belongs to You,

New Bible Study House Group – The Letter to the Hebrews

Shelagh and I will be hosting a new Bible Study House Group at our home (*The Rise, 19 Rotherfield Road, Henley-on-Thames RG9 1NR*) on the **last Thursday of each month from 2–4pm**, beginning **Thursday 25th September 2025**.

We will be studying the Letter to the **Hebrews together, using *Hebrews: For Everyone Bible Study Guides*** by Tom Wright (ISBN 9780281063796). Tom Wright—also known as N. T. Wright—is one of the world’s leading New Testament scholars and a former Bishop of Durham. He is widely respected for making the Bible accessible and engaging, combining deep scholarship with clear explanation,

There will be **tea, coffee and cake**, and I have already ordered 8 copies of the study guide (priced at £4.99) in case anyone has difficulty obtaining one.

All are very welcome to come and join us as we explore this book of the New Testament and as a result get to know Jesus better.

Upcoming dates for 2025–26 include:

18 Dec | 29 Jan | 26 Feb | 26 Mar | 30 Apr | 28 May | 25 Jun | 30 Jul | 27 Aug | 24 Sept
Shelagh and I look forward to welcoming you.

READERS FOR DECEMBER and JANUARY

7th Nigel Smith and May Mosawi
14th (6.00 pm) Nine Lessons and Carols
21st Paul Barrett and Caroline Fulton
24th (10.00 am) Kester Geroge and Patsy Lacey
25th David Williams and Sarah Fulton-Urry
28th Benefice Service at Shiplake
4th Kester George and Karen Drakeford-Lewis
11th Tilden McKean and Josie Peddie
18th James Frost and Patsy Lacey
25th Benefice Service at Dunsden

SIDESMEN'S ROTA FOR DECEMBER and JANUARY

7th Kester and Pippa George
14th (6.00 pm) Brenda Wright and Tilden McKean
20th (3.30 pm) Annabel Blackwell and Jo Pavey
21st Paul Barrett and Karin Henderson
24th (10.00 am) James and Elsie Frost
24th (4.00 pm) Becca and Emily Bryan
25th Kester and Pippa George
28th Benefice Service at Shiplake
4th Julie Griffin and Pat Needham
11th Tilden McKean and Jo Pavey
18th Brenda Wright and Annabel Blackwell
25th Benefice Service at Dunsden

INTERCESSIONS FOR DECEMBER and JANUARY

7th Jo Taylor
14th (6.00 pm) Nine Lessons and Carols
21st Jane Burt
25th Tilden McKean
28th Benefice Service at Shiplake
4th David Williams
11th May Mosawi
18th Paul Barrett
25th Benefice Service at Dunsden

COFFEE ROTA FOR DECEMBER and JANUARY

7th Karin Drakeford-Lewis
14th (6.00 pm) All welcome to help
21st Elsie and James Frost
24th (10.00 am) Jo Taylor
27th Benefice Service at Shiplake
4th Sarah Bevan
11th Hilary Andrews
18th Leonie Brown
25th Benefice Service at Dunsden



*By the kind hospitality of Harpsden Court's
owners you are warmly invited to enjoy*

"Christmas Cava Canapés & Carols"



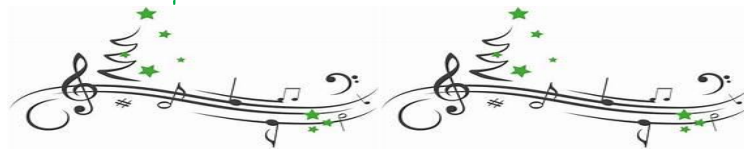
A special evening to Celebrate the Joy of
Christmas & Raise funds for St.
Margaret's Church

Date: Friday 12th December
Time: 6 – 7.30pm
Location: The Great Hall, Harpsden Court
Dress Code: 'Christmas Sparkle' encouraged
Tickets: £10 per person to include first drink & canapés

Please bring £ Cash £ to buy additional drinks & Raffle tickets



If you require any future information and to buy
tickets please email: jotaylor28@aol.co.uk



Admission by pre-paid ticket only

United Benefice of Shiplake with Dunsden & Harpsden cum Bolney

3 Wins in 1 - "Stopping food waste, Stopping land-fill and Gaining friends"

Please see the link below to SOFEA - a non-profit organisation that puts community at the heart of the Food Larders they offer locally.

Anyone can subscribe (& cancel at any time) and Everyone is welcome.

Now recently located at Henley YMCA Hall (with great, free parking) the Food Larder is open on Thursday

afternoons from 2.00 -4.00pm.

The Food Larder is currently run by the YMCA office team and volunteers, but more are needed. If you can spare a few hours on a Thursday afternoon it would be much appreciated.

Ideally a weekly or bi-weekly commitment would be perfect but any time offered would be great to offer help.

Please contact jotaylor28@aol.co.uk if you are able to volunteer and she will put you in touch with the organisers at the YMCA.

For more information about SOFEA please visit website at address below.

<http://www.sofea.uk.com>

Home visiting, Home Communion

If you are not able to get to church for whatever reason, the Anna team are happy to come to you whether for a visit or to enable you receive the sacrament of the consecrated bread and wine within your home.

Contrary to some people's understanding this doesn't mean you are about to be called heavenwards, it's just impractical for you to try to get to church.

Please do ring Revd Heather: 07946352026 in the first instance.

Come and make a beautiful **Christmas wreath** with the Shiplake church flower team on Monday 8th December, 1 - 3pm.

Booking is required by emailing Helen at timothyballard1939@btinternet.com . The cost is £45.

Refreshments are included.

It promises to be a super event - the presenter is Louise McGregor - a well-known florist for 60 years both in London and locally. Louise specialized in events and will be supported by the flower team .

We look forward to seeing you there.



ANNA MINISTRY

The Anna tea in December will be different! Mindful of the darker days I am planning to hold a prayer book 1662 Communion service at 2 pm at Dunsden on the 11th of December prior to celebrating the forthcoming season of Christmas, with a glass of mulled wine, Christmas cake and mince pies. EVERY ONE is welcome, but I do need to know you are coming for catering purposes please.

Rev'd Heather 07946352026 or revhwturner@gmail.com

January Community Lunch

Following a very successful community church lunch at Shiplake Meadows, we will be going there again in February. Our next lunch will be at Henley Golf club on January 15th. Dates in diary now. Menus will be circulated in December but it would be helpful to know before if you intend to come.

Revd Heather

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Harpsden Parish News is written for and by the people of this parish, and contributions are always welcome. However, the views expressed therein are those of the writers and are not necessarily shared by the Rector, the Editor and Churchwardens.

Benefice Website:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/27-442AP/>