Newsletter
NOV/DEC 2026

# The Parish of St Mark and All Saints, Reading

**Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.** John 6:37




## LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

When the clocks go back and the evenings begin to draw in, it can feel as though winter has arrived almost overnight. By December, many of us will be leaving home in the dark and returning in the dark too. Some enjoy the cosy evenings, warm drinks and glowing fires. For others, the shorter days can feel difficult, tiring or lonely. The change of season is a reminder that our lives have different rhythms. There are times of energy and activity, and times when we need to slow down, rest and pay attention to what is happening within us and around us.

November gives us space to pause. Around Remembrance Sunday, we remember those who have served and sacrificed, and we pray for peace in a world where conflict continues to cause so much suffering. We also remember those we have loved and lost, giving thanks for the ways their lives have touched ours. Remembering can bring gratitude and comfort, but it may also stir sadness. In church there is room for all these feelings. We bring them honestly before God, trusting that we are held in love and that no life is forgotten.

As November moves towards December, the Church begins the season of Advent. Advent is a time of waiting, watching and preparing—not only for Christmas celebrations, but for the coming of Christ. In a season that can quickly become busy with shopping, parties, school events and long lists of things to do, Advent offers a different invitation: to pause, to listen and to make room for God. We light candles week by week, and each small flame reminds us that darkness does not have the final word. Christian hope does not pretend that everything is fine. It trusts that God comes to meet us in the real world, with all its uncertainty, joy and need.

This season can also encourage us to notice the people around us. As the weather grows colder and Christmas approaches, some may be worried about money, health, bereavement or being alone. A phone call, a visit, an invitation for a cup of



tea or a practical offer of help may bring light to someone who is struggling. Small acts of patience, generosity and kindness can become signs of God's love in our community. This year, we are also holding a special Christmas appeal to help us give a token gift, together with the Christmas message, to residents in our local care homes and to children in our church schools. If you would like to help, please consider contributing towards the cost. Every donation, however small, will help us share a little joy and remind people across our community that they are remembered and valued this Christmas.

Our church relies entirely on the generous financial giving of our community to support our Mission and Ministry, and to help keep our beautiful buildings open. If you would like to know more about becoming a regular donor please speak to us about our **Parish Giving Scheme** or visit https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donate/

Alternatively you can make a donation at https://givealittle.co/campaigns/9a0a2324-3282-4e14-b1f8-dd36c01c9ea2

*Thank you!*

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www.achurchnearyou.com/reading-all-saints
www.achurchnearyou.com/reading-st-mark

www.facebook.com/StMarkandAllSaintsReading/

# COMING SOON: DATES FOR YOUR DIARY




**Our first events are just days away!** We hope you can join us, even at short notice.

First comes our **Jumble Sale on Saturday 31st October**—a chance to clear out before Christmas, find a bargain and give useful things a new home.

**All Saints Patronal Festival** follows on Sunday 1st November at 10am at All Saints Church. You are warmly invited to celebrate with us. All Saints Day is a time to thank God for the saints whose lives point us towards Christ and encourage us in our own faith. As the festival of our church's dedication, it is also an opportunity to celebrate our life together.

Stay for coffee and cake afterwards. There will be no service at St Mark's that day, so we can gather together at All Saints.

Our **All Souls** service of loving remembrance takes place later that day, Sunday 1st November at 4pm at All Saints Church. We gather to give thanks for those who have died and remember them before God. Everyone who has lost a loved one, however long ago, is welcome. We will offer prayers, read aloud the names of those we remember and invite families and friends to light a candle. Though our loved ones are gone from this world, they remain in our hearts.

Our remembrance is held in the Christian hope that death is not the end, but a transition into eternal life with our Lord. Jesus' promise in John 11:25 of resurrection and life brings comfort as we gather.

The roll of remembrance is already available in church. Please add the names of anyone you would like remembered. All names will be read aloud, whether or not you can attend.

**Remembrance Sunday** is on 8th November. We will remember those who have died in war and pray for peace at both churches. Please note the earlier start at All Saints, allowing us to join the national two-minute silence at 11am.

Do see the publicity on pages 6 and 7 for details of the **Christmas Sale** on 14th and our **Pet Service** on 15th. Both events promise to be great fun.

Looking further ahead, join us on **Sunday 29th November at 10am** at All Saints Church, Downshire Square, for a service celebrating ten years since Rev'd Jo began her ministry here. We will give thanks to God for these years of shared parish life.

Coffee, cake and celebrations will follow! There will be no service at St Mark's that day.

Whether you can join us for one occasion or several, you will be very welcome.

Join us at our Patronal Festival

## ALL SAINTS DAY

Sunday 1st Nov
at 10am
(joint parish service)
at All Saints Church,
Downshire Square

The service will be followed by coffee and cake.

There will be no service at St Mark's this day




Sun 1st November
4pm All Saints Church

For all who have lost someone at any time:
an opportunity to come, light a candle, and remember them before God.




Remembrance Sunday
**8th November**

9am St Mark's Church
10.55am All Saints Church
with a two minute silence at 11am

*...We shall remember them...*



# THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

**Help us share the joy of Christmas across our community!**

This year's Advent and Christmas theme **The Gift of Christmas** focuses on the first and greatest Christmas gift of all: the gift of God being born as one of us in Jesus Christ.

The Gift of Christmas invites us to join with our communities:

- to **celebrate** the great gift God offers to each one of us in the birth of Jesus
- to **receive** that gift – and all God gives to us – with gratitude and joy, and
- to **respond** to God's generosity by serving others, especially those in need.

Our links with four local care homes and two church schools are a joyful part of our church life and an important part of our mission and service to our area. Through worship, visits, pastoral care and shared celebrations, we build relationships and take Christ's love out into our wider community.

You may remember back in 2024 our church community, shared **EASTER JOY** by giving an amazing **600 Easter gifts** to residents in local care homes and children in our church schools. Each parcel was a simple way of saying, "You are remembered, valued and held in our prayers."

This Christmas, we'd love to do it again. We are launching a new project **CHRISTMAS GIFT** through which we hope to give a small present, Christmas card and message to every resident in our care homes (and our older members who live alone), and every child in our church schools.

To do this we need to raise **£500** to purchase Nativity themed decorations, sweet treats, christmas cards and gift bags.

In addition each gift and card will share the Christmas message, an invitation to our Christmas services and let people know we're thinking of them, whether they can join us in church or not.

To join in, simply put your donation in an envelope marked **CHRISTMAS GIFT** and place it in the offertory, or give it to Revd Jo. You can also donate using the QR code or by bank transfer; please email Revd Jo so that your gift can be added to the appeal.

**Thank you for helping us bring a smile to people in our care homes and schools this Christmas!**




# HARVEST

Our Harvest celebrations brought us together to thank God for the gifts that sustain us. This year's theme was water: something we use daily, often without much thought, yet every harvest depends on it. From rain nourishing the soil to the water we drink, this precious gift connects us with creation.

Water reminds us that life depends on God's gifts, just as our spiritual lives depend on his grace in Jesus Christ. We cannot make crops grow by wishing, nor sustain ourselves spiritually through our efforts alone. Harvest invites us to receive with gratitude, recognising our dependence on God, the earth, and one another.

Our schools joined in with their own Harvest celebrations. There was a certain irony when St Mary and All Saints School had to move its annual celebration from church back to school because it was too wet! With water as our theme, the weather certainly supplied an unexpected illustration. Thankfully, a change of venue did not stop the celebration: Harvest is about giving thanks wherever we gather, even when the rain has other plans.

Our thanksgiving took practical shape through gifts to ReadiFood foodbank. Thank you to everyone who gave so generously. Your donations share what we have with neighbours needing support, turning gratitude into care. Each gift matters, expressing the community we want to be: one where people look out for each other.



Harvest also asks us to look beyond our own cupboards and tables. The food and clean water many of us take for granted are not available to everyone. Giving thanks means remembering those who go without, caring for creation, and considering how our everyday choices affect others. These are not tasks for one Sunday alone, but habits to carry into the months ahead.

Thank you to everyone who shared in our celebrations, in church and at school. May our Harvest thanksgiving continue in generous hearts, thoughtful choices and practical kindness.

# FIRST AID: READY, WILLING AND ABLE

Would you know what to do in a first aid emergency? It is a question we have been asking ourselves recently. If someone becomes ill or is injured at either of our church premises, it is important that immediate assistance is available. This can save lives and may prevent minor injuries from becoming major ones.



We invited members of the parish to attend a first aid course, and several people joined the one-day session on 17 October. We were taught basic first aid, including the recovery position, CPR, how to use a defibrillator, and how to respond to choking, seizures, burns, shock, heart attacks and strokes.

The three aims of first aid are to preserve life, prevent a condition from worsening and promote recovery.

### Medical information and emergency contacts

It is helpful to add important medical information and an emergency contact to your mobile phone.
Emergency responders may be able to view these details from the locked screen.

Use the health app on your Apple or Android phone to add important medical information and emergency contacts. The phone's emergency function may allow someone to view these details without unlocking the screen.

**emergencySMS: text 999**

Did you know that people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment can pre-register a mobile phone to contact the emergency services by text? You need to set this up before use. Text the word 'register' to 999 and follow the instructions

**what3words**: your precise **location**

In an emergency, a what3words address can help you describe your precise location to the call handler, alongside the street, nearest road or recognisable landmarks.
The what3words addresses for our church buildings are:

**All Saints Church** – flank.bend.forced

**All Saints Hall** – themes.ages.grin

**St Mark's Church** – hiding.acted.organ

**St Mark's Hall** – deep.famous.smart

**Where are our nearest defibrillators?**

Use the defib finder website below to identify defibrillators near your home and the places you visit regularly.
**https://www.defibfinder.uk/**
At our churches, the nearest available defibrillators are:

**St Mark's Church and Hall** – the nearest defibrillator is at Battle School, Cranbury Road. It is a community defibrillator, accessible 24/7 on the outside of the school. **Call 999 for the access code.**

**All Saints Church and Hall** – a defibrillator is kept in a kitchen cupboard at All Saints Hall and is accessible to church and hall users.

Many thanks to 4 Minutes Training Ltd for an informative and educational course. **www.4minutes.co.uk**



We hope we never need to use our training, but we now feel more confident that we could help until the emergency services arrive.

## DRS ABC: what to do in a life-threatening emergency

If the brain is starved of oxygen, a person can begin to die within three to four minutes. Use the DRS ABC approach below to make a rapid, systematic assessment of someone with a life-threatening condition.

**D — DANGER:** Check that it is safe to approach, both for you and for the injured person.

**R — RESPONSE:** Check whether the person responds by speaking to them and gently shaking their shoulders.

**S — SHOUT OR CALL FOR HELP:** If the person is unresponsive, **call 999 as soon as possible** and follow the call handler's instructions. If someone else is present, ask them to find the nearest defibrillator.

**A — AIRWAY:** Open the airway by gently tilting the head back and lifting the chin. Follow the 999 call handler's advice if you suspect a spinal injury.

**B — BREATHING:** Check for normal breathing for **no more than 10 seconds**. Look for chest movement and listen for breathing; occasional gasps are not normal breathing. If the person is breathing normally, place them on their side in the recovery position and continue to monitor them.

**C — COMPRESSIONS:** If the person is not breathing normally, begin CPR. Place your hands in the centre of the chest and give **30 compressions** at a rate of **100–120 per minute**. If you are trained and willing, give **two rescue breaths**, then continue cycles of **30 compressions and two breaths**.



Continue CPR until the defibrillator or emergency services arrive, the person shows signs of life, or you are unable to continue. Switch on the defibrillator as soon as it arrives and follow its spoken instructions.

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT ST MARK'S

Since 1987, Black History Month has been celebrated across the UK as an opportunity to recognise, honour and celebrate the achievements, contributions and rich heritage of Black communities. This year at St Mark's, we asked ourselves, “Why don’t we celebrate and share this wonderful occasion with our community?” The answer was simple: we should.

To mark the occasion, we created a vibrant and engaging display featuring local and national Black role models whose achievements have made a significant contribution to society. Our display highlighted inspiring individuals from different backgrounds, encouraging conversations about their achievements and the positive impact they have had on their communities and beyond.
We also featured a collection of traditional instruments from Madagascar, together with information about their cultural significance and the history of the Black History Month movement.
The celebration was made even more special through the active participation of our community members. People were invited to share stories about their own role models, reflecting on individuals who have inspired them throughout their lives.
One member wore traditional clothing that represented their cultural heritage, creating a colourful and meaningful display of identity, pride, and unity.



The event brought people together to celebrate culture, history and achievement, while encouraging greater understanding and respect within our community. We look forward to sharing more photographs and memories from this special celebration in the coming weeks.

A Collect for




from the Church of England.

**Compassionate God,
who sent Jesus Christ to deliver us from all manner of injustices and inequalities, create in us new hearts and enlarged visions,
to see the image of God in every person, irrespective of background, race and ethnicity.
May we be generous in our love of others
as we work towards ending misunderstandings, racism and injustice, creating communities of human flourishing,
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 forever**

**Amen**

## READING MALE VOICE CHOIR



We had the great pleasure of welcoming Reading Male Voice Choir to All Saints Church in October for a wonderful evening of music. The choir was joined by special guest Lucy John, a Welsh soprano, whose contribution made the occasion even more memorable. It was a joy to hear the church filled with such a rich variety of music, including favourites such as ‘I Dreamed a Dream’, ‘Fix You’, ‘The Prayer’ and ‘Anthem’ from *Chess*. The warmth and power of the singing created a very special atmosphere, and it was lovely to see people gathered together to enjoy the concert in our beautiful church building.

Reading Male Voice Choir supports a range of charitable causes through its concerts, and this event raised funds for Headway, the brain injury charity. Thank you to the choir, Lucy John, everyone who helped organise the evening, and all who came along and gave so generously. It was a joyful occasion, bringing music, community and support for an important cause together under one roof.

## SCOTTISH DANCE

On Saturday 10th October, we held our annual Scottish Dance at St Mark’s Hall. This popular event is usually linked with our Harvest celebrations and was a lively and enjoyable way to begin them. More than 30 people joined in, many of whom had seen the poster in church, around the community or online. It was wonderful to welcome both familiar faces and newcomers, and the evening offered a relaxed and fun way for people to engage with us as a parish. The dancing was energetic—and at times exhausting—but, above all, it was a lot of fun. During the interval, everyone enjoyed a shared ‘bring ‘n’ share’ supper, which added to the friendly atmosphere. Our thanks go to Duncan, our caller, for leading us so enthusiastically through the dances and helping to make the evening such a success.












## COME AND BE PART OF IT

There's more than one way to be part of parish life: sharing a meal, exploring faith, celebrating our pets or gathering for Christmas. Whether you're a familiar face or coming along for the first time, you're warmly welcome. Our four-week study of Paul's letter to the Ephesians offers a chance to hear Paul at his most upbeat as we explore the riches of following Christ and what his words mean for our lives today. We meet in the Downshire Room in All Saints Church Hall on 27 October and 3, 10 and 17 November. If you'd like to share a meal, please arrive promptly at 7pm; otherwise, join us for the study at 7.30pm, finishing by 9pm. Come with a friend, bring your questions and enjoy being part of our community!

## Bible Study Group

Come and join us as together we explore **The Letter to the Ephesians**.

Bible Study

We meet in person at All Saints Hall (Downshire Room) and **begin with a meal followed by a discussion** to explore the meaning of the text today.

You are very welcome to join us

**3rd, 10th, 17th November**

**7.00-9.00pm**

## CHRISTMAS PLEA

With our Christmas fundraising events fast approaching, do have a look at home and see if you have anything we can use to make our events extra special. We can use:

**Christmas food items** – we can create hampers for raffle prizes

**Bottles** – these can be used on tombolas, raffle prizes or if we get enough a bottle stall

**Gifts** – any unused, unwanted gift sets or any unused and unloved items can be put to a new home on the raffle or stalls

**Christmas decorations** – you might have changed your décor at home – bring unwanted Christmas items in and we can sell these on a stall

Thank you in advance and hope to see you on Saturday 14th November 3pm at the Parish Christmas Fair (All Saints Hall) and Saturday 5th December, 1pm at the Christmas Tree Festival (St Mark's Church)

Shopping online for Christmas? Remember to use '**easyfundraising.org**' to 'donate' a small percentage of cost of your goods to us – it costs you nothing and we get quite a bit of money each quarter absolutely free. See the 'generous giving' page for more details.



# CHRISTMAS IS COMING...




**All Saints Church**
Downshire Square
RG1 6NN

THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

**St Mark's Church**
Cranbury Rd
RG30 2TA

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

**Nativity Service**
Sunday 20th December 11.00am All Saints

**Carols by Candlelight**
Sunday 20th December 6.30pm All Saints
*(Followed by hot chocolate and refreshments)*

**Crib Service with Christingles**
Christmas Eve 24th December 5.00pm All Saints

**First Mass of Christmas**
Christmas Eve 24th December 9.30pm St Mark's

**Midnight Mass**
Christmas Eve 24th December 11.30pm All Saints

**Christmas Morning Eucharist**
Christmas Day 25th December 10.00am All Saints

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND




# ADVENT REFLECTIONS

## 7pm for 7.15

at All Saints Church (in the sacristy)

## Tuesday 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd December.



Join us for an hour of study and reflection as we prepare for Christmas.

# SAFEGUARDING: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Ensuring that our churches are a safe and welcoming place for all is a responsibility we share and an essential part of caring for one another. The news this week has been another stark reminder of the importance of safeguarding in every part of church life. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity, listened to and protected from harm. Creating a safer church is everyone's responsibility, not just the task of those holding particular roles.

If you are worried about someone's safety, something you have witnessed, or behaviour that does not feel right, please raise your concern with **Helen McLuckie, our Parish Safeguarding Officer**. You do not need to investigate or be certain before speaking up. Concerns should be taken seriously and passed to those responsible for responding appropriately. You can also contact the diocesan safeguarding team directly.

If recent news has affected you, brought back painful memories or left you feeling unsettled, please seek support. You do not have to face this alone. You can speak with Helen, seek help from your GP, or contact an independent support service. **Safe Spaces** offers free, independent support for adults affected by church-related abuse: **0300 303 1056**.



If someone is in immediate danger, call **999**. By listening carefully, respecting boundaries and speaking up, we can all help make our churches safer.

## POEM – written by Paul Farmer

Everyday, I pray that

Throughout the world, we will learn to share

The world's bounteous fare

I pray we will find solutions

To deal with the world's growing pollution

So that our children

Will be able to breathe in pure air

I pray the world's homeless and poor

Will find food for both their bodies and souls for evermore.

I pray for all those with broken minds and souls

(That they will be healed and made, once again, whole), finally and especially

I pray that the world will soon breed a generation

That, when it grows old enough to question

Will be able to ask

'What was that long forgotten thing called war?'






# CHARITY UPDATES

## MACMILLAN MORNING

On Saturday 12th September we hosted a **Macmillan Cancer Support** coffee mornings at each of our parish churches. We wanted to say a massive thank you to those of you who baked, promoted, helped, donated and sold the goodies and all who visited or donated online to support our Macmillan Event … THANK YOU



We managed to raise a fabulous £365 at St Mark's Church and a further £320 at All Saints Church.





This is just simply wonderful.

## BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

On the same day, we had our churches open for **Ride and Stride**. Norman Pitcher, along with some friends, decided to cycle between churches in Reading and in doing so raised £250 plus gift aid. This money will be split between our parish and Berkshire Historic Churches Trust who support and provide grants for churches in need in Berkshire.



## CHARITY COFFEE

In addition to this, we raised £140 for Age Concern/ The Alzheimer's Society at our July Saturday coffee morning at All Saints Hall.

At the September charity coffee morning we raised £155 for Breast Cancer Now.

Thank you to Paul, who continues to run and organise these monthly charity coffee mornings.

## COWSHED CHRISTMAS GIFT APPEAL

Every year, our friends at The Cowshed brings Christmas joy to children who might otherwise go without presents. Last year, local people, churches, schools, companies and other organisations helped us give over 21,000 presents to more than 3,000 children across Berkshire.

Professional organisations refer children, and parents share their child's interests so gifts are personalised.

This year, families across Berkshire face impossible choices between heating, food, clothing and Christmas presents, with some struggling to afford even warm clothes and essentials. You can brighten their Christmas by donating a new gift for a child or young person.

Our **Tree of Hope** will be at Parish Christmas Events, then at the back of All Saints. Choose a tag and buy a gift, or donate money for us to buy one. Return gifts to church for collection by the 'Elves at The Cowshed', who wrap them and pack them in handmade fabric sacks, ready for delivery or collection before Christmas.

Here is what the families they support say:



"It's hard to put into words how grateful I am for everything you've done for us. You've made a difficult situation so much easier. To be treated with dignity, compassion, and kindness has helped us in so many ways! Thank you once again!"

"I was in tears!! You made our lives indeed. I still can't believe we were lucky to get your support. My kids at different ages are all so happy with their gifts. God bless you so much for making our lives so happy."

Last year, Cowshed distributed sacks containing gifts worth around £210,000—a remarkable achievement for a small Berkshire charity. **Join the Christmas magic and give a gift of hope. https://www.thecowshed.org/christmas-present-appeal/**

The Children's Society

The Children's Society is one of the core charities supported by our parish. It works to protect the hope and happiness of children and young people in the UK, especially those facing difficult times or who are threatened by abuse, exploitation or neglect. It stands alongside children and families, offers practical support and helps young people to be heard. By supporting this work, we can help vulnerable children and young people find safety, renewed hope and the opportunity for a brighter future.



As in previous years, **there will be a special collection for The Children's Society during our Christingle service at 5pm on Christmas Eve at All Saints Church**.

Christingle is a joyful occasion for all ages, reminding us that the light of Christ shines in the darkness and calling us to share that light through loving action.

You can give during the service or support the charity online. Gifts bought through its online shop can also provide a lifeline to a vulnerable child or young person. Thank you for helping us support this important parish charity.

**https://childrenssociety.org.uk**
**https://givehope.uk/**

## CHOIR UPDATE

Rehearsals will soon begin for our new choir at All Saints, beginning with our Christmas carol service and then we hope the choir will become a regular part of our Sunday worship..

If you are interested, or if you know someone who may be, please speak to Revd Jo, Jerry, Katharine (email sherbornecats@gmail.com) or contact the parish office.







## ST MARK'S BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Following the latest PCC meeting, a new Building and Maintenance Subcommittee has been formed to help oversee the care, repair and upkeep of St Mark's Church. One of its first tasks is to respond to recommendations in the Quinquennial Report—rather like an MOT for our buildings—which covers the church, hall, grounds and associated facilities.

**Work being planned**

We are currently obtaining quotes and advice for the following work:

- Repairing broken window panes in the church.
- Repairing or replacing the drain cover by the Cranbury Road gates.
- Work on the hall heaters. Our usual engineer does not hold the qualification required for this work, so we are consulting another engineer and have supplied the information requested.
- Replacing fluorescent lighting with LED lighting, installing over-door heaters, and fitting self-closing mechanisms to the church doors.

Some of this work may be eligible for grant funding.

**Work already completed**

Several practical improvements have already been made:

- The guttering on the south side of the hall has been replaced.
- A wire guard has been fitted to the downpipe on the north side of the hall to prevent leaves and other debris from blocking the drains.
- Holes in the toilet walls have been filled and damaged doors repaired.

## EXPLORERS

Six Explorers went to Thames Valley Hospice (Richfield Avenue, Caversham) in October. The purchases were varied: drinks and highly recommended cakes, birthday cards, even Christmas cards and a bookcase. No, we didn't have to carry the bookcase home with us - it will be delivered. By the time the photo was taken one explorer had gone off on their own adventures walking into town.

Would you like to join us next time?

Friday 4th December we will be driving to Henry Street Garden Centre to enjoy their Christmas Display and maybe some Christmas purchases and not forgetting tea/ coffee and cake in their cafe.

Meet outside All Saints Church at 10:15am. If you would like to join us, please let the office or Revd Jane know for car sharing purposes.



# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY




## Fancy a cuppa?

Join us at our regular Monday coffee mornings at All Saints Church or at our monthly charity coffee mornings in the Downshire room All Saints Hall. (For full details see below).

**Coffee, chat and companionship**

**Everyone is welcome**

Coffee is also served on Friday mornings at 8.40 (term time only) before our weekly Infant School Service

## CHARITY COFFEE MORNING

**10.30am—11.30am**

Downshire Room, All Saints Hall

Includes raffle, tombola and bring 'n' buy

**2nd Saturday in the month (except Nov)**



21st November – Blesma (The Limbless Veterans Charity) and the Royal Airforce Benevolent Fund

12th December – Thames Valley and Children's Air Ambulance

25% of the fundraising from each coffee morning will be donated to Parish Funds, the remaining donations go directly to the charities listed.




## STRENGTH AND BALANCE CLASS

**St Mark's Hall, Cranbury Road, Reading, RG30 2TA**

**Tuesday 9.30am—10.30am**

A friendly, supportive exercise class designed to strengthen muscles and bones, improve balance and mobility and help you feel more confident on your feet.

£8 per class (first session free)

Classes led by a qualified level 4 exercise instructor.

**Contact Laura for more information on 07762 151932 or email lauramgfitness@gmail.com**

## BADMINTON CLUB



Monday 7.30–9.30pm

Tuesday 7.30–9.30pm

All Saints Hall £4

Bring a racket, Tuition available.

## OPEN GROUP

Open group is a social gathering open to all. We meet once a month at 2.30pm in the Downshire Room, All Saints Hall (unless otherwise stated) Payment is £10 per year (excluding July/ Aug and Dec) or £2 per meeting.



**Wednesday 25th November** – 'Black Gold Black Lungs' – a talk on coal mining by Lionel Williams

**Wednesday 9th December – 3pm Christmas Cream Tea** (£4)

**Wednesday 27th January** - 'Nature's firecrackers; shakes and rumbles' – plate tectonics, volcanoes and earthquakes – Dr Alison Johnson

## LINK GROUP

Link Group usually meet on Wednesdays at 11am until 12 noon (in the Downshire Room, All Saints Hall, Downshire Square) for coffee, chat, prayer and study of a bible passage.

If you would like to join us or find our more, please ask.

Our dates for the Autumn will be.

**Wednesday 11th November**

**Wednesday 2nd December**

**Wednesday 20th January**

## PRAYERS…

Do you have something or someone you would like us to pray for?

We are happy to receive weekly prayer requests using the prayer boxes in church or by speaking to the wardens or clergy on a Sunday morning. If your request is not for yourself, please check that the person for whom you are requesting prayer is happy for you to share information with us. In public prayer only first names or initials will be used. God, who knows all things, hears beyond the words we speak aloud to the intentions of our hearts and will not fail to listen.
If you would like someone to pray with you, please speak to one of the clergy or ministry team.

In particular we invite you to pray

- for **peace in our world**: for those living with war, violence, displacement, fear, or grief, and for all working patiently for justice, reconciliation, and the protection of innocent lives.
- in this **season of remembrance**, for all mourning loved ones and all whose lives have been changed by war; for comfort, healing and a renewed commitment to peace.
- for our **national and local leaders**: for wisdom, integrity, compassion, and a commitment to justice as they make decisions affecting public services, the economy, community safety, and care for the most vulnerable.
- for **the town of Reading**: for kindness between neighbours, welcome for newcomers, and a spirit of generosity and belonging
- for all affected by **colder weather**, especially older people, rough sleepers and those struggling to keep warm; for outdoor workers, emergency services and all providing shelter and care.
- for people facing **financial pressure this winter**, especially those worried about food, heating, rent or debt; for food banks, local support services and community groups.
- for **hospitality workers, care workers and hospital staff**: for strength and patience in their daily work, fair treatment and time to rest; that they may feel valued as they support and care for others.
- for our **Christmas outreach events** and all involved; that everyone may find a warm welcome and encounter Christ's love.
- for our **church community this Advent and Christmas**; that we may make room for Christ and welcome all who join us.
- for **The Gift of Christmas appeal**; that through our ministry care homes and schools we may share God's love in practical ways.
- for those who are **sick or in need**, remembering especially, Stella, Linda, Elizabeth, Christable, Mark and Cheryl, and all who feel weary or overwhelmed.
- for those who have **died recently**, and for all whose anniversaries of death fall at this time.

## WALSINGHAM MASS

**NEW MEETING TIME**
**7.30PM**

The cell of our Lady of Walsingham meet to celebrate Mass at 7.30pm at All Saints Church (on the first Monday of the month (excluding bank holidays):

Monday 2nd November

Monday 7th December

Monday 11th January 2027

(during the winter months services will be held at Tazewell Court)

## A PRAYER FOR OUR TIME

Gracious God,
Bring peace where there is conflict, comfort where there is sorrow, and courage to love our neighbours
Keep us in thy loving care, and guide our steps; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

## M.A.D.

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

A Social gathering for children (aged 5+) of the church community

TUESDAY 10th NOV
TUESDAY 8th DEC
4.30-6pm
All Saints Church Hall

MAD Club meets one **Tuesday** a month, for fun, games, crafts and time together to grow in our faith and make an even bigger difference in our world.
We finish with a simple meal together-
Why not invite a friend?
For more information talk to Revd Jo or Iva Butler.

## ALL SAINTS FAMILY

COFFEE AND CATCH UP

**WED 18TH NOVEMBER**

**Church open after school for refreshments and a chat**

**Everyone is welcome**



PLEASE COME IN



## JOIN US FOR PRAYER…



**Compline** (Night prayer) is online each Wednesday and Sunday night at 9pm .
**Parish prayers** meet fortnightly online on alternate Monday evenings at 7pm, to pray for the Parish and our community.

**Everyone is welcome to join us at these times.**

"Rejoice at all times, pray without ceasing give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. "

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

## GENEROUS GIVING

**If you are shopping online then please consider first registering with easyfundraising.**

Raise **free funds** every time you **shop online**

**www.easyfundraising.org.uk**—perhaps the easiest way to support our church financially if you shop on-line. Many companies 'donate' a small percentage of the total cost of your goods to your nominated charity and it costs you nothing.!

Just hover over the QR code with your camera on your smart device and it will take you to St Mark and All Saints Reading easyfundraising's cause page.




*Thank you for everything you currently do. It makes a huge difference.*

Don't forget our Parish is also a charity and there are many ways you can support us.

• You can remember loved ones by **sponsoring our weekly service sheets.** We recommend a donation of £20 and we can print a short tribute (up to 50 words) on the front of the service sheet on your chosen date.

• If you're a fan of online banking why not give **direct by BACS** to St Mark and All Saints Church PCC.
Sort Code **30-91-31,**
Account number **02374937.**

• Become a **regular giver** by setting up a regular amount via the Parish Giving Scheme—https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donate/

• **Scan the QR code in the service sheet** (and the front of this newsletter) and make a donation on your smart phone with your card.

## WHY HOLLY BELONGS AT CHRISTMAS

With its glossy green leaves and bright red berries, holly is a familiar Christmas decoration rich in Christian symbolism

Holly was first used by pagans to decorate for the festival of Saturnalia. When Christians began celebrating Christmas in honour of Christ, they adapted that decorating practice to reflect Jesus' life and death. Holly's prickly leaves recall the crown of thorns and its red berries symbolize Christ's blood shed on the cross. Because holly thrives and its berries retain their brilliance even in harsh winter conditions, non-Christians saw it as a symbol of eternity — which is fitting for Christians as well. Its evergreen foliage reminds that the child born in Bethlehem came to bring salvation, hope and everlasting life.



## HALLS FOR HIRE

Our two beautiful Church halls are available for regular hire for groups and organisations or one off hire for parties and events.

Rental income from our halls plays a huge role in balancing the parish finances so please consider us if you are looking for a space and recommend us to your friends.

The Downshire Room at All Saints is also available separately for smaller groups.



**All Saints Hall,**
**Downshire Sq, RG1 6NH**

Email the Parish Office:
allsaintsreading@gmail.com
or stmarkandallsaints@gmail.com
or call 0118 9502620

**St Mark's Hall, Cranbury Rd, RG30 2TA**



Email Sharon: st.mark.church.hall@gmail.com or telephone 0770 752 3617

## BLESSED HUGH FARINGDON

If you are applying for a place at Blessed Hugh Faringdon School (for September 2027) and need a letter to accommodate your supplementary information form (SIF) please email your request to Rev'd Jo by the end of November – Email: revdjowilliams@gmail.com

Details about the application process and supplementary form can be found at the link here: https://www.hughfaringdon.org/home/join-us/admissions-information/

# THE MONTH AHEAD…

## November

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sun | 1 | 10.00am | Joint Service AS Patronal | AS |
| | | 4.00pm | **All Souls** | AS |
| Mon | 2 | 10.30am | Coffee on Mondays | AS |
| | | 7.30pm | Walsingham Mass | Tazewell Ct |
| Tues | 3 | 7.00pm | Bible Study | AS hall |
| Wed | 4 | 9.00pm | Compline | Online |
| Thur | 5 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Fri | 6 | 8.50am | School Family Worship preceded by coffee | AS |
| Sat | 7 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Sun | 8 | 9.00am | St Mark's Eucharist Remembrance | STM |
| | | 10.55am | All Saints Eucharist Remembrance | AS |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Mon | 9 | 10.30am | Coffee on Mondays | AS |
| | | 7.00pm | Parish Prayers | online |
| Tues | 10 | 4.30pm | MAD CLUB | AS Hall |
| | | 7.00pm | Bible Study | AS Hall |
| Wed | 11 | 11.00am | Link Group | AS Hall |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Thur | 12 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Fri | 13 | 8.50am | School Family Worship preceded by coffee | AS |
| Sat | 14 | 3.00pm | Christmas Fair | AS Hall |
| Sun | 15 | 9.00am | St Mark's Eucharist + Baptism | STM |
| | | 11.00am | All Saints Eucharist | AS |
| | | 4.00pm | **Pet Blessing Service** | AS |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Mon | 16 | 10.30am | Coffee on Mondays | AS |
| Tues | 17 | 7.00pm | Bible Study | AS Hall |
| Wed | 18 | 3.20pm | Coffee and Catchup | AS |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Thur | 19 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Fri | 20 | 8.50am | School Family Worship preceded by coffee | AS |
| Sat | 21 | 10.30am | Charity coffee | AS Hall |
| Sun | 22 | 9.00am | St Mark's Eucharist | STM |
| | | 11.00am | All Saints Eucharist + Baptism | AS |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Mon | 23 | 10.30am | Coffee on Mondays | AS |
| | | 7.00pm | Parish Prayers | online |
| Tues | 24 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Wed | 25 | 2.30pm | Open Group | DR |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Thur | 26 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Fri | 27 | 8.50am | School Family Worship preceded by coffee | AS |
| Sat | 28 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Sun | 29 | 10.00am | Joint Celebration Service | AS |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Mon | 30 | 10.30am | Coffee on Mondays | AS |

## December

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tues | 1 | 7.00pm | Bible Study (sacristy) | AS |
| Wed | 2 | 11am | Link Group | AS Hall |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Thur | 3 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Fri | 4 | 8.50am | School Family Worship preceded by coffee | AS |
| | | 10.15am | Parish Explorers | AS |
| Sat | 5 | 1.00pm | Christmas Tree Festival | SM |
| Sun | 6 | 9.00am | St Mark's Eucharist | STM |
| | | 11.00am | All Saints Eucharist | AS |
| | | 2.30pm | Messy Church | AS |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Mon | 7 | 10.30am | Coffee on Mondays | AS |
| | | 7.30pm | Walsingham Mass | Tazewell |
| Tues | 8 | 7.00pm | Bible Study (sacristy) | AS |
| | | 4.30pm | MAD CLUB | AS Hall |
| Wed | 9 | 3.00pm | Open Group | AS Hall |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Thur | 10 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Fri | 11 | 8.50am | School Family Worship preceded by coffee | AS |
| | | TBC | St Edwards Christmas | AS |
| Sat | 12 | 10.30am | Charity coffee | AS Hall |
| Sun | 13 | 9.00am | St Mark's Eucharist | STM |
| | | 11.00am | All Saints Eucharist | AS |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Mon | 14 | 9.45am | Battle School Christmas | STM |
| | | 10.30am | Coffee on Mondays | AS |
| | | 7.00pm | Parish Prayers | online |
| Tues | 15 | 2.15pm | Battle School Christmas | STM |
| | | 7.00pm | Bible Study (sacristy) | AS |
| Wed | 16 | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Thur | 17 | 2.00pm | ASI Nativity | AS |
| Fri | 18 | 8.50am | School Family Worship preceded by coffee | AS |
| | | 10.00am | SMAS Christmas | AS |
| Sat | 19 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Sun | 20 | 9.00am | St Mark's Eucharist | STM |
| | | 11.00am | All Saints Eucharist with All Comers Nativity | AS |
| | | 6.30pm | **Carols by Candlelight** | AS |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Mon | 21 | 10.30am | Coffee on Mondays | AS |
| Tues | 22 | 7.00pm | Bible Study (sacristy) | AS |
| Wed | 23 | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Thur | 24 | 5.00pm | **Crib Service with Christingle** | AS |
| | | 9.30pm | **First Mass of Christmas** | STM |
| | | 11.30pm | **Midnight Mass** | AS |
| Fri | 25 | 10am | **Joint Festal Eucharist** | AS |
| Sat | 26 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Sun | 27 | 9.00am | Joint Parish Eucharist | STM |
| | | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Mon | 28 | 10.30am | Coffee on Mondays | AS |
| | | 7.00pm | Parish Prayers | online |
| Tues | 29 | | NO EVENTS | |
| Wed | 30 | 9.00pm | Compline | online |
| Thur | 31 | | NO EVENTS | |

## FUTURE DATES 2027

### Open Group

Wednesday 27th January
Wednesday 24th February
Wednesday 24th March
Wednesday 14th April
Wednesday 19th May
Wednesday 16th June
Wednesday 14th July
Wednesday 25th August
Wednesday 22nd September

### Link Group

Wednesday 20th January
Wednesday 3rd February
Wednesday 3rd March
Wednesday 7th April

### Charity coffee mornings

Saturday 9th January
Saturday 13th February
Saturday 13th March
Saturday 10th April
Saturday 8th May
Saturday 12th June
Saturday 10th July
Saturday 14th August
Saturday 11th September
Saturday 9th October
Saturday 13th November
Saturday 11th December

## SUNDAY ZOOM

We recognise that it can be difficult for some members to get to church each week, particularly in the colder months of the year.

We aim to live stream one service each week over Zoom.

If you are unable to join us in person, please do consider joining our worship online.
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85678162379?pwd=ZytBWFpleGdIUXovdGcyeEZoelZBdz09

Meeting ID: 856 7816 2379 and
Passcode: worship (or 7805385 if dialling by phone)



## GRACE FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

As the year draws to a close, we remember its joys, its challenges, and the prayers still waiting for answers. Through every season, God has been faithful.
We place our regrets in God's mercy, our sorrows in God's care, and our hopes in God's hands.
We do not need to know all that tomorrow holds to take the next step in faith.
May the coming year find us loving more freely, forgiving more readily, and sharing kindness wherever we go.
With grateful hearts, we welcome a new beginning, trusting that God will walk beside us each day.