



Dear Friends,

Each year, after Christmas, as I sort out the piles of paper in my study, I vow to start planning in September all the Christmas talks, Carol Services, Nativities and present buying etc. Of course, it never happens, as it doesn't feel right. It's the wrong season to think about Christmas.

Now would normally be the season whilst we are in the midst of winter, some wonderful frosty mornings and peachy/pink sunrises, when Christmas lights are twinkling and everywhere we hear Christmas Carols and songs playing.

But we are not in normal times. As I write this, Omicron threatens to spoil our Christmas festivities and services once again, to bring uncertainty into our lives. So, let's do what we can do, let's focus on what we do have. We have the present moment, and we have the Christmas story.

Let's be grateful for what we have. Enjoy the moment when the air is filled with spices from warm mulled wine, when brandy butter melts on our mince pies, enjoy the moment when we write Christmas cards to those we may not have seen for a while, enjoy the moment when we can hug a friend, and enjoy the moment when we wrap presents for loved ones, knowing that these gifts will bring them joy.



Despite the pain and losses and difficulties of the past year, Christmas can still be such a joyful time. It starts with the little ones coming into church for their Christmas services and parties. We hear their gasps of delight when the glitter ball is switched on throwing stars into the 'bright sky'. And we especially see joy in the children's faces as they kneel before our crib scenes, touched by the wonder and awe of the Christmas story. Children have an innate spirituality and acceptance that touches our hearts.

Christmas becomes real for us in those moments. Jesus, the Light of the World is coming. As ever, the days ahead and the New Year will have its challenges and its joys.



Whilst we are speaking of joy, have you ever noticed how much joy there is in the Christmas story? It starts with the angel who visits Zechariah and Elizabeth, foretelling the birth of John the Baptist: "he will be a joy to you" the angel prophesizes. When cousins Elizabeth and Mary are visiting each other, the unborn baby John the Baptist within Elizabeth's womb "leaped for joy."

Elizabeth's neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they "rejoiced with her". When the Angel of the Lord appears to the shepherds after the birth of Jesus, the Angel says, 'Do not be afraid, for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.' If we were to look, we would find hundreds more references to joy in the Bible.

Many of us will be singing 'Joy to the world' and 'O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant' this Christmas. As we celebrate the good news that God comes to us to bring the promise of eternal life; love, peace, hope and joy to our broken world, let us approach 2022 with joy in our hearts, determined to do all we can to put joy in the hearts of those in our families and our communities, and especially to all who are struggling at this time, those whose lives are far from joyful at this time.

*(continued on page 3)*

## Events and Notices

### Upcoming Services

*Please continue to wear a face mask in church*

#### Sunday, 19th December

10.00am Holy Communion at St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh

10.30am Holy Communion at Christ Church, Bradford on Avon

**6.00pm Carol Service** at St James, South Wraxall—followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the village hall

**6.30pm Carol Service** at St Nicholas, Winsley—followed by mulled wine and mince pies



#### Christmas Eve - Nativity and Crib Services

**10.00am** Nativity Service at St James, South Wraxall

**10.00am** Crib service at St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh

**3.00pm** Crib service at St Nicholas, Winsley. **See page 3 for more details**

**4.00pm** Join us for us for outdoor Carol singing around the Nativity Scene at Christ Church, Bradford on Avon, preceded by a lantern procession at 3.50pm from the school car park in Berryfield Road. **See page 3 for details of a lantern procession at Monkton Farleigh**

#### - Midnight Services

**11.15pm Midnight Holy Communion** at St James, South Wraxall, joint with Monkton Farleigh

**11.15pm Midnight Holy Communion** at St Nicholas, Winsley

**11.15pm Midnight Holy Communion** at Christ Church, Bradford on Avon

#### Christmas Day

10.00am Family Communion at St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh, joint with South Wraxall

10.00am Family Communion at St Nicholas, Winsley

10.30am Family Communion at Christ Church, Bradford on Avon

#### Sunday, 26th December

No service in church. Online service through the YouTube link on our website under Upcoming Services

#### Sunday, 2nd January 2022

10.30am Benefice Service with Holy Communion at Christ Church, Bradford on Avon

#### Sunday, 9th January 2022

10.00am Holy Communion at St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh, joint with South Wraxall

10.00am Refresh at Winsley Church Hall

10.30am Holy Communion at Christ Church, Bradford on Avon

• **All further services in January will be on our website at the end of this month**

#### Ministry Team:

Rector Rev Ann Keating

Rev.ann.keating@btinternet.com (722230)

Rev Tessa Mann (309374)

LLM: Rachel Pound (862223)

#### Benefice Office:

Caroline Brydon (865046),

nboabenefice@gmail.com

Website [www.nboachurches.co.uk](http://www.nboachurches.co.uk)

#### Church Wardens:

**Winsley:** Roy Ludlow (868779) Linds Batson (720069)

**Christ Church:** vacant, Contact Rev Ann Keating

**South Wraxall:** Dave Wyper (865384) Valentine Thornhill (862552)

**Monkton Farleigh:** Vacant. Contact Rachel Exley PCC Secretary (851485)

#### Lay Pastoral Assistants:

Stephen Pike (782537), Denise Davies (863678)

Gill Fairhurst (867560), Daphne Cox (868224)

Elizabeth Bush (866624), James Middleton (920564)

#### Children's and Families Worker:

Zoe Yeomans - [zyeomans3@gmail.com](mailto:zyeomans3@gmail.com)

#### Funerals

Funeral of Edward Walker on Thursday 30th December at 1pm at St Nicholas, Winsley. Ann taking

#### Weddings

Adam Bown and Catherine Stevenson at St Nicholas Church Winsley on Friday 31st December at 4pm. Ann taking

I think the following poem speaks of that for which we long:

(continued from front page)



**Transform our empty spaces  
O Christmas God.  
Fill the empty managers of the world with food  
Empty the cardboard boxes, refuge  
of the lonely and despairing.  
Bring warmth and light and shelter  
to all who watch and wait this night.**

**In bar and bare hillside,  
in barrio and back room,  
in crowded flat and empty home  
may we feel your presence at our  
shoulder and in our hearts**

*Kate McIlhagga*

Thank you for all your cards and good wishes. From all the staff team, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a New Year full of hope, joy and peace.

Ann, Rector, Benefice of North Bradford on Avon and Villages

## Christmas Family Events

### Christmas Eve Events:

**3pm Crib Service at St Nicholas, Winsley**—The theme of the Crib Service this year is 'Journey to Bethlehem'. We will be starting the service in the Seven Stars car park/Marquee at 3.00pm. We will then walk to church and sing around the tree outside. Following this we will gather around the Crib inside the church. This will be a short, family friendly service. Everyone is welcome. *Tessa Mann*

**4pm Join us for us for outdoor Carol singing** around the Nativity Scene at Christ Church, Bradford on Avon, preceded by a lantern procession at 3.50pm from the school car park in Berryfield Road. Children to come dressed up or there will be nativity costumes at the school entrance.

**4pm Lantern Procession at Monkton Farleigh**— Led by "Hector" the Shetland pony! Starting at the village hall and processing to the candle lit church. Enjoy mulled wine and mince pies (chocolate for the children)

### Other Events:

**Christmas Tree Festival at St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh.** December 12th until Jan 2nd, 10am—6pm every day. See page 4 for the poster

**'Guess the Carol' Churchyard Trail at St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh and St Nicholas, Winsley**—for everyone to enjoy

**The Christmas Experience at St Nicholas, Winsley**— an interactive way for everyone to explore the Christmas Story. 10.00am-4.00pm every day



### Thank you...

A huge thank you to everyone who has knitted bells for us this Christmas or sewn them up or been involved in some way. It is much appreciated. Some bells have already been well received by the children at Acorns and Sunbeams. They will also be going to the Ark and to each church for any children that come to our upcoming carol and crib services. *Zoe*



## The South Porch at Christ Church



The Christmas story is building in our south porch at Christ Church. Thanks to Year 6 at Christ Church school, the latest addition is a series of nativity related clay figures inspired by stone and wood carvings and stained glass windows in our beautiful church.

## Christ Church: Let there be light!

And there was light - just in time for our carol service! The broken lights in the nave were removed and temporary lighting installed. This will see us through the winter and until our proposed energy efficient and adjustable lighting is put in as part of the wider improvement and restoration project at Christ Church. Many thanks to Stephen and Ted for organising this.



We thought you might like to see the impressive scaffolding kit that was assembled by the two lovely electricians who undertook the work for us!

*Gill Ellis-King*

## ST. PETER'S CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



Come and see the Christmas Tree Festival  
at St Peter's church  
Monkton Farleigh, BA15 2QJ

Open daily 10.00am to 6.00pm  
from 12 December 2021 to 2 January 2022

*Wishing you a joyous and peaceful  
Christmas and New Year*

## Parking for the Midnight Service on Christmas Eve at Christ Church

Please note that there is no parking available at the Mount Pleasant Centre for the midnight Christmas Eve service but members of the congregation are welcome to use Christ Church School car park.

*Revd Ann*



The Food Bank tree at St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh, part of the Christmas Tree Festival in the church.

The next edition of NewsLink will be on the **9th January 2022!** Please email any relevant contributions to Caroline at [nboabenefice@gmail.com](mailto:nboabenefice@gmail.com) by Tuesday, January 4th latest. You can read the full version on our website [www.nboachurches.co.uk](http://www.nboachurches.co.uk)

If you would like an electronic version of NewsLink or require a hard copy, please email or leave a message for Caroline at the Benefice office on 01225 865046.

**A very Merry Christmas from us all!**