



St. Luke's Church, Maidenhead

www.stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk

[This sheet is also available on the above website]

Church Office: 01628 622733

admin@stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk

Vicar: sally514@btinternet.com

Week Commencing: 17th December, Advent 3

This week we have a 10 am Parish Communion and at 6.00 pm it is the Nine Lessons and Carols service followed by mulled wine and mince pies. On Wednesday evenings in Advent Compline (Night Prayer) will be said on zoom. Why not join in for a time of quiet in a busy season.

Attached to this week's mailing is the rota for the next quarter (which takes us from Epiphany right through the Easter day!). Please do check for when you are down to do something. You will also find attached the first draft of the church calendar for next year – do note dates in your diary now.

The Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming
sent your messenger
to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards
of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare
and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient
to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found
an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive ...

Post Communion

We give you thanks, O Lord,
for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

First Reading

The servant of the Lord said: ¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as

a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. *Isaiah 61. 1-4, 8-11*

The Gospel Reading

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' ²¹And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' ²²Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' ²³He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord"' as the prophet Isaiah said. ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' ²⁶John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing. *John 1. 6-8, 19-28*

Sunday's Hymns:

327	Awake, awake	75	Long ago, prophets knew
42	Longing for light	320	The great forerunner of the morn
45	O Come, O Come, Emmanuel		

Thought for the week:

'among you stands one whom you do not know'

For the second week in this year's Advent readings, we encounter John the Baptist. An eccentric character, he challenges the establishment – the Jewish leaders – and he challenges us too.

'among you stands one whom you do not know'

To put the reading in context, this is the adult John speaking about the adult Jesus – we are always mixing time in the Christian story – a reminder that whilst the birth of Jesus is important, what matters far more is that he grew up and as an adult fulfilled the mission that God his father had for him.

But as John's gospel reminds us now – and we will hear in the full prologue at our Carol Service – the world did not know Jesus.

'among you stands one whom you do not know'

How well do we know Jesus?

It is easy to fall in love with the baby – with the Christmas story. To be enveloped by the romantic portrayal in school nativities where there is no blood or gore, or dirty straw or smelly animals – or their owners. It is easy for people – for us – to get stuck in the baby bit – 'Father Christmas and Jesus are best friends' wrote a child once. But Jesus grew up. That's why he was here. How well do we know him?

'among you stands one whom you do not know'

And how well do we know ourselves? for that is what Jesus came to do... to help us face up to who we are individually and corporately – today John the Baptist asks us to look deep within ourselves as we prepare to welcome Jesus afresh – and in John today we see a model of living that is helpful – and challenging.



In this third week of Advent, as things hot up a bit, John the Baptist calls us to bring the good news that Isaiah was preaching, to those around us. He models that way in which we might do this humbly, pointing always to Jesus, challenging the systems and structures around us, and doing all this from a deep self-knowledge and confidence that comes from knowing Jesus himself – the baby born with a mission that we are invited to share in now.

‘among you stands one whom you do not know’

Or maybe we do know him...

Prayer suggestions for this week:

- Give thanks for a successful Christmas Tree Festival, and pray for all who passed through the church.
- For the work of the Hope Project and Number 22.
- For our keeping of a holy Advent and joyful Christmas
- For the people of Israel and Palestine, for an end to the violence there and for strength for all those who are suffering loss and fear
- For peace in Ukraine and Russia, and of Sudan, and also in Armenia and Ethiopia.
- For a new church music leader.
- For our growth in faith and for the developing Alpha team. For God to be moving guests to join the course next year.
- For all those whose anniversary of baptism falls in December: Herbie Prater, Lily Edmonds and Arlo Ridley.
- For all those who live and work in Colby Gardens.
- The sick and their carers : Monica Olley, Ann Hockham, Valerie Bosley, Pat Botting, Phyllis Sigsworth, Jean Jackson, Iris Brown.
- Those who have died recently, and those who mourn them.
- Those whose anniversary of death falls in December: John Sheppard, Denis Rayfield, Beryl Jenkins, Evelyn Rose, Roy Horsham, John Norris, Margaret Swansborough, Joan Parker, Dorothy Scott, Penelope Hutchings, Peter Brown, John Dickson, Anne Seagrove, Max Neale, Eileen Pond, David Sawyers, Robert Gardener, Peggy Harris, Colin Bowerman, Robert Gill, Sheila Mayers, Joyce Bryant, Isabella Monk, David Jones, Bernard Bowdery, Patricia Walker, Roy Goff, Jean Judd, David Jesson, Dorothy Chalk, Steven Robinson and Carol Kharas.

Readings for Morning Prayer for the week beginning Sunday 17th December 2023:

Sunday	P 68.1-20	Isaiah 25.1-9	Luke 3.1-17
Monday	Psalm 40	Isaiah 38.1-8, 21-22	Mathew 16.13-end
Tuesday	Psalm 146	Isaiah 38.9-20	Matthew 17.1-13
Wednesday	Psalm 46	Isaiah 39	Matthew 17.14-21
Thursday	Psalm 121	Zephaniah 1.1-2.3	Matthew 17.22-end
Friday	Psalm 124	Zephaniah 3.1-13	Matthew 18.1-20
Saturday	Psalm 130	Zephaniah 3.14-end	Matthew 18.21-end

Rotas for next week:

Sunday the 24th December: Parish Communion

Read: Ian Gilchrist

Intercede: Ministry Team

Welcomers: Ralph, Sue and Don

Coffee: Sally and Jenny

Midnight Mass:

Read: Ruth Sheppard

Intercede: Ministry Team

Welcomers: TBC

Christmas Day:

Read: Sue Turner

Intercede: Ministry Team

Welcomers: TBC

Our church is floodlit at night.

This week the flood lighting has been sponsored by:

Jacqueline Lewis

In loving memory of Barbara Lewis



To sponsor the floodlighting please fill in the form at the back of church or email:

admin@stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk

Given rising fuel prices, it is suggested the minimum donation for weekly sponsorship is now £15.

There are lots of weeks available.

What's on.... This week:

- Sunday 17th 10.00am, Parish Communion
6.00pm, Nine Lessons and Carols, by candlelight/mulled wine/mince pies
 - Tuesday 19th 8.30am, Morning Prayer, on zoom
 - Wednesday 20th 8.30am, Morning Prayer, on zoom
10.00am, Holy Communion
9.00pm, Compline, zoom using morning link
 - Thursday 21st 8.30am, Morning Prayer, on Zoom
3.00pm, Keeping Company, in church
7.00-9.30pm, Open Vicarage
 - Friday 22nd 8.30am, Morning Prayer on zoom
5.00pm, Evening prayer, on zoom
 - Saturday 23rd 9.00am, Morning prayer on zoom
 - Sunday 24th 10.00am, Parish Communion
4.00pm, Candlelit Crib Service for younger families
5.00pm, Candlelit Crib Service for older families
10.00pm, 'Midnight Mass'
 - Monday 25th 10.00am, All Age Christmas Holy Communion
- No services Tuesday 26th – Saturday 30th**

Church Office. The office will close at 11.30am on Friday 22nd December and will re-open at 9am Wednesday 3rd January 2024

Sundays at Six: All Services are at 6.00pm Zoom link: use Sunday morning or as specified above

17 th December	Carol Services at each church at 6.00 pm
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Open Vicarage returns:

All members of the congregation are warmly invited to drop into the vicarage for mulled wine / mulled fruit juice and seasonal nibbles any time between 7 and 9.30 pm on Thursday 21st December. Revd. Sally

**We hope you all enjoyed the very successful Christmas Tree Festival. Thank you to all those who helped and visited over the weekend.**

Many people commented on how lovely the whole event was and how beautiful the church looked with all the trees. This year we really did represent a microcosm of the whole community with such a variety of trees and all really thoughtful.

We are delighted that, from the tree voting boxes alone, we will be sending over £4000 to Number 22 Counselling Service. Thanks to its Director, Shula Tajima, who spoke movingly and helpfully about the Hope Project at our closing service on Sunday. We have also raised much needed money for church funds (particularly in the current economic climate – it was lovely to keep the church warm at the weekend!) from refreshments, donations and the raffle.

We can now reveal that the tree voted ‘best dressed’ in church was the tree decorated by the Alexander Devine Children’s Hospice. Their Harry Potter themed tree wowed visitors – with beautifully knitted characters from the books. Many congratulations. The immediate runners up were, in order: Jean Fuller, Thames Hospice, Claremont and Holyport Nursing Team, It’s All About Hair, Number 22, Oliver’s Mental Health Tree, and Optalis. Others were very close too. Well done everyone!

Coming up..

Messy Church our Messy church will re-start in the new year, dates are as follows: 5th January, 2nd February, 1st March, 30th March, 3rd May, 7th June, 5th July, 6th September, 4th October, 1st November, 29th November

Alpha course: we have committed to running an Alpha course next year and are now recruiting the team to run it. If you feel called to help in leading small group discussion, catering or prayer ministry please speak to Revd Sally asap. And, of course, we will all be able to pray for the Alpha course – team and guests. Our first training session will be on Wednesday 17th January at 7pm. The course will start on Wednesday 31st January. Please speak to Revd. Sally if you think you would like to join the course.

Wednesdays in Advent: 9pm, Compline on zoom. Everyone is warmly invited to join in this very short service offering space at a busy time. Use the Morning Prayer link.

The order of service can be found here (or download the daily prayer app): <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/daily-prayer/night-prayer-compline>

Vigil for Peace - 16th December, 7:30pm

“It is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness”

As violence affects many parts of the world, people of goodwill of all faiths and none are invited to take part in a short vigil to demonstrate solidarity across our diverse community, and our shared wish for peace on earth. The vigil will take place at St Joseph's Parish Centre, 36 Cookham Rd, Maidenhead, from 7:30pm, with introductory readings and an opportunity for silent reflection - you are invited to come along for as much time as you wish or can spare. The event will finish at 9pm.

Christmas at St. Luke's Church

Sunday 17th December

6.00 pm, **Nine Lessons and Carols, by candlelight**, followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Thursday 21st December

3.00 pm, **Keeping Company**

Tea, cake and reflection for those bereaved at any time

Christmas Eve, Sunday 24th December

4.00 (younger families) and 5.00 (older families) pm, **Candlelit Crib Services**

10.00 pm **'Midnight Mass'**

Christmas Day, Monday 25th December

10.00 am, All Age Christmas Holy Communion

The Burdetts Christmas Lights. The Burdetts are holding their annual Christmas Lights "open house" (Strictly final notwithstanding!) on: Saturday 16th December from 2:00pm to 9:30pm and Sunday 17th December from 2:00pm to 5:15pm and 8:15pm to 10:00pm at 30 Mallow Park (off Cranbrook Drive). Please feel free to drop in for coffee/tea and a mince pie/cake, and to see and hear Richard's Christmas Illuminations.

Ride and Stride update: Ride+Stride Berkshire raised just under £28,000 this year which is a fantastic total and a substantial increase on last year. We are so grateful to all who opened and manned their churches and of course to all who walked or ran or cycled or drove - on what was one of the hottest days of the year... Thank you all so much. And please put the next date in your diaries - and in your church diaries too - Saturday 14th September!

Our Regular activities:

The 8.00 Holy Communion service is monthly, on the 2nd Sunday.

Midweek Holy Communion is at 10 am weekly, followed by coffee

Baby and Toddler group meets on Thursdays, 9.30 – 11.00 am term time only. We meet in church.

Messy Church continues on the first (usually) Friday, monthly, 4-5.30pm. Next is 5th January 2024
admin@stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk to book a place.

Keeping Company is our monthly meeting for those bereaved (at any time). Third Thursday at 3pm, in church. The next is 21st December

Thursday Teas meets in the community hall offering tea, cake and conversation. Second Thursdays monthly. Next is 11th January

Gaynor's Gift is a prayer shawl knitting ministry that anyone can take part in at home. We meet together monthly to pray, knit and drink tea. 4th Thursdays monthly. Next is 26th January

Please note that for all Zoom services the links below are being used:

Sunday Morning Worship:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87358197400?pwd=MTFxVINad1R6NEl6cVZ6TVJ5bGlzdz09>

Meeting ID: 873 5819 7400 Passcode: 526076

Zoom Morning Prayer at 8.30 am Tuesday – Friday, 9 am Saturday

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81459090925?pwd=Y2hKZkFYZ04zbGZBd1BHcmllldU5Hdz09>

Meeting ID: 814 5909 0925 Passcode: 180609

Zoom Evening Prayer at 5pm on Fridays (except first Friday)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85378796960?pwd=dUNTTnRZVFJBY2xiS3QyVHIYZ1BaZz09> Meeting ID:

853 7879 6960 Passcode: 386635