

# At the heart of Christmas



## Christmas



2021



As we draw towards the end of Advent, we once more become aware of the confusion and darkness of the world around us. There is an air of uncertainty and concern as well as unease at the impact of Omicron and Plan B. If we are honest, I think we are all struggling to work out what is best and right.

What has got us through the last 20 months is our focusing on God and seeking to be the body of Christ –rooting ourselves in prayer, supporting one another, and respecting the different views and feelings, while seeking to create a space so that as many as possible can be with God and each other. As we all grow increasingly weary and confused by the twists and turns it gets more difficult and I hope we can all look out for each other and find ways to support each other as we together seek to serve the wider community.



Advent is about us preparing to discover the presence of God in the reality of our lives and world. The Christmas story is, behind all the gloss we have added over the centuries, a messy and tough story of the birth of a child in challenging circumstances. But those who focus on that baby discover something wonderful and peaceful in the midst of the chaos and mess. Perhaps we can each this Christmas seek to discover where God is in this current mess and how we can share that peace and wonder with those around us. Perhaps we need to focus on what we can do – and do it well – rather than become distracted and frustrated at what we cannot do, or by those who seem to be making the situation worse. Let us seek to do all we can in our worship, in our music, in our care of each other, in our

welcome of the stranger etc so that we may be the body of Christ in the midst of the uncertainty of the world.

We will further adapt the guidance we have previously put in place. **It is now a legal requirement for face coverings to be worn in Church.** Please consider whether you wish to remove them when singing or not. We will restore all **our seating** to being spaced out and will resume **administering communion to each person where they are.** **Tea and Coffee** will be served, but please be sensitive to others and do not crowd around the serving tables, and only remove face coverings when actually drinking.

We appreciate that for some these moves will not be enough while for other they may be challenging and unsettling. **Please do let the Ministry know your feelings and thoughts and we will be adapting and developing as we believe is best for the common good. Please continue to show the care and respect for each other- and our worship and love of God – that you have shown in such depth over the past months.**

We hope that you will be able to share with us as far as possible in our life of prayer, worship and reflection. We have made some changes to our Advent programme and events. What follows is a list of services and activities – but please be aware these may change and be further adapted as things change around us.

**Advent Book Club.** There will be an opportunity for the last 2 Wednesdays of Advent to meet on Zoom for an hour from 7pm to explore a book with Revd Sam & Fi. The Book is the **'Music of Eternity' – meditations for advent with Evelyn Underhill.** If you would like to join, please contact Revd Sam as soon as possible,

**Fellowship Lunches** These will meet on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec** and they will include **a discussion on some of the themes in the book** led by one of the Ministry Team. This will be **after the Noon Mass** – please bring your own lunch. Seats will be set up socially distanced.

**The themes for the last 2 weeks are**

Advent 3      Recognising God's coming

Advent 4      Embracing God's coming

Also, **the rhythm of Parish life will continue** – giving you opportunities to pause and reflect on the presence of Christ with you in your lives and of his light and peace in the gloom and confusion of the world.

### **Private Prayer and Public Worship**

St Mary's is open each weekday (Monday to Friday) from 9am – Noon for Private Prayer

At **Noon on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at St Mary's** there is a **Eucharist** (which is also streamed).

In addition, on **Tuesday at 9.30am at St Faith's** and on **Thursday at 10.30am at St Wilfrid's** there will be a Eucharist (these will not be streamed)

There will be a **streamed reflection** around Noon on **Tuesdays and Thursdays.**

**Sundays** there will be services at

**8am** (not on 26<sup>th</sup>) **and 10am at St Mary's;**

**9am at St Faith's** (not on 19<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup> Dec)

**and 11am at St Wilfrid's.** (not on 19<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup> Dec)

**Just Ask      Saturdays 10 – 11am at St Mary's** – a chance to come and explore arranging Weddings and Christenings or 'just ask' the clergy anything!



### **Comfort and Joy**

We are again supporting the Churches Homeless Action Voucher scheme. Can you give a Christmas card and a gift card/voucher (suggest £5) to share with one of the local charities supporting those on the margins? Sharing that precious gift of choice. To donate please place in the plate at Church or deliver to the Vicarage.

Final Day for collecting Dec 15<sup>th</sup> Wednesday – **can you help come and sort? 2pm on 15th**

### **Christmas Hamper**

As part of our support of the Hope into Action House and those who live there, we are hoping to create a Christmas Hamper of things we

would like. Can you bring an item of food (or something else) you would enjoy at Christmas to share with them with you on the next 2 Sundays?

**Other events (at St Mary's unless otherwise stated)**

Please keep an eye and ear open for changes to these events ...



**Sun Dec 12<sup>th</sup> 2.30 and 5pm Barrells Memorial Services**

If you can help us support Barrells and welcome those who are bereaved, please let Fr Bob know

**Mon Dec 13<sup>th</sup>**

**7.30pm Julian Prayer Group at St Faith's**

**Tues Dec 14<sup>th</sup>**

**6pm Carol singing around the streets**

of the Parish – come and help us remind people

of what lies at the heart of Christmas



**Weds Dec 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Noon Fellowship Lunch and discussion**

**2pm Can you come and help us count and sort the Christmas Vouchers for 'Comfort and Joy'**

**Thurs Dec 16<sup>th</sup>**

**7.30pm Royal Marine School of Music Christmas Concert**



**Fri Dec 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Noon 'Comfort and Joy'**

distribution of Christmas Vouchers

**7pm Forever Together Memorial Service**



- Sat Dec 18<sup>th</sup>**      **11am Requiem Mass for Angela Carpenter**  
 followed by the Interment of her ashes in the  
 Churchyard  
**6pm Parish Christmas Quiz – online??**  
 – for details contact Revd Marcus as may be online
- Sun Dec 19<sup>th</sup>**      **10am Fr Giles' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of priesting**  
 There will be a Parish Mass (no services at St  
 Wilfrid's or St Faith's) to celebrate with Fr Giles.  
**6pm Nine Lessons and Carols –**  
 a very special service celebrating the Christmas Story  
 in words and music
- Tues Dec 21<sup>st</sup>**      **4pm Portsmouth Film Society at St Mary's**  
 Disney Pixar Film 'Soul'  
**6pm 'Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street'**  
**Tickets Adults £3 Children £2**
- Weds Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>**      **Noon Fellowship lunch and discussion**
- Christmas Eve 4pm Young Families** gather at St Mary's to  
 prepare for
- 5pm Nativity Service –** spaces limited so please  
 book in advance by contacting Fr Bob
- 6pm Mass of the Nativity at St Wilfrid's**
- 7pm Mass of the Nativity at St Faith's**
- 11.30pm Midnight Mass at St Mary's –** spaces  
 limited so please book in advance by contacting Fr  
 Bob
- Christmas Day 9am Book of Common Prayer Eucharist**
- 10am Mass and Carols at St Mary's**
- Dec 26<sup>th</sup>**      **10am Parish Mass for the Feast of St Stephen**

**Dec 27<sup>th</sup> Noon Mass at St Mary's**

**Tues 28<sup>th</sup> 9.30am Mass at St Faith's**

**Weds 29<sup>th</sup> Noon Mass at St Mary's**

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Mass at St Wilfrid's**

**Friday 31<sup>st</sup> Noon Mass at St Mary's**

**Sunday Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> onwards – normal service times**

**Thurs Jan 6<sup>th</sup> 7pm Sung Mass for the Epiphany at St Mary's**

There is an arts installation at St Mary's – hanging from the screen as you pass to the Font from the Tower. This is a reflection on the experience of refugees – 'Tears of joy'. These will hang near the Crib scene to help us reflection how Jesus, Mary and Joseph were also refugees as they fled to Egypt

Finally, if you would like to make a donation to provide **flowers in our churches and help decorate them over Christmas** – either in memory of someone or in thanksgiving for something – then please place money in a clearly marked envelope before Dec 17<sup>th</sup> – or if you would like to pay by BACS contact us for details (and mark payment 'Flowers')

Thank you as always to all of you for your support, your care for one another and your prayers for us and all we do, We are all aware that for many the coming days will not be easy. If you are aware of anyone who needs a call from the Ministry Team or you would like them added to our prayer list then please let me know.

We hope that we will together discover more of what lies at the heart of Christmas and the light and peace we find in Christ's presence with us in the reality of our lives.

*Best wishes for Christmas and 2022*



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