

Services in Church. As we look forward to returning to church together, we must remember the rules that have been put in place for our safety.

1. You must book your place in church by 5pm on the Friday before the service. Contact the office by phone or email. If no one answers please leave a message with your name and contact number and we will get back to you.
2. You can only attend with people who are in your bubble and or as an individual. You will be seated to allow for social distancing between households.
3. We will be retaining details of attendees for 21 days for Track and Trace purposes as before. We also have the NHS app QR codes available so you can check in at the church if you are able to.
4. You must wear a mask whilst in church and remain within your social bubble. You cannot chat inside the church with those outside your bubble. Six people can chat outside the church as long as they remain socially distanced.
5. Hand sanitiser will be available upon entry and exit of the church.
6. We will not be using the donation envelopes but it is possible for you to use the new Donation Station if you wish. This allows you to donate by card.

Services for the first 3 weeks of December will be as follows:

Sunday 6th: 10am Holy Communion
Sunday 13th: 8.30 Holy Communion
 10am Advent Together
Sunday 20th: 10am Holy Communion

The Christmas Eve and Day services will be announced on the Weekly Sheet next week; please also keep an eye on the church website for details.

Online services. For those of you who are unable to return to church at this time there are services online from our Diocese and these will continue over the Christmas period. The phone recordings of services will also be continuing for those of you who find this easier to join in with.

Christ Church College, Oxford will also be holding a variety of services online; from Zoom chats about the Nativity to Lessons and Carols services streamed live there is something for everyone to enjoy. Follow the link to see what they have on offer and how to access the services:
<https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/christmas2020>

Christmas will be different this year but we are thankful that we may join together in some format to worship and celebrate our Lord.

Please Keep Safe and Keep in Touch, Katie, Office Administrator and Susan Bailey, Churchwarden

Social Media reminders:

Twitter (new!) [@olneychurch](https://twitter.com/olneychurch)

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/stpeterandstpaulchurcholney>

Church office: 01234 241721 or office@olney.church



Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Olney

Sunday 6th December 2020

2nd Sunday of Advent



Welcome and notices

Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Gospel: Mark 1: 1-8

Wed 9th : Isaiah 40: 25- end

Matthew 11: 28- end

Collect: *Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God.*

Amen.

Intercessions: The second Sunday in advent is when we remember that the prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah. The Patriarchs and Prophets awaited someone they never met, while John the Baptist met and recognized the Messiah and Mary most importantly brought Jesus into the world. So we pray for those who have not yet met with Jesus to know the full meaning of His deity, we pray for all of us to recognize Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and we ask that we might also 'bring' Jesus to others by our words and deeds. We ask Lord Jesus that we may remember and be thankful for your first coming and that we will be ready for Your second coming. Good Shepherd, we pray that the leaders of all Christian Churches may be anointed and blessed to love and serve Your flock – Your people. We pray for the leaders of the nations that they would rule according to Your will and Your ways. We ask that You would direct and guide all who work for justice in the world; for judges, lawyers, solicitors, the military and the police. We also ask for Your blessing on the anxious, the lonely and the broken; that they may know Your love, Your presence and Your healing. "Keep us, O Lord, while we tarry on this earth, in a serious seeking after You, and in an affectionate walking with You, every day of our lives; that when You come, we may be found not hiding our talent, nor serving the flesh, nor yet asleep with our lamp unfurnished, but waiting and longing for our Lord, our glorious God for ever". **Amen.**

We pray blessing and healing for those who are sick: *Toby O'Grady, Kevin, Keith, Cyril, Rene Tourle, Pat Major, Gail, Martin, Hannah, Rena Partridge, Phill Stocking, Eliza, Bar, Georgina, Michael Seabrook, Debbie and Lorraine.*

We remember the recently departed and pray for comfort for families and friends: *Pat Aitken*

We remember and give thanks for those whose Yearsmind is now. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer:

Prayer: *Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Listening Ear. Please email prayer@olney.church for prayers.

Some material included is

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Rector's letter. Dear Family,
Christmas is all about God stepping into our world and coming into our lives to make everything better for us all. As we think of Jesus being prepared to be born as a dependent child and then growing up dedicated to the welfare and blessing of humankind we can be both challenged and encouraged. Jesus' example challenges us to do our best to imitate Him in caring for others, and at the same time Jesus' commitment to us encourages us to know that we are never left alone and are never left without His love and His presence. It is a true and helpful saying that: "Christmas is about presence - Jesus presence with us".

And not only do we have Jesus' love and example; we are also blessed to have people around us who bless us and are godly examples to us all. Just a moment of thought can bring to mind those for whom we are grateful; those who have helped, encouraged and been there for us when we needed them.

God willing we will be able to see the ones we love over the Christmas season and we will be able to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with each other in services in Church and/or by computer and phone. Do look out for updates about services on the Church website and in the weekly sheets.

Don't forget our prayer and support links if you want others to join with you in prayer or help in any other way. Until we do see each other, stay safe and know God's present to you – His presence with you.

God bless you with a Healthy Christmas. *Andrew+*

Hymns for this week. This week we have a hymn that fits nicely with our reading from Isaiah, 'Come, thou long-expected Jesus'. Our second hymn is 'Hark, a thrilling voice is sounding'.

These can be heard by following the links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=fAGE1Es8IPs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EApbus3gBA>

Advent. The Advent course with Janet continues with consideration of Luke 2:15-20 and the Shepherds who were the first to hear the news of Jesus's birth from the angels. Silent night, Holy night with the words "son of God, love's pure light" reminded us of God's ability to light up our lives. Then from John 1:1-5 thinking about how God speaks to us today. Finally, from the carol "It came upon a Midnight Clear" a contemporary view of this part of the Christmas Story coming together.

Phone buddy system. As well as the prayer and support links available via the church website, don't forget that we also have a phone buddy system. If you would appreciate having someone to chat to please contact the church office in the usual way and we can arrange for someone to be in touch. Although we are not able to be together properly, the church family is still here for you.

Gold Pins. You may remember that after the APCM in October Rev. Andrew introduced special gold St. Peter and St. Paul pins which could be awarded to those who had gone above and beyond in supporting the church. The Standing Committee of David Phillipson, Susan Bailey, Lisa Geary, Haydn Langley and Pat Pankhurst received them together with Susan and Andrew Heron for their work with the children. Recently two of these pins were awarded to Ken and Gill Noon.

As many of you know, Ken and Gill have recently retired as vergers after more than 20 years of wonderful service. They are going to be a very hard act to follow! Although they did not want a fuss made of their retirement, the Standing Committee didn't want it to go unmarked so a letter of thanks was sent to them alongside their pins.

If you feel someone has provided exceptional service to our church family then you can nominate them to receive a Gold Pin by contacting the Standing Committee via the church office.

Coop Funding. Susan Bailey was delighted to represent the church at the Co-op Community Fund Payout on the 12th November. St Peter and St Paul church received a £3,339.07 share of the £10,427.35 total, with the Allotment Society and Infant Academy being the other recipients. Gladys, the Co-op's Member Pioneer, will be visiting the church as our plans develop to see the Welcome Area refurbishment progress for the benefit of all from babies to nonagenarians.

Christmas Family Trail. Over the summer our church took part in an interactive trail from Scripture Union. They have now organised a similar activity for Christmas as the local churches are unable to hold many of the usual family Christmas activities. So, if you would like to meet Mary, the shepherds, and the Wise Men from the Nativity Story then you will be able to do so from Friday 11th December. Running through to Christmas you can follow the **In Search of Christmas Family Trail** starting outside the Catholic church then picking up clues on the noticeboards outside the Baptist, URC and Parish churches. All you need is a smart phone to scan the QR codes then watch the short videos and look out for the hidden letters which will lead you to a final video that helps to explain what Christmas is all about.

Christmas lunches. Pat and Ashley will be cooking and delivering Christmas lunches to those in need over Christmas. Please contact Pat on 07811 492137 to arrange for an order form or she will talk you through this over the phone. Please also call if you can donate anything towards the lunches. These will be gratefully received. *Pat and Ashley Pankhurst*

Operation Christmas Child boxes will now have to be dropped off 12/13 December due to lockdown.