



### Readings and Collects Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December

**Reading:** Exodus 33: 7-11a

**Gospel:** John 21: 19b-end

**Wed 30<sup>th</sup>:** 1 John 2:12-17

Luke 2: 36-40

**Collect:** Merciful Lord, cast your bright beams of light upon the Church: that, being enlightened by the teaching of your blessed apostle and evangelist Saint John, we may so walk in the light of your truth that we may at last attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ your incarnate Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

**Post Communion Prayer:** Grant, O Lord, we pray, that the Word made flesh proclaimed by your apostle John may, by the celebration of these holy mysteries, ever abide and live within us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Readings and Collects Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

**Reading:** Jeremiah 31: 7-14

**Gospel:** John 1: 1-9, 10-18

**Wed 6<sup>th</sup>:** Isaiah 60: 1-6

**Epiphany:** Matthew 2: 1-12

**Collect:** God our Father, in love you sent your Son that the world may have life: lead us to seek him among the outcast and to find him in those in need, for Jesus Christ's sake.

**Amen**

**Post Communion Prayer:** All praise to you, almighty God and heavenly king, who sent your Son into the world to take our nature upon him and to be born of a pure virgin: grant that, as we are born again in him, so he may continually dwell in us and reign on earth as he reigns in heaven, now and for ever. **Amen**

### Hymns.

**20<sup>th</sup>:** 'O come, O come, Emmanuel' and 'The Angel Gabriel' ('Gabriel's message' from Luke's Gospel)

**24<sup>th</sup>:** 'On Christmas night all Christians sing' (Sussex carol) and 'Away in a manger'

**25<sup>th</sup>:** 'Once in royal David's city' and 'In the bleak midwinter' Watch on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/GPpy3XSk6c0>

**27<sup>th</sup>:** 'O come, all ye faithful' ('Adeste fideles') and 'O little town of Bethlehem'

**3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2021:** 'While shepherds watched' and 'Hark, the herald angels sing' (John's Gospel)

**Office closure.** The church office will be closed from 24<sup>th</sup> December through to 4<sup>th</sup> January, except for emergency calls and emails.

Please Keep Safe and Keep in Touch.

Merry Christmas, and a brighter 2021 to you all,

*Katie, Office Administrator and Susan Bailey, Churchwarden*

Social Media reminders:

Twitter (new!) @olneychurch

Facebook:

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

Church office: 01234 241721 email: [office@olney.church](mailto:office@olney.church)



Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Olney

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**



### Welcome and notices

**Reading:** 2 Samuel 7: 1-11, 16

**Gospel:** Luke 1: 26-30

**Wed 23<sup>rd</sup>:** Malachi 3: 1-4, 4.5-end

Luke 1: 57-66

**Collect:** Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Intercessions:** Just a few more 'sleeps' until Christmas.

Here are some Christmas season prayers for the next two weeks to celebrate God's goodness to us and also to remember those less fortunate than we are:

Holy Jesus, by being born as one of us and lying humbly in a manger, You show how much God loves the world. Let the light of Your love always shine in our hearts, until we reach our home in heaven, and see You on Your throne of glory. Lord Jesus Christ, Your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth: accept our heartfelt praise as we worship You, our Saviour and our eternal God. Loving Jesus, You were born in a stable and worshipped by the shepherds and angels. Be with all who celebrate but also with all who are sad, fearful and lonely; be with all who feel distant from celebrating at this time. Be for them a living hope that lightens their hearts.

Christ born for us, Son of God, given for us, help us to know You, to worship You, serve You and bless us and fill us with Your peace.

Jesus, for whom there was no room in the inn, give courage to all who are homeless. Christ, who fled into Egypt, give comfort to all refugees. Jesus, who fasted in the desert, give relief to all who are starving. Lord Jesus, who hung in agony on the cross, give strength to all who suffer. Lord in your mercy hear all these our prayers. **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, Lorraine and Rachel Lintern..*

**We remember the recently departed and pray for comfort for families and friends:** *Christopher Mann, Brenda Chennells, Pat Aitken and Stuart Briggs.*

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

**Eucharistic Prayer:** Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Listening Ear.** Please email [prayer@olney.church](mailto:prayer@olney.church) for prayers.

Some material included is

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**Funerals.** Patricia Aitken, 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Private event.

**Dear Church Family.** On behalf of the Standing Committee, the PCC, and Katie our Office administrator, David and Susan would like to thank you all for your support over the last 9 months. The Standing Committee has met on Zoom every Tuesday for the last 40 weeks and will continue to do so after our two-week break over Christmas. We have managed to produce a weekly sheet through all that time, and delivered it to your home. We understand from your feedback that it is welcomed and well read. Our Zoom church services and online resources have been well used and once we reopened we have welcomed hundreds of you back into church. Although we have had to comply with social distancing and Covid restrictions, and our services have been shorter and quieter than usual (with no hymns), we have all enjoyed the peacefulness of our church, the sharing of communion, and seeing old friends in person.

Although circumstances have been challenging, we have been able to support families at funerals, memorials and, for the first time this week, a wedding. Activities for the children have been well thought through and supported by young families, and will culminate on the 24<sup>th</sup> with the Nativity Trail. Please book if you wish to attend. It's so important and a government requirement at this time. On the upside, booking has been a new concept for us and it does mean we get to know everyone by name.

With many of you receiving your first vaccination this week, we hope and pray that we are almost back to normal by Easter. However, we will be mindful through your feedback that there may be a "new normal".

Now that Christmas approaches, a light in the darkness of this difficult year, **we have made you a Christmas present.** From midnight on Christmas Eve, it is with great joy that we bring you our **special online Christmas Day Service** from St Peter and St Paul Church, Olney. Hear the bells, see your church, your Rector, members of the ministry team, PCC and our choir in your own home. Join in and sing along. Go to <http://olney.church/christmas-service>. If you have no computer of your own, then perhaps a relative or friend can show you. It will also be available after Christmas for a while. More details of services on your Christmas Card. Please print and fold. Thank you, Janet, for the picture

We look forward to welcoming you back in the New Year. We send you our thanks, love, peace and prayers as you rejoice on this very special day. May you have a Happy and Blessed Christmas. *Susan and David, Churchwardens*

**Christmas Services.** The Ministry Team and Standing Committee have worked hard to ensure we can worship together in some form. This year's Christmas Services:

24<sup>th</sup> December 4pm Christmas Eve Nativity Trail

24<sup>th</sup> December 6.30pm Holy Communion for Christmas Eve

25<sup>th</sup> December 10am Christmas Day Holy Communion.

We welcome back the choir to sing at the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services

Going into the New Year:

27<sup>th</sup> December 10am Holy Communion

3<sup>rd</sup> January 10am Holy Communion

Places will need to be booked in the usual way. We ask that you choose **either the Christmas Eve OR Christmas Day** service so that as many of us as possible can be accommodated safely. Bookings for services between 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> December will be limited to 6 people per bubble to allow us to accommodate as many people as possible. Please can all bookings for services up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> January be made by the **22<sup>nd</sup> December** to allow the wardens to allocate seats. If you are **unable to attend** or are late booking, then you are asked to contact David Phillipson directly who will book you in. Seats are limited. Email [david.phillipson@olney.church](mailto:david.phillipson@olney.church) or call 07912059491.

**Nativity Trail.** Join us to experience the Christmas story in a new way. Walk from Church Street, through the church yard and then into our beautiful candle-lit church, visiting scenes from the Christmas story depicted by live actors. Follow the star, listen to the angels, meet the shepherds, come face to face with the wise men and finally visit the baby Jesus. As they start the trail children will be given a small craft gift that they add to at each scene, enabling them to take home a reminder of this miracle-filled story. Book your preferred starting time by contacting Katie at [office@olney.church](mailto:office@olney.church) or calling 01234 241721. Slots are available 4pm to 5pm, with each slot being 10 minutes long.

**Christmas lunches. Final call for those who would like to have their Christmas lunch delivered.** 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.*

**Advent Course - Comfort and Joy - A course for Advent.**

16<sup>th</sup> December Luke 1:46-55. The words we know as the Magnificat. To whom does Mary give credit for her being blessed? Hark the herald angels sing: such wonderful words of proclamation and praise. Think on the lines "Late in time behold him come," and "Hail the incarnate deity." Luke 1:67-70,76-79. God's plans take time. Do you get impatient with God sometimes? O little town of Bethlehem. The words "how silently, how silently" do not remind me of a stable with a young woman giving birth! Christ enters into human hearts. How did God enter yours - with a bang or silently?

Luke 2.28-32. We move on to the time when Mary and Joseph took Jesus to be blessed in the temple as the law required. In the Bleak Midwinter. The big question is what can we give to the Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ, not just at the time of Christmas giving, but every day?

There are other carols and Christmas hymns you can think of, and readings too. However, we may celebrate Christmas this year, hold fast to the focus.

**Advent Course – Feedback.** If you have been on the Zoom course or studied the materials at home, Janet would like your feedback. Did you enjoy it? Do you think any changes are needed? Would you like a Lent Course on Zoom or, if possible, in a home group? Those of us who have a copy of the materials for "Comfort and Joy" would like to pass them on. If you would like them please let us know through the office - [office@olney.church](mailto:office@olney.church) or 241721.