

Funerals. Stewart Briggs, 15th January. Private event.

Church closure. At the meeting of the Standing Committee held Tuesday evening by Zoom, I can confirm that a decision to extend the current closure of the church to all activities was agreed unanimously. We will meet again on Tuesday 12th January when we will review the position once again. I am pleased to report that the four people who were tested positive for COVID-19 after the service and recording on the 20th December, are all reported to be on the way to recovery. I am also very pleased to confirm that no new cases have been identified in the church family. Please stay safe and healthy. *David Phillipson, Senior Churchwarden*

New Evening Prayer service. As well as our weekly Wednesday morning prayers on Zoom we will now be offering an evening prayer service at 6pm each Sunday. To join in please get the link from the church website: <http://olney.church/zoom>. You can also phone in by calling **0131 460 1196** and entering the **passcode (427368)**. Evening Prayer will be delivered by various members of our Ministry team. It will be a nice way to connect with the wider church family again; especially for those of us who are having to shield again. The evening prayer sheet is available on the website alongside the Zoom link or delivered for those without computers. Do join in by phone.

Hymns for the week. For Epiphany we have 'As with gladness men of old' and for the baptism of Christ from Mark's Gospel we have 'Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you'. Follow the words in this gentle version. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2rOOLhSWJ0>.

Help and support. This week we have included an extra leaflet with a selection of helpline numbers in case you need extra support. You can also contact the church office or use the links on the website if you need anything; we are here for you even if we cannot be together in person.

Brian Lintern – Gold Pin Award. Back in August I wrote about Brian's enormous contribution to our church, after he announced he would stand down from the PCC and Fabric Committee. We have, over many years, been eternally grateful for his help, support and vast knowledge of all things fabric related. So, it is with great pleasure that I was able to call last month with his gold pin badge, which is given to people that have gone above and beyond, what is normally expected in the service of our church. Brian also received a letter of thanks for the sterling job he has done over the years. *Susan*

Church Mice competition winner. The first name out of the hat of those who had found all 10 Church Mice was Jeremy, whose tub of chocolates has been delivered by Andrew P-K.

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

Social Media reminders:

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

Facebook:

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

Church office: 01234 241721 email: office@olney.church



Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Olney

Sunday 10th January 2021

1st Sunday of Epiphany

Baptism of Christ

(Church Closed)



Welcome and notices

Reading: Genesis 1: 1-5

Gospel: Mark 1: 4-11

Wed 13th : Hebrews 2: 14-end

Mark 1: 29-39

Collect: Heavenly Father, at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son: may we recognize him as our Lord and know ourselves to be your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

Intercessions: On this Sunday when we remember the Baptism of Christ, our own baptisms and how by God we are cleansed from our sins: Creator God, we praise and worship You for Your infinite power and love. We thank You for Your forgiveness; that You have washed us clean and that You continue to inspire and refresh us with Your presence. Thank You for our own baptisms in Christ and for the fresh start that we have at the beginning of each new day. Lord, in Your mercy Hear Our Prayer. Ever present God, at the beginning of this New year we pray that You will fill us and all Your church throughout the world with Your Holy Spirit. Fill us with Your peace, love, hope and joy. Lord, in Your mercy.....

Compassionate God, mindful that Christians around the world worship and gather in many different settings and circumstances, we pray for Your church to know Your love and reach out not just to those who find faith easy but also to those who struggle with faith. Lord, in Your mercy..... Eternal God, we pray for our archbishops, bishops, clergy, lay ministers and every member of Your church to live life in 2021 envisioned and empowered by You to the glory of Your Name. Lord, in Your mercy.... King of kings and Lord of lords, come with power in Your world to make Your loving kindness and peace known and honoured in every land. We pray for peace across the nations of the world and for the leaders of the nations to make wise and just rulings and decisions. Lord, in Your mercy.... Compassionate God, be with all who are anxious, lonely, all who are struggling with life at this time through illness, uncertainly, stress or worries of any kind. Lord, in Your mercy...

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, Rachel Lintern and Lorraine.*

We remember the recently departed and pray for comfort for their families and friends: *Stewart Briggs and Barbara Trinder.*

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

Eucharistic Prayer: Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son: by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Some material included is

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Rector's letter. I am writing on the morning after the announcement made by the Prime Minister with regard to the new National Lockdown; it is so hard to not be able to see and be with loved ones, but safeguarding them, ourselves and others will always have to be our priority. I hope, trust and pray that all is as well as it can be for each one of you and that we can all help each other through this challenging time. Some ways to keep in touch with each other are to 'zoom', phone, make use of our weekly sheet and take part in services online. As well as various virtual church services and our Diocesan service on Sundays at 10.00am we also have our service of Wednesday Morning Prayer at 9.30am and a new service of Evening Prayer at 6pm each Sunday. Please join us if you can; details are on the weekly sheet and on our web site.

On the 6th January we will have celebrated the 'Epiphany' (the 'manifestation' or 'appearance' of God coming into the world) and the recognition of the baby Jesus by the Magi (and the world). This Sunday (the 10th) we will remember the Baptism of Christ, when the Father's voice from heaven declared Jesus to be God's beloved Son. Jesus of course did not need to be washed clean of any sin because He never sinned, but by being baptised He showed humankind how we can all be cleansed and forgiven by God and come to know that (by God's grace) we can all be the Father's beloved children.

Monday the 18th is the first day of the 'Week of Prayer for Christian Unity'. More about the week can be found here: https://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/591118/Home/News/Latest_news/Abiding_in_Christ.aspx. As a taster for the week, I include here two of the prayers from this helpful material:

"God our Father, you reveal to us your love through Christ and through our brothers and sisters. Open our hearts so that we can welcome each other with our differences and live in forgiveness. Grant us to live united in one body, so that the gift that is each person comes to light. May all of us together be a reflection of the living Christ"

"Thrice-Holy God, we thank you for having created and loved us. We thank you for your presence in us and in creation. May we learn to look upon the world as you look upon it, with love. In the hope of this vision, may we be able to work for a world where justice and peace flourish, for the glory of your Name."

It is good to remember that during these difficult and trying times we are not alone; we have God with us (Emmanuel), and we also have each other to stand by us and help us in our times of need. Let's look after one another in deed and prayer. Stay safe and God bless! *Andrew+*

Prayers and Chalking. Andrew P-K also tells us, that he has chalked the church door with the cross, letters C + B + M and the year 2021. All the crosses stand for Christ and the letters refer both to the initial letters of the Magi (Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar) and to the Latin words of blessing *Christus mansionem benedicat*, ("May Christ bless this house"). He also said the following prayer:

*"God of new beginnings, bless this church this new year;
Bless all who come and go through its doors.
May all who enter come in peace and bring joy;
May all who come to this door find welcome and peace;*

*May this church abound with love and joy
And may that love and joy overflow into the community and wider world In Jesus' name. Amen."*

Andrew has offered to say a similar prayer for your family and home, and would be happy to visit you outdoors (with or without chalk!) Send your address details and phone number to office@olney.church if you would like Andrew to call.

Book Launch and TV series from our own Kate Nicholas.

From this Thursday Kate's new series on Ephesians, *Living a Transformed Life*, is on TBN (Freeview channel 67 and Sky Channel 582). Watch at 7.00 pm on Thursday with repeats Fridays (3.05 pm) and Saturdays (11 am). It will also be available on demand through TBN - easily accessed through Kate's website <https://www.katenicholas.co.uk/>. Kate also has an exciting new book launch online at 7pm on 11th Feb, for her book *Soul's Scribe*. Spaces are filling up fast and she would like you to be able to join her. You can register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/book-launch-souls-scribe-connecting-your-story-with-gods-narrative-tickets-133252761597>.

A reminder of all our services and church groups during the church closure:

1st and 3rd Sunday of the month: Children's activity packs delivered to the younger members of our church. If you would like a pack, please let the office know by email.

2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month: YAGs Zoom meetings, with Sarah and Will from 7.30 to 9pm, with Sarah and Will from 7.30 to 9pm. If you have young people who would like to join them for first session next week, email the office with your contact details.

Every Wednesday at 9.30am: Zoom Morning Prayer. Telephone: 0203 481 5240 and enter the meeting ID: 825 0404 5581# or follow the link at <http://olney.church/zoom/>

Every Sunday at 6pm: Zoom Said Evening Prayer. Details overleaf.

All of these are run by members of our church family and offer us a chance to worship together, even if not quite in the way we are used to.

We also have available the services from our Diocese. These can be accessed via phone or online. Every week you can download the service and the order of service. For those without computers ring 01865 920930 and once connected dial 0 for the full version of the service, or dial 1 a short version of the service. Standard call rates apply. There will be a few seconds of silence before the service starts.

Website is <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19-2/livestream/>

All of these details can be found on the church website (<http://olney.church>) alongside Thoughts for the Day and links to all of our help and support groups.

Although the church is currently closed this will be reviewed weekly, as such details for the Sunday services for the 17th, 24th and 31st January are yet to be decided. We will update you via the weekly sheet and church website as soon as the church is able to open again.

**With another
lockdown happening,
please remember if
you're struggling and
you feel hopeless,
you're not alone!!**

**Can these helplines get shared far and
wide for those who may need someone to
talk to during this uncertain time?**

**Samaritans 116 123
Anxiety UK 03444 775 774
Mind 0300 123 3393
Calm 0800 58 58 58
Crisis text line (text)85258
Child-line 0800 11 11**

