

THIS WEEK'S READINGS AND DEDICATIONS

Monday 18 December

Psalm 40; Isaiah 38. 1-8; 21-22; Matthew 16. 13-end

Tuesday 19 December

Psalm 146; Isaiah 38. 9-20; Matthew 17. 1-13

Wednesday 20 December

Psalm 46; Isaiah 39 Matthew 17. 14-23

Thursday 21 December

Psalm 121; Zephaniah 1. 1-2: 3; Matthew 17. 22-end

Friday 22 December

Psalm 124; Zephaniah 3. 1-13; Matthew 18. 1-20

Saturday 23 December

Psalm 130 Zephaniah 3. 14-end; Matthew 18 21-end

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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BIDEFORD PARISH BULLETIN

Part of the Mission Community of
Bideford, Landcross, Littleham, Monkleigh and Weare Giffard

Our Purpose:

TO SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

SUNDAY 17 DECEMBER

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

U-CAN SUNDAY

9.30 am CELTIC COMMUNION
President: Rev'd Madeline Bray
Talk Rev'd Marisa Cockfield

11.15 am ENCOUNTER SERVICE

6.00 pm NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT—CHRISTMAS EVE

8.00 am SAID HOLY COMMUNION
President: Rev'd Chris Hutchins

9.30 am MORNING WORSHIP WITH HOLY COMMUNION
President: Rev'd Robin Pirrie
Talk: Rev'd Chris Hutchins

11.15 am ENCOUNTER CONTEMPORARY CAROL SERVICE

2.30 pm NATIVITY

4.00 pm NATIVITY

11.30 pm MIDNIGHT MASS
President: Rev'd Claire Rose-Casemore
Talk: Rev'd Robin Pirrie

If you would like to donate to the work and ministry of St Mary's Church, we would be very grateful. You can donate at the door using our contactless machine or post cash in the slot in the same unit. If you would like to find out about regular giving, then please speak to one of the clergy or one of the Church Wardens. Thank you for your kind generosity.

Dates of Events and Meetings

Mon 18 Dec 9.30 am Holy Dusters
Tues 19 10.30 am Holy Communion
2.00 pm Reflections Bring and Share Lunch
Wed 20 10.00 am Stay & Play
Thurs 21 6 pm St Marys' Choir singing at Affinity
Fri 22 10.30 am – 12.30 pm Winter Warmer (see below)
2.30 pm Nativity Rehearsal
Sat 23 8.00 am Morning Prayers
11.00 am Christmas Carols outside Bideford Baptist Church
2.00 pm Nativity rehearsal
Sun 24 8.00 am Said Holy Communion
9.30 am Morning Worship with Holy Communion
11.15 am Encounter Contemporary Carol Service
2.30 pm Nativity
4.00 pm Nativity
11.30 pm Midnight Mass
Mon 25 9.30 am Christmas Day Worship with Holy Communion

PRAYERS

Please remember the following church family in your prayers:
John Day, Gwynne Dendle, Martin Fishleigh, Hazel Taylor and Roger Phillips.

UCAN SUNDAY

Today is UCAN Sunday when any donations of food (tins, packets etc) or money, which is used to keep a store cupboard in Church to enable us to help those in need, would be very appreciated.

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS SERVICE – TODAY

The Nine Lessons and Carols Service tonight at St Mary's will be at the slightly earlier time this year of 6 pm. There will be mince pies and mulled wine following the Service.

We hope you will be able to join us.

A VERY UNUSUAL CHRISTMAS—18 DECEMBER

There will be a Carol Service at Holy Trinity Church, Weare Giffard, tomorrow at 7 pm.

It will be a mixture of mediaeval and country carols, readings, and the unexpected ...

There will also be mulled wine and refreshments. Donations toward the Lady Chapel repair will be gratefully received.

STAY AND PLAY—20 DECEMBER

There will be a Stay and Play session on Wednesday, 20 December from 10 am to 12 noon for children under 5 and their carers. (Siblings up to age 8 also welcome.)

I 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.
For 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.

THE SECOND READING – John 1. 6–8 and 19–28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

The Testimony of John the Baptist

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said,

'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
"Make straight the way of the Lord",
as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

There will be toys, craft table, songs, parachute games etc.

There is no charge to attend, although a voluntary contribution of £2 to cover refreshments would be very welcome.

CAROL SINGING AT AFFINITY— 21 DECEMBER

If you would like to hear, and join in with, some lovely carols, come along to Affinity on Thursday 21 December at 6 pm where St Mary's Choir will be singing.

WINTER WARMER - 22 DECEMBER

There will be no Friday Diner on 22 or 29 December, but we will be having a Winter Warmer on 22 December, serving tea, coffee, juice, homemade soup and a roll, and pudding from 10.30 am – 12.30 pm. Hopefully we will be able to do the same on 29 December so watch this space.

A QUIET CHRISTMAS SERVICE – FRIDAY 22 DECEMBER AT 6PM—HOLY TRINITY, WEARE GIFFARD

A gentle Christmas service for the bereaved, estranged and those going through a tough time.

If you would like to go to this Service and need a lift, please speak to Robin Pirrie, or let the office know.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS—23 DECEMBER

If you miss out on the Affinity carols (or would like a double dose after Affinity!) there will be Christmas Carols outside Bideford Baptist Church on Saturday 23 December at 11 am.

ENCOUNTER CONTEMPORARY CAROL SERVICE

Please join us if you can on 24 December at 11.15 am for the Encounter Contemporary Carol Service.

There will be lively carols, though-provoking readings and a short talk.

NATIVITY—24 DECEMBER

The Nativity will at 2.30 pm, then again at 4 pm.

Expect the usual festive fun as we tell the Christmas story. Come dressed as shepherds, angels, wise men, etc. Get your tea towels & angel wings ready - grown ups and children alike!

MIDNIGHT MASS—24 DECEMBER

Please join us at 11.30 pm as we welcome in Christmas morning with a reflective service which includes Holy Communion.

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP SERVICE

Everyone is very welcome at our special 9.30 am Christmas Day Service with carols.

DAVE SPARKES' CHRISTMAS RAVE

If you live alone and are on your own on Thursday 28 December at 5 pm, you are very welcome to Dave's Rave.

Nibbles supplied but please bring something to drink. Please let me know if you would like to come. Lorna 477117

TABI HUTCHINS' THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Originally planned for May 2020 and then repeatedly postponed for various reasons, we are finally having a Thanksgiving service for Tabi! It's on Sunday 14 January 2024 as part of the Encounter service (11.15am). All who care for Tabi and would like to celebrate her with us are very welcome. There will be light refreshments (and probably cake!) after the service. Chris and Rachael Hutchins

CHRISTMAS CARDS

The pigeonholes at the back of the church are groaning under the weight of Christmas cards! Please check to see if any are for you. Thank you.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE FRIDAY DINER

Firstly, a huge thank you to everyone who has supported the Friday Diner this year, with cooking, supplying of soup, meals and puddings, and donations of socks for Christmas goody bags – you are all brilliant and it really is appreciated by the volunteers and everyone who comes to eat and enjoy company every week.

Now another ask - we are asking if anyone would like to join our Friday Diner Team, not every week but every other week or once a month. We have various roles that make up the team from working in the kitchen and using the cooker; serving tea, coffee and squash; waitressing and talking to the folk coming in, and there is a rota, so we know who is helping and when.

The numbers of people coming in varies each week from 26 to 42 and there are more folk coming in to just enjoy the company of others rather eat on their own. We set up at 9.30 am approximately, serve meals from 11.15 - 1.00 pm, and try to leave before 2.15 pm.

This is a part of St Mary's mission to reach the wider community of Bideford, so if you feel that this is something you would like to help with, are able to help with or know more about, then come into the Diner on a Friday to see what we do or talk to Richard James, Pam Howlett or Ro Day.

SUNDAY 17 DECEMBER– THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

COLLECT

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way
of your Son:
give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice,
and to suffer for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE FIRST READING – Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11 **The Good News of Deliverance**

The 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;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to 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.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

For 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.
Their 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.