

20 DECEMBER – CAROL SINGING OUTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

Churches Together will be Carol singing on Saturday 20 December at 11 am on the Baptist Church forecourt, Mill Street, accompanied by the Town Band.

Everyone is welcome to attend and join in.

BISHOP OF CREDITON, THE RIGHT REVEREND MOIRA ASTIN PREACHING ON SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER AT 9.30 AM SERVICE

The Right Reverend Moira Astin, Bishop of Crediton will be preaching at the 9.30 am service on Sunday 21 December.

Sharon Tavener and Karen Johns will also be commissioned as Anna Chaplains during the service.

SOCKS!

At Christmas we like to give our guests at the Friday Diner a small Goody Bag. We would therefore be most grateful for donations of new Men's winter socks. Please leave in the crate at the back of the Church or hand to one of the helpers. Thank you. Lorna

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

There is still time for anyone who would like to give a monetary donation towards the 40 Christmas gifts Maggie Murray is organising for families in need at St. Mary's School, from our church family. Please give whatever you can in an envelope to Debbie or Karen in the Church Office. Many thanks, Maggie Murray.

RING FOUND IN DISABLED TOILET

A ring has been handed in to the office which was found in the disabled toilet. If it is yours, please let the office know.

We also have a man's gold ring which was found in church several years ago, but no-one came forward about it. If this might be yours, please let the office know.

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Team Rector:

Rev'd Claire Rose-Casemore 01237 475765

Rev'd Ruth Beckett 01237 439584

Rev'd Robin Pirrie 07584 261686

Rev'd Alan Glover: (Bishop's Licence) 01237 451147

Rev'd Madeline Bray (Bishop's Licence) 01237 477488

Churchwardens: Sally Strutt 01271 329177

Justine Duhig 07941 912090

Parish Administrator: Debbie Crawford 01237 472551

Assistant Karen Johns

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator: Pattie Morris 01237 476501 or 07984 937179

Lift enquiries Karen Johns 07368 637664

Director of Music: Chris Beechey 01237 420652

Bell Tower Captain: Kate Wills 07768 934677

Church Office opening hours: 9 am–12 noon, Mon–Fri 472551

St Mary's House, 9 Church Walk, Bideford. EX39 2BP

Email: admin@stmaryschurchbideford.org

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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 14 DECEMBER 2025 THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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|----------|---|
| 8 am | Said Holy Communion
President: Rev'd Robin Pirrie |
| 9.30 am | All Age Service
President: Rev'd Claire Rose- Casemore |
| 11.15 am | Encounter and Communion
President: Rev'd Madeline Bray |
| 6 pm | Nine Lessons and Carols
President: Rev'd Claire Rose- Casemore |

(11 am Celtic Communion, Landcross – Rev'd Robin Pirrie)

SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER 2025 THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 9.30 am | Morning Worship with H.Communion, and Junior Church
President: Rev'd Claire Rose-Casemore
Talk: Bishop of Crediton, The Right Reverend Moira Astin |
| 11.15 am | Encounter Carols |

(11 am Holy Communion, Littleham – Rev'd Ruth Beckett)

(6 pm Carol Service, Weare Gifford - Rev'd Ruth Beckett)

This church currently has a policy of not taking collections during services.

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

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.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 35 1-10

The Return of the Redeemed to Zion

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.
Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
'Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.'
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 11.2-11

Messengers from John the Baptist

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

Jesus Praises John the Baptist

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,
"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you."

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

DATES OF EVENTS AND MEETINGS THIS WEEK

Mon 15 Dec	9 am -7 pm Monkleigh School Carol Concert & Nativity
Tues 16 Dec	10.30 am Holy Communion 2 pm Reflections Christmas Social
Wed 17 Dec	9.30 am Music Makers 11.30 am Moreton Court Communion 3.30 pm Messy Church
Thurs 18 Dec	11 am Highwood Carol Service 2 pm St Marys School Christingle Service 4-5.30 pm Crypt Youth (7-11s) 5.30-7 pm Crypt Youth (12-16s)
Fri 19 Dec	11.15 am-1 pm Friday Diner Christmas Lunch
Sat 20 Dec	8 am Morning Prayer 9.30 am Nativity rehearsal 11 am Churches Together Carol singing outside Baptist Church
Sun 21 Dec	9.30 am Morning Worship with Communion, and Junior Church 11.15 am Encounter

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS SERVICE TONIGHT

Don't forget it's our special Nine Lessons and Carols Service tonight at 6 pm.

The service will be by candlelight and, following the service, there will be mulled wine and mince pies at the back of church.

VALERIE REED'S FUNERAL AND THANKSGIVING SERVICES

For anyone who would like to attend Valerie's funeral, it will take place on Friday 19 December at 12.15 pm at North Devon Crematorium.

There will also be a Thanksgiving Service for Valerie on Friday 16 January 2026 at 2.30 pm in St Mary's Church.