

A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL



South Cotswold Team Ministry

St. Mary's Church Fairford

Newsletter Sunday 25th December and Sunday 1st January

As from Sunday 8th January the Newsletter will have a new format. The last Sunday of the month will be a full Newsletter and the other weeks just Services, Notices and Prayer Ministry. This is for a trial period only. Please let us know how you find it – positive or negative! – once you've had a chance to experience a full month.

Heather will send out the dates when articles are required for the last month when she returns to the office after Christmas. Heather says - Thank you to all those who contribute I couldn't produce it without your input.

Services

Christmas Eve

3.00 pm 'Quiet' Crib Service

5.00 pm Crib Service

11.30 pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

8.00 am BCP Holy Communion

10.00 am Sung Christmas Communion

Sidespeople: Jilly Connell and Mary Mawle

Readings: Mike Godsall Intercessions: Janet Edwards

Offertory: Heather Gorton and Sally Salter

No coffee

Thursday 29th December - No communion.

New Year's Day – The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus

8.00 am BCP Holy Communion

10.00 am Common Worship Holy Communion

Sidespeople: Heather Gorton and Michelle Harris

Readings: Linda Atherton Intercessions: Alison Godsall

Offertory: David and Sally Salter

Coffee: Janet Edwards and Beth Bruce Gardner

Thursday 5th January
10.30 am Holy Communion

Online worship: Rev Caroline broadcasts 9am Morning Prayer Monday-Thursday and Saturday) via Facebook. www.facebook.com/stmarysfairford

From Caroline: 01285 712467

Christmas readings: Isaiah 52.7-10; Hebrews 1.1-4; John 1.1-14

I was chatting with my husband Paul recently about Christmas films. About how they seem to fall into different categories. The first are films that just get ‘attached to Christmas because that’s when they always seem to be shown, like *The Great Escape*, or *Zulu*, or *The Sound of Music*. The second are films that are set at Christmas, even though they seem to have very little to do with the season, like *Die Hard*. But the third are Christmas films that are actually *about* Christmas – that deal with not just the holiday, but with the deep concepts and emotions that Christmas holds.

In that third category, we agreed, the very best Christmas films are the ones that have genuine darkness in them. Films like *It’s a Wonderful Life*, or *Holiday Inn*, which are set in post-war worlds with people still suffering terrible after-effects from that conflict. Or indeed that most iconic of Christmas stories, whether in novel or any of its numerous film versions, *A Christmas Carol*, where we see the true and genuine darkness of Scrooge’s penny-pinching life.

These films speak so deeply to us in this season because Christmas is about darkness as well as light. Jesus being born among us is so important and world-shaking because he is light in darkness, “the light that is coming into the world”. As we hear in John’s Gospel – “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” The reason for the joy and celebration of Christmas is because we are so aware of how much we need it. How much we need hope and light to counter despair.

This Christmas season I pray that we all, and all our communities and friends, may hear something of this message of hope: that they may find themselves lifted and strengthened by this story of a God who is love, and the power of light over darkness. And I pray that we may feel it and live it – a proof against despair and cynicism, and a call to purpose and action.

The darkness is real, and hard, and the mid-winter may indeed be bleak. But the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not, and will not, overcome it.

Rev’d Caroline

From Heather

Email address: fairfordpcc@gmail.com or heathergorton31@gmail.com.

Telephone: 01285 712428

My office hours are 10.00 to 1.00 Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
I am also continuing to work from home so you can contact me at either the office (712611) or home (712428). The office is closed on Mondays and Michelle will be in on Fridays from 10.00 to 12.00.

Do please keep sending in your articles, photos and amusing stories! Favourite recipes or garden tips welcome – I do need your input!

The office will be closed from Friday 23rd December and re-open on Tuesday 3rd January. If there is anything urgent please do contact me at home.

Contacts

Rev'd Caroline 01285 712467

Rev'd Canon Denise Hyde 01285 713285

Mike Godsal 01285 713101

Christine Benzie 01285 713395

Wendy Graham 01285 711765

Please remember the following in your prayers:

Those who are ill: Grace Slack, Pat Russell

Those who have died: Eileen Godwin, Rosemary Burridge, Lisa Chaundy

NOTICES

Vicar's downtime

Denise and I will both be taking some time off after Christmas. I will be down in Somerset with my family for most of the week following Christmas Day, and will be returning ready for Sunday services on the 1st January. Any vital communications should go to our churchwardens, Mike or Christine in the first instance. If I don't see you on Christmas Day, have a wonderful Christmas, and a very happy New Year!

Advent Drinks Party

We now have a final total for the takings. It is £1570 and 60 pence. We are incredibly grateful for such generous support for what was a very happy occasion, Mike and Alison

Messy Church

Messy Church is having a break in December. Our next Messy Church will be on 8 January at 4pm. For more details please contact Sarah Bottomley on 01285712074 or stmaryslmt@gmail.com

Home-Start Cotswolds are running a 'Baby and Me' postnatal group at Fairford Library on Fridays, 11am to 12.30pm. Each week we cover a different topic, eg. sleep, feeding, play and communication. If you have a baby aged 0-6 months, please call 01285 885391 or email Groups@home-start-cotswolds.org.uk to book your place.

Advent Trail

From now until Christmas there is an Advent Trail in the garden of Fairford United Church open all day. Adults and children are welcome but children must be accompanied by an adult. There is lots to see and do so we hope you can come and share the experience.

Diane Routledge

The Flower Team are decorating the church on Thursday afternoon. Our very grateful thanks to them all for taking time off during a busy week to make the Church look Christmassy!

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Prayers from St Mary's – Rev'd Caroline's Morning Prayer every day except Friday and Sunday from 9.00 am - <http://www.facebook.com/stmarysfairford>

Community Prayers

Please note that from **Monday, 2nd January 2023** the time of Community Prayers will be changing from 6pm to 5pm.

All are welcome to come and pray together for the world, the nation and our community along with any prayer requests that are placed in our prayer box in the Lady Chapel. We meet for about 30 minutes in the Chancel and please use the north door.

Daily Hope from the Church of England - A good option for worship if you can't access the internet. It is a free phone number where you have the option of the prayer for today, hymn for today and reflections. Telephone 0800 804 8044 Sent by Andrena Miles.

Christian healing is God meeting us at our point of need. (Bishop Maddocks)

Mary Mawle 01285 712174

Ann Nicholls 01285 713063

Rev'd Denise 01285 713285. denisehyde15@gmail.com

From Ann Nicholls



Remy where has our water gone?" "I don't know Yoda but we don't have to prove it, our Mums know we can walk on water.

Father God, I give today's troubles to you. With renewed hope I want to exchange my independence for God-dependence. I want to stop striving to be self sufficient so I can embrace the hope and peace of being God sufficient. I pray in Jesus name, AMEN

Christmas Prayer Tree

You are invited to write a label for someone that you will miss or not see this Christmas and to tie it on the Christmas tree in the church porch. Labels are provided in the basket next to the tree. If you would like someone to be remembered and are unable to come to the church yourself, please contact Rev'd Denise on 01285 713285 or email denisehyde15@gmail.com who will write a label for you on your behalf.

A warm friendly place in the Heritage Room in the Community Centre is open for people to spend time in during the colder months. The room is open Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 2.00 pm. Free wi-fi is available and the kitchen is there for anyone who wants to make a hot drink. The Community Centre will be closed from Friday 23rd December and re-opens on Tuesday 3rd January.



W4W

Newsletter



Contact details Mary Ann
Wellbeing Coordinator
coordinator@working4wellbeing.org.uk
07555738138

December

The Fairford Talking Cafe is every Wednesday 11am-12:30pm in the Farmor room in Fairford Community Centre.

The Lechlade Talking Cafe is taking place in Lechlade Baptist Church every Thursday 10:30am- 12pm.

Digital drop ins

Fairford 09:30am-10:30am Every Tuesday Fairford Community Centre or by appointment.

Lechlade 10am Lechlade Baptist Church or by appointment.

Events

Fundraising Dinner at Colosseo – Monday 5th December

Thanks very much to our volunteers David and Alison who have organised a fundraising dinner and raffle on Monday 5th December to raise money for Working 4 Wellbeing. Tickets are being sold for £25, which includes a starter and main course, with £5 of this being donated to our charity. Please contact them to book your place: 01285 713182/ amw13@btinternet.com

Wellbeing walks- Two of our W4W volunteers have been organising walks around Fairford. The day and time does change due to weather but if this is something that you would enjoy please get in contact and get emails of when the group is meeting for a stroll.

We have a series of fun activities and entertainments planned for the Talking Café through December, so please do feel free to come and join in even if you aren't on the rota to volunteer:

Wednesday 7th December John Read is bringing his choir to sing us some traditional carols

Wednesday 14th December Mindsong are coming for a more informal singalong

Wednesday 21st December Christmas Party with Secret Santa, bingo, festive food and music and raffle (NB: if coming along please bring a wrapped secret santa gift with you, pre-loved items in good condition are very welcome)

Christmas Lunch if you are alone at Christmas and would like to join the Christmas lunch at the Community Centre please contact Amanda or Mervyn Cully. Tel: 01285 712700 Mobs: Amanda 07960 485946, Mervyn 07773 557846 Email: cully.amanda@gmail.com

Christmas Shut down W4W will be Closed from 26th December until 2nd January

Shopping Trip

W4W has now put on two successful shopping trips. We were very lucky to secure the Lions Mini bus and a great Volunteer driver and we went off to do some Christmas shopping. Our Volunteer Driver has said that he will put on more trips at our request. Have a think of where you would like to go and let the W4W team know.

Thank You

Thanks to Fairford Co-op for their support of the Men's Shed, providing refreshments each week to help keep the busy workers fuelled up. Chair of the Shedders, Malcolm Cutler, popped down with Mary Ann to present them with a certificate of thanks.

Live Music at the Talking Cafe

We were delighted to welcome Jay Matthews and her band of musicians who played us some tunes at the cafe on Wednesday 9th November. She is keen to join forces with us again for a Memory Lane Singalong next February and has asked for volunteers to help serving refreshments at the event. One event will be at St Birinus Court in Lechlade, and the other will be at Beaumont Place in Fairford. Specific dates to be confirmed, but both events will take place on a Friday morning at 11.30am for one hour. Could you help with this? Contact me on 07385 489303.



Saint Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first live nativity scene in 1223 in order to cultivate the worship of Christ. He himself had recently been inspired by his visit to the Holy Land, where he'd been shown Jesus's traditional birthplace.

From Alison Hobson

From the Wilts and Glos Standard 1 January 1887

Christmas Day at the Parish Church: When the ringers had sounded forth their midnight welcome to the great winter festival they rightly conjectured that it would be an old-fashioned Christmas Day. Bright frosty air greeted those who assembled in a goodly number to attend the early celebration of Holy Communion at eight o'clock. The service at 11am was fully choral and the choir of 10 men and 18 boys were for the first time for many and year vested in the ancient garment of the singers of the Church of God, hallowed by the usage of three thousand years. It is a matter of some interest to record that this restoration of the choir was accomplished by the unanimous desire of the parishioners, and by the cordial and constant interest of the members of the choir themselves. Every surplice was given and made 'for love' by parishioners and friends, and more than one individual sacrificed their own personal feelings for the good of the church, and the decency and order of the public worship of God. The anthem was 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord', the soprano solo being well and sweetly sung by Arthur Ruddy. The second celebration of Holy Communion was as equally well attended as the earlier. A short and bright evensong, with carols was held at four o'clock. The decorations of the church were very effective. Choice flowers from Devonshire were worked up by Miss E M Iles into a most chaste canopy for the font, whilst the reredos, pulpit, lectern and prayer desk were ornamented with such other

floral offerings as were available. The traditional holly and ivy were everywhere used with good effect. Altogether the great festival of the Incarnation of our Lord in 1886 was a red letter day in the annals of Fairford church.

This lovely snowy photograph was taken by Lynn Bateman last week



Fairford Park 1906



What is the history of Fairford house?

This was what Verey described as 'an almost perfect Restoration composition' of house, garden and park, built next to the church and village of Fairford. Its formal Franco-English style was altered in the 18th century, first to a Rococco style and then to the landscape style. The mansion was demolished in 1957 and Farmors School was built on the site.

The Twelve Days of Christmas Meaning of Each Gift

1. On the First Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me: A Partridge in a Pear Tree.

The partridge in a pear tree represents Jesus, the Son of God, whose birthday we celebrate on the first day of Christmas. Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge, the only bird that will die to protect its young.

2. On the Second Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me: Two Turtledoves.

These twin birds represent the Old and New Testaments. So in this gift, the singer finds the complete story of the Christian faith and God's plan for the world. The doves are the biblical roadmap that is available to everyone.

3. On the Third Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me: Three French Hens.

These birds represent faith, hope, and love. This gift hearkens back to 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter written by the Apostle Paul.

4. On the Fourth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me: Four Calling Birds.

One of the easiest facets of the song's code to figure out, these fowl are the four Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

5. On the Fifth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me: Five Gold Rings.

The gift of the rings represents the first five books of the Old Testament, known as the Torah or the Pentateuch.

6. On the Sixth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me: Six Geese a-Laying.

These lyrics can be traced back to the first story found in the Bible. Each egg is a day in creation, a time when the world was "hatched" or formed by God.

7. On the Seventh Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me: Seven Swans a-Swimming.

It would take someone quite familiar with the Bible to identify this gift. Hidden in the code are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, and compassion. As swans are one of the most beautiful and graceful creatures on earth, they would seem to be a perfect symbol for the spiritual gifts.

8. On the Eighth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me:

Eight Maids-a-Milking.

As Christ came to save even the lowest of the low, this gift represents the ones who would receive his word and accept his grace. Being a milkmaid was about the worst job one could have in England during this period; this code conveyed that Jesus cared as much about servants as he did those of royal blood. The eight who were blessed included the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

9. On the Ninth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me:

Nine Ladies Dancing.

These nine dancers were really the gifts known as the fruit of the Spirit. The fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

10. On the Tenth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me:

Ten Lords a-leaping.

This is probably the easiest gift to understand. As lords were judges and in charge of the law, this code for the Ten Commandments was fairly straightforward.

11. On the Eleventh Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me:

Eleven Pipers Piping.

This is almost a trick question, as most think of the disciples in terms of the dozen. But when Judas betrayed Jesus there were only eleven men who carried out the gospel message.

12. On the Twelfth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me:

Twelve Drummers Drumming.

The final gift is tied directly to the Catholic Church. The drummers are the 12 points of doctrine in the Apostles' Creed. "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day, he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

(I expect quite a few of you know this hilarious version but for those that haven't read it before – have a good laugh!)

Twelve Days of Christmas by John Julius Norwich

25th December.

My dearest darling,

That partridge, in that lovely little pear tree! What an enchanting, romantic, poetic present! Bless you and thank you.

Your deeply loving Emily.

26th December.

Mr dearest darling Edward,

The two turtle doves arrived this morning and are cooing away in the pear tree as I write. I'm so touched and grateful.

With undying love, as always, Emily.

27th December.

My darling Edward,

You do think of the most original presents: whoever thought of sending anybody three French hens? Do they really come all the way from France? It's a pity that we have no chicken coops, but I expect we'll find some. Thank you, anyway, they're lovely.

Your loving Emily.

28th December.

Dearest Edward,

What a surprise - four calling birds arrived this morning.

They are very sweet, even if they do call rather loudly they make telephoning impossible. But I expect they'll calm down when they get used to their new home.

Anyway, I'm very grateful - of course I am.

Love from Emily.

29th December.

Dearest Edward,

The postman has just delivered five most beautiful gold rings, one for each finger, and all fitting perfectly. A really lovely present - lovelier in a way than birds, which do take rather a lot of looking after. The four that arrived yesterday are still making a terrible row, and I'm afraid none of us got much sleep last night. Mummy says she wants us to use the rings to 'wring' their necks - she's only joking, I think; though I know what she means. But I love the rings. Bless you.

Love, Emily.

30th December.

Dear Edward,

Whatever I expected to find when I opened the front door this morning, it certainly wasn't six socking great geese laying eggs all over the doorstep. Frankly, I rather hoped you had stopped sending me birds we have no room for them and they have already ruined the croquet lawn. I know you meant well, but let's call a halt, shall we?

Love, Emily.

31st December.

Edward,

I thought I said no more birds; but this morning I woke up to find no less than seven swans all trying to get into our tiny goldfish pond. I'd rather not think what happened to the goldfish. The whole house seems to be full of birds - to say nothing of what they leave behind them. Please, please STOP.

Your Emily.

1st January.

Frankly, I think I prefer the birds. What am I to do with eight milkmaids - AND their cows? Is this some kind of a joke? If so, I'm afraid I don't find it very amusing.

Emily

2nd January.

Look here Edward, this has gone far enough. You say you're sending me nine ladies dancing; all I can say is that judging from the way they dance, they're certainly not ladies. The village just isn't accustomed to seeing a regiment of shameless hussies with nothing on but their lipstick cavorting round the green - and it's Mummy and I who get blamed. If you value our friendship - which I do less and less - kindly stop this ridiculous behaviour at once.

Emily

3rd January.

As I write this letter, ten disgusting old men are prancing about all over what used to be the garden before the geese and the swans and the cows got at it; and several of them, I notice, are taking inexcusable liberties with the milkmaids.

Meanwhile the neighbours are trying to have us evicted. I shall never speak to you again.

Emily

4th January.

This is the last straw. You know I detest bagpipes. The place has now become something between a menagerie and a madhouse and a man from the Council has just declared it unfit for habitation. At least Mummy has been spared this last outrage; they took her away yesterday afternoon in an ambulance.

I hope you're satisfied.

5th January.

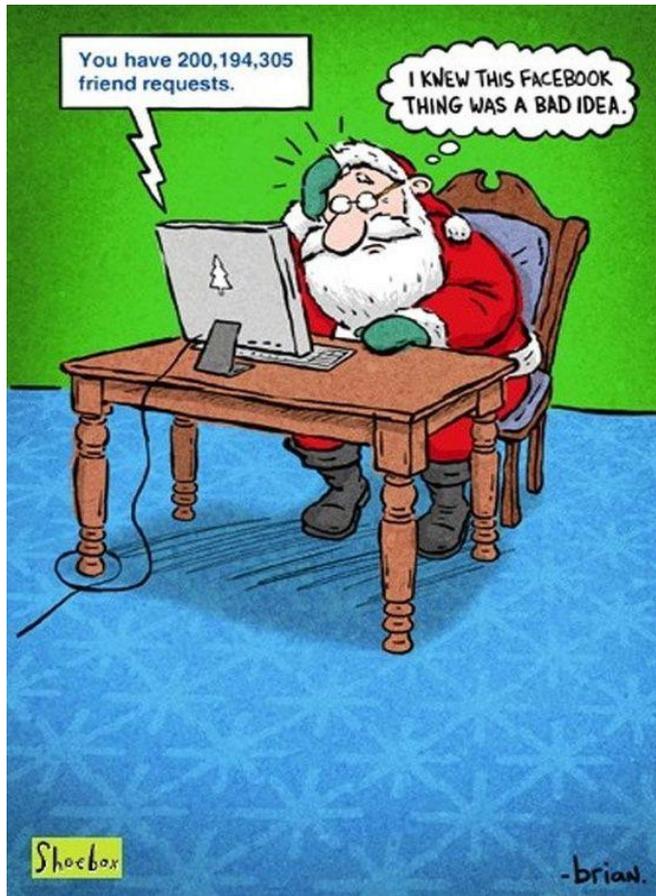
Sir,
Our client, Miss Emily Wilbraham, instructs me to inform you that with the arrival on her premises a half-past seven this morning of the entire percussion section of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and several of their friends she has no course left open to her but to seek an injunction to prevent your importuning her further. I am making arrangements for the return of much assorted livestock.

I am, Sir, Yours faithfully,
G. CREEP
Solicitor-at-law

A Little Poem for Seniors

A Little Poem For Seniors, so true it hurts!
Another year has passed
And we're all a little older.
Last summer felt hotter
And winter seems much colder.
There was a time not long ago
When life was quite a blast.
Now I fully understand
About 'Living in the Past'
We used to go to weddings,
Football games and lunches..
Now we go to funeral homes
And after-funeral brunches.
We used to go out dining,
And couldn't get our fill.
Now we ask for doggie bags,
Come home and take a pill.
We used to often travel
To places near and far.
Now we get sore asses
From riding in the car.
We used to go to nightclubs
And drink a little booze.
Now we stay home at night
And watch the evening news.
That, my friend is how life is,
And now my tale is told.
So, enjoy each day and live it up...
Before you're too damned old!





As you see this photo was, I presume, taken in December 2018 (the star is up) The church looked just the same last week!



NO NEWSLETTER NEXT WEEK