



St. Luke's Church, Maidenhead

www.stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk

[This sheet is also available on the above website]

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Week Commencing: 24th December, Advent 4 / Christmas Eve

A very Happy Christmas to everyone, and prayers for a peaceful and healthy new year.

This week we have a 10am Parish Communion. There will be an activity for any children present. In the evening we have two Crib services again – at 4pm for younger children and 5pm for older families. Our 'Midnight' Mass is at 10pm.

The Collect for Advent 4

God our redeemer,
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of your Son:
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our
saviour, so we may be ready to greet him
when he comes again as our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

The Collect for Christmas Day

Almighty God,
you have given us your only-begotten Son
to take our nature upon him
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:
grant that we, who have been born again
and made your children by adoption and grace,
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you...

The Collect for Christmas 1

Almighty God,
who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,
so we may share the life of his divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Post Communion for Advent 4

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.

Post Communion for Christmas Day

God our Father,
whose Word has come among us
in the Holy Child of Bethlehem:
may the light of faith illumine our hearts
and shine in our words and deeds;
through him who is Christ the Lord.

Post Communion for Christmas 1

Heavenly Father
Whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life
of an earthly home:
help your Church to live as one family
united in love and obedience,
and bring us all at last to our home in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord

First Reading for Advent 4

¹Now when David, the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' ³Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.'

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' ⁸Now therefore you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you, David, that the Lord will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16

Gospel Reading for Advent 4

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' ³⁴Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1.26-38

First reading for Christmas 1

¹⁰I 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. ¹¹For 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. ¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. ²The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory;

and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. ³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. *Isaiah 61. 10-62.3*

Gospel reading for Christmas 1

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.'

¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

²¹After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. *Luke 2. 15-21*

Sunday's Hymns:

79	O little town of Bethlehem	85	The Angel Gabriel
315	Sing we of the blessed mother	313	For Mary, mother of our Lord
394	Tell out my soul!		

Hymns for 31st December

80	Of the father's Heart begotten	77	Lully lulla
59	Angels from the realms of glory	76	Love came down at Christmas
666	I cannot tell		

Thought for the week:

If you are feeling tired and worn out with all the preparations for the Christmas celebrations, and concerned about the state of the world, perhaps a thought about the first Christmas might help.

Mary was an unmarried mother, facing that stigma, alongside the gruelling journey to Bethlehem to take part in a census. One story suggests that when she and Joseph arrived at his family home the relatives took one look at her swollen belly and, knowing that the marriage had not yet taken place, sent the expectant couple round the back to the stable. Unwelcome, cast out. After the birth they then also fled even further to escape Herod's slaughter of the innocents – becoming refugees in Egypt.

Israel was in an unsettled time with Roman occupiers and harsh taxation. Would Joseph still have a job to return to?

People were desperate for relief from the drudgery of everyday life and looked for a saviour.

Life was harsh for many people – nationally and personally.

We could say, *plus ça change*.

And that is why God became incarnate. Not to bring heaven to earth but to lift earth to heaven. To know just what it was like to live a human life and to identify wholly with humanity.

As we remember Jesus being born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago, so he is also reborn in each one of us again today, if we will allow him to be.



As Christmas festivities are cancelled in Bethlehem, we are invited to join....

SERVICE OF LAMENT - LIVE FROM BETHLEHEM



4pm GMT (6pm in Bethlehem), Saturday 23

December Livestream from Lutheran Christmas Church, Bethlehem

Join with Christians around the world this Christmas in a Liturgy of Lament to mourn immense suffering in the Holy Land amid this current crisis. Central to this liturgy of lament is the message that God is with those who suffer and if Jesus was born today, he would be born “under the rubble”. The service will be livestreamed from the Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem and will include a sermon by Revd Munther Isaac.

[Find out more](#)

Prayer suggestions for this week:

- For our keeping of a holy and joyful Christmas, and healthy and peaceful New Year.
- For those who are living on the breadline and on our streets, for shelter and support
- For the people of Israel and Palestine, for an end to the violence there and for strength for all those who are suffering loss and fear. For our sisters and brothers in the Jewish and Muslim communities of our own town, especially those worried for loved ones.
- For peace in Ukraine and Russia, and of Sudan, and also in Armenia and Ethiopia.
- For our schools, for rest and re-creation for staff and learners.
- For a new church music leader.
- For our growth in faith and for the developing Alpha team. For God to be moving guests to join the course next year.
- For all those whose anniversary of baptism falls in December: Herbie Prater, Lily Edmonds and Arlo Ridley.
- For all those who live and work in Colby Gardens
- The sick and their carers : Monica Olley, Ann Hockham, Valerie Bosley, Pat Botting, Phyllis Sigsworth, Jean Jackson, Iris Brown, Lorraine, Emily Holmes.
- Those who have died recently, and those who mourn them.
- Those whose anniversary of death falls in December: John Sheppard, Denis Rayfield, Beryl Jenkins, Evelyn Rose, Roy Horsham, John Norris, Margaret Swanborough, Joan Parker, Dorothy Scott, Penelope Hutchings, Peter Brown, John Dickson, Anne Seagrove, Max Neale, Eileen Pond, David Sawyers, Robert Gardener, Peggy Harris, Colin Bowerman, Robert Gill, Sheila Mayers, Joyce Bryant, Isabella Monk, David Jones, Bernard Bowdery, Patricia Walker, Roy Goff, Jean Judd, David Jesson, Dorothy Chalk, Steven Robinson and Carol Kharas.

Readings for Morning Prayer for the week beginning Sunday 24th December 2023:

Sunday	Psalm 116	Isaiah 32.1-18	Luke 1.26-45
Monday	Psalm 110	Isaiah 9.2-7	Luke 2.1-20
Tuesday	P119.105-144	Genesis 4.1-10	Acts 6
Wednesday	Psalm 120	Exodus 33.9-19	John 13.21-35
Thursday	Psalm 132	Jeremiah 31.1-17	Matthew 18.1-10
Friday	Psalm 139	Isaiah 55	Luke 12.1-21
Saturday	Psalm 144	Isaiah 60.13-end	Luke 12.22-34

Readings for Morning Prayer for the week beginning Sunday 31st December 2023:

Sunday	P105.1-11	Isaiah 40.1-11	Luke 2.22-40
Monday	Psalm 1	Genesis 17.1-13	Romans 2.17-end
Tuesday	P 18.1-30	Ruth 1	Colossians 2.8-end
Wednesday	Psalm 127	Ruth 2	Colossians 3.1-11
Thursday	P89.1-37	Ruth 3	Colossians 3.12-4.1
Friday	Psalm 48	Ruth 4.1-17	Colossians 4.2-end
Saturday	Psalm 99	Baruch 1.15-2.10	Matthew 20.1-16

Rotas for the next two weeks:

Sunday 31st December: Parish Communion

Read: Ben Darracott

Intercede: Jeanette Lock

Welcomers: Jacqueline, Simon and Kim

Coffee: Sally and Jenny

Sunday 7th January: All Age Holy Communion

Read: Sue Hinchliffe

Intercede: Preacher

Welcomers: Clare, Lisa and Don

Coffee: Jenny and Lisa

Our church is floodlit at night.

The flood lighting has been sponsored by:

Advent 4, Christmas Eve

Jacqueline Lewis

In honour of my mum Barbara Lewis

Christmas 1

Colette Baxter

In fond memory of David Sexton

and

Eunice Goodman

Wishing everyone peace for Christmas and the New Year



To sponsor the floodlighting please fill in the form at the back of church or email:

admin@stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk

Given rising fuel prices, it is suggested the minimum donation for weekly sponsorship is now £15.

There are lots of weeks available.

What's on.... This week:

Sunday 24th

10.00am, Parish Communion

4.00pm, Candlelit Crib Service for younger families

5.00pm, Candlelit Crib Service for older families

10.00pm, 'Midnight Mass' (zoom usual Sunday link)

Monday 25th 10.00am, Christmas Holy Communion (zoom usual Sunday link)

No services Tuesday 26th – Saturday 30th

Sunday 31st 10.00am, Parish Communion
Tuesday 2nd 8.30am, Morning prayer on zoom
Wednesday 3rd 8.30am, Morning prayer on zoom
10.00am, Holy Communion
Thursday 4th 8.30am, Morning prayer on zoom
Friday 5th 8.30am, Morning prayer on zoom
4.00pm, Messy Church
Saturday 6th 9.00am, Morning prayer on zoom
Sunday 7th 10.00am, Parish Communion
6.00 pm, Epiphany Carol service

Church Office. The office will close at 11.30am on Friday 22nd December and will re-open at 9am Wednesday 3rd January 2024

Sundays at Six: All Services are at 6.00pm Zoom link: use Sunday morning or as specified above

7 th January	Epiphany Carol Service, in church at St. Luke's
21 st January	Night Prayer with reflection, on zoom Led by the Church of the Good Shepherd, Cox Green
4 th February	Taizé service for Candlemas, in church at St Luke's
18 th February	Evensong and Benediction, in church at All Saints
3 rd March	Eucharist for St. David, in church at All Saints
17 th March	Stations of the Cross, in church at St. Luke's (Passion Sunday)
24 th March	Taizé service at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Cox Green (Palm Sunday)
7 th April	Stations of the Resurrection, on zoom Led by the Church of the Good Shepherd, Cox Green
21 st April	Eucharist of Wholeness and Healing, in church, at All Saints

Open Vicarage returns:

All members of the congregation are warmly invited to drop into the vicarage for mulled wine / mulled fruit juice and seasonal nibbles any time between 7 and 9.30 pm on Thursday 21st December.
Rev. Sally



Christmas Tree Festival feedback...

Rather than set up a de-briefing meeting this year, everyone is warmly invited to email reflections on the CTF – both those things that went well and areas where we might do things better, and any other thoughts – to Rev. Sally now, while still fresh in our minds. She can then compile these for next year. Thank you.

We have one raffle prize left unclaimed for Zoe, ticket, white 129. Unfortunately we don't seem to have the correct contact number. If this is you or you know Zoe please contact the church office. Many thanks.

It was great to present Sylvia and Martin, and Nicole from Alexander Devine Hospice with the certificate for the best dressed tree:



Coming up..

Messy Church our Messy church will re-start in the new year, dates are as follows: 5th January, 2nd February, 1st March, 30th March, 3rd May, 7th June, 5th July, 6th September, 4th October, 1st November, 29th November

Alpha course: we have committed to running an Alpha course next year and are now recruiting the team to run it. If you feel called to help in leading small group discussion, catering or prayer ministry please speak to Revd Sally asap. And, of course, we will all be able to pray for the Alpha course – team and guests. Our first training session will be on Wednesday 17th January at 7pm. The course will start on Wednesday 31st January. Please speak to Revd. Sally if you think you would like to join the course.

Advent and Christmas at St. Luke's Church

Thursday 21st December

3.00 pm, **Keeping Company**

Tea, cake and reflection for those bereaved at any time

Christmas Eve, Sunday 24th December

4.00 (younger families) and 5.00 (older families) pm, **Candlelit Crib Services**

10.00 pm **'Midnight Mass'**

Christmas Day, Monday 25th December

10.00 am, All Age Christmas Holy Communion

Sunday 7th January

6.00 pm, Epiphany Carol Service

Defibrillator at St. Luke's church

On Friday 15th December we were delighted to officially receive a defibrillator from Trustees of Thames Valley Heartbeat. The defibrillator itself was funded by two charities Thames Valley Heartbeat and Windsor and Maidenhead Christian Trust. It will serve a vital role for the community. Full details can be found in the following article.

<https://www.maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk/news/maidenhead/192946/maidenhead-church-fitted-with-lifesaving-device.html>



Refugees and Rough Sleepers / homeless in town:

A group is working on what can be done to support these people over the winter months. Thanks to Jeanette for attending on behalf of Street Angels and keeping us updated too. Nigel Cohen offers this summary:

We are establishing three streams. One is a temporary homeless shelter for rough sleepers, ideally every night for the three months from Jan to March if we can get enough support. The second is temporary hosting for refugees through the Gift-a-Room scheme. The third is a Drop-in Centre to provide basic support for people living on the streets, such as food and shower facilities. We are planning for the Drop-in Centre to be a much more significant centre for community support, one of its roles being to provide basic support for rough sleepers. For ease, I have started to refer to the three streams as the Homeless Project (in Maidenhead, where it needs to be explained).

It seems (hot off the press) that the Council may be able to offer some support, but in the meantime, volunteers are being sought for:

- Offers of a room for a refugee for up to two months
- Volunteers to help with the homeless shelter for rough sleepers for a variety of tasks, such as cooking, cleaning up, welcoming people and/or occasional overnight stays either once a week or once a month.
- Volunteers at the Drop-in Centre for tasks such as making teas/coffees and making guests feel welcome either once a week or once a month.

Further information can be found at:

- The Brett Foundation website: there is a full page devoted to each of the streams, as well as an introductory page with links to each of the streams:
<https://www.brettfoundation.charity/homeless-project>

- Flyers (attached): one for each of the schemes. The flyers are also available to download from the respective pages on the Brett Foundation website.

For anyone who wants it, this is a link directly to the Gift-a-Room scheme:

<https://www.brettfoundation.charity/homeless-project/gift-a-room-scheme>

Or have a word with Jeanette or Revd. Sally.

Our Regular activities:

The 8.00 Holy Communion service will continue to be monthly, on the 2nd Sunday.

Midweek Holy Communion is at 10 am weekly, followed by coffee

Baby and Toddler group meets on Thursdays, 9.30 – 11.00 am term time only. We meet in church.

Messy Church continues on the first (usually) Friday, monthly, 4-5.30pm. Next is 5th January 2024
admin@stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk to book a place.

Keeping Company is our monthly meeting for those bereaved (at any time). Third Thursday at 3pm, in church. The next is 21st December

Thursday Teas meets in the community hall offering tea, cake and conversation. Second Thursdays monthly. Next is 11th January

Gaynor's Gift is a prayer shawl knitting ministry that anyone can take part in at home. We meet together monthly to pray, knit and drink tea. 4th Thursdays monthly. Next is 26th January

Please note that for all Zoom services the links below are being used:

Sunday Morning Worship:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87358197400?pwd=MTFxVINad1R6NEl6cVZ6TVJ5bGlzdz09>

Meeting ID: 873 5819 7400 Passcode: 526076

Zoom Morning Prayer at 8.30 am Tuesday – Friday, 9 am Saturday

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81459090925?pwd=Y2hKZkFYZ04zbGZBd1BHcmllldU5Hdz09>

Meeting ID: 814 5909 0925 Passcode: 180609

Zoom Evening Prayer at 5pm on Fridays (except first Friday)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85378796960?pwd=dUNTTnRZVFJBY2xiS3QyVHlYZ1BaZz09> Meeting ID:

853 7879 6960 Passcode: 386635