

1st December 2024



Do not be afraid!

“Why do you keep telling people about the love of God? You should tell them more about hell!” So, I was advised by a parishioner many years ago. Didn't I know that Jesus talked more about hell than heaven? (Not sure how she worked that one out.) Nevertheless, in her view, fear of hell would encourage people to turn to God. As we begin Advent today, is this a season to be afraid? After all it is a time the Church sets aside to prepare for the coming of Jesus; both at the first Christmas, and at his return in glory. Some Christians seek to interpret current world affairs through the lens of some dramatic biblical passages; looking for signs associated with the second coming of Jesus. The more terrifying the world becomes, the more likely Jesus will not delay. So are sown the seeds of fear and dread. The more scary the world might seem, perhaps they hope, more people will turn to God. Although we must remember what Jesus said, *‘No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.’ Mark 13.32* Now, the Bible does indeed talk about fear in relation to God; as an example, *‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...’*. However, this refers to a deep reverence and awe for God's power, majesty, and righteousness. It's not about being scared of God, but rather about recognizing his greatness and living with respect for his commands and authority.

This Advent as we prepare for the coming of Jesus, amidst all the doom and gloom we are presented with from all directions, we will be reminded: Do Not Be Afraid. It is a message we hear in both of our readings today. Isaiah brought God's word at a time of incredible impending calamity: *‘Comfort, comfort my people’*. Even as the world falls apart there is *‘good news’* for those who trust in God. Jesus in Mark's gospel in the face of fear, illness and death, brings peace, hope, healing, freedom and life.

So, for me, Jesus is always GOOD news. He was good news at the first Christmas and as I reflect on his return, he is still and always will be GOOD NEWS.

Rad

Please pray for...

John Panter, Andy Morton (Debra Deeley's son-in-law) and Gordon Robinson (Nita Heath's son-in-law). Catherine Smith would like to thank everyone for their continued prayers for Colin. Diana Picton-Robinson would like to thank everyone for their prayers, she's recovering well and hoping to be back at church very soon. *Please let the Church Office know if you would like your name to be added or removed from this list.*

Cynthia Costelloe's Funeral

Cynthia's funeral will be at St Mary de Haura, Shoreham-by-Sea at 11.30 on Monday 16th December. Directions, if you're planning to go are available from our Church Office; however the service will be live streamed at <https://visual-memorials.co.uk/cynthia-costelloe>. The video can also be watched later in the day as explained on the web page. Donations in memory of Cynthia will go to St Mary's Shoreham Mothers' Union, and the British Heart Foundation and can be made via the following link donations tab at the following link <http://www.hdtribe.co.uk/>. Please continue to keep David and the family in your prayers.

Carol Singing

Do join us at any of our carol singing events this year:



Woodcroft 11.00am Monday 9th December
Joules Place 11.00am Wednesday 11th December
Mercian Court 7.00pm Monday 16th December
Tunstall Hall 2.00pm Wednesday 18th December
All welcome – Christmas jumpers essential!

Gift Service

We shall be accepting gifts for the Women's Refuge on **Sunday 8th December**. If you are able to donate items such as toiletries, chocolates, hats, scarves and gloves for women, and any toys or treats for children, these would be very gratefully received. Please bring **unwrapped gifts** along to the service on the 8th.

Services

Services are in St Mary's Church unless otherwise indicated

9.00am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am CW Holy Communion

Readings: Isaiah 40. 1-11 Mark 5, 21-end

The 10.30 service will also be on Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85337124930?pwd=NFdMTzRMR2JXbXRoSctVRS9PSkZXdz09>

Meeting ID: 853 3712 4930 Password: 867888

Wednesday Morning Prayer 9.00am ZOOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89943278704?pwd=RytPQ3RmOG5yYlBpUWpoWWkxWGFEZz09>

Meeting ID: 899 4327 8704 Password: 730701

Thursday 10.00am BCP Holy Communion

Sunday Sermons

These are available on our website:

<https://www.stmarysmarketdrayton.org.uk/media>

Christmas Services

We are in need of volunteers for some of our services over the Christmas period. These services often attract those who don't normally attend church, so it would be great to make it a welcoming and positive experience for them. Please consider helping if you can and let Helen Hughes know as soon as possible if you can help. Many thanks to those who have already signed up.

Carol Service 22nd December 7pm

3 Welcomers needed

Christingle 24th December 5pm

4 Welcomers needed

Midnight HC 24th December 11.15pm

2 Welcomers and 1 Reader needed

Christmas Day 25th December 10.00am

1 Welcomer needed

Mothers Union



Christmas Lunch: 12.30 pm on Monday 9th December in the Parish Rooms. Cost £4
Please remember your Smartie tubes!

Good News Stories

We'd love to share some stories of what God has been doing in our lives. If you have an encouraging story you'd be willing to share on a Sunday morning, please let Catherine know.

Foodbank Items Needed

Stock Items urgently required.

Sponge Pudding / Slab Cakes; Cleaning products and Anti-bac wipes.

We have plenty of—Cereals; Pasta; Rice; Tea; Baked Beans.

If you need to contact the Foodbank, please call

01630 654007 (not the one in the church directory).

The trolley at the back of church is now in use and donations are gratefully received.



Carol Service Choir - All Voices!

Practices for all voices continue Thursday evenings at 7.30pm

Prayer Link

If you need prayer for yourself or a loved one, we have a dedicated 'Prayer Link' team, who link up to pray for any situation/ request that is put to us. All requests are strictly confidential. There is a list at the back of the church of the whole group and you can contact anyone of us to start the prayer chain, although the usual first contact is either through: Elaine Mason 07846715620 nickjgmason@gmail.com Or Carol Corney 01630 653137 or 07932 642246 candjcorney@gmail.com - or speak to us in person. If you love to pray for others, please join us. Contact Elaine or Carol.

Messy Christmas

Tuesday 3rd December 3.30pm in the Parish Rooms



Staying in Touch

Please either leave a message or send an email and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Church Administrator: Helen Hughes

Phone: 01630 653505

E-mail: stmarysmarketdrayton@gmail.com

Website: www.stmarysmarketdrayton.org.uk

Facebook: @StMarysMarketDrayton

Parish Rooms FB: @TheParishRoomsMD

Operations Manager: Elaine Cook

E-mail: opsmanagerofstmarys@gmail.com

Vicar: Revd Catherine McBride

E-mail: vicarofstmarys@gmail.com

If you do not wish to continue to receive these newsletters, please let us know.