

WEEKLY MESSAGE FROM OUR VICAR, ALEX – 12th December 2022

Dear Church Family and Parish Friends,

Hoping you're all well.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the wonderful food bank collection last week (picture attached). The Epsom and Ewell food bank were thrilled with your donations.

Thank you also to all who have contributed to the parcels of love - we will be able to deliver 25 really beautiful gift bags to those in the community who are going through hard times or will be alone at Christmas (or both) this year. These will really make a difference - THANK YOU!

I am delighted to say that since writing last week, we have had a wonderful Christmas Craft morning and Christingle service at St. Paul's and a wonderful Refresh@10 morning and visit from Aberdour at St. Mary's (they said they would like to come back at Easter, which is brilliant - as well as the regular assemblies and other visits to the school). Thank you to everyone who has been praying for these and the other Christmas outreach events this month.

This news email contains information on the following:

1. Christmas Lights Outreach - decorating windows to share joy in the parish
2. WARM SPACE AT St. Paul's (Tuesday 13th December, from 2-4 pm)
3. Parish Prayer, Tuesday 13th December, at 7.30 pm on Zoom
4. Messy Church Nativity - Sunday 18th December, 11 am at St. Mary's
5. Parish Carol Service, Sunday 18th December, 6pm at St. Mary's
6. Other key dates through to the 1st January 2023
7. Finances in our parish - a letter you will be receiving in the next few days
8. Thank yous from Jean Watson & the family and David & Sue Wharton
9. Some updates from the Baxters on the school in the Gambia
10. Some B5 messages
11. Bible Studies on Revelation by Jo Hawkins
12. A message about refreshments at St. Mary's from Hilary Latham

Love and prayers,
Alex

1. Christmas Lights Outreach - decorating windows to share joy in the parish

Thank you so much if you have contributed to our Christmas lights outreach this year. Attached are the first 5 windows, to get your creative ideas flowing.

We are decorating our windows to show a bit of love and joy at this time of year - and to bring joy to the children in our church family and schools, in particular, who go for a walk around the parish in December to see the lights in the windows.

If you're happy to decorate a window and send the photograph either to Michael on Facebook or to me on this email (so I can pass it to him) then please do so.

Thank you so much for joining in.

2. WARM SPACE AT St. Paul's (Tuesday 13th December, from 2-4 pm)

St. Paul's will be open again tomorrow from 2-4 pm as a WARM SPACE.

We have been leafletting the local area and have been putting up advertising in places where we think people will see it. Please do spread the word that people can get warm at St. Paul's on Tuesday afternoons, if they are struggling to heat their homes or anxious at this time.

They can also receive refreshments and lovely people to chat with them too!

3. Parish Prayer, Tuesday 13th December, at 7.30 pm on Zoom

Tomorrow evening is our final parish prayer meeting of the year, which will be at 7.30 pm on Zoom.

David will be leading this, and I will be there too, please do join us if you can.

4. Messy Church Nativity - Sunday 18th December, 11 am at St. Mary's

On Sunday morning, it is our Messy Church Nativity Service at 11 am at St. Mary's. A flyer is attached.

David and Sue Wharton and a team of others have been working really hard at this - please do come and support them and the Messy Church families in learning about our Saviour's birth.

5. Parish Carol Service, Sunday 18th December, 6pm at St. Mary's

On Sunday (18th December) at 6pm it is our Parish Carol Service, at St. Mary's.

The Musicians and choir have been practising hard for this and it would be wonderful to have as many people as possible to attend this special occasion.

Please do come along if you can - and please do invite your friends. A flyer is attached.

6. Other key dates through to the 1st January 2023

Saturday 24th December, 3pm: St. Mary's Christingle

Saturday 24th December, 5.30 pm: Parish Crib Service at St. Paul's

Sunday 25th December, 10 am, whole parish Communion service at St. Paul's (as it is St. Paul's turn this month, next year this will swap over)

Sunday 1st January 2023, 10 am, whole parish Communion service at St. Mary's

7. Finances in our parish - a letter you will be receiving in the next few days

Times are tricky for everyone - and all of us, personally and in organisations, are being stretched financially.

As a PCC we have recognised that we need to generate some more funds for our parish - for some special projects that we are working on currently and that are coming up, as well as for our staff salaries.

The Wardens have written a letter explaining this, which will be sent out / delivered in the next week.

Please don't worry if you are finding things difficult and are unable to help donate any extra funds for the parish at the current time. We do not want anyone to feel uncomfortable or under pressure.

However, if you are in a position where you may be able to help us out, please do prayerfully consider the letter you receive.

If you have any questions about this, please do be in touch.

8. Thank yous from Jean Watson & the family and David & Sue Wharton

Jean Watson, Bruce and Phil would like to express thanks to all the church family for their wonderful support, prayers, good wishes, cards, calls and visits at this very difficult time for their family.

Everyone who wishes to is invited to attend the thanksgiving for Alastair's life at St. Paul's Howell Hill at 1.30 pm this Friday afternoon (16th December)

David and Sue Wharton and their family 'would like to thank everyone for their messages of sympathy and support following the death of David's mother, Jean. Knowing that we were being prayed for made a difficult time a lot easier to get through. Thank you'.

9. Some updates from the Baxters on the school in the Gambia

Please see attached the latest update from John and Dorothy Baxter on the school in the Gambia, which they were able to visit in November.

10. Some B5 messages

At 12 pm on Saturday (16th December), the B5 are holding 'Carols round the bonfire' outside All Saints Church.

'Beauty and the Beast'

Tickets for the Pilgrim Pantomimes 2023 production are on sale from Saturday 3rd December At the Institute Banstead from 25th to 28th January 2023 with a Saturday matinee, tickets are 9-£13, available online through our Box Office agents Ticketsource via the Pilgrim Pantomime website. With a cast from the B5 churches don't miss this classic tale of a gruesome beast, a beautiful maiden and battling fairies with all the usual laughter, songs and panto frolics.

11. **Bible Studies on Revelation by Jo Hawkins**

Many of you will know that Jo Hawkins has very faithfully, for many years, run bible studies on all sorts of subjects.

A favourite topic of hers is the Book of Revelation.

Piers Clark and a team of others have worked with Jo to help make a website where we can watch and listen to her online.

The link for this is here: <https://joseebiblestudy.com/revelation-1/>

Please do take a look and encourage Jo in this enterprise.

12. **A message about refreshments at St. Mary's from Hilary Latham**

- Firstly I would like to thank the refreshment Team for their hard work.
- We have considered serving drinks before the service but this is not possible at the moment so you will find the 'Closed' notice on display. (The exception to this is when people have arrived early to set up or practice.)
- You have heard a lot about Eco Church recently. We are trying to be more Eco aware and one small step is that you might consider bringing your own beaker to avoid recycling cups. We do purchase Fairtrade type products.
- Extending the team of helpers would be helpful. Please speak to Hilary Latham if you are willing to join the team.
- Donations are always appreciated.

Love and prayers

Alex

Rev Alex Stevens

Vicar

Parish of Nork with Burgh Heath

07312 113019

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