



The Shrevenham and Ashbury Benefice

'Mirroring the hospitality of God'

Vicar: The Rev'd Norma Fergusson. Tel 01793 784338
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Sunday 17th December 2023 Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday 17th December

Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu is giving today's online sermon.
Watch on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) or our [website](#).

- 7:45am Shrevenham, St Andrew
Holy Communion (BCP)
- 9:00am Compton Beauchamp, St Swithun
Matins
- 9:30am Watchfield, St Thomas
Matins
- 10:00am Bourton, St James & [Facebook](#)
- 11:00am Ashbury, St Mary
Celtic Morning Prayer
- 4:30pm Shrevenham, St Andrew
Carol Service with the Benefice Choir
and St Andrew's Handbell Ringers
- 6:30pm Longcot, St Mary & [Facebook](#).
Carol Service with the Benefice Choir
and St Andrew's Handbell Ringers

Tuesday

- 9:00am Morning Prayer. Live on [Facebook](#)
- 9:00am Ashbury, St Mary
Ashbury School Carol Service
- 6:00pm Shrevenham, St Andrew
Longcot School Carol Service

Wednesday

- 9:00am Shrevenham, St Andrew [Facebook](#)
Morning Prayer
- 10:30am Wednesday Study Group via Zoom
- 2:00pm Shrevenham Methodist Church
Village Carols
- 5:00pm Shrevenham, St Andrew
Cloths for the Cradle
- 7:00pm Wednesday Study Group
St Andrew's Vicarage

Thursday

- 9:00am Matins. Live on [Facebook](#)
- 10:00am Shrevenham, St Andrew
Messy Church Christmas Drop-in
- 5:00pm Fernham, Elmside Green
Village Carols
- 7:45pm Shrevenham, St Andrew & [Facebook](#)
Compline for Advent

Friday

- 9:00am Matins. Live on [Facebook](#)
- 6:00pm Ashbury Crossroads
Stations of the Nativity

Sunday 24th December – Christmas Eve

Rev'd Shannon Preston is giving our online Christmas sermon. Watch on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) or our [website](#).

- 9:00am Compton Beauchamp, St Swithun
Holy Communion (BCP)
This service will be recorded and posted
on [Facebook](#) during the day
- 4:00pm Ashbury, St Mary
Crib Service
- 4:00pm Bourton, St James
Village Carols
- 4:00pm Shrevenham, St Andrew
Crib Service
- 5:00pm Watchfield, St Thomas
Holy Communion (BCP)
- 11:30pm Shrevenham, St Andrew
Midnight Mass
- 11:30pm Longcot, St Mary
Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

- 10:15am Shrevenham, St Andrew & [Facebook](#)
Holy Communion
- 10:30am Ashbury, St Mary
Family Service
with Communion by Extension

No midweek services until Tuesday 9th January

Sunday 31st December

- 10:30am Watchfield, St Thomas & [Facebook](#)
Benefice Holy Communion (BCP)

A Countdown to Christmas

We are sharing a carol every day
on [Facebook](#) until Christmas Day.

There is a short video introduction
and a link to a specially chosen
version on YouTube.

You can also watch the videos on
the [Countdown](#) to Christmas page
on the Benefice website.



Songs & Stories and Baby & Toddler Group

The groups that meet on Wednesday and Thursday mornings are now taking a break until after the school Christmas holidays and will restart w/c 8th January 2024.

Community Cycle of Prayer

Please pray this week for all who live and work
in Idstone Road in Ashbury, and Townsend Road
in Shrevenham.

Welcome

Welcome to Paxton Dash McDonagh who was baptised
in St Mary's Church Ashbury on Sunday 10th December.

Watchfield Family Carol Service

Edna and Mabel welcomed children to the Carol Service at St Thomas. Unfortunately, Maisey the donkey declined to join them – it was a bit too windy for her!



The children helped to prepare the crib and sang Away in a Manger (with a little help from the choir).



Messy Christmas
Drop In!

Pop along to St Andrew's Church on Thursday 21st December anytime between 10 and 11.30 for some Messy Church Christmas crafts and mince pies!

No need to book but for any further info message standfast.shrivenham@yahoo.com

Cloths for the Cradle

Shrivenham, St Andrew

Wednesday 20th December at 5pm

A short, but quiet and reflective service for the week before Christmas.

Christmas can be a bitter-sweet time as we remember those we love who are not around to share it with us, and worries about work, health or family can make it difficult to join in what seems to be compulsory jollity. The wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, all of which link Christmas to Holy Week and Easter; this is an opportunity for us to bring our cares, uncertainties, hopes and fears to the God who knows what it is like to be human.

Confirmation

If you think you might be interested in being confirmed and would like to find out more, please talk to Norma or Patrick and we will arrange classes from 18th January at 7.45pm in St Andrew's Vicarage. All ages are welcome.



Christmas flowers in St Mary's Church, Longcot



St Swithun's Church, Compton Beauchamp



The Longcot flower team



COLLECT

O Lord Jesus Christ,
 who at your first coming sent your
 messenger
 to prepare your way before you:
 grant that the ministers and stewards
 of your mysteries
 may likewise so prepare and make
 ready your way
 by turning the hearts of the
 disobedient to the wisdom of the
 just,
 that at your second coming to judge
 the world
 we may be found an acceptable
 people in your sight;
 for you are alive and reign with the
 Father
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Isaiah 61:1-4. 8-end
A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The servant of the LORD said: The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

I 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. For 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.

PSALM Psalm 126

R *The Lord has done great things for us
 [and we are glad indeed].*

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
 then were we like those who dream.
 Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
 and our tongue with shouts of joy. **R**

Then they said among the nations,
 "The Lord has done great things for them."

The Lord has done great things for us,
 and we are glad indeed. **R**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
 like the watercourses of the Negev.
 Those who sowed with tears
 will reap with songs of joy.
 Those who go out weeping, carrying
 the seed,
 will come again with joy, shouldering
 their sheaves. **R**

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

My brothers and sisters, rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

GOSPEL John 1:6-8. 19-28

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptising if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptise with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptising.

POST COMMUNION

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
 kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
 that when your Christ comes again
 we may shine as lights before his face;
 who is alive and reigns now and for ever.



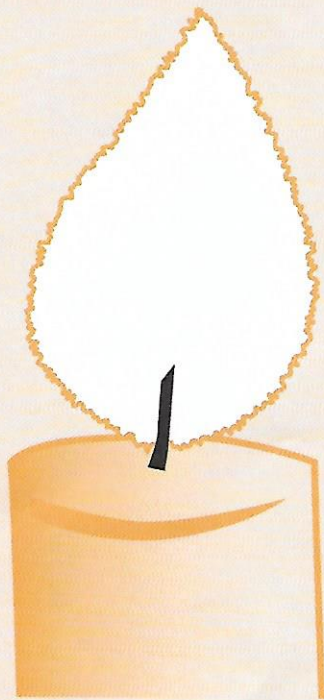
Sunday 17 December 2023
3rd Sunday of Advent
John 1:6-8, 19-28

In the GOSPEL TODAY

JESUS, THE LIGHT

Who is coming?

Who do you think the light is?
Try to draw a picture of him.



Fill in the spaces, using the Gospel story to help.

John said that he had come to tell about ___ (het) ___ g h ___ (ilt) which would _ h ___ e (nis) on _ v e _ y _ n _ (reee).

A PRAYER TO SAY

Loving Lord, John the Baptist knew Jesus was special. I know Jesus is special too. Help me to shine with Jesus' light in the way I share love and kindness. Amen.

People are wondering who John the Baptist is. He tells them he is God's messenger, sent to tell us all that Jesus is coming. Jesus is our light, someone so special that John is not good enough to untie his sandals.

Jesus shines through me

Draw yourself doing one of the pictured actions around the frame.



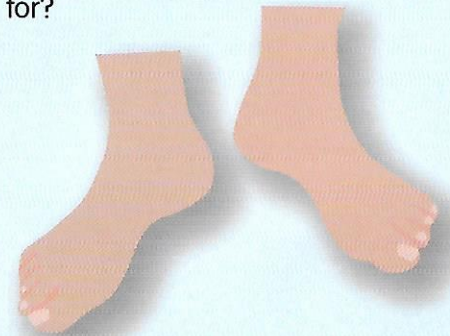
Dark to light puzzle

Match the shadow shapes with the pictures.



Whose sandals?

These feet belong to the important person coming after John the Baptist. Design a really special pair of sandals for him. Who do you think the sandals are for?



Cross out the first letter and then every other letter to find out who the sandals belong to.

X J Q E Z S Y U W S

Answers: Who is coming: the light which would shine on everyone. Whose sandals: Jesus.