



The Shrevenham and Ashbury Benefice

'Mirroring the hospitality of God'

Vicar: The Rev'd Norma Fergusson. Tel 01793 784338
vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk

Associate Vicar: The Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu. 07471 434276
associate.vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk

Licensed Lay Minister: Mr Richard Fergusson. Tel 07788 436831



Sunday 24th December 2023 Fourth Sunday of Advent

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

Monday 25th December – Christmas Day

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

No midweek services until Tuesday 9th January

Community Cycle of Prayer

Please pray this week for all who live and work in Idstone near Ashbury, and Vicarage Lane in Shrevenham.

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.

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.

All the videos and YouTube links are available on the [Countdown to Christmas](#) page on our website.



Sunday 31st December

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

Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu is off duty from Tuesday 26th December until Monday 1st January inclusive.

The Benefice office will be closed from Sunday 24th December until Sunday 7th January. Emails will be checked regularly.

Christmas Message

Richard, Patrick and I would like to wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas.

Thank you for supporting your churches throughout the year and especially during our Advent and Christmas services. Thank you, too, to everyone who has made these possible by organising services both in person and online, cleaning and decorating the buildings and providing refreshments and, not least, sharing their favourite carols. It's not often that social media brings moments of calm, but these have been a real blessing on the Advent journey. Lastly, if you will forgive a purely personal note, thank you for making Richard's and my last Christmas in the Benefice so very special.

May grace, like glitter, bring joy and sparkle to your celebrations. May you know the power of love to heal and restore, where that is needed. And may the peace of the Christ child be with you, and those you love, this Christmas and always.

Welcome

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



Photo: Pete Davis

Ashbury Stations of the Nativity

When 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.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. *Luke 2:15-16*



Ashbury

Inspired by his time in Ashbury, Canon Paul Richardson has introduced a walking nativity in his new parish of Stainton, South Yorkshire.



Stainton

Confirmation

Bishop Gavin is coming to St Mary's Church, Longworth, on Saturday 2nd March for a service of 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.

The Benefice Choir – Watchfield, St Thomas



Carols by Candlelight – Ashbury, St Mary



COLLECT

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 for ever.

FIRST READING 2 Samuel 7:1-11. 16

A reading from the second book of Samuel.

Now when David the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the 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." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you." But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I 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. Wherever 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?" Now 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; and 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. And 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, from 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. Your house and your kingdom

shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

PSALM Psalm 89:1-4. 19-26

R *Your love, O Lord, for ever will I sing.*

Your love, O Lord, for ever will I sing;
 from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.
 For I am persuaded that your love is established for ever;
 you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens. **R**

"I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
 I have sworn an oath to David my servant:
 'I will establish your line for ever, and preserve your throne for all generations.'" **R**

You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people:
 "I have set the crown upon a warrior and have exalted one chosen out of the people.
 I have found David my servant;
 with my holy oil have I anointed him. **R**

My hand will hold him fast and my arm will make him strong.
 No enemy shall deceive him, nor the wicked bring him down.
 I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. **R**

My faithfulness and love shall be with him,
 and he shall be victorious through my name.
 I shall make his dominion extend from the Great Sea to the River.
 He will say to me, 'You are my Father, my God and the rock of my salvation.'" **R**

SECOND READING

Romans 16:25-end

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

To God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command

of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith – to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

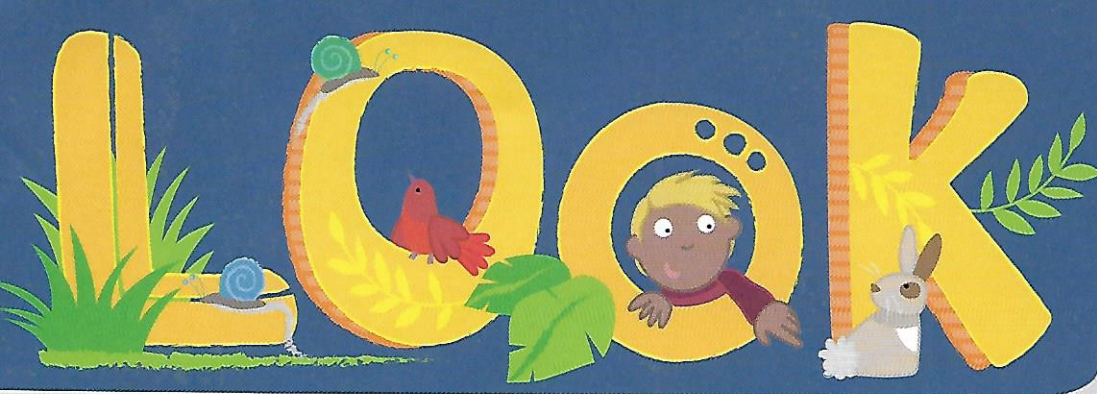
GOSPEL Luke 1:26-38

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

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The 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. And 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. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then 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.

POST COMMUNION

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.



Sunday 24 December 2023
4th Sunday of Advent
Luke 1:26-38

In the **GOSPEL TODAY**

MARY chosen by God

_____ (write your name) is chosen by God too! God wants us to live our lives close to him. He loves us so much. He has a special job for each of us. Draw a picture of yourself doing something helpful.



This is ME saying "YES" to God

God sends the angel Gabriel with a message for Mary. She is going to have a very special baby! Mary does not know what this means, but she says "yes" anyway. Mary trusts God completely.

HAIL MARY!

Changing faces



Mary was worried when the angel Gabriel first appeared.



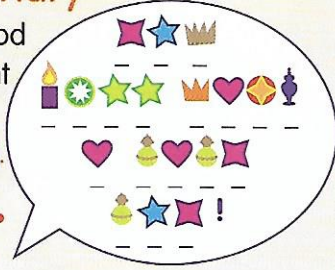
Make Mary's face happy after the angel tells her not to be afraid.



Yes! Mary said "yes" to God. Circle the children who are saying "yes" to God and doing what he wants.

A message for Mary

Today Mary receives good news from an angel sent by God. Join the dots to see the angel Gabriel.



a =	♥	o =	★
b =	👑	u =	👑
e =	👤	v =	👑
h =	👑	w =	👤
i =	🌟	y =	★
l =	★		

The angel has good news for Mary. Use the code to find out what it is.

A PRAYER TO SAY

Hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.