



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 31st December 2023 First Sunday of Christmas

Sunday 31 December

Richard Fergusson is giving today's online sermon.
Watch on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) or our [website](#).

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

**No midweek morning services until
Tuesday 9th January**

Wednesday 3rd January

2:00pm Shrevenham, St Andrew & [Facebook](#)
ASK Holy Communion

Saturday 6th January

10:00am Bourton, St James
Family Service with Baptism

Sunday 7th January

7:45am Shrevenham, St Andrew
Holy Communion (BCP)
9:00am Compton Beauchamp, St Swithun
Holy Communion (BCP)
9:30am Watchfield, St Thomas
Holy Communion by Extension (BCP)
9:30am Longcot, St Mary & [Facebook](#)
Holy Communion
10:15am Shrevenham, St Andrew.
Family Service
11:00am Ashbury, St Mary.
Morning Prayer
5:30pm Shrevenham, St Andrew & [Facebook](#)
Compline and Benediction

Community Cycle of Prayer

Please pray this week for all who live and work in
Kingstone Winslow near Ashbury,
and West End Road 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 hope you have enjoyed
the carols we have been
sharing daily on [Facebook](#)
during Advent.

Thank you to everyone
who has contributed – we
have heard some lovely
memories and reflections.

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



Rev'd Norma Fergusson is off duty from Monday 1st January until Friday 5th January inclusive but contactable on 07799 545035.

For pastoral emergencies please call
Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu on 07471 434276

For other church enquiries please email
vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk
or contact your local churchwarden.

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

Wednesday Study Groups

Both groups will restart on 10th January.
The Zoom group meets at 10:30am, and the group that
meets at the Vicarage starts at 7pm.

If you would like to join either group,
please contact Richard Fergusson

richard.fergusson.ilm@btinternet.com

07788 436831

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.

If you would like to make a text donation to support
the work of the churches in our Benefice,
please use the numbers below.

Text **GIVEfive** to **70470** to donate **£5**

Text **GIVEten** to **70470** to donate **£10**

Your standard text message rate applies.

Thank you!

Village Carols at St James' Church Bourton

Edna greets everyone as they arrive for the service.



Nimrod the Shetland pony.



Bourton Village Voices.



In case you were wondering, the red glow is cast by the radiant heaters in the church.

Welcome

Welcome to John Benedict who was baptised at St Andrew's Church Shrivenham on Christmas Day.



Crib Service at St Andrew's Church Shrivenham



COLLECT

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.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

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.
 For 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. The
 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. You shall be a crown of
 beauty in the hand of the LORD,
 and a royal diadem in the hand of
 your God.

PSALM Psalm 148

R Praise, O praise the name of
 the Lord.

Alleluia!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;
 praise him in the heights.
 Praise him, all you angels of his;

praise him, all his host.
 Praise him, sun and moon;
 praise him, all you shining stars. **R**

Praise him, heaven of heavens,
 and you waters above the
 heavens.
 Let them praise the name of the
 Lord;
 for he commanded and they were
 created.
 He made them stand fast for ever
 and ever;
 he gave them a law which shall
 not pass away. **R**

Praise the Lord from the earth,
 you sea-monsters and all deeps;
 Fire and hail, snow and fog,
 tempestuous wind, doing his will;
 Mountains and all hills,
 fruit trees and all cedars; **R**
 Wild beasts and all cattle,
 creeping things and winged
 birds;
 Kings of the earth and all
 peoples,
 princes and all rulers of the world;
 Young men and maidens,
 old and young together. **R**

Let them praise the name of the
 Lord,
 for his name only is exalted,
 his splendour is over earth and
 heaven.
 He has raised up strength for his
 people
 and praise for all his loyal
 servants,
 the children of Israel, a people
 who are near him.
 Alleluia! **R**

SECOND READING

Galatians 4:4-7

*A reading from the letter of Paul
 to the Galatians.*

When the fullness of time had
 come, God sent his Son, born of
 a woman, born under the law, in
 order to redeem those who were
 under the law, so that we might
 receive adoption as children.
 And because you are children,
 God has sent the Spirit of his Son

into our hearts, crying, "Abba!
 Father!" So you are no longer a
 slave but a child, and if a child
 then also an heir, through God.

GOSPEL Luke 2:15-21

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

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. When they saw this, they
 made known what had been told
 them about this child; and all who
 heard it were amazed at what the
 shepherds told them. But Mary
 treasured all these words and
 pondered them in her heart. The
 shepherds returned, glorifying
 and praising God for all they had
 heard and seen, as it had been
 told them. After 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.

POST COMMUNION

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.

LOOK

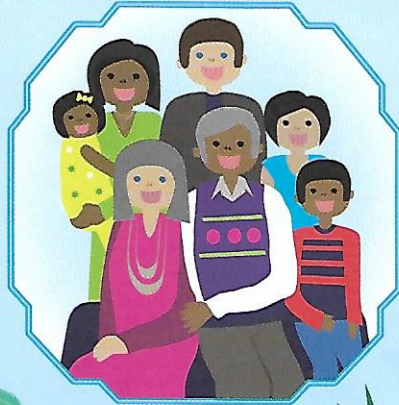
Sunday 31 December 2023
 The Holy Family of Jesus,
 Mary and Joseph
Luke 2:22-40

In the GOSPEL TODAY

A HOLY FAMILY!

Spot the difference

Can you spot five differences in this family photograph? Draw your own family's portrait on the back of this sheet.



A PRAYER TO SAY

Loving Father, help me to always see and understand how important Jesus is in my life. Help me to shine with Jesus' love so that other people can recognise him too. Amen.

Mary and Joseph take Jesus to be presented to God, just like every other Jewish baby boy. In the Temple the Holy Family meet Simeon and Anna, two wise and holy people. They both praise God when they see Jesus as they know he is no ordinary baby. This baby is the light of the world!

Maze

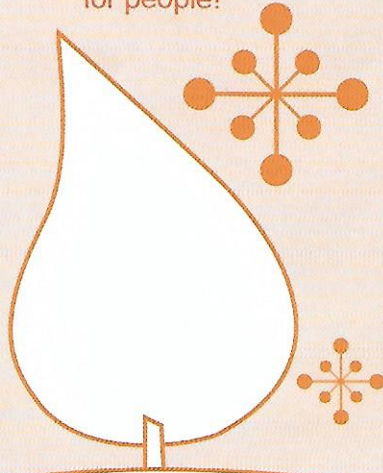
Mary and Joseph took baby Jesus to the Temple.

Can you find which route they took?



Light of the world

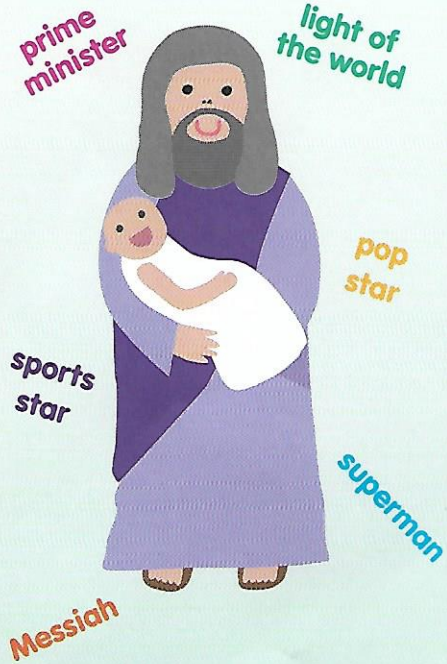
Jesus is the light of the world. How can you be a light for people?



Write, or draw, inside the candle some of the ways you can help someone today.

A special baby

Simeon knew that baby Jesus would grow up to be very special. Circle the words which say what Simeon knew about Jesus.



Messiah

Answers: Spot the difference: dad's glasses, top colour, child's hair clip, grandma's walking stick and grandpa's jumper.