



Companies spend millions on their Christmas advertising campaigns. I wonder if you think they hit the mark, or whether you have a favourite?

Waitrose are trying to convince us that the best thing about Christmas is the food.



Macdonald's have a young woman rediscovering her imaginary childhood friend, still waiting for her at the back of the wardrobe.

And the John Lewis advert—always much anticipated—takes its inspiration from ET, with a young boy discovering a star-shaped space craft has crash landed in the forest near his home. He befriends the stranded alien, sharing some special Christmas moments with her; until she leaves, flying off into the night sky.

Now, I know Waitrose food is very nice...but, really, is the food better than seeing our loved ones? And what could possibly be better than knowing that Christmas shows us that God loves us so much, he came to be with us?

I wonder what Macdonald's imaginary friend advert is trying to tell us— that Christmas is the time of year to suspend disbelief and reconnect with the child within each of us. Maybe that's a good message. But whilst it's true that people often feel that they 'grow out of believing in Jesus', he is far from imaginary. It is true though, that he does wait for us; he is always waiting for us to remember him and turn back to him and his love is always waiting for us.

And what about the John Lewis advert? It's entitled the Unexpected Guest. Well that definitely chimes with what happened that first Christmas. You could say the shepherds and wise men were unexpected guests. But perhaps the most unexpected guest was God himself, in the form of a tiny baby.



But unlike John Lewis' interstellar visitor, God didn't leave. He stayed. He didn't just come to observe us, he came to be one of us.

The real gift of Christmas is Jesus himself. He still comes to be with us and by his Spirit he stays with us, living within us, never leaving us.

Thank you to all of our St Mary's Church Family for your continued support, patience and perseverance this year. Have a peaceful and joy-filled Christmas.

*Catherine*



## Living in Love and Faith

Living in Love and Faith (LLF) is a process by which the Church of England is seeking to explore Christian teaching and learning about human identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. It is intended that the process will contribute to the Bishops' discernment of a way forward in relation to questions relating to these issues. A number of resources have been produced, including a book, a series of films and podcasts and a 5-session course. For more information on these resources please see <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/our-faith/living-in-love-and-faith/>

Parishes are being encouraged to hold their own LLF courses and we will be holding our own courses in the new year. We will try and provide a number of options, for example daytime, evening and online, so that everyone who wants to can take part.

## Services

### Christingle Service Christmas Eve 5.00pm (also on ZOOM)

All the tickets for this event have now gone.

### Christmas Eve Communion Service 11.15pm

### Christmas Day 9.00am BCP Communion Service

### Christmas Day 10.30am Christmas Celebration (also on Zoom)

Readings : Isaiah 9.2-7 Luke 2. 8-20

### Boxing Day (Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> December)

No service at St Mary's. There will be a short Communion service at Hinstock at 2.00pm, followed by a walk from the church at 2.30pm, lasting about 1 hour – returning to church for mulled wine and mince pies. All welcome.

**There will be not be a Wednesday Morning Prayer Meeting (29<sup>th</sup> December) or the Thursday Communion Service (30<sup>th</sup> December) this week.**

### Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 9.00am BCP Communion Service

### Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 10.30am Holy Communion and Epiphany Carol Praise

Readings: Isaiah 60. 1-6 Matthew 2. 1-12

The Zoomed services above will use the same log in details as our usual 10.30 Sunday service:

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

Meeting ID: 853 3712 4930 Password: 867888

You can also join our Zoom services on your landline using any of the following numbers, with the meeting IDs and passwords above: 0203 481 5237 / 0203 481 5240  
0131 460 1196 / 0203 051 2874



## Epiphany Sunday

The first Sunday of the New Year 2022, 2nd Jan, we will be celebrating Epiphany Sunday.

The service will be a Holy Communion and I would like for us to sing Epiphany themed Carols/Songs/Hymns. If you have a particular favourite for the Epiphany season that you would like to be included, please can you let me know by Tuesday 28th December and I will include the most popular choices into the service. If you could also include a 'one-liner' as to why you chose a particular piece that would be great. Please send your choices to me at [curateofstmarys@gmail.com](mailto:curateofstmarys@gmail.com).

Many thanks and have a Merry Christmas. Ian

## Foodbank Items Needed

Stock Items urgently required

Long –Life Cartons of Fruit Juice; UHT Milk; Rice Pudding; Custard; Washing up Liquid; Washing Powder/Tabs; Tins of ham/chicken/pork/Spam; Sponge Puddings / Slab Cakes

We have plenty of

Pasta; Rice; Tea; Baked Beans; Tinned Tomatoes

If you need to contact the Foodbank please call **01630 654007** (not the number in the current church directory).



## ACORN update!



Hello friends—We are very excited to be actively integrating the ACORN spiritual practice into our church life here at St Mary's. If you would like to find out more, and/or if you would like to get involved, do please get in touch with Sue or Keren. [suefrankfort@gmail.com](mailto:suefrankfort@gmail.com) or [Kerenmacfarlane@gmail.com](mailto:Kerenmacfarlane@gmail.com) or see <http://www.qpcweb.org/assets/documents/ACORN.pdf>

## Market Drayton Churches Together

We will be holding our AGM on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2022 at Market Drayton Methodist Church, following a united service beginning at 6.00pm. All are welcome.



## Please pray for...



Helen Sweet's son-in-law, Alan. David & Rosemary Platt's new grandson. Tracy Cook, recovering from surgery. Val Creasey's daughter Sarah. John Panter, who is unwell. Please also pray for Barry Salter, Jean Arbon and David Jones.

## Staying in Touch

The office is closed from 23rd December and re-opens on Tuesday 4th January.

**Phone:** 01630 653505

**E-mail:** [stmarysmarketdrayton@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysmarketdrayton@gmail.com)

We will continue to post information to our website and Facebook page:

**Website:** [www.stmarysmarketdrayton.org.uk](http://www.stmarysmarketdrayton.org.uk)

**Facebook:** @StMarysMarketDrayton

**Vicar:** Catherine McBride

**E-mail:** [vicarofstmarys@gmail.com](mailto:vicarofstmarys@gmail.com)

**Phone:** 01630 656943

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

**Please be aware that the office BT email address no longer works. Please use [stmarysmarketdrayton@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysmarketdrayton@gmail.com)**