

# NEWSLETTER

January 2024

## from the Church of St. Michael's Bray



The Parish Church of Bray with Braywood, Holyport & Moneyrow Green, Fifield, Touchen End and Oakley Green

website: [www.braystmichael.co.uk](http://www.braystmichael.co.uk)



## A LAST LOOK BACK TO CHRISTMAS AND A FIRST LOOK TOWARDS LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER.

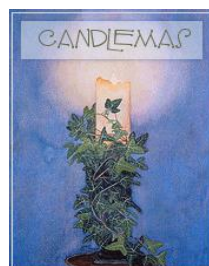
Happy New Year!

We are coming up to the Feast of Candlemas which falls on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February; we will keep the feast on the nearest Sunday, this year Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> of January. Candlemas (also known as The Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple) recalls the story of Jesus, still a baby, being taken to the Temple to be dedicated to the Lord by his parents (a little bit like a Christening today, but no water). There they meet Simeon and Anna and we hear Simeon's Song, his response to recognising the Messiah, which many of you will know as the Nunc Dimittis, "Now Lord let your servant depart in peace..." from the service of Evensong.



Candlemas is sometimes described as "A last look back to Christmas and a first look towards Lent, Holy Week and Easter" and is a pivotal moment in the story of Jesus, as we have a hint at the suffering to come in Simeon's words to Mary "and a sword will pierce your own soul..."

As we had such success with our Crib Service on Christmas Eve we will try a similar format, songs and story telling, at a Candlemas service on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January at 3.00 pm for children of all ages!



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Looking back to Christmas in terms of numbers attending and feedback received we had a very wonderful and successful time. The Advent Carols, Christingle, Community Carols and Christmas Carols all had great attendance and wonderful feedback. The choir did an excellent job at all the services and lots of people commented how wonderful it had been. Our Midnight Mass and Christmas Day services also draw people in at nearly pre-pandemic numbers.

A strong indicator that things are on a good trajectory. A new Crib Service on Christmas Eve afternoon drew in 84 adults and 45 children! A great success for a first time with a new service; many thanks to those who helped organise, publicise and execute!

Looking forward to Lent we will keep Ash Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, with a Eucharist with ashing at 8.00 pm in church (and on Zoom). On the Sunday Evenings of Lent, we will have a service, on Zoom only, of Compline (Night Prayer) at 9.00 pm as well as our normal services.

With sadness we will be saying a final goodbye to two members of the congregation; Gilly Blaxland's funeral is in church on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 2.30 p.m. Sophie Farmer's (nee. Dashwood) funeral will be in Church on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January at 11.00 a.m.

With best regards,  
Ainsley.

## **Awards for distinguished service to the church**

**Our Vicar Ainsley and Deputy Church Warden and Verger, Jim Tucker, will each be presented with an Award for distinguished service to the diocese and wider church at a service led by Bishop Steven at Christ Church Cathedral on the 27<sup>th</sup> January.**

Ainsley will be made an Honorary Canon and become part of the Cathedral's College of Canons, playing an important role and bringing experience and wisdom to promote the life and mission of the Cathedral

Jim will be admitted to The Order of St Frideswide named after the renowned Patron Saint of Oxford. Founded in 2001, by the then Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Revd Richard Harries, it admits just a small number of people each year

Ainsley began his career as a teacher taking a keen interest in community development work, in and around the docklands area in Liverpool. He answered his call to be ordained and completed a four-year curacy in the city before moving south to Windsor. He served 20 years in Windsor and Maidenhead before moving to become our Vicar of Bray. He maintains his link to education as a governor at two nearby church schools – Holyport and Braywood - and has been part of the Diocesan Synod since 2009. He is also Area Dean for Maidenhead and Windsor.

Speaking on his installation as Honorary Canon, Ainsley said: "I was not expecting to open that letter, the thought had not even crossed my mind. It is a great pleasure and a great honour. It made me reflect on what a long journey I have been on, from a community development worker in Liverpool to 25 years in ministry in Windsor and Maidenhead."

Jim has been involved in the running of our church for 30 years and spent time as a church warden and treasurer. His experience saw him elected to the deanery of Maidenhead and Windsor where he served as treasurer for 10 years and later as deanery lay chair. Jim has been part of the Deanery Synod for more than 28 years, and has been its lay chair since 2019. For the past six years, his duties have also included lay membership of the Diocesan Synod.

On receiving the honour of joining the Order of St Frideswide, Jim said: "I am surprised, delighted, and humbled to be singled out for this award. I was not looking for anything like this but the acknowledgement from the Bishop means a lot. My work has been very rewarding and I feel that I am receiving this on behalf of a great many people who do just as much as I do."



Our annual community carol concert on the Sunday before the church carol service has become a popular feature of St Michael's pre-Christmas calendar. We have been able to support several good causes over the years, and for 2023 we chose Thames Hospice; there is surely no better known or more deserving charity in the area.

The concert on Sunday 10 December featured all the usual components, with the church choir excelling itself once again with some lovely pieces, some familiar, some new to Bray, under the direction of Lindsay Bramley with Oliver Gooch at the piano. Later they joined the occasional singers of the Community Choir in their rendition of popular numbers as *Let it Snow*, and of course the traditional finale *White Christmas*, starting with the verse and then the audience being encouraged by Lindsay to join in the chorus – not that much encouragement was needed!

An innovation this year was a welcome appearance by Windsor Community Orchestra, with conducting being shared between Adam Swift and our own Sean Douglas.

We also enjoyed a reading of the poem *Christmas in the Trenches* and had a very moving address from Hospice ambassador Kate Atkinson. We are very grateful to Kate for sharing her experience of the Hospice and the loving care it was able to provide for her late sister. Thanks to Kate and all those who took part a magnificent £1,100 was raised for the Hospice.

***Jim Tucker***



## Sunday Afternoon Recitals at 3.00pm

**February 11th**

**Peng Lin (piano)**

Chinese pianist Peng Lin is the 1st prize winner of the 2012 Rhodes International Piano Competition and winner of the Juilliard Concerto Competition, making her Lincoln Center debut in 2015. Her programme includes **Beethoven** 'Les adieux' Sonata, **Debussy** and **Scriabin**.

**March 10th**

**Victor Braojos (piano)**

Young prize-winning Spanish pianist Victor Braojos makes a welcome return with **Schubert**, **Chopin** and **Granados** *Romantic Scenes*

**April 7th**

**In Springtime**

Join St Michael's Choir and friends for an afternoon of music in celebration of spring.

## Admission free with Afternoon Tea

*St Michael's Church will again be host to Cantorum Choir when on Saturday 23 March, they perform the Durufle Requiem.*

## CONTACT LIST

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**For general enquiries (Christenings, Weddings etc) in the first instance please contact our Parish Administrator, Richard Severn: 01628 633113 [stmichaelsbray@gmail.com](mailto:stmichaelsbray@gmail.com)"**

### **The Churchwardens:**

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Penny Murray 623041

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Lynda Jones 635178

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### **Gift Aid Officer :**

Vicki Henley

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### **Electoral Roll Officer:**

**Penny Murray**

### **Director of Music:**

Oliver Gooch

### **Assistant Director of Music:**

Lindsay Bramley

### **Parish Safeguarding Officer/Sunday School:**

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### **Bellringers:**

*Tower Captain:*

Tim Palmer [tim@timzmail.com](mailto:tim@timzmail.com)

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