

WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY



If this is your first newsletter, welcome ... if you have any questions about the church family, the Christian faith, or about our children's work, please do not hesitate to call Matthew the Rector on 01787 310 845.

This newsletter combines:

- Notices for this week (p1 – p2)
- The church diary (including livestream & Zoom joining instructions) (p3)
- A list of Christmas Services (p4)
- Prayers, and Readings for Sunday's morning 10.30am service (p5)

Thank yous...

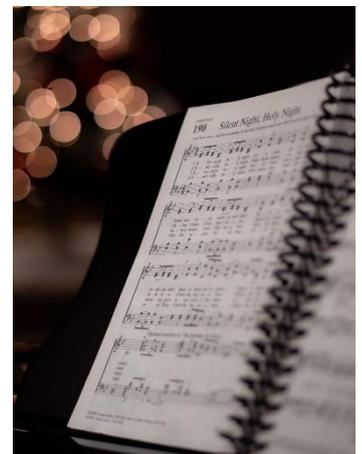
Firstly to everyone involved with the Christmas Market at Shimpling Village Hall last Sunday. There was a lovely buzzing atmosphere, plenty of laughter, wonderful stalls with food and wreaths prepared by many in the church community. Though we do not know the exact total yet, several hundred pounds have been raised towards church funds.



We also want to thank the many people involved in supporting the service of thanksgiving for the beautiful life of Doreen Hamand on Wednesday. Also many thanks to all who helped with decorating the tree and the crib at Holy Trinity yesterday.

Omicron / Plan B / Singing

During Advent we prepare to celebrate the most wonderful news, the birth of Jesus Christ, and many of us also plan to visit friends and family. The introduction of the Plan B measures whilst the risks associated with omicron are determined is therefore really upsetting – if understandable as omicron spreads so rapidly. Furthermore the guidance for churches, particularly relating to masks and singing, has been 'a source of debate'. Wearing masks in church is now mandatory. This Sunday we are also recommending that members of the congregation do not remove their masks to sing – though this is not compulsory. We do ask that people take a lateral flow test before attending church and would be sensitive to those around them. Thank you for your understanding. Let us pray that omicron is not as dangerous as some fear.



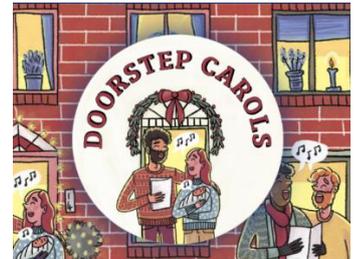
Alongside this we are considering options to enable singing outside for some of our Christmas services. Watch this space.

Steed's Meadow & Care Homes

We are delighted to announce that there will once again be a service at Steed's Meadow (hopefully monthly) on Wed 15th December at 10.00am. Many thanks to Henry for helping to make all the necessary arrangements for this to go ahead. Similarly there will be services in two Benefice Care Homes – at Melford Court on the 15th Dec at 2.00pm, and in the Willow's Lawshall on the 20th at 10.15am. Many thanks to Henry, Judith, and the Elders supporting this important ministry.

Door Step Carols

BBC Radio Suffolk are once again presenting 'Doorstep Carols'. This will take place this year on Wednesday 15th December at 6.00pm. If you have a friendly group of neighbours around you, why not consider arranging a Christmas singalong. Please see: www.doorstepcarols.co.uk/is-your-area-involved-/suffolk for the song sheets and tune into BCRadio Suffolk on 104.6 FM.

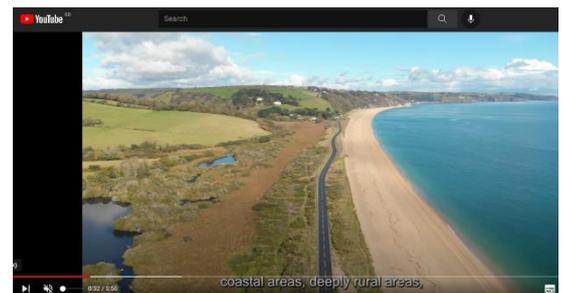


Church of England's Vision and Strategy

(taken from the Diocesan weekly newsletter; Bishop Mike features in the corresponding video about 'mixed economy churches', which can be viewed [here](#))

The Church of England's calling is and always has been to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ afresh in each generation to the people of England. The work to develop the new Vision and Strategy is underway as the Church of England adapts and puts its trust in God to become a simpler, humbler, bolder Church. The strategic priorities are:

- To be a church that is younger and more diverse.
- To be a church where mixed ecology is the norm – where every person in England has access to an enriching and compelling community of faith by adding new churches and new forms of Church to our parishes, schools and chaplaincies.
- To become a church of missionary disciples where all God's people are released to live the Christian life.



The mixed ecology was included as part of General Synod in November where it looked at flourishing church and ministry in parishes. Bishop Mike features in the supporting video, shown below, along with a showcase of projects from across Suffolk.

Sunday Off! 26th December

The Bishop has advised that parishes may take the 26th off. Having discussed this with the PCC's, the Rector has not felt the need to mount a campaign in opposition! There will undoubtedly be services online or on the radio for you to participate in.

Diary

Sun 12 th	9.00am	Holy Communion at Shimpling
	10.30am	Holy Communion at Holy Trinity with livestream *
	11.45am	Zoom Coffee after the Service **
	2.00pm	Messy Church at Lawshall church
	4.00pm	Carols after Messy church
Mon 13 th	9.00am	Connect baby & toddler Group Christmas Party (booking req'd)
Tues 14 th	7.30pm	Pastoral Measure – Combined PCC Meeting
	7.30pm	Handbells at St Catherine's
Wed 15 th	10.00am	Christmas Communion at Steeds Meadow
	2.00pm	Christmas Communion at Melford Court
	7.30pm	Bell Ringing Practice at Holy Trinity
Thurs 16 th	All Day	Barnardiston School Carol Service HT
	7.00pm	Choir Practice
Fri 17 th	2.00pm	Long Melford School Christmas Service
	2.00pm	Lawshall School Christmas Service
Sat 18 th	5.00pm	Chamber Choir rehearsal in the Lady Chapel
Sun 19 th	10.30am	Holy Communion at Holy Trinity with livestream *
	11.45am	Zoom Coffee after the Service **
	4.00pm	Alpheton Carol Service
	6.30pm	Long Melford Carol Service

* Livestream Joining Instructions

- Google the five words "Holy Trinity Long Melford Facebook".
- Click on the top link ([or simply click here](#)) to open the church's Facebook page and scroll down a bit.
- Please note that you do not need a Facebook account yourself in order to watch the livestream.

** Zoom Coffee after the Service

Zoom Meeting ID: 833 5925 6347, Passcode: 682003, or [click this link](#)

Dates for your diary

- Sunday 9th Jan, 4.00pm at Lawshall Church – Epiphany Stargazing Walk / Service .
- Sunday 23rd Jan, 4.00pm at Holy Trinity Church – Informal Worship
- Sunday 30th Jan, 10.30am at Holy Trinity – Benefice Favourite Hymn service.

Christmas Services

Please bring a mask and have a lateral flow test before attending

- Sun 5th **Family Advent Service, Melford**
10.30am *looking forward to Christmas*
- Sun 5th **Shimpling Christmas Market**
11 - 1pm *festive food & crafts – Shimpling Village Hall*
- Sun 5th **Alpheton Lights of Remembrance***
4.00pm *remembering our loves ones*
- Sun 5th **Traditional Advent Carols, Melford**
6.30pm *choral service with readings and reflections*
- Sat 11th **Melford Tree of Lights***
6.30pm *remembering our loved ones*
- Sun 12th **Lawshall Messy Church Crafts and Carols**
2.00pm *at the Christmas Tree Competition in Church; carols at 4pm*
- Sun 19th **Alpheton Carol Service**
4.00pm *candlelit and atmospheric*
- Sun 19th **Melford Carol Service**
6.30pm *come and sing some well-known carols*
- Fri 23rd **Lawshall Carol Service**
6.30pm *at All Saints Church*
- Fri 24th **Crib Service, Melford**
3.00pm *dressing up in nativity costumes optional!*
- Fri 24th **Shimpling Carol Service**
6.00pm *candlelit and atmospheric*
- Fri 24th **Midnight Mass, Melford**
10.30pm *an atmospheric communion service*
- Sat 25th **Benefice Family Communion**
10.30am *please bring your presents to show!*



Collect (prayer for the day)

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.

Amen

First Reading**Isaiah 12:2-6**

Surely God is my salvation;

I will trust and not be afraid.

The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defence;

he has become my salvation.'

³With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

⁴In that day you will say:

'Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;

make known among the nations what he has done,

and proclaim that his name is exalted.

⁵Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things;

let this be known to all the world.

⁶Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,

for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.'

Gospel Reading**Luke 3:7-18**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptised by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?' ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ⁹The axe has been laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.'

¹⁰'What should we do then?' the crowd asked.

¹¹John answered, 'Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.'

¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptised. 'Teacher,' they asked, 'what should we do?'

¹³'Don't collect any more than you are required to,' he told them.

¹⁴Then some soldiers asked him, 'And what should we do?'

He replied, 'Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely – be content with your pay.'

¹⁵The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. ¹⁶John answered them all, 'I baptise you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' ¹⁸And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to You O Christ

Post Communion Prayer

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. **Amen**

Suggestions for Prayer

- We remember before God those who have recently died and those who mourn.
- We pray for the many key workers who are exhausted after two years of the constant pressures associated with Covid.
- We pray for the many facing Christmas with mixed feelings, and particularly those facing Christmas without a loved one for the first time.
- We pray for those suffering from anxiety and mental health issues.
- We pray that in the business of cultural Christmas preparations, this Advent we can find space in our hearts once more to receive the Good News of Comfort and Joy.