

# Parish of Monks Risborough

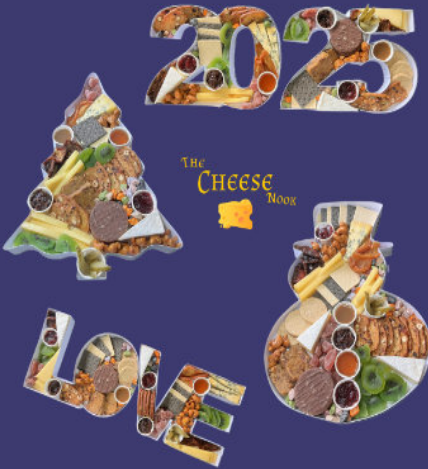
## *Newsletter*



St Dunstan's Church      St Peter's Chapel

December 2024 - January 2025

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# Clergy

**Team Vicar The Rev'd. Peter Godden, The Rectory, Mill Lane, Monks Risborough HP27 9JE**

**Tel: 01844 274771 Email: revpetergodden@outlook.com**

**Associate Priest: The Rev'd Sally Prendergast**

**Tel: 07876 515098 Email: revsallyp@gmail.com**

Arrangements for Baptisms, Confirmation Preparation, Confessions, Banns of marriage, Weddings and Funerals can be made with Peter at the address above.

**Website: [www.stdunstanschurch.com](http://www.stdunstanschurch.com)**

**Registered Charity No. 115386**

## Regular Services

<b>St Dunstan's</b>	Sundays	8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)	<b>1st Sunday in month</b>
		10.00 am PARISH COMMUNION	
		10.00 am FAMILY SERVICE	<b>1st Sunday in month</b>
		3.00 pm Evensong	<b>Except 4th Sunday in month</b>
	Thursdays	9.30 am Holy Communion	
<b>Owlswick Chapel</b>		9.00 am Holy Communion	<b>2nd Sunday in month</b>
		3.00 pm Evensong	<b>4th Sunday in month</b>

## The Parochial Church Council

**Chairman:**

**The Rev'd. Peter Godden**

**Churchwardens:**

Paul Woodward-Court 01844 344417

Sue Ingram 01844 275287

**Secretary:**

Lucy Nott 01844 345268

**Treasurer:**

David Curry 07854 198498

**Deanery Synod Reps**

**Ex Officio Member**

Mrs J Curry, Mr E Kent

The Rev'd Sally Prendergast

**Elected Members**

Mrs A-M Burke, Mr C Fairall, Mrs A Maycock, Mrs D Norie, Mrs J Rogers, Dr C Trower, Mrs A Vere

## Directory

**Churches Together in Risborough Rep.** Margaret Pitman 01844 346008

**Gift Aid Secretary** Nick Tyler 01844 344589

**Electoral Roll Officer** Caroline Godden  
email: [electoralroll@stdunstanschurch.com](mailto:electoralroll@stdunstanschurch.com)

**Weekly Notice Sheet Organiser** John McKay 01844 274650  
email: [comms@stdunstanschurch.com](mailto:comms@stdunstanschurch.com)

**Newsletter Editor** Morna Hinch 01844 345169

**St Dunstan's Choir Practice** **Thursdays from 6.30 pm**

**Tower Captain** Brian Highe 01844 343755

**Bell Ringing Practice at St Dunstan's** **Thursdays 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm**

## The Rev'd Peter Godden writes:

How are your Christmas preparations going? As this *Newsletter* hits your doorsteps, it will be start of Advent – the time when Christians are called to prepare themselves spiritually for the celebrations of Christmas, and the welcoming of Christ afresh into our lives and our world.

Wanting to embrace Advent fully, I tend to do most of my practical Christmas preparations way ahead of time – especially everything for our Christmas services here at St Dunstan's.

This meant that, all the way back in August, I spent a sunny day immersed in the liturgy (that is, the words and rituals that make up a service), the scriptural readings, and of course the music of Christmas. I spent a particularly large amount of time weighing up which carols were going to make the grade, and which would be rested again until 2025. It's no easy task! And so it was that, whilst the nation was enjoying sunbathing and ice creams, the Rectory was alive with the sound of Christmas music. My wife found this all bemusingly entertaining – that is, until I decided to play Wham!'s *Last Christmas* for a laugh, at which point I was told that this was a step too far for the height of summer (and don't worry, I haven't selected it for Midnight Mass).

Whilst the Christmas offerings of Wham!, Band Aid, Slade and the rest probably do all belong solely in the yuletide season, other parts of the festive celebrations are most definitely not just for Christmas – not least the way in which the story at its heart reveals God's love to us.

The most famous Bible passage that is read out at Christmas services is probably the prologue to St John's Gospel, where St John opens up for us what an incredible thing it is that that the God who created the universe and everything in it cares for us so deeply that He chose to take upon Himself our human nature and share what it is to be human with us.

This means that you, by definition of being human, are so precious, so esteemed in God's eyes, that God the Son leapt from His throne in heaven into this world for your sake and for the sake of everyone: to love us, to minister to us, and to save us. We call God being born among us the 'incarnation', and we cannot hear about this too much, for it reminds us how much we are worth, and how much we are loved.

*Last Christmas* probably does belong firmly in December, along with a whole other heap of traditions that make the season distinctive. But the revelation of God's love in the Christmas narrative belongs at the centre of our lives every single day.

May the joy of Christ's birth be yours this Christmas, and for ever.

I hope to see you soon.

With my prayers,

**Peter**

# From the Parish Registers

**Baptisms:** *We welcome into the family of God:*

29th September: Isabelle Ridgely

**Funerals:** - *Rest in Peace:*

14th October: Sheila Hunnisett age 94, of Ickneild Court

21st October: Richard Ashby, age 92, Westmead

11th November: Christine Rennie. Age 82 of Askett Lane

## St Dunstan's Pastoral Care

Caring for our community is part of our vision and service. The Pastoral Care Group is there to visit and support all those in need - the bereaved, sick, lonely and housebound, and those who may feel anxious about themselves or a loved one.

Similarly, if you know of someone who might benefit from contact, please get in touch.

We are here for you.

For more information, please contact Angeline Vere on **01844 343006** or at **angeline.ver@btinternet.com**

There may also be those who could benefit from some spiritual encouragement. No matter where you might be on a journey of faith, there are members of the Pastoral Care group who would be only too happy to visit or have a telephone call with those who would appreciate a chat and perhaps someone to pray with. If you would like such a phone call, you can contact Jill Iredale on 01844 346488 or at **jillstovold@icloud.com** or Angeline Vere on 01844 343006 or at **angeline.ver@btinternet.com**.

The Pastoral Care group works alongside and with Peter, the Vicar, who can be contacted on 01844 274771, or at **revpetergodden@outlook.com**.

## The Church Hall

The fully equipped hall is available for church and associated events.

It is available for people to use after Christenings, weddings, funerals and other services. It is also available for hire to local community groups and charities, and is very popular for hosting small classes.

For further details or to arrange a booking, contact **stdunstanschurhall@gmail.com** or ring 07942 356245.

# Church Calendar

All services at St Dunstan's Monks Risborough unless otherwise stated.

1 <sup>st</sup> December	Sunday	<b>First Sunday of Advent</b> 8.00 am BCP Holy Communion 10.00 am All-Age Christingle Service No Evensong service at St Dunstan's: 6.00 pm Churches Together in Risborough Advent Service (St John's Church, Lacey Green)
5 <sup>th</sup> December	Thursday	9.30 am Holy Communion
8 <sup>th</sup> December	Sunday	<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> 9.00 am BCP Holy Communion (St Peter's Owlswick) 10.00 am Parish Eucharist 3.00 pm Evensong
12 <sup>th</sup> December	Thursday	9.30 am Holy Communion
15 <sup>th</sup> December	Sunday	<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b> 10.00 am Parish Eucharist 3.00 pm Evensong
18 <sup>th</sup> December	Wednesday	4.00 pm Blue Christmas: A service for all who may find the season of Christmas difficult or painful
19 <sup>th</sup> December	Thursday	9.30 am Holy Communion
22 <sup>nd</sup> December	Sunday	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b> 10.00 am Parish Eucharist 3.00 pm Owlswick Carol Service (St Peter's Owlswick) 6.00 pm Nine Lessons & Carols
24 <sup>th</sup> December	Tuesday	<b>Christmas Eve</b> 3.00 pm Children's Service 6.00 pm Village Carol Service 11.30 pm Midnight Mass



25 <sup>th</sup> December	Wednesday	<b>Christmas Day</b> 8.00 am BCP Holy Communion 10.00 am All-Age Parish Eucharist
26 <sup>th</sup> December	Thursday	(Boxing Day) <i>No service</i>
29 <sup>th</sup> December	Sunday	<b>First Sunday of Christmas</b> 10.00 am Parish Eucharist 3.00 pm Evensong ( <b>St Peter's Owlswick</b> )
2 <sup>nd</sup> January	Thursday	9.30 am Holy Communion
5 <sup>th</sup> January	Sunday	<b>Feast of the Epiphany (Transferred from 6<sup>th</sup> January)</b> 8.00 am BCP Holy Communion 10.00 am All-Age Parish Eucharist 3.00 pm Evensong
9 <sup>th</sup> January	Thursday	9.30 am Holy Communion
12 <sup>th</sup> January	Sunday	<b>Baptism of Christ</b> 9.00 am BCP Holy Communion (St Peter's Owlswick) 10.00 am Parish Eucharist 3.00 pm Evensong
16 <sup>th</sup> January	Thursday	9.30 am Holy Communion
19 <sup>th</sup> January	Sunday	<b>Second Sunday of Epiphany</b> 10.00 am Parish Eucharist 3.00 pm Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service
23 <sup>rd</sup> January	Thursday	9.30 am Holy Communion
26 <sup>th</sup> January	Sunday	<b>Third Sunday of Epiphany</b> 10.00 am Parish Eucharist 3.00 pm Evensong (St Peter's Owlswick)
30 <sup>th</sup> January	Thursday	9.30 am Holy Communion

## Would you like a lift to and from church on a Sunday morning?

If you would like a lift either on a regular basis or as a one-off, please contact Cathy on 01844 343226 or at [cathy.farquhar@btinternet.com](mailto:cathy.farquhar@btinternet.com).

A call by Friday evening would be appreciated.

# Blue Christmas

## St Dunstan's Church

**Tuesday 19th December, 4.00 pm**

A special service for all those who find this season difficult or painful, or who wish to worship in solidarity with them.



The service includes prayers, Bible readings, music, and times of quiet and reflection, as we prepare for Christmas by both acknowledging our sadnesses, and embracing the hope that God offers us in the birth of Jesus Christ his Son.

All are welcome.

## Parish Prayer Group

The Pastoral Care Group meets to pray for both the needs of the Church and the parish in general, but also for individual people who may wish to benefit from the power of prayer. It also addresses urgent wider issues of concern.

Meetings are held in the Church Hall on the 3rd Friday of each month at 9.00am for about half an hour. The next meetings are on 20th December and 17th January. A reminder will be in the eNews and Pewsheets on the Sunday prior to each of those dates and we will also email those who regularly attend.

If you would like prayers said for you or for a loved one or for any aspect of Parish life, in confidence, then please do get in touch - or fill in a Prayer Request Card and put it in the new Prayer Request Box in the centre of the church. Also, if you are interested in being part of this Group, on a regular or occasional basis, we would be so pleased to hear from you - or indeed just arrive at the stated time.

Jill Iredale

**jillstovold@icloud.com**

01844 346488

Angeline Vere

**angeline.vere@btinternet.com**

01844 343006



# Report on meeting of the PCC 1st October 2024

In the October meeting of the PCC, members continued their discussion of the draft policy to admit children to Holy Communion, in the light of Diocesan comments. Following this discussion, all members of the PCC who were present indicated that they were in favour of taking this step in the life of the church, and a vote to adopt the draft policy achieved the required majority in order to be passed. As a result, the policy will now be sent to the Diocese with the hope that it will receive episcopal approval.

At every meeting of the PCC, reports are received from various groups and teams. The prayer group has indicated that they would like to receive more requests for prayers from the different groups within the church, so you are encouraged to let Rev'd Peter Godden, Jill Iredale, or Angeline Vere know if there are any such requests.

Many of you will know that the church was affected by some recent localised flooding. We were most grateful to some of our neighbours, who helped to avoid any serious damage to the building. We now have some sandbags available to help avoid any future flooding.

A discussion of the hall fees was held and it was suggested that a lower block of £20 for two hours be offered in addition to the current options to hire the hall of £30 for four hours and £45 for eight hours. This proposal was unanimously adopted by the PCC.

Finally, with the imminent departure of Rev'd David Williams from St Mary's Princes Risborough, the role of Team Rector for the Risborough Team also becomes vacant. The PCC agreed to, and voted in favour of the proposal that the appointment of a new Team Rector follow the same structure, terms and conditions as the existing post.

The next meeting of the PCC will be on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

**Lucy Nott**

**Secretary to the PCC**

## That coin in your Christmas pudding

There is a tradition, which dates from the Middle Ages, of putting silver coins into Christmas puddings. The first coins used were a silver farthing or penny. After World War One, it became a threepenny bit and then a sixpence. Finding one was supposed to bring you good fortune, but probably it was more likely to break a tooth as you bit into the pudding.

We now pay for most things with plastic or by tapping a mobile telephone. In future, will people put old credit cards or phones in their Christmas pudding? Hope not.

Other coins 'appear' at this time of year. Chocolate coins are traditionally given to children at Christmas time, and in Jewish tradition during Hanukkah. It is said that one night Saint Nicholas climbed on a roof and threw a purse of money down a chimney, which landed in a pair of stockings that a little girl had hung up to dry. Good throw!



## Knitting Group

This group meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 2.00 pm in the Church Hall. For further information please contact Janet East 01844 345028 or Pam Scott 01844 346857.

This year we were able to send a record number of 39 blankets to Whitechapel Mission. This is of course due to our wonderful knitters, far and wide. Special thanks to two of our most prolific knitters, one from Rochdale and one from Little Meadle. Special thanks also to the two local ladies who help me with the sewing up.

We are pleased to support Whitechapel Mission, who donate the blankets to clients when they get rehoused, but we would also be happy to provide a bright and colourful knitted bed or knee blanket to any local elderly person who would appreciate one.

If anyone feels like joining us they would be very welcome. Also any contribution of wool would be gratefully received.

## Church Choir

Choir practice is held in church every Thursday evening from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm, For more information please contact Margaret Pitman 01844 346008.

## Bell Ringers

This friendly group practises from 7.30/7.45 pm to 9.00 pm on a Thursday evening. We welcome beginners and experienced ringers.

If you would like to come along to see what's involved please contact Tower Captain Brian Highe 01844 343755.

## Open House

In December we will be taking a break from our main theme and looking at the '**Wise Men and Stars**' as we think about the events surrounding Jesus' birth. Please check for the date in the eNews or weekly Pew Sheet.

The January topic continues with the theme of '**How did Christianity spread?**' by concentrating on the **British Isles**. This is planned for Wednesday the 22nd January but please check the eNews for any updates.

Advanced notice of a future date - Wednesday 19th February before we take a break for Lent Groups.

For more information please contact Ted or Mary Kent on 01844 274089

# Baptisms



The birth of a child is a wonderful occasion, and a time for thanksgiving and rejoicing. Many people still wish to mark this in their parish church, either with the service of Baptism (also known as a Christening), where a child is baptised and welcomed into the Christian faith, or with a service of Thanksgiving and Dedication, where a child is named and blessed.

If you would like to find out more, please do not hesitate to contact Peter our Vicar, on 01844 274771, or at [revpetergodden@outlook.com](mailto:revpetergodden@outlook.com).

## 10 O'Clock Club

Our Sunday school is a fun get together for children, in St. Dunstan's Church Hall, which runs parallel to the Sunday morning 10.00 am service, usually on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

We run an hour of games, craft, Bible stories and Lighthouse songs, and then join the congregation in church for the end of the service. There is no commitment or need to book. Just come along and join in the fun.

On the first Sunday of the month, we join the congregation for the family service at 10.00 am.

The next dates for the 10 O'clock Club are 8th December and our Christmas party on 15th December. In the New Year the dates are 12th and 26th January.

If you would like any further information, please contact: Debbie Norie 07982 247715 or at [debbienorie@googlemail.com](mailto:debbienorie@googlemail.com).

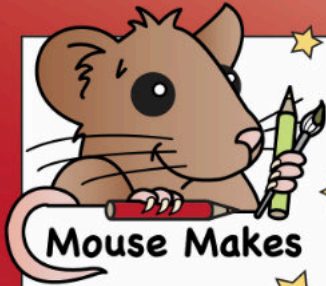
## What sort of a Christmas card person are you?

The time to send and receive Christmas cards has come round again – time for our annual shock at the cost of a coloured card, and disbelief at what the Post Office intends to charge us to deliver them.

It seems there are three kinds of people when it comes to Christmas cards: the total abstainers, the total givers and the selective givers.

Abstainers write 'Happy Christmas everyone' on Facebook, and consider the job well done. Total givers spend a fortune on cards and stamps and send them to everyone they know. Selective givers try to cut corners, but then cannot remember who sent whom what, and as the cards pour through their door, spend time worrying...

However you do it, it is good to stay in yearly touch with your widest circle of friends and family. Proverbs points out that: 'Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.' Prov 25:25. Your loved ones will enjoy hearing from you!



## Mouse Makes

★ "Jesus said,  
I am the \_\_\_ Y  
and the \_\_\_ U \_\_\_  
and the \_\_\_ I \_\_\_.  
No one comes to the Father  
except through me."  
*John 14:6*

"The child to be born  
will be called  
H \_\_\_ , the  
\_\_\_ of \_\_\_"  
*Luke 1:35*

"For unto you is born  
this day a  
S \_\_\_  
who is  
\_\_\_ R \_\_\_  
the \_\_\_ R \_\_\_"  
*Luke 2:11*

## THE GREATEST GIFT

"She will bear a son,  
and shall call his name

\_\_\_  
for he will save his  
people from their sins."  
*Matthew 1:21*

"Jesus said,  
I am the

\_\_\_ and the life."  
*John 11:25*

B L I G H T L O  
R A Y W O J J R  
E M M A N U E L  
A B Y J E S O  
D S A V I O U R  
S A V R J S D

O H O L Y O R C R T U  
S O N O F M A N H A R T  
N L S H E P H E R D U  
O Y A E P E R G I F T G  
C H R I S T M A S T H S  
R E S U R R E C T I O N

**JESUS**  
—  
**THE**  
**GREATEST**  
**GIFT**  
**OF ALL!**

P R O P H E T I  
R E D E E M E R  
I E M I L I G  
E M E S S I A H  
S R M E G F T  
T E A C H E R E

E V E R L A S T I N G  
K I N G O F K I N G S  
I N K I G W F D O U  
S E S O N O F G O D D  
S E W O C O U W O R D  
C O U N S E L L O R U

EMMANUEL • MESSIAH REDEEMER • KING OF KINGS • WORD  
SON OF MAN • EVERLASTING • SHEPHERD • PRIEST • PROPHET • TEACHER  
LIGHT • BREAD • VINE • DOOR • LAMB • COUNSELLOR • CHRISTMAS • GIFT

Find the words from the Bible verses too!

Dec24 © deborah noble @ parishpump.co.uk

**Princes Risborough Area Heritage Society presents**

# **THE MERCY HOSPITAL SHIPS**



**Ken and June Brazier tell about amazing  
charity ships which provide surgery for  
impoveryshed lands worldwide**



**Weds Dec 4th 7:30 to 9:15pm at the  
BRUSHWOOD SUITE, Wades Park  
BAR OPEN, non-members welcome £3 cash**

## **Bereavement Drop In**

This group meets on the second Monday of every month throughout the year offering a warm welcome to anyone struggling with the grief of bereavement. We share together over a cup of tea or coffee, talk about our experiences or just listen. Many find comfort in talking about their loved ones with others who know what they are going through.

We meet in the Chapter House at St. Mary's Church, Princes Risborough, at 3.00 pm, and everyone is welcome, of any faith or of no faith at all.

Please contact me if you need further details.

**Revd Rose Williams** 01844 274225

# Harvest Festival with a visiting Bishop

Harvest Festival is always a special occasion in the life of the church – not least because it reminds us of the precarious nature of human existence, of our reliance on God for His goodness, and to be thankful not just to God but to all those people who work so hard to harvest and process the food that we perhaps sometimes take for granted.

Harvest at St Dunstan's this year was particularly special. The floral displays produced by our wonderful flower team were especially splendid, bursting with vibrant autumnal colours, and made the church look absolutely brilliant.

For the Parish Eucharist, we had the very great pleasure of welcoming the Rt Rev'd Adam Atkinson, Bishop of Bradwell, in our midst. This was an unusual visit, as Bishop Adam is an area Bishop in the Diocese of Chelmsford rather than our own Diocese of Oxford; his visit was to help his godmother and member of our congregation Anne Baker, mark a special birthday this year. Bishop Adam preached a truly encouraging sermon about us looking after God's kingdom, and letting God in return look after us.



The joyful, vibrant service concluded with Bishop Adam giving God's blessing to the congregation as the sun came out.

The service was followed by a super lunch, organised by our devoted Events Team, and enjoyed by many of the morning's congregation. It all made for a memorable start to the busy period of the church year that will run all the way through to Christmas and then Epiphany in the new year.

# Christmas Concert by Candlelight

with the

## Chinnor Silver Band

### St Dunstan's Church

### Monks Risborough

Wednesday 11th December

at 8.00 pm

Tickets £12.00

Complimentary Glass of Mulled Wine  
or a Soft Drink and a Mince Pie

### Prize Raffle

Tickets are available from  
Jo (01844) 346321 or Penny 07762 880219  
or Days to Remember, High Street, Princes Risborough  
or online from

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-dunstans-church](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-dunstans-church)

*Jamadar*





St Dunstan's  
Monks Risborough

St Peter's  
Owlswick

# Christmas at St Dunstan's

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December

**4pm | Blue Christmas**

A special service for all those who may find this season difficult or painful.

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December

**6pm | Nine Lessons & Carols**

An evocative service of readings and Christmas carols.

Christmas Eve

**3pm | Crib Service**

A joyful service for all the family exploring the wonder of Christmas. We would love to see you come dressed in nativity costumes!

**6pm | Village Carol Service**

A special service on the cusp of Christmas featuring readings and carols.

**11.30pm | Midnight Mass**

A service of beauty and wonder, as we welcome in the feast of Christmas.

Christmas Day

**8am | BCP Holy Communion**

A peaceful service of Holy Communion early on Christmas morning according to the Book of Common Prayer.

**10am | Christmas Day Eucharist**

A joyful all-age service of Holy Communion as we celebrate Christmas Day.

**We look forward to seeing you!**

## DIARY DATES FOR DECEMBER AND JANUARY

### December

- 4th Women's Institute - Whitecross Hall 1.45 pm (Page 25)
- 4th MR Heritage Society - Wades Centre 7.30 pm (Page 14)
- 11th Open House Group - TBA 7.30 pm (Page 11)
- 11th Chinnor Band Concert - St Dunstan's 8.00 (Page 16)
- 12th Fellowship Group - Church Hall 10.15 am (Page 10)
- 18th Friendship Group - Church Hall 2.00 pm (Page 10)
- 20th Parish Prayer Group - Church Hall 9.00 am (Page 8)

### January

- 8th Women's Institute - Whitecross Hall 1.45 pm (Page 25)
- 14th Fellowship Group - Church Hall 10.15 am (Page 10)
- 15th Friendship Group - Church Hall 2.00 pm (Page 10)
- 17th Parish Prayer Group - Church Hall 9.00 am (Page 8)
- 21st Tuesday Talk - PR Library 3.00 pm (Page 29)
- 22nd Open House Group - TBA 7.30pm (Page 11)
- 23rd Knitting Group - Church Hall 2.00 pm (Page 11)
- 29th Walking Group - Burton Lane 9.30 am (Page 10)



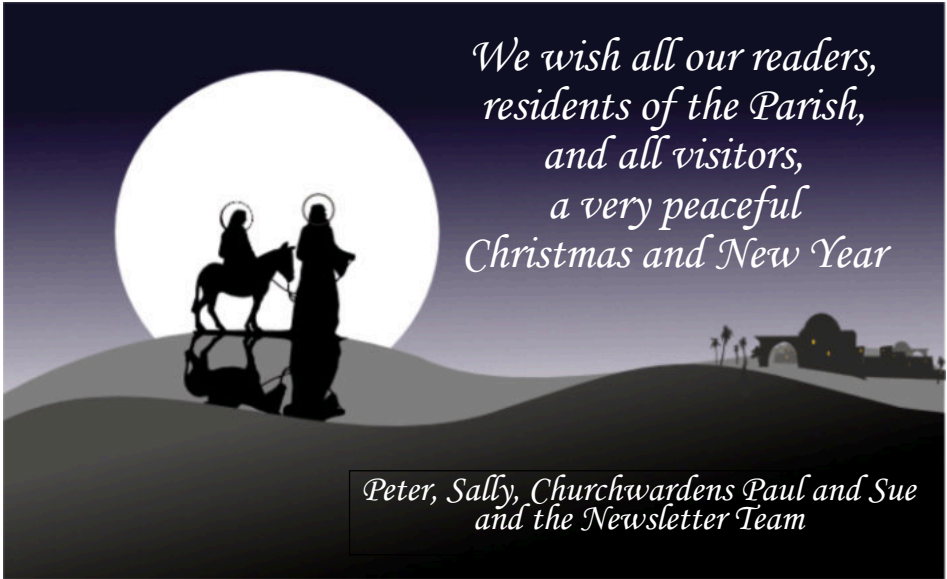
**For further information about the Church,  
services, and current notices**

**see our website**

**[www.stdunstanschurch.com](http://www.stdunstanschurch.com)**

You can also keep up-to-date by following us on Facebook  and 

*A Member of the Risborough Team Ministry*



*We wish all our readers,  
residents of the Parish,  
and all visitors,  
a very peaceful  
Christmas and New Year*

*Peter, Sally, Churchwardens Paul and Sue  
and the Newsletter Team*

**Final copy date for next *Newsletter*  
is  
10th January 2025**

**Please give copy to one of the following:**

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*The next Newsletter will be issued from 26th January 2025*

# The Rhode to Church

Confession time; this year my husband Patrick and I were really disorganised with organising our holiday. We wanted a destination that provides everything from history and architecture to peaceful pools to read beside and excellent food. In the end, we arrived in Rhodes at a hotel with no sea views (how did we manage that?!) but a gloriously dramatic and rocky Greek hillside for a backdrop.

Daylight revealed a less-than-glamorous phone mast with a white outbuilding beside it, perched in the cedars at the very top. But a hill is a hill! The law of everything dictates that it must be climbed, so after a couple of days of reading beside the pool, we packed rucksacks with water and snacks, and found the trail. Although we could only see a phone mast, there was apparently a monastery at the top, so my motivation went up a few notches.

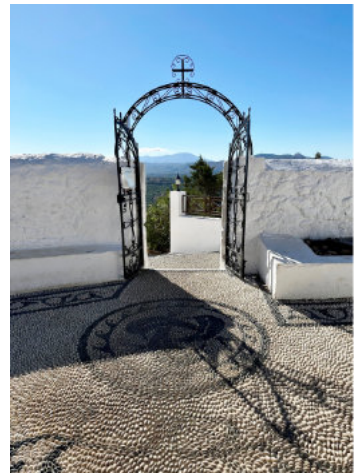
The trail was steep, dusty, and rocky, but we paused regularly to take in the view. We were joined by scrawny-looking goats, songbirds, and dragonflies. The scorched ground was strewn with bizarre plants, including one that looked like piles of chicken wire. After a while, the trail petered out and we picked our way towards a steep slope and found ourselves on a driveway, leading to 300 broad steps, numbered in white paint at every fifth one.

A steady trickle of people, locals and tourists rubbing shoulders, passed up and down. My eye caught signs that this is not just a tourist spot; piles of stones were carefully placed on a small plateau in the shade of the cedars. Onwards and upwards, zigzagging back and forth, we continued until the trees broke to reveal the pristine, whitewashed walls of the 'monastery', brilliant against a perfect blue sky.

The building we saw from below, and dismissed as a utilitarian shack, was a place of pilgrimage.

We stepped into a courtyard paved with round stones in different colours picking out geometric designs. The monastery (more like a chapel) was a simple building with a ledge for people to light candles, and inside a large painted icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary holding baby Jesus in an ornately carved wooden frame. Beneath the icon, hanging on colourful ribbons, were metal tokens embossed with baby feet, hands and eyes, and rows of wax baby figures. Photographs of babies and children were tucked into the frame. Outside I found a plaque which explained it all.

Many years ago, before the monastery, a wandering shepherd saw something glinting on the hill. He saw it again, so went to look closer, and found an icon of



Mary and Jesus beside a flickering candle, which he brought down to the nearby village. Word reached officials in Cyprus, who came to see the icon and recognised it as one that was missing from their monastery. They took it back, but shortly afterwards the icon reappeared on the hillside. It was returned to Cyprus, only to reappear again on the hillside. It was agreed that the icon should remain where it apparently wanted to rest, and the Panayiya Tsambika Monastery was built.

A vigil lamp was kept lit, and it became a place of pilgrimage. As often happens, people came to pray to Mary for a child of their own, including one lady who had difficulty bearing a child. She told her husband that she'd found a discarded wick from the vigil lamp and had swallowed it as she prayed. She fell pregnant, and according to the account, she bore a son who, as he emerged from her, clutched a tiny wick in his hand.

Now I could understand the wax babies beneath the icon, many of them bearing wicks. They, and every metal token and photograph were a prayer of yearning, of thanks, of joy, of sadness, but above all of hope. Behind the wall of candles, scratched into the sooty wall, are the names of children.



The trees outside were festooned with ribbons, toys, bracelets and medallions. I watched silently as women, sometimes with partners, paused in the cool darkness, gazed on the icon, crossed themselves, and reached out to touch the frame. Even the most hardened groups of tourists fell silent.

This was not what I expected when we set out to walk to a phone mast with a shack... It was a beautiful and deeply moving reminder that God will often speak to us when we're not listening. Please know that I said prayers in the chapel for all who, in whatever way, patiently walk the path of parenthood.

**Revd Sally Prendergast**

## Ninth Child



*Portrait of Federico da Montefeltro and his son Guidobaldo c. 1476-7*  
attributed to Pedro Berruguete died 1504. 4'5" x 2'5"  
Galleries Nazionale della Marche Urbino.

At long last Duke Federico da Montefeltro could pose proudly with his ninth child and only son Guidobaldo. Federico had been made Duke of Urbino by Pope Sixtus IV in 1474, and under Federico's leadership Urbino became one of the most powerful and cultured states of Italy. His boy Guidobaldo was about 4 or 5 in this very large painting, a legitimate son for whom he had waited all of his adult life.

His first wife had died childless in 1457, so taking no chances, aged 40, he had married 14-year-old Battista Sforza, the highly educated and clever daughter of Signor Alessandro Sforza of Pesaro. Battista bore Federico 8 daughters in 11 years, all but one placed early into politically expedient marriages. The last daughter Chiara wisely became a nun. Finally her 9th child Guidobaldo was born in 1472 and Battista died 6 months later, as well she might. She was 26.

In tones of red, brown and silver, Duke Federico is somehow, in spite of his armour, seated on his high throne under a nice perspective wooden ceiling. He is reading one of his hefty tomes at his lectern, on top of which is a conical hat encrusted with pearls and gold thread, a diplomatic gift from the ambassador to the Shah of Persia for services rendered. His sword is strapped to his side. All the many portraits of the Duke are shown in profile, as he had foolishly left the visor of his helmet open during a joust to entertain a mistress, and a lance had broken the bridge of his nose and taken out his right eye. (A discouraging sight, surely, for his 14-year-old bride.)

His chivalric honours are proudly displayed: his Order of the Ermine bestowed on him by King Ferrante of Naples, and on his prominent armoured leg is his Order of the Garter awarded by Edward IV of England. In the right-hand corner is his helmet (with its visor wisely closed), its dented crown a reminder of the lance which had struck out his eye.

Fragile little Guidobaldo (1472-1508) leans against his father's red-draped knee, holding the sceptre which signified the continuation of the Montefeltro dynasty. It is engraved with the word 'pontifex', alluding to the Pope's granting of the right of succession. The child is wearing his heavily bejewelled ceremonial robes, his neck and sparse hair adorned with pearls.

Pedro Berruguete, the presumed artist of this painting, was Castilian, Court Painter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. With other foreign artists, he worked on the decoration of the resplendent Palace of Urbino's ducal library. (You can visit the fantastic Palace today.)

The Duke's impressive tome seems to block his hard-won son from his sight, reminding me of the many parents I see glued to their mobiles, ignoring their tablet-holding infants. Let us hope that little Guidobaldo is gazing out at a devoted mother-substitute.

**Susanne Carr**

# Christmas Quiz 2024

1. This year was a Leap Year. Were 1900 and 2000 Leap Years?
2. What is Whamaggedon?
3. Alan Bates hit the headlines in January? He shares his name with a famous actor but why is he well known?
4. HRH Duke of Edinburgh met a special resident at S Helena in January who had also met his grandparents. Who is he?
5. A young actor, fresh out of drama school, was told by Arthur Lowe, "don't worry if there's not a lot of lines. They'll come. In the meantime get yourself a funny costume and stand near me". Who was the actor who passed away this year and starred in this classic sitcom?
6. Why did a family photo taken for Mothering Sunday lead to a lot of media speculation?
7. Why did North Korean television object to Alan Titchmarsh and his trousers?
8. How did a black cat called Matins get into trouble on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1953 at Westminster Abbey?
9. Where was the Carnation Revolution fifty years ago?
10. What product manufacturer (a byword in usefulness) announced in 2024 they would introduce the first bladeless version?
11. Which Oxford don applied unsuccessfully to be a code breaker in the 1940s? There was a note by his name, "keen".
12. Where is the Elephant and Bear Line?
13. What is Election purdah?
14. What was Gamblegate?
15. 17<sup>th</sup> July was National Emoji Day. One of the most popular is known as ROTFL. What does that mean?
16. In this year's Olympics the Philippines gold medallist Carlos Yulo got an unusual reward as well as the medal. What was it?
17. In August a north Italian city advertised for people to learn an ancient skill. The job requirements include being 18 or over, having a high school-level education, knowing how to swim, and possessing a medical certificate that proves "a healthy and robust constitution". What job was this for?
18. What music celebrated its 200th anniversary? Liked by many and Karl Marx thought "it a solemn mass of earthly joy"?
19. Why might you be looking forward to not looking back in anger?
20. What types of special judges were cancelled after 147 years' service and replaced electronically?

*See Page 28 for answers*



# Tapping a well of talent

In the last issue I talked about the creative writing club I have been running at Monks Risborough Primary School for 2023/2024 Year 6, and included a short story by one of the students. Here is another example of their flair and imagination. Enjoy!

PS I don't write their work or edit it. I give them advice and skill sets, make them think, and answer their questions. They discuss and critique their own and each others' work and help each other. They are very supportive of each other – but honest too.

**Jackie Highe**

## Life Doesn't Frighten Me At All

Dark walls, creaking doors  
Spiders on the tables, spiders on the floor.  
Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Ghosts, skeletons, dinosaurs  
Not even people chasing me with swords.  
Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Thunder and lightening in the sky  
Evil creatures walking by  
Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Freezing cold, paddling pool  
Who, me scared? Not at all  
Life doesn't frighten me at all.

## Monks Risborough Women's Institute

We normally meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 1.45 pm in the Whitecross Hall.

Our Christmas meeting this year is on **December 4th**, when as well as Christmas nibbles, music etc we will hear about 'Tales from a riverbank' which will be given by Mrs Graham Laurie.

Our January Meeting is on the 2nd Wednesday, **January 8th**, when we will be having our 'New Year Quiz'.

We welcome visitors and look forward to seeing you. We do ask that any visitors contact a member beforehand to make sure we can welcome you. A contact number is 01844 346582.

# Monks Risborough CofE Primary School

## Half Term reports

### Year 1

Wrens had a fantastic time walking to the post box. We have been learning our address in Geography, in our studies about 'Our Local Area' - families, please keep an eye out for an envelope arriving in the post soon! There's a special something inside for you. As we walked so safely, we were treated to a visit to the park and had so much fun working on our gross motor skills! Quote Rosie, *"This is the best day of my life!"*

In Year 1 we were looking at art in Scotland We learnt a Scottish song called 'I will walk 500 miles'. We loved singing it and it made us smile. We painted the Loch Ness Lake using blue and green. I loved the singing and I liked the painting.

**By Zoe & Abi Year 1**

### Year 2 Human & Physical Features in Geography

We are learning about Princes Risborough in Year 2. On Thursday we left the school and crossed the crossing. We walked down past the post box, crossed the road and walked past St Dunstan's church. We ended up in St Dunstan's park by the Dovecot and we walked past the other school. We went across the zebra crossing up to the High Street walking near the market house and continued to the library passing Dominoes. We went to the library and had a look at some books, Mrs Shea read 'I don't like curly hair'. It was a good book. We walked along towards High Wycombe and crossed the road to go to the Baptist Church, we had our snack and drinks in the hall. Then we walked back down the High Street going past St Mary's Church through Church Lane past Wades Field turning up towards the zebra crossing and back to Monks School.

**by Emelia, Florence, Reuben & Blake**

### Year 3

Year 3 went to Science Oxford to learn about rocks and we made snow (chemistry). In the first classroom we had boxes of rocks which we made a link grid which was to show the similarities of each rock. After this we made snow, we used water and special snow powder. We used a turkey beaker to collect water and two spoons then we wrote on a sheet the perfect recipe. Our one was 5 scoops of water and 4 scoops of powder – it was icy and fluffy. After this we went to the Exploration Room. My favourite activity was the pipes where you put a ball down and put a napkin in the pipe to help it flow. (DB) My favourite activity was a table that blew up and you could make a parachute to go up. (DP)

We had a brilliant time!

**By Dardan & Dori Year 3**

In Year 3 we were finding out about art in Australia. We made dot paintings, I made a rectangle and I made a tulip and we played the didgeridoo! When you blow it, it feels like your brain is shaking! It was quite difficult and made a low vibrating sound which I could feel through my body We also made Fairy Bread which Australians have as a snack. It is like normal bread with butter and hundreds and thousands on. We had lots of fun.

**By Lachlan & Darcie H Year 3**

### **Year 4 Neasden Temple**

When we got there we took our shoes off and put them in a special room just for shoes and coats. Then we waited for some other school to arrive and then sat on the carpet and watched a video about how they built the temple. Next we went upstairs to see the statues of the Gods they believe in and we had to be very careful and quiet. We watched their candle dance which they sang with and waved candles around the Gods. They were men dressed in beautiful clothes, everything was very precious. There were lots of Gods and carvings on the walls. We prayed to some of the Gods. We then went on to a balcony where we could see everything as it was very high up. We then went downstairs in groups to do a treasure hunt. We were looking for different Hindu items and answering questions. All our body parts had to be covered apart from our hands and faces, grown-ups should cover their faces if they were a lady. We had our lunch outside sitting on marble benches and we got a bit wet, and then we had our photo taken by the gold statue.

**By Hattie, Sophie, Evelyn P & Matilda Year 4**

### **Year 5 Arts Week**

Arts week was during the last week of term our theme was different arts around the world. In Year 5 we were learning about India, we were colouring in elephants in Pointillism (which is dots used to make an image). We used colour pens. All the other classes looked at other countries around the world including Jamaica, Finland and Australia. As well as the elephants we performed some Indian Bollywood dancing. Year 2 did a dance to the Moomin song using ribbons, which floated in the air. Some children brought in items of clothing from different countries to show the classes. We really enjoyed arts week, we had never seen some of the patterns on the clothing before which is very different from ours.

**By Olivia & Aamilah Year 5**

#### **Church Flower Rota**

Organisers:

Gwen Miles 01844 345230

Jenny Masterton-Smith 01844 273538

#### **Sunday Coffee Rota**

Organisers:

Jo Wade 01844 346321

Anne White 01844 346536

# Monks Risborough Horticultural Society

We are looking forward to our Winter 'break' in December & January. Thanks again for all the support during our 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year.

Then a great start with our first 2025 meeting on **Wednesday 19th February** at St Dunstan's Church hall with an earlier start time of 7.30 pm.

John Tyler & The Changing Wildlife of the Chilterns.

Website: <https://themrhs.wixsite.com/mrhs>



1. The year 2000 was a leap year. But 1900 was not. Every 4 years is a leap year.
2. Whamageddon is a game played during the 24 days before Christmas in which players try to go from 1 December to the end of Christmas Eve (24 December) without hearing "Last Christmas" by Wham!
3. Sir Alan Bates has been very active in trying to address the Post Office scandal. A giant tortoise.
4. Ian Lavender, who played Pike.
5. The photo taken by HRH Princess of Wales had been not very successfully altered.
6. He was wearing American style jeans.
7. The cat fell asleep on the Coronation throne.
8. Portugal.
9. Swiss Army knife.
10. JRR Tolkien. The word "keen" may have been a misspelling of his surname.
11. Near Coventry from Nuneaton down to Royal Leamington Spa.
12. The rule that civil servants and others will normally observe discretion about making new announcements or decisions that could influence voters.
13. The allegations that some politicians took bets on when the general election would be when they had insider information.
14. Roll on the floor laughing.
15. A lifetime of free colonoscopies.
16. Gondolier.
17. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.
18. The news that the group Oasis are performing again.
19. Line judges at Wimbledon.
- 20.

## Quiz solutions

# Princes Risborough Library

**The Tuesday Afternoon Group Monthly Talks 3.00 pm - 4.00 pm**

**Tuesday 21st January** : Talk on "The Chiltern Society"

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We shall be pleased to see you.

---

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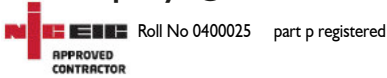


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