

**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT
FERNHAM**

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2017



“Rejoice!”

**Thought for the month: Letter from Canon Richard Hancock. TSSF
Blessed are....**

The Bishop of Oxford Rt. Rev'd. Dr Steven Croft has invited us all to go on a journey with him to explore the Beatitudes over the Advent period. Bishop Steven believes the teaching found in the Beatitudes, part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount [Matthew 5.1-10] are key to living as a Christian disciple. In them we find the heart of the Christian faith and he has distilled these down to three headings, Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous. His hope is that we can model ourselves, our communities and our churches on these principles.

As Advent is a time for reflection and contemplation, as we prepare for the great feast of Christmas, I invite you all to look at how we can be a more Contemplative church. Here is an excerpt from the Bishop's booklet on exploring the Beatitudes.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

According to the gospels, Jesus often withdrew to spend time apart with God (Mark 1.35; Luke 5.16). Jesus calls the twelve disciples to be with him before they are sent out (Mark 3.14). In the great image of the vine, Jesus calls his disciples to abide in him so that God's life may bear fruit in our lives.

To be a contemplative Church means:

To be deeply rooted in Christ as a branch in the vine, through prayer and worship, word and sacrament

To be sustained in joy and hope in the midst of a suffering world

To seek the continual grace and renewal of the Holy Spirit in our lives

To value deep wisdom and offer meaning

To take our theology seriously as dialogue with God as well as talk about God

To live in healthy rhythms of prayer and rest and work and be fully human

To be good news in an over active and busy world

To offer the gift of silence, still places and moments of encounter with the living God

To listen deeply to ourselves, to the world in which we live and to one another

To discern God's call to us as individuals and communities
 To wrestle with God
 To surrender our doing in order to make space for stillness and dwelling,
 that God might be free to do and act **within** us.

“Contemplation is the only ultimate answer to the unreal and insane world that our financial systems and our advertising culture and our chaotic and unexamined emotions encourage us to inhabit. To learn contemplative practice is to learn what we need so as to live truthfully and honestly and lovingly. It is a deeply revolutionary matter.” **Rowan Williams**

I would invite you all to reflect on these and what they mean for your own life as well as that of the church and local community.
 If you would like to know more booklets are available, please ask Norma, Richard or I or you can look at the information and video on the diocesan website; www.oxford.anglican.org

May your advent reflections bring you to a deeper understanding of God's love and propose for you in the world.

Blessings
 Canon Richard Hancock.

Views expressed in “Thought for the month” are those of the contributors

Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice Services in December

Sunday 3rd December

Advent Sunday

7.45am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Shrivenham
9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Fernham
10.15am	Family Service	Shrivenham
11.00am	Morning Worship	Ashbury
3.00pm	Joint Service Advent Carols	Longcot Chapel
5.00pm	Advent Carols	Watchfield

Sunday 10th December

9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Watchfield
9.00am	Morning Worship	Fernham
9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
10.15am	Parish Communion	Shrivenham
11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
5.45pm	Christingle & Carols around tree	Shrivenham

Sunday 17th December

9.00am	Matins	Watchfield
9.00am	[said] Holy Communion	Bourton
11am	Communion, jointly at	Ashbury Free Church
4.00pm	Village Carols	Fernham
6.00pm	Carol Service	Compton
6.00pm	Carol Service	Longcot
6.30pm	Carol Service	Shrivenham

Friday 22nd December

6.00pm	Stations of the Nativity	Ashbury
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Saturday 23rd December

5.00pm	Carol Service	Ashbury
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Sunday 24th December**Christmas Eve**

4.00pm	Crib Service	Ashbury
4.00pm	Crib Service	Shrivenham
6.30pm	Carols around tree	Watchfield
11.30pm	Midnight Mass	Shrivenham
11.30pm	Midnight Mass	Compton
11.30pm	Holy Communion	Longcot

Monday 25th December**Christmas Day**

9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Watchfield
9.00am	Holy Communion	Fernham
10.15am	Parish Communion	Shrivenham
10.30pm	Holy Communion	Ashbury

Sunday 31st December

10.30am	Benefice Service Holy Communion	Longcot
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The Ashbury prayer cycle for December will be: 3rd Church Lane, 10th College Farm Lane, 17th Ashdown Estate, 31st Idstone Road.

Ashbury Evangelical Free Church

Sunday 10th at 10.15 a.m. communion service

Sunday 17th at 11.00 a.m. **joint service** with St. Mary's at A.E.F.C.

Wednesdays 6th & 20th at 2.15pm. tea & chat.



Everyone is welcome!

Ashbury News

(See Ashbury also under Benefice News)

Diamond Wedding celebration 9th November: John and Anne Bunce

would like to say thank you for cards and flowers sent to them on their diamond wedding anniversary, and the Rose and Crown for a lovely meal. A total of £140 was given in donations for Macmillan Cancer support. We were very grateful to you all.

Harepins Knitting Group

It's a very big thank you to all who bought, and our merry band of ladies who knitted, the poppies that were on sale in the Jam Jar/Shop. A grand sum of £167.50 was raised and will be gifted to the Royal British Legion. For more details about the knitting group please contact Lorna at the shop. Everyone is welcome. Marina Tombs.

NB 1st W&S Scouts Big Christmas Post 2017

Stamps will be sold in Ashbury Village Shop from Wed 1st Nov. for only 30p each. Last posting date is on **Tuesday 12th December -3.30pm**

The WI - Inspiring Women - Bishopstone with Hinton Parva WI

Our Christmas celebration evening will be held on Thursday 9th December, 7pm at Bishopstone Village hall. Hot supper and puddings for all! If you are not a member but would like to join us please let me know in advance as we are catering and there will be a small charge for this.

Looking ahead at January, we have speaker Andy Binks giving us a "Swindon History in Photos" at Hinton Parva village hall, 7pm. Andy chairs the Swindon Society devoted to the preservation of the towns history through photographs, films, memorabilia and advertising material, chronicling what has changed and what has evolved.

Our WI has members from the villages of Ashbury, Bishopstone, Hinton Parva, Wanborough and Liddington, and we always welcome new members. Our monthly meeting takes place on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7.30 - 9.30pm in either Bishopstone or Hinton Parva village halls, and we have groups which also meet outside of our monthly meeting; e.g. Reading, Art Study and organised trips for members and their friends.

Come along to one of our meetings to see if you like it - no obligation to join unless you want to!

Please contact me if you would like any further information - **Maggie Simons 7108001**



**Carol Singing in Ashbury Village Hall
Thursday 21st December 2.30 - 4pm
Everyone is invited to this Festive Singalong
(music and song sheets provided)
followed by Tea & Mince Pies - all for free**

Longcot and Fernham News

Longcot Churches working together -Chapel News

SUN. 3rd 3pm Advent Carol Service. Everyone is welcome to join us for this special service to be held on the first Advent Sunday. Pam Mullin, Methodist Local Preacher and a familiar face at the chapel, will be leading the service and we look forward to sharing fellowship over tea and mince pies (“first one this year?”) afterwards.

FRI. 29th 3pm This year's last T Time Fellowship which is open to everyone who would enjoy the chance to chat to friends old and new over a seasonal afternoon tea. There is no charge but contributions to our chosen charity are always welcome. If transport would help or you'd just like to know more please contact **Stella on 01793 782584.**

Community News

New Countywide Volunteering Website

Oxfordshire Volunteers (oxonvolunteers.org) is a brand new countywide volunteering website designed to link you with your perfect volunteering opportunity! Whether it's a regular weekly slot or a one-off opportunity, you'll find them all on the website. You might even want to apply for a position on a trustee board, helping to manage a local charity that you are passionate about. The website is great for groups too, who at last have one central place on the web to advertise their wonderful opportunities.

What do you need to do?

If you are a volunteer: go to oxonvolunteers.org, register yourself using the blue 'Try Volunteering' button and start searching for opportunities. It's as simple as that!

If you are an organisation: use the 'Need Volunteers' button to register as a provider and start posting your opportunities!

This site is run as a partnership by Oxfordshire's three Volunteer Centres, funded by Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire City Council and Cherwell District Council.

Benefice News

Christmas events and services in Ashbury:

3 December Cloths for the cradle – a reflective service for Advent.
20 December Stations of the nativity. 21 December Village hall carols.
23 December Carol service in church. Christmas Eve Crib service.
Christmas Day Family Communion.

Ashbury Carol Service will be on Saturday 23 December at 5pm in St Mary's Church. Please join us after the service for a glass of wine

Carol services in Longcot, Fernham and Compton Churches will be on Sunday 17 December at 4pm (Fernham) and 6pm (Longcot and Compton)

Faringdon Singers Christmas Concerts

This ever popular group of local singers are offering two Christmas concerts: in Shrivensham Methodist Church on Saturday 9 December at 7.30 pm and on 10 December in the Church of the Blessed Hugh, Faringdon, at 3pm. The programme includes music by Handel, Rutter and Bach, together with carols for choir and audience and seasonal readings.

MARY-JESS – THURSDAY 14TH DECEMBER

Get into the Christmas spirit at St Mary's second concert featuring Mary-Jess, who many saw at the Longcot Ocktaves evening in 2015. She returns to St Mary's on Thursday 14th December as part of her 2017 "Winter Tour". Expect an enchanting evening, listening to her beautiful songs and timeless classics including seasonal favourites Joni Mitchell's 'River' and Frozen's 'Let it Go', as well as songs from her new album 'Prayer to a Snowflake', which was released last year to critical acclaim. Best-known as the winner of the Chinese 'X Factor' in front of 70 million viewers, Mary-Jess is the singer of the official Downton Abbey theme, and the UK Ambassador for "The GREAT Britain Campaign" in 144 countries around the world. Mary-Jess wows audiences all over the world, so don't miss out on what promises to be an unforgettable evening. Tickets and info from www.amickproductions.co.uk

Breakfast groups

There will be a men's breakfast as usual on the first Saturday of December in Ashbury village hall but the breakfast bible study on the last Saturday of the month will be taking a break until the end of January.

A Christmas Blessing

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ child
be yours this Christmas and always.

**Please join us at any of our services for
Advent, Christmas and the New Year.**

**There are a variety of times and service styles to choose
from.**

Norma

Country Matters

This time of the year I am out and about covering a lot of country. In the past week I have been privileged to be asked to shoot standing in picturesque valleys in both the Cotswolds and Chilterns. I am usually accompanied by my black lady companion but my four-legged shadow is off games just now with eleven stiches in her chest and a lampshade round her head to deter licking the wound. This autumn the crops have emerged well, better than last year when slugs and flea beetle damage were more of a problem. Our cattle are now housed, tucking into silage but keeping them clean will not be so easy this year, with the bedding straw so brittle after the August storms that it breaks up too easily.

This year many French vineyards are harvesting one of the smallest yields of grapes on record but here we did not have those damaging frosts and in this season of mellow fruitfulness, fruit has been abundant. I am also struck this year by the brilliant vibrancy of our red berried shrubs. As someone who often starts the day with a well known brand of cereal with red berries for

breakfast, these fruits in our hedges and gardens really add colour to a dull December day. Many shrubs profit like apples from having both genders in proximity and we must teach our children that most colourful red berries are poisonous.

In our hedgerows fieldfares and redwings are clearing the hawthorn haws; beneath these bushes you can spot the vivid necklaces of bryony and woody nightshade. You will also find spindleberries. I have planted a good number in new hedges and they are one of my favourites, with the orange pip now breaking out. Unfortunately they play host to overwintering aphids. Also to be found is the guelder rose which is a variety of viburnum with red berries. I get a buzz near Christmas of harvesting plenty of berried holly on the downs from bushes I planted over twenty years ago. Growing up, we had none in the Vale but farming relations in west Dorset used to send us a box through the post and we used to reciprocate with a brace of pheasants posted unwrapped just with an addressed label round their neck! Those were the days, but seriously let me know if you would like to be given game in the feather and I will see to it. Whitebeam and Rowan trees also sport red fruits. And our gardens are now showing brightly with the vivid crimson varieties of cotoneaster and pyracantha, often as a hedge or against a wall.

rwgreen42@gmail.com m 07788727811

Richard Green

Benefice Clergy

Vicar	Rev Richard Hancock	01793 780183
NSM	Revd Norma Fergusson (Except Monday and Friday)	01793 710055

Newsletter entries for January 2018. Submit your entries for January by **18th December** to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN.

marionlturner@me.com 01793 710302

For more of “what’s on” and local information see the Ashbury Village Website www.ashbury.org.uk and the [community page on Facebook](#).