



St Michael
and All Angels
Parish Church
of
Amersham-on-the-Hill

Please take one

Newsletter

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2021/22



Christmas At St Michael's

Saturday December 18
5 pm Carol Service (Nine Lessons and Carols)

Friday December 24
Christmas Eve
3 pm Crib Service
(Please register with the office to ensure we have sufficient seats available,)
8 pm Midnight Mass

Saturday December 25
Christmas Day
Eucharists 8.30 (said) and 10 am (with carols)

Sunday December 26
8.30 am Eucharist
No service at 10 am

Sunday January 2
Epiphany
Eucharists at 8.30 am and 10 am

The Christmas Tree Festival, with trees sponsored by local community groups will be open from December 4 to January 5



Sycamore Road at Christmas Photo: Roland Gillott



Music on St Michael's Square

Saturday December 11
9.45 am—2.15 pm

In this issue...	
Christmas Season	3
St Columba	4
Climate emergency	5
Film Club	6



St Michael and All Angels
Sycamore Road
 Amersham HP6 5DR
Church Office:01494 726680
Office@stmichaelsamersham.org.uk.
 (Monday – Friday
 9.30 am – 12.30 pm)

Clergy

Vicar
 The Revd Debbie Oades
revdebbieoades@gmail.com.



Churchwardens

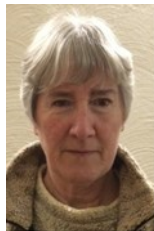
Roger Leslie
rogerleslie25@gmail.com

Associate Priest
 The Revd Peter Binns
peter.binns166@btinternet.com



Roland Gillott.
Roland.gillott@btinternet.com

Church Administrator
 Hazel Miller
office@stmichaelsamersham.org.uk.



Safeguarding Officer
 Ann Beattie
 safeguard-
ing@stmichaelsamersham.org.uk

Website
www.stmichaelsamersham.org.uk



Newsletter Editor
 Kenneth Prideaux-Brune
 01494 433871
pbrune@olcs.net

St Michael's Vision Statement

As a Christian community, we seek to engage with the world around us and to be a place of welcome and acceptance for all on a journey to God – believers, doubters and those who are seeking.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Vicar or the PCC or the official policy of St Michael's Church.

The Newsletter is published monthly (except January and August).

The next issue will appear on Sunday January 30. Material for inclusion should please be emailed to the Editor on pbrune@olcs.net by January 18.



COMMENT

The Christmas Season

We are fortunate to live in the Northern Hemisphere where Christmas is celebrated during the shortest days of the year. The lights, the festivities and the fun help to carry us over into the lengthening days of the New Year.

Whether we are in the Northern or the Southern Hemisphere, the central figure in that celebration is one who appeared to be powerless: a baby in swaddling clothes in a manger, the son of a carpenter and his partner, on a journey away from home, staying overnight in a stable, a baby they called Jesus. And yet we know what that baby went on to achieve.



Just at the moment there are a number of issues which fill our news programmes and in the face of which we may feel powerless. Climate change has been particularly brought to our attention recently, but looking after those in need is a continuing concern, as is providing an appropriate level of social care to those who need it.

However the lesson of the baby in the manger is that nothing is impossible. Who among those who visited the stable all those years ago would have thought that Jesus' teaching would lead to what it has. Even at the time of his death on the Cross, a happy ending

looked unlikely. We don't as yet have an ending, but what we do have is a continuing story which is based on love and full of hope.

An important part of the Christmas story, therefore, is that we must not give up. In the same way that Jesus did not give up, we must not do so either. There is always a chance that a solution will be found.

So as we move into the Christmas season, let us do so with optimism. If a powerless baby in a manger can in time overcome apparently overwhelming odds, then so potentially can those with responsibility for finding solutions for the problems which we face now.

Roland Gillott

ANNIVERSARIES

St Columba

St Columba was born in Ireland 1,500 years ago

As with all early saints much about Columba's life is shrouded in mystery. Wikipedia states boldly that he was born on December 7, 521. The more cautious Encyclopaedia Britannica simply asserts that he was born 'c521'. In around 563 he sailed to Scotland, with 12 companions, landing in Argyll, an area that had been settled by Gaels from Ulster, and visited his cousin, the King of Dal Riata, who offered him the island of Iona as a base from which he could attempt the conversion of the rest of Scotland to Christianity.

At first sight Iona seems like a remarkably remote spot to establish a base. To get there you have to travel to Oban, make a ferry crossing to Mull, drive several miles across Mull on what I remember as mostly a dirt track, before taking another

ferry to Iona. But in the 6th century there were hardly any roads in Scotland and much of the country was covered in more or less impenetrable forest, so travel by water was really the only option and Iona was an eminently logical place to base himself. His monastery was a simple affair, just a chapel and a few huts, but it was there that the Book of Kells, one of the great artistic masterpieces of the period, was produced. He travelled first up Loch Ness to visit the King of the Picts in Inverness and from there he converted the whole of what became Scotland to Christianity. And it was monks from Iona who brought Christianity to Northumbria.

Columba died on Iona in 597 (the year that St Augustine landed in Canterbury) and Iona rapidly became a place of pilgrimage. It was the burial place of the early Scottish

kings (and more recently of former leader of the Labour Party, John Smith). The Abbot of Iona was overlord of scores of monasteries in Scotland and Ireland; it was one of the most prestigious positions in Dark Age Europe. In the 12th century a Benedictine monastery was founded there and Iona remained a place of pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages.

In 1938 George MacLeod brought a group of unemployed craftsmen from his parish of Govan in Glasgow, together with a group of young ministers, to Iona to start the reconstruction of the Abbey buildings. So began a process which led to the formation of the Iona Community. I remember George saying that the first Christian reformation had come with the birth of Celtic Christianity around the year 500; the second with the birth of medieval monasticism around the year 1000; the third with the Protestant Reformation around 1500 and the fourth would be around 2000, led by the Iona Community. Well, that fourth Reformation hasn't yet occurred but the Iona Community has made an enormous contribution to the whole Christian Church, through spirituality and styles of worship and through political engagement. The anniversary of Columba's birth has been marked by the completion by the Community of a major refurbishment of the accommodation at the Abbey. And so, the legacy of Columba will live on for generations to come.



Iona Abbey today

Ken Prideaux-Brune

Climate Change—What Can We Do?

On November 9 and 11, John Probert kindly presented two ZOOM presentations to COTHA about climate change in the context of COP26. Those who attended made comments such as: “The presentation was very clearly set out and a really helpful sweep through what’s happening.” “What a wonderful evening’s presentation! So clear and informative.” “The visuals were so powerful.” John is a ‘Climate Reality Leader’, as a result of training with former Vice-President Al Gore’s Climate Reality Project. www.climaterealityproject.org Here he offers a summary of his presentation

Climate science is complex, but according to Al Gore the questions we need to ask about how to deal with climate change are three simple ones: **must we change, can we change, and will we change?**

Must we change?

Even “developed nations” are now facing the early, but still often devastating, consequences of global heating – storms, floods, droughts, wildfires. Public

awareness of the critical situation appears to be increasing fast. We are starting to see low-lying nations losing land, migration away from conditions that no longer offer a livelihood, even deaths, with the worst consequences for those people and nations whose contribution to climate breakdown has been negligible.

The concept of “climate justice” is well and truly on the world’s agenda,

with pressure on industrialised nations to help redress the balance. So...

Can we change?

The main cause of global heating is the burning of oil, coal and gas – fossil fuels – since the industrial revolution, pushing vast amounts of carbon dioxide, methane and other even more powerful gases into the atmosphere. However, the two main sources of renewable energy, solar and wind power, have plummeted in price in recent years, and in just three years’ time they will be cheaper than fossil fuels everywhere. They are also not going to run out. Electric vehicles will soon be the norm, and there are “new kids on the block” such as green hydrogen that promise much. And we can plant many, many more trees, at the same time as reversing deforestation, so that carbon dioxide can be removed from the atmosphere naturally.

In summary, there are solutions to our problems; we just have to make sure the one meets the other. So...

Will we change?

The Climate Talks recently ended in Glasgow, COP26, represented our “last best chance” to change direction. At the time of writing, it’s too soon to know how positive the outcome will prove to be. Many nations and leaders have vested interests, working towards short-term gains



The Amersham Town Council’s stall about Climate Change on St Michael’s Square in November.

Continued on Page 6

Climate Change Cont...

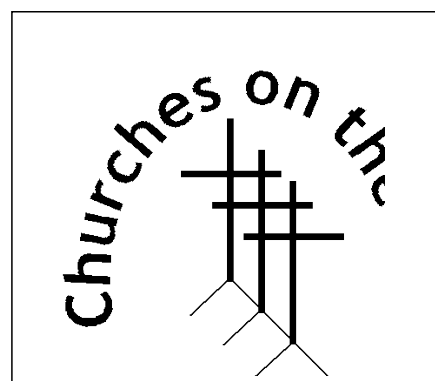
where only long-term goals will achieve what's needed. Only clear vision, collaboration, and yes, systemic change, will work. Our current economic system values the bottom line – money – above everything, ahead of people and the planet, and although this is changing, it's not changing anywhere near fast enough. In particular, it is important that the powerful fossil fuel companies are challenged on "greenwashing" and are removed from positions where they can unduly influence policy.

Finally .. What we can do...

Clearly, we all have a part to play – drive less, fly less,

eat less meat, for example. We can question whether our bank, or our pension fund, supports new fossil fuel development? The more we learn, and understand, what is causing the problems, the more we can do individually, but looking for a healthy, green future, not a hair-shirt regime.

However, probably the most important thing we can do is to spread the word about what we learn. The only way our leaders will really act with the urgency this requires is if we tell them they must.



COTHA Joint Service St John's Methodist Church Sunday January 23. 10.30.

The first of the two Sundays in 2022 when the three churches of Amersham-on-the-Hill (the Free Church, St Michael's and St John's) will worship together is January 23.

The service will be at St John's Methodist Church and as usual it will start at 10.30 am

Wise Choices Film Club

Friday December 3

Downton Abbey, The Movie

The Crawleys and their staff prepare for the most important moment of their lives, a visit from the King and Queen. Starring all the original cast of Downton Abbey, with Imelda Staunton as guest.

Running time: 117 minutes.

Friday January 7

The Vice

An audacious and darkly comic look at former Vice President Dick Cheney. His quiet rise from Washington intern to the most powerful man on the planet. Stars Christian Bale.

Running time: 127 Minutes

Activities in January

Sunday	Jan	2	EPIPHANY Warden: Alan Bacon (774870)
Tuesday	Jan	4	LUNCH BREAK. Chat around the tables. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	Jan	5	Nappy Days. 1.30—3 pm Christmas Tree Festival closes.
Friday	Jan	7	Crafty Cuppa. 10.30 am—12.30 pm Wise Choices Film Club. <i>The Vice</i> . Wheeler Room. 2 pm
Sunday	Jan	9	Baptism of Christ. Epiphany 1. Gathered Round. Traidcraft stall at 10 am Warden: Ann Jarvis (726078)
Tuesday	Jan	11	LUNCH BREAK. Bite-size service. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	Jan	12	Nappy Days. 1.30—3 pm
Sunday	Jan	16	Epiphany 2. Warden: Roger Leslie (726362)
Tuesday	Jan	18	LUNCH BREAK. Challoner's Girls in Recital. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	Jan	19	Nappy Days. 1.30—3 pm
Sunday	Jan	23	COTHA JOINT SERVICE at St John's. 10.30 am. Epiphany 3. Warden: Roland Gillott (722674)
Tuesday	Jan	25	LUNCH BREAK. The church in 100 objects. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	Jan	26	Nappy Days. 1.30—3 pm
Friday	Jan	28	Pop in and Paint. 10.30 am—12.15 pm
Sunday	Jan	30	Candlemas. Warden: Roland Gillott (722674)



**St Michael and All Angels
Amersham-on-the-Hill**

DIARY

DECEMBER 2020/JANUARY 2021

Eucharists will be celebrated each week
Sundays 8.30 am and 10 am
Tuesdays 10.30 am

The church is open for private prayer until 4 pm on Tuesdays, following the 10.30 am service, and on Wednesdays and Fridays until mid-afternoon. The votive candle stand has been moved into the Lady Chapel, which has been set aside as a place of quiet.

Weekly Activities in the Hall

Sundays	Tae Kwando.. Hall. 10 —11 am
Mondays	Mature Movers. 1.45—2.45 pm (from September 20) Dance Studio. Hall. Children from 3+. Afternoon.
Tuesdays	Pilates Health Physiotherapy. 7.15—8.15 pm. (from September 7)
Wednesdays	Karate Club. Hall. Beginners/Junior 6 —7 pm. Intermediate/Senior 7—8 pm
Thursdays	Dance Studio. Hall. Children from 3+. Afternoon.
Fridays	Stay Steady, Stay Strong.. Hall. 1.30—2.30 pm Karate Club. Hall 6.30—8.30 pm

Other activities in December

Wednesday	Dec 1	Nappy Days. 1.30—3 pm
Friday	Dec 3	Wise Choices Film Club <i>Downton Abbey, The Movie</i> . Wheeler Room 2 pm
Saturday	Dec 4	Christmas Tree Festival opens
Sunday	Dec 5	Advent 2. Warden: Claire Sinclair (07951 954701)
Tuesday	Dec 7	LUNCH BREAK. Bite-size service. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	Dec 8	Nappy Days. 1.30—3 pm
Friday	Dec 10	Crafty Cuppa. 10.30 am—12.30 pm
Saturday	Dec 11	Music on St Michael's Square. 9.45 am—2.15 pm.
Sunday	Dec 12	Advent 3. Warden: Alan Bacon (774870)
Tuesday	Dec 14	LUNCH BREAK. Favourite Christmas Recordings. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	Dec 15	Nappy Days. 1.30—3 pm
Saturday	Dec 18	Nine Lessons and Carols. 5 pm. Warden: Roger Leslie (726362)
Sunday	Dec 19	Advent 4. Warden: Andy Connor (723561)
Friday	Dec 24	CHRISTMAS EVE. Crib service. 3 pm. Warden: Roland Gillott (722674) Midnight Mass. 11.15 pm. Warden: Roger Leslie (726362)
Saturday	Dec 25	CHRISTMAS DAY Warden Roland Gillott (722674)
Sunday	Dec 26	No 10 am service

For activities in January see page 6.



Mouse Makes
Colour the tree then colour in one star each day until Christmas. Leave the large star at the top of the tree to colour in on Christmas day!

What's on the Christmas Tree?

Presents at Christmas under the tree,
A red Christmas stocking waiting for me,
But what really is Christmas,
What is it about?
Just look and the Bible and you will find out!
It's about **JESUS**
- the best present of all,
JESUS our **Saviour**,
God's gift to us all!

A STAR
shows the way to Jesus
Read *Matthew 2:1-12*

ANGELS
bring messages from God
Read about Gabriel's message in *Luke 1:26-38*
Read the shepherd's story in *Luke 1:26-38*

LIGHTS AND CANDLES
remind us that Jesus lights our way to God
Read *Luke 2:29-32*

PRESENTS
remind us of God's special gift to us ... **JESUS!**

"For God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life." *John 3:16*