

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 get in touch. Our administrator Vicky is available on 07804 558160. This notice sheet covers the next week and combines:

- Notices,
- The church diary (including livestream & Zoom joining instructions),
- Prayers and readings for the services on Sunday's 8th & 15th December 2024, and
- A reflection from an NHS ward ...

Wild Advent **postponed** to Sunday 15th Dec ...

The weather was looking slightly **too** wild this weekend! Please note that the Wild Church Advent has changed date and will now be on 15th December and **NOT** this Sunday 8th. 4.00pm at Golden Wood. It should be amazing with an atmospheric light trail.



Invitational Christmas Choir

The choir at Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford is extending an invitation to those who would like join them for the Main Carol Service on 22nd Dec at 6.30pm. The rehearsals will be on Thurs 12th & Thurs 19th Dec at 7.00pm, with a final rehearsal before the service on 22nd Dec at 5.15pm. If you would like to know more – then either email me on nwbrown@btinternet.com, or come and say hello at the organ console after a service.

Baby Boxes for Ukraine

While on holiday I met an amazing person called Wendy Warrington, who had been voted midwife of the year for 2023. She has an amazing ministry to Ukraine and, because of her midwifery skills, particularly to the women who are prematurely giving birth due to the conflict. She, with volunteers, personally delivers equipment and goods directly to the hospitals in Ukraine she supports. Our Connect Mother and Toddler group are right now knitting and collecting baby items such as baby wipes, creams etc so that we can pack our own Baby Boxes, which we are hoping to deliver to Manchester (the departure point) in the New Year. We have collected some amazing, lovingly made items so far, and will continue to do so until the New Year. A huge thanks also goes to all those who have contributed so far, including the Wool Patch and members of Melford Library. Please contact me if you have items you would like to contribute or they can be left with Nick at the Library. Thank you in advance. Revd Judith Offord and the Connect Volunteer Team. judithrev3@gmail.com or 01787 315689.

Faith Chat

If you'd like to discuss a recent sermon, a matter of faith, a church practice or anything else of a churchy nature, please join us in a relaxed, warm, informal atmosphere at the home of Susie and David Tweed at 10.30am on Tuesday 14 January. We hope to run the group on a monthly basis. If you're interested, please have a word with Malcolm or Judith Offord (01787 315689).

Newsletter emails

There are still a number of emails not arriving at their intended address each week. In the New Year we will be investigating an alternative method for emailing out the newsletter. In the meantime, could you please check your junk email and check that it is not being redirected there. Many Thanks Vicky

A Church Near You (ACNY)

We are currently updating the information for all of our churches on the ACNY websites, which is a nationally supported website platform available to all Church of England churches. This system has the advantage of allowing people to easily transfer church services into their electronic diaries. This will be an ongoing job – please bear with us whilst this is taking place.

Suggestions for Prayer

- We give thanks for the many young people involved in bell ringing, our invitational choir, our youth group and our toddler group, and our 'pizza be with you' small group. Please pray for the many volunteers who give out so generously to them.
- We pray that the Lord would draw many to our services and would touch hearts with the good news of the Nativity (who could you pray for or invite?).
- We pray for lasting peace in the Holy Land, for a resolution to the war in Ukraine, and a ceasing of hostilities in other places of violence and hatred.
- We remember before God those who have recently died and those who mourn, including the families of Anne Clubb and Sally Norman.
- We pray for those in need of God's presence or his healing touch including Barbara Brady, David Bremer, Robert Hawkins, baby Munroe & Gordon Wright.

A reflection from one of our Elders - God and the NHS

Cambridge Dialysis Centre, Unit E, Beadle Trading Estate, Ditton Walk, Cambridge CB5 8PD is where I spend four hours three times a week, recumbent and with my left arm motionless, while a dalek-like machine adjacent to the bed cleanses my blood. I am grateful for this astonishing process, as it replaces my kidneys which have failed. The Centre has 36 beds and it feels a bit like a laboratory. However that atmosphere is tempered by the skill, humanity and good humour of the nursing staff (and one lovely volunteer) who run the Centre. My sense of estrangement there is compounded by the down phase of my bipolar disorder, which creates depression and anxiety and a fear of joining in human society.

This all set me to thinking about healing in the Bible. Jesus Christ is the figure who healed the most people. It is remarkable that many of His healing cases involved people whose ailment had excluded them from normal human society and from participation in worship in the Temple, for example lepers, the woman with an issue of blood and those deemed to be mad. The more I read about these cases the more I became convinced that there were two elements to their healing: the cure of the illness itself and the restoration of wholeness to the person, which enabled them to return to human society and to worship.

The big picture of our human situation is that, since Adam and Eve, we are a fallen people. Christ entered into our suffering situation and gave us the assurance that we could be saved from this fallen state through faith in Him. His healing acts symbolise this promise of salvation: the sick and estranged are not only physically healed but they are restored to wholeness. Critically they came to Christ with complete faith that He could and would heal them. Christ thus demonstrated his power, derived from God, to overcome our sinful state.

Where does that leave me and the NHS? Firstly I am not suffering to anything like the extent of the people healed by Christ, but my sense of alienation kept me from society and even from attending church. (Sally's patience and care in this time was vital.) However when I was eventually drawn to come to church, I was astonishingly given a sense of wholeness by the touches, the gestures, the words and the prayers of members of the congregation, not only at Holy Trinity but also from all the churches in the Benefice.

Conclusion: I am grateful and need to have greater faith and I believe God is present in the hearts of those nursing staff and the lovely volunteer.

PS I have just been offered a transfer to the dialysis unit in West Suffolk Hospital, which I have accepted as it will halve my travelling time.

Ian McDonald

Notes for diary section overleaf ...

** Livestream Joining Instructions*

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

Morning Prayer Zoom Meeting ID: 810 2345 2032, Password: 283350, or click [here](#).

Diary

Sun 8 th	10.30am	Communion at Holy Trinity *
	4.30pm	Lights of Remembrance at Alpheton Village Hall
	6.30pm	Lights of Remembrance at Holy Trinity* (refreshments from 6pm)
Mon 9 th	9.30am	Connect Baby & Toddler Group at St Catherine's
Tues 10 th	9.00am	Morning Prayer via zoom #
Wed 11 th	10.00am	Coffee Caravan at Alpheton Village Hall
Thurs 12 th	7.00pm	Choir Practice
Fri 13 th	all day	Barnardiston Hall Carol Service
	6.00pm	Alfie's Bar at Alpheton Village Hall
	8.00pm	Beer & Carols at The Bush, Shimpling
Sun 15 th	10.30am	Communion at Holy Trinity *
	4.00pm	Wild Church at Golden Wood, Lawshall
Mon 16 th	9.30am	Connect Baby & Toddler Group at St Catherine's
	7.30pm	A&S Homegroup
Tues 17 th	9.00am	Morning Prayer via zoom #
	12.00pm	Funeral at Holy Trinity – Anne Clubb
Wed 18 th	10.00am	Communion at Steeds Meadow
	2.00pm	Communion at Melford Court
Thurs 19 th	7.00pm	Choir Practice
Fri 20 th	2.00pm	Melford School Carol Service at Holy Trinity
	2.30pm	Lawshall School Carol Service at All Saints
Sun 22 nd	10.30am	Communion at Holy Trinity *
	4.00pm	Alpheton Carol Service
	5.15pm	Choir Practice
	6.30pm	Holy Trinity Carol Service *
Mon 23 rd	6.30pm	Lawshall Carol Service
Tues 24 th	9.00am	Morning Prayer via zoom #
	3.00pm	Crib Service at Holy Trinity
	6.00pm	Shimpling Carol Service
	10.45pm	Midnight Mass at Holy Trinity
Wed 25 th	10.30am	Christmas Day Communion at Holy Trinity *
Sun 29 th	10.30am	Communion at Holy Trinity *
Tues 31 st	9.00am	Morning Prayer via zoom #

Readings for 8th December 2024

Collect (prayer for the day)

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness we are grievously hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen**

First Reading

Philippians 1:3-11

I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:1-6

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar – when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene – ²during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

'A voice of one calling in the wilderness,

"Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.

⁵Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.

The crooked roads shall become straight,
the rough ways smooth.

⁶And all people will see God's salvation.'"

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to You O Christ

(Bible readings courtesy of Bible Gateway New International Version - UK (NIVUK))

Post Communion Prayer

Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Readings for 15th December 2024

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

Philippians 1:3-11

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

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? ⁸ Produce 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. ⁹ The 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.

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

¹² Even 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.

¹⁴ Then 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.'

¹⁵ The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John 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. ¹⁷ His 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.' ¹⁸ And 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

(Bible readings courtesy of Bible Gateway New International Version - UK (NIVUK))

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**

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

- Sun 8th
4.30pm
Lights of Remembrance, Alpheton Village Hall
remembering loved ones, refreshments after in Village Hall
- Sun 8th
6.30pm
Lights of Remembrance, Melford
remembering loved ones, refreshments from 6.00pm
- Fri 13th
8.00pm tbc
Beer & Carols Shimpling (tbc)
at the Bush Pub
- Sun 15th
4.00pm
Advent Wild Church, Golden Wood, Lawshall, (IP29 4PJ)
an Advent journey with refreshments & carols round the firepit
- Sun 22nd
4.30pm
Alpheton Carol Service
come and sing some well-known carols
- Sun 22nd
6.30pm
Main Melford Carol Service
come and sing some well-known carols
- Mon 23rd
6.30pm
Lawshall Carol Service
come and sing some well-known carols, refreshments after at the Swan
- Tues 24th
3.00pm
Crib Service, Melford
family friendly service, nativity dress optional!
- Tues 24th
6.00pm
Shimpling Carol Service
come and sing some well-known carols
- Tues 24th
10.45pm
Midnight Mass, Melford
an atmospheric communion service
- Wed 25th
10.30am
Family Christmas Day Communion, Melford
please bring presents to show!
- Sun 29th
10.30am
Benefice Communion at Holy Trinity, Long Melford
a simple communion service

Forget Elf on the Shelf



Jesus wants Ewe in a Pew