

SERVICES NEXT WEEK

MONDAY 15TH DECEMBER

DRAYTON ST LEONARD – 7 PM CAROL SERVICE

FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER

CHISELHAMPTON – 7 PM CAROL SERVICE

SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER

ADVENT 4

ABBEY – 8.00 AM HOLY COMMUNION (BCP)

WARBOROUGH – 8.00 AM HOLY COMMUNION (BCP)

DRAYTON ST LEONARD – 9:30 AM MORNING SERVICE

LONG WITTENHAM – 9:30 AM HOLY COMMUNION

STADHAMPTON – 9:30 AM FAMILY EUCHARIST

ABBEY – 10:30 AM SUNG EUCHARIST

BERINSFIELD – 11.00 AM HOLY COMMUNION

CLIFTON HAMPDEN – 4.30 PM CAROL SERVICE

MARSH BALDON – 5.00 PM CAROL SERVICE

WARBOROUGH – 6.00 PM CAROL SERVICE

ABBEY – 6:00 PM NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

CULHAM – 6.30 PM CAROL SERVICE

A Service of Holy Communion is at St Mary's and St Berin Berinsfield every Wednesday at 9.30am. Everyone welcome.

NEXT WEEK'S BIBLE READINGS

Isaiah 7.10–16

Romans 1.1–7

Matthew 1.18–end

NOTICES

Village Coffee Morning in the Abbey

Tuesdays 11.00 am – 12 pm

Community Coffee Morning meets every Tuesday at Berinsfield Church Hall 10.30am-12pm. Dementia friendly.

Abbey Tots – Wednesdays in the Abbey 9.30am – 10.30am Last session for 2025 is 17th December. Reopening 7th January

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SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER

ADVENT 3

Welcome to our services today, especially any who are visiting us or are new parishioners. Please make yourself known to the clergy or those on duty.

THE COLLECTS

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

God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

BIBLE READINGS

Isaiah 35.1–10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. ³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.' ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the

redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

James 5.7–10

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 11.2–11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' ⁴Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.' ⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." ¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

THE 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.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

Let us pray to the God whose works of healing, hope, and compassion still break into our world. Faithful God, in the Gospel today John sends his disciples to ask, "Are you the one who is to come?" We bring you our own questions, our uncertainties, and our longing for reassurance. Strengthen your Church to be a community where honest searching is welcomed and doubt is met with grace. Make us people who point to Christ not only with our words

but with lives shaped by kindness, courage, and hope.

God of transforming love, Jesus answered John by speaking of what was happening around him. Help us to notice the quiet signs of your kingdom among us: in acts of generosity, in communities that support one another, in those who work for justice and care for the vulnerable. Bless our neighbourhoods with a spirit of compassion and cooperation, that together we may reflect your healing presence.

God of the fragile and the weary, Jesus' ministry brought hope to those who felt overlooked or forgotten. We pray for all who struggle today: for the anxious, the housebound, the grieving, for those carrying heavy responsibilities, and for any who feel close to giving up. Hold them gently in your care, and surround them with people who bring comfort, strength, and understanding.

God of encouragement, Jesus spoke of John as a prophet and more than a prophet—a reminder that you see in us possibilities we rarely see in ourselves. Pour out your Spirit on our community, that we may encourage one another in faith, support one another in challenges, and celebrate one another's gifts. Loving Lord, we pray for those who grieve, especially the family and friends of Malcolm Matzen, Revd Peter Dewey, John Kerr and Anthony Wheatley who recently passed. We also lift before you Revd David Cockerell as he enters palliative care. May your peace give them strength for each new day and fill them with the hope of your promise of the joy of your eternal kingdom.

Amen



Merry Christmas from Alpha

'Wondering if there's more to Christmas? At Alpha you can meet new people and explore the Christian faith together. It's for anyone who's curious. No judgement, no pressure. Each session unpacks a big question of life, faith and purpose, and is designed to spark conversation. Come along, bring a friend, see what you think! Introductory supper Wednesday 14th January. Email revclairwren@gmail.com to register your interest

