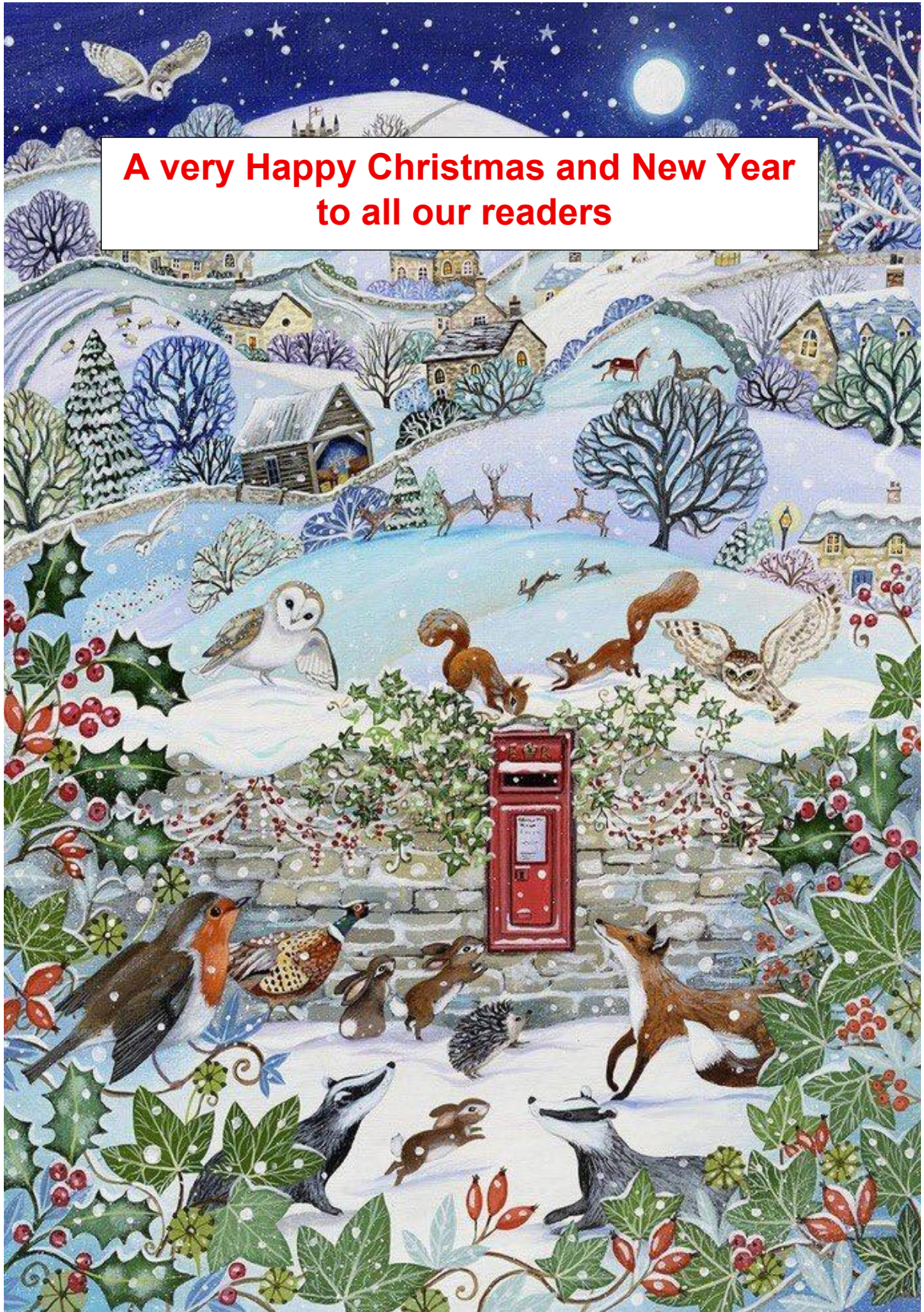


**A very Happy Christmas and New Year  
to all our readers**





## Clergy

Vicar: Rev'd Caroline Symcox– 01285 712467

carolinesymcox@googlemail.com

Curate: Rev'd Vicky Falvey – 07356 234248

revvickyfalvey@gmail.com

## SERVICES

### **Sunday 21st December – 4th Sunday of Advent**

8.00 am BCP Holy Communion

10.00 am Common Worship Holy Communion

Sidespeople: Eleanor Toby and Jenny Hewes

Readings: Val Trafford Intercessions: Meg Ralph

Offertory: Wendy Close/Alison Cahoon Prayer Rota: Ruth Blackwell & Val Trafford

*Coffee: Amanda and Mervyn Cully*

6.00pm Nine Lessons and Carols

### **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December – Community Prayers**

### **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December- Christmas Eve**

3.00pm Quiet Crib service

5.00pm Boisterous Crib service

11.30pm Midnight Mass

### **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December- Christmas Day**

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

10.00am Family Christmas service with Holy Communion

Sidespeople: Jill Connell and Michelle Harris

Readings: Meg Ralph Intercessions: Ruth Blackwell

Offertory: David Salter

### **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December- Holy Innocents**

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

10.00 Family Service

### **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December – Community Prayers**

### **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January – Epiphany**

8.00 am BCP Holy Communion

10.00 am Common Worship Holy Communion

Sidespeople: Andy Wilkinson and Michelle Harris

Readings: Mike Godsal Intercessions: Val Trafford

Offertory: David/Sally Salter Prayer Rota: Ruth Blackwell and Ann Nicholls

*Coffee: Sarah Bottomley and Carol Thompson*

**From Rev'd Caroline – Email [carolinesymcox@googlemail.com](mailto:carolinesymcox@googlemail.com)**

Readings for Sunday: Isaiah 7.10-16; Romans 1.1-7; Matthew 1.18-end

On this fourth Sunday in Advent we remember the last of our major figures who have guided our focus through this season of preparation – the Virgin Mary. We might be used to reading Luke's account of the holy couple learning that Mary is to bear God's Son – where it is Mary who hears from the Lord, in the form of the angel coming and speaking to her. This moment is called the 'Annunciation', when Mary first hears the truth of the momentous change that is about to happen in her life, and that of her family.

Here though, we have Matthew's account, and here we see not through Mary's eyes, but Joseph's. Joseph doesn't have a face-to-face encounter with the divine messenger, but instead is confronted in a dream. The Lord's word is clear – do not seek to end your engagement to Mary, but instead stand by her, because her pregnancy, and the son that she will bear, are part of God's eternal plan, spoken in the words of the prophets from centuries past.

For both Mary and Joseph, learning that God is breaking into their lives is such an incredible moment. I cannot imagine going through the experience that they have. The resilience and depth of faith that they both have to hear God's word and to not only accept it, but embrace it, ready to have their lives changed beyond recognition. Apart from anything else, there is something so down to earth about this – we think about God speaking through his prophets, or working great miracles like the parting of the Red Sea, but here he's actually coming into the mess and confusion of this world. He's going to be born and live among us, in a real human family, with real (and flawed) human parents. This isn't some far-off, untouchable divine power. God is 'with us' in the closest and most powerful way imaginable.

So often, especially these days it feels, we look around us and wonder how it is that things can be as they are. How people can have it in their hearts to be so callous, so cruel, so careless of others. How leaders can think that violence, oppression and war are viable options to achieve their ends. We can see clearly the darkness that human beings are capable of. It is into this darkness that Jesus comes – born weak and helpless, born as the Son of God, and the son of Mary, taking on this messy human nature to transform it from within. This is what he comes to save and redeem. We know we need it – we need him.

In these last few days of Advent, may we not shy away from our need of redemption, but eagerly look forward to it, knowing that the child of Mary, flesh of our flesh, carries that hope and that promise with him.

*Rev'd Caroline*

Our last Morning Prayer session of 2025 will be 9am on Christmas Eve. We'll then take a break until the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026. For this coming Saturday and the 24<sup>th</sup>, click the link below to join.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89129208277?pwd=dgARPNFJ8Amab2LFsrz9SkRdhjPFiY.1>

Meeting ID: 891 2920 8277

Passcode: 968373

**From Heather** - [fairfordpcc@gmail.com](mailto:fairfordpcc@gmail.com) or [heathergorton31@gmail.com](mailto:heathergorton31@gmail.com)

Office: 01285 712611 or home 01285 712428

My office hours are 10.00 to 1.00 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. I am also continuing to work from home so you can contact me at either the office or home. The office is closed on Mondays and Michelle will be in on Fridays from 10.00 to 12.00.

If you are sending in your articles, photos etc. for the bumper copy at the end of the month I will need them by 12 noon on the last Wednesday of the month. For the weekly newsletter I would still like articles in by Wednesday midday.

**Change to Office opening hours:**

***The office will be open on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December from 11.00 to 1.00 and will re-open on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January. If there is anything that is urgent between these dates, I will be at home so do contact me there. Details above,***

***This week's edition of the Newsletter includes Christmas and the New Year. The following edition will be on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January.***

o0o

**Please remember the following in your prayers:**

**Those who are ill:** Grace Slack, Hannah, David and Glynnis Langley

**Christmas Prayer Tree**

You are invited to write a label for someone that you will miss or not see for whatever reason this Christmas and to tie it on the Christmas tree in the church porch. Labels are provided in the basket by the tree or you may like to bring your own label. If you would like someone to be remembered and unable to come to the church yourself, please contact Rev'd Denise on 01285 713285 or email [denisehyde15@gmail.com](mailto:denisehyde15@gmail.com) who will write a label on your behalf.

**PRAYER AND WORSHIP**

**Community Prayers**

All are welcome to come and pray together for the world, the nation and our community along with any prayer requests that are placed in our prayer box in the Lady Chapel. We meet every Monday at 5pm for 30 minutes in the Chancel. Please use the north door.

*(Please also note we do not always meet on Bank Holidays, please check notices above for clarification)*

For further details contact Rev'd Canon Denise Hyde [denisehyde15@gmail.com](mailto:denisehyde15@gmail.com)

## **Prayer/Thought for the Week**

Only ask.

As long as it draws you closer to him rather than pulling away, whatever you need if you trust God he will supply it.

Now is the season of hope unfolding the dark winter season when hope waits to be born. Let us come before God with receptive and willing spirits. May our souls magnify God's name and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour.

Lord I welcome you to be my King, and I receive the gift of a new heart, fill me with your Spirit today. AMEN Taken from The Green Heart of the Snowdrop.  
AMEN

## **NOTICES**

### **Christmas Dates for your Diary**

- 6pm Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December – Nine Lessons and Carols ('The Carol Service')
- 3pm Christmas Eve – Quiet Crib Service
- 5pm Christmas Eve – Boisterous Crib Service
- 11.30pm Christmas Eve – Midnight Mass
- 8am Christmas Day - BCP Christmas Holy Communion
- 10am Christmas Day – Family Christmas Holy Communion
- 

### **Message from Mike and Alison Godsal.**

We would like to thank everyone who helped to make our Advent Drinks party such a successful and happy event. From those who made lovely nibbles, to serving and for coming along to support us. We managed to raise an amazing £1700. Which will go towards the repairs of St Mary's church roof. Thank you.

### **Items for Ukraine**

The people taking a van to Ukraine no longer have room for bedding, clothing or shoes. They are VERY grateful for all the items on the blue poster here. We will continue to take them to the Ukrainian Church in Gloucester who are transporting them to Ukraine. If you have a question about any other items, please phone us on 0779 555 4102

Thank you *Geoff & Hope*

**The Fairford Christmas Day Lunch,  
in the Community Centre on 25th December,**

is open for bookings now. Posters for the Christmas Day Lunch are up around the town and nearby. We're nearly up to capacity, so let us know very soon if you want to come. Now's the time. We'll be delighted to hear from you (with your tel. no please to call you back). Call 01285 712700 or Amanda 07960 485946 or Mervyn 07773 557846

**Updates to St Mary's Church Website**

Bishop Robert's sermon and blessings for the glass doors have been added to the website, together with a page about The Salisbury Organist's visit to St Mary's and a video from the Church of England's Digital Labs about the Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas.

The permanent links for the Salisbury Organist and the Grumpy Owl will appear shortly! Please keep checking the website for the latest updates and additions!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Brass Cleaning – Help Needed!**

For many years Wendy Graham has been cleaning the brass with other volunteers. In the last year or so she has found that she is the only cleaner left and understandably finds it too much on her own. Are there any willing 'cleaners' who would be happy to take over from Wendy. If you would like to help, please contact the office (712611).



**From Ingrid**

The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ. Two turtle doves are the Old and New Testaments. Three French hens stand for faith, hope and love. The four calling birds are the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament. The six geese a laying stand for the six days of creation. Seven swans a swimming represent the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit – Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership and Mercy. The eight maids a milking are the eight Beatitudes. Nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The ten lords a leaping are the Ten Commandments. The eleven pipers piping stand for the eleven faithful disciples. The twelve drummers drumming symbolize the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

Popular not historically proven

Modern sources claim the gifts were coded symbols used by English Catholics during periods of persecution (1500s-1700s)

Historians generally agree this interpretation has no solid evidence and appeared only the 20<sup>th</sup> C.

More a modern myth.

**Happy Christmas from Fairford History Society.**



*St. Helen's Anglican Church, Fairford, Manitoba in 1993-94.*

*A lovely snowy picture, but in temperatures of 30 degrees below freezing!*

St. Helen's Anglican Church, built in 1917 is a modest wood-frame structure situated just south of the Fairford River on municipal land surrounded by the Pinaymootang First Nation. It is located on the site of the first Anglican mission to the Fairford area between lakes Manitoba and St. Martin, established in 1842 by Rev. Abraham Cowley, has important connections to missionary activity among First Nations peoples in Rupert's Land (later Manitoba). The building, a modest interpretation of Gothic Revival styling common to early Anglican churches in the province, was erected within the stone foundation of a previous log structure (1862), which in turn had replaced the mission's original church damaged in a major flood.



Adjacent to the church are a pair of stone monuments. One was erected in 1971 to commemorate Richard Woodhouse (1837-1902), who was first elected Chief of the Fairford Reserve on 3 August 1871, and his sons who succeeded him, Richard Woodhouse and William Woodhouse. The other monument was erected in November 1948 to commemorate local people who served during the Second World War.

For those that missed it last year!

### **Twelve Days of Christmas by John Julius Norwich**

25th December.

My dearest darling,  
That partridge, in that lovely little pear tree! What an enchanting, romantic, poetic present! Bless you and thank you. Your deeply loving Emily.

26th December.

Mr dearest darling Edward,  
The two turtle doves arrived this morning and are cooing away in the pear tree as I write. I'm so touched and grateful. With undying love, as always, Emily.

27th December.

My darling Edward,  
You do think of the most original presents: whoever thought of sending anybody three French hens? Do they really come all the way from France? It's a pity that we have no chicken coops, but I expect we'll find some. Thank you, anyway, they're lovely. Your loving Emily.

28th December.

Dearest Edward,  
What a surprise - four calling birds arrived this morning. They are very sweet, even if they do call rather loudly they make telephoning impossible. But I expect they'll calm down when they get used to their new home. Anyway, I'm very grateful - of course I am.  
Love from Emily.

29th December.

Dearest Edward,  
The postman has just delivered five most beautiful gold rings, one for each finger, and all fitting perfectly. A really lovely present - lovelier in a way than birds, which do take rather a lot of looking after. The four that arrived yesterday are still making a terrible row, and I'm afraid none of us got much sleep last night. Mummy says she wants us to use the rings to 'wring' their necks - she's only



joking, I think; though I know what she means. But I love the rings. Bless you.  
Love, Emily.

30th December.

Dear Edward,

Whatever I expected to find when I opened the front door this morning, it certainly wasn't six socking great geese laying eggs all over the doorstep. Frankly, I rather hoped you had stopped sending me birds we have no room for them and they have already ruined the croquet lawn. I know you meant well, but let's call a halt, shall we? Love, Emily.

31st December.

Edward,

I thought I said no more birds; but this morning I woke up to find no less than seven swans all trying to get into our tiny goldfish pond. I'd rather not think what happened to the goldfish. The whole house seems to be full of birds - to say nothing of what they leave behind them. Please, please STOP. Your Emily.

## **An easy Christmas recipe and they will soon disappear!**

### **Milk Chocolate and Hazelnut Flapjack**

455g of butter

455g of brown sugar

680g of oats

140g of golden syrup

125g of hazelnuts, chopped

250g of milk chocolate

Put the butter, sugar and golden syrup together in a pan and cook on a low heat.

Meanwhile, melt the chocolate in a bain marie

Add the oats, melted chocolate and hazelnuts and mix in well

Pour the mix into a baking tray and then put in the oven at 180°C/gas mark 4. Heat through for 20 minutes and then put in the fridge to chill. Once set, cut up into small pieces and serve as a petit four



If you're bringing  
me more socks-  
Don't bother!

## Useful Contacts in Fairford

Dentists: M Milnthorpe and S. Steer,  
White Cottage, London Street 01285 713993  
Doctors' Surgery: Keble Lawns, 01285 712377  
Fairford Community Centre: High Street, 01285 711571  
Fairford & District Choral Society:  
James Chute, Chair. 07870 383682  
Fairford Firecrackers Womens Institute:  
President – Beth Bruce-Gardner 07791 841201  
Secretary – Hayley Evans 07866 518830  
Fairford History Society: Alison Hobson 01285 711768  
Lechlade and Fairford Mothers' Union:  
Kathleen Hall 01285 712583  
Fairford Hospital (Day Centre): The Croft, 0300 4216470  
Fairford Pre-School: Leafield Road 01285 713176  
Fairford Primary School: Leafield Road, 01285 712543  
Fairford Sports Centre 01285 713786  
Fairford United Church 01285 712586  
Farmor's School: The Park 01285 712228/712302  
Flying Start Nursery School 01285 711711  
Friends of Fairford Church:  
Simon Mumford [simonmumford@outlook.com](mailto:simonmumford@outlook.com)  
Friends of Fairford Hospital [admin@friendsoffairford.org.uk](mailto:admin@friendsoffairford.org.uk)  
Library: London Street 01285 712599  
Palmer Hall (Bookings): London Street. 01285 712189/711657  
Patients Participation Group:  
Chairperson: Emma Saxby [emmasaxby.coach@gmail.com](mailto:emmasaxby.coach@gmail.com)  
St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Church 01285712586  
Theatre-goers: David & Alison Watkins-Nash 01285 713182  
- [bookingftg@btinternet.com](mailto:bookingftg@btinternet.com)  
Town Council Offices, Community Centre, 01285 712344  
U3A: Sue Snell [membershipsec@fairfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:membershipsec@fairfordu3a.org.uk)  
Wellbeing coordinator-Mary Ann Dibbs -  
[coordinator@working4wellbeing.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@working4wellbeing.org.uk) Mobile 07555738138