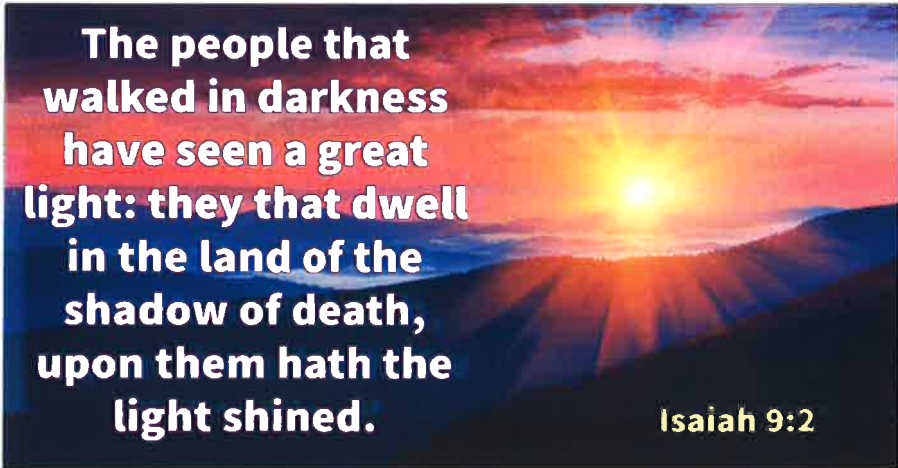




St Mary's Monthly Newsletter

Issue 24



**The people that
walked in darkness
have seen a great
light: they that dwell
in the land of the
shadow of death,
upon them hath the
light shined.**

Isaiah 9:2

December 2023

From the Rector—

Dear Friends

We have lived through another year and as we enter December we often look back and consider what we have learnt. It's been an odd year I think. Many people I have spoken to have said they can't wait to see the end of it! It's certainly been a year of deaths in the parish, each one having an impact on all of us. Because each one was part of our family, our church family. Each one being like a light that has been switched off in our church.

As I was looking through the Christmas readings, I came across this verse from Isaiah.

**The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of darkness- on them light has shined.**

The book of Isaiah was written just under 3 thousand years ago, by the Judean Prophet Isaiah. His words are used a lot over the Christmas period because Christians believe that his prophecies foretold the birth of Jesus. But this verse, which is the beginning of a reading for Christmas morning, struck me as being so true for us all this year. The verse is important to Christians as we believe that Jesus' birth shone a light into this world, a world that can seem dark and bleak to so many. For Christians, Jesus' light shines out all the time and that however dark it can seem, his light is like a candle that continues to flicker, dispelling the darkness and bringing hope, even in the worst situations. He is in those moments of love, of care, of kindness, of grace, when someone offered us that light in their words or actions, and in our acts of grace towards others. Never forget how much hope you bring to another person in just a smile.

We don't know what 2024 will bring, but, I do know that if we turn to Christ's light, we live in hope, and we will be able to face the year ahead with peace in our hearts. And isn't that what Christmas is all about?

Isaiah's reading ends with

'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'

My prayer for you all this coming year is that whatever you face, you will know the light of Christ to be your comfort, your guide, your counsellor and your peace.

Merry Christmas

May 2024 be peaceful and healthy for you and yours

Rev. Phe



This will be the final issue of the Newsletter. A monthly publication was started at the beginning of the interregnum as a means of keeping parishioners informed of the vacancy process and what was happening at St Mary's while there was no rector. The publication was well received and supported.

The parish has moved on since that time. Phe advises parishioners of forthcoming events during the notices at the end of the Sunday service. Towards the end of each week Polly issues the following week's pew sheet with comments in her email to highlight forthcoming attractions. [If you are not receiving these communications please contact the parish office.] The newsletter simply replicates these methods of communication.

As editor I would like to thank everyone who has regularly contributed by providing articles for publication. Without your input the newsletter would not have been able to continue for as long as it has. In addition Polly's monthly help has been invaluable and I am most grateful to her.

Sara Read

Advent and Christmas

Church Services

Sunday 3rd December	Advent Sunday	8.00am 10.00am 6.00pm	Holy Communion Choral Eucharist Advent Carol Service
Sunday 10th December	Advent 2	10.00am 6.00pm	Parish Eucharist Evensong
Sunday 17th December	Advent 3	8.00am 10.00am 6.00pm	Holy Communion Parish Eucharist Service of Nine lessons and Carols
Sunday 24th December	Christmas Eve	10.00am 5.00pm 11.30pm	Parish Eucharist Crib Service with Christingle Midnight Service
Monday 25th December	Christmas Day	8.00am 10.00am	Holy Communion Festive Eucharist
Sunday 31st December	Christmas 1	10.00am	Parish Eucharist

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 15th December

1pm

Christmas Lunch at St Mary's Hall

Saturday 17th December

2-6pm

Antony and Phe are hosting an Open House at
the Rectory in Blundel Lane.

All are welcome

Friday 22nd December

10.00am

Join other people in St Mary's Hall
to help make Christingles
(the more the merrier)

Saturday
27th January
2024

BURNS NIGHT DINNER
WITH DANCING

[Please see poster on Page 16]

*Details of all Christmas Services may be found on Page 4 of this
newsletter*



St Mary's Christmas Lunch

The Parish Christmas Lunch will be held on:

FRIDAY 15TH DECEMBER @ 1pm

Suggested donation £18 per person

(all profits to Crisis at Christmas)

[Lists to sign to reserve your place is in the church. You may also email Polly.

Please give your donation to Polly in the parish office.]





Burns Night

SATURDAY 27TH
JANUARY 2024

7.30pm - midnight

Black tie or highland wear

*Come and join us for
an evening of
dinner and dancing
at
St Mary's Church Hall*

£45/HEAD TO INCLUDE

WELCOME DRINK
THREE COURSE HAGGIS
SUPPER
SCOTTISH DANCING

TICKETS AVAILABLE INDIVIDUALLY OR FOR A TABLE OF 8)

NOW FROM

THE PARISH OFFICE 01932 866007

OR EMAIL

ADMIN@STMARYSSSTOKEDABERNON.ORG.UK

TWO CARTHUSIAN CONNECTIONS

By Stephen Chater (with acknowledgement to the late John Waterson)

St Mary's houses a fine collection of stained glass, about which more is continuing to be discovered as a result of research by the relevant experts.

One example is a panel in the window of the north transept which depicts "the Funeral of the Virgin", a subject which was once very familiar but which, long ago, fell out of popularity. According to legend, as the apostles carried the Virgin Mary's coffin to the burial site, the chief priest led a group of Jews to make a protest. However, when they tried to stop the procession, their hands became detached from their arms and eventually stuck to the Virgin's bier. The artist of the panel has represented the protesters as soldiers wearing armour from the time of the Renaissance.

The panel was acquired by St Mary's in 1950 from the collection of Sir Thomas Neave which had, in turn, been bought from John Christopher Hampp, a Norwich merchant who rescued a good deal of continental stained glass in the early 19th century. For many years, it was thought that the panel had been created in England (largely on the fairly spurious basis that the church in the background was considered to have an "English look"), but under French or, more likely, Flemish influence in the early 16th century. However, research in the 1980s (conducted primarily by Dr Hilary Wayment of Cambridge and Jessie McNab of the Metropolitan Museum, New York) revealed a much more precise and intriguing provenance.

Experts now believe that the panel was one of a series originally located in the Great Cloister of the Charterhouse in Louvain (now in Belgium), the foundation stone of which was laid in 1489 by Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy and sister of Edward IV and Richard III. The other panels in the series depicted the death of the Virgin and the assumption of the Virgin.

The Louvain Charterhouse survived until 1783 when it was suppressed because there were so few resident brothers. The windows of the Great Cloister, including these three

panels, were sold by auction, when much of the glass was bought by Hampp. The three panels from the "Story of the Virgin" series were subsequently separated.

As an indication of the quality of this glass, it will be of interest to readers to know that the death of the Virgin panel is now on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and that a fragment from the Assumption panel is currently held by the Metropolitan Museum of New York. St Mary's is, therefore, in august company!

There is, fortuitously, a further Carthusian link at St Mary's in the form of the altar frontal in the Norbury chapel. This 17th century crimson silk damask originated in an Italian Charterhouse. It was acquired by Viscount D'Abernon in Parma and presented to the church by his widow. Hand-woven into it is a design of cherubs' heads around scrolling cartouches enclosing the letters GRA CAR. This is an abbreviation for GRATIA CARTHUSIENSIVM which can be translated, with perhaps intentional ambiguity, as either "Grace enfolds the Carthusians" or "Grace comes from the Carthusians".



Review of Lunctime Concert

26th October 2023:

A Cycle of Sea Songs

St Mary's has long held an impressive reputation for good music which enables us to invite musicians of international importance to our church.

One such person is the baritone, Jonathan Evers, from New Zealand who has been studying in this country at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he has just completed his second year of the Opera Studies Course.

Jonathan has performed regularly as a concert and oratorio soloist and as a soloist internationally with New Zealand Opera, the Berlin Italian Opera, and the British Youth Opera to name a few of his engagements. He has earned an impressive number of awards during 2022-2023 including the Britten-Pears young Artist 2023.

Jonathan's appraisal of the ballads to be sung, painted a picture of Suffolk in the 19th century with its seafaring population who lived a life of poverty and hardship.

A brief biography of Nathan Williamson, the pianist, tells us that he has studied at the Guildhall School of Music and at Yale and Oxford Universities.

His recent works include a commission for the 2023 Aldeburgh Festival, a Piano Quartet for the Rossetti Ensemble and a commission for a Sonata for Piano and Cello.

Other performing highlights include the complete Beethoven Concertos as well as several international tours.

Nathan amongst other achievements directs the Art of British Song which celebrates the legacy and future of British songs as well as directing the Southwold Music Trust, which places music at the heart of his home town of Southwold in Suffolk.

The programme opened with the first cycle of songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) who with the composer, George Butterworth in 1912 collected songs and dances of the Suffolk countryside from the local people whose descendants are still in the county today.

Vaughan Williams transcribed the words of R.L Stevenson's 'Songs of Travel' for the ballads to describe the poverty of country life in 'The Vagabond.'

The piano played the flickering flames of the 'The Roadside Fire' with a steadily quickening tempo to accompany the soloist whilst 'Bright is the Ring of Words' starts loudly descending into softer reflective passages.

The ballads were sung by Jonathan Evers in his rich and powerful voice, each song flowing effortlessly into the next.

Martin Shaw (1875-1958) was an organist who, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, had studied Purcell before moving to Southwold.

Our pianist, Nathan Williamson, told us of how his father remembered Martin Shaw as a local resident.

Martin edited, alongside Vaughan Williams, a number of collections of carols and hymns and was very influential in hymnody in the mid-20th century. As a result, his craft is such that his songs are beautifully written for the voice as was shown in the four ballads sung as part of the recital. The words were attributed to different poets.

Down by 'The Salley Gardens' is a love song of a young man reflecting on the past by watching the river flow by which was eloquently portrayed by both music and voice.

'Annabel Lee is another love song telling us how she had been borne away to "the sepulchre by the sea."

Not all sea ballads are so gloomy and the words of 'Cargoes' by John Masefield describes the colourful riches that can be gained by voyages to far off lands and the soloist expresses that excitement in words and music.

A unique feature of the recital was a reading by the poet Robert Jellicoe, who was born and bred in Suffolk.

Robert read from his first book of poems, 'Shorelines, Voices of Southwold Fishermen.' It was from these poems that the cycle of ballads, 'Grey and Green are all my Light' were composed by Nathan Williamson. The poet tells of how 'Dance of Death' was inspired by a visit to a ruined church in Dunwich whose buttresses were like the ribs of a ship and where the dull thudding noise he heard was made by the clappers on a bell - a scene which haunts him. It is brought to life vividly by Jonathan's singing as he portrays the torment of the dying.

This cycle of ballads comes full circle with 'Grey and Green. are all my Light' with music and voice dying away to become both peaceful and reflective of 'my soul's flight'. No cycle of Suffolk songs would be complete without the folksong arrangements of Benjamin Britten (1913-1976). It was with the three traditional folk songs of 'O, Waly, Waly', 'The Foggy Dew' and 'Oliver Cromwell', that the recital was ended in a light-hearted and entertaining manner by Jonathan Evers. The applause for both Jonathan, as soloist and Nathan as pianist and composer for this unique recital was well deserved.

Diana Thalben –Ball



Jonathan Evers



Nathan Williamson

Thursday 14th December

Philip White-Jones presents a Christmas Organ Recital

Philip was chorister at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and a student at the Junior Royal Northern College of Music. He was awarded the Organ Scholarship at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and has since held many organist and musical directorships around the country, including at Winchester Cathedral and Southwell Minster. Also an experienced pilot and instructor, he now combines his love of aviation with performing, teaching and accompanying.



LUNCHTIME CONCERT PROGRAMME 2023/4



THURSDAY 30th NOVEMBER

Pupils of Yehudi Menuhin School

THURSDAY 14th DECEMBER

Philip White - Jones -
Christmas Organ Recital

2024

THURSDAY 25TH JANUARY

Martin Toyer – Organ Recital

THURSDAY 29TH FEBRUARY

Olivia Petryszak & Matthew Brown
Recorder and harpsichord

THURSDAY 28TH MARCH

Bridget Esler & Matthew Brown
Voice and organ

THURSDAY 25TH APRIL

Quartet Malamatina
Guitar quartet

All concerts are at 1pm either in the Church or the Church Hall
No need to book but there will be a retiring collection

FOR MORE DETAILS OF THESE OR ANYTHING
ELSE THAT IS GOING ON

AT ST MARY'S

PLEASE CONTACT THE PARISH OFFICE

01932 866005

ADMIN@STMARYSSTOKEDABERNON.ORG.UK

Monteverdi – The Secret Lives of Venetians

Sunday 5 Nov 2023

On November 5th around the historic church of St. Mary's the community of Stoke D'Abernon were letting off fireworks to remember the Gun Powder Plot of 1605. In St. Mary's on that same evening a quieter and peaceful celebration of musical history of the same period was shared with us by The Queenes Chappell, an evening of Monteverdi madrigals '*such stories by setting Italian poetry to emotionally driven, expressive music*' entitled, The Secret Lives of Venetians. The programme included works from across the breadth of Monteverdi's life and composing career, from his first publication of madrigals in 1587 to the last published while he was alive, in 1638. There is a particular interest in hearing works from across his career in this way as we can hear the evolution in his style of writing over his many active years; the earlier written pieces, such as *Baci soavi, e cari*, are unaccompanied voices who sing largely in homophonic textures, with bold harmonic changes expressing the intensity of the text. The later pieces, such as *Ogni amante è guerrier*, use much more instrumental accompaniment and often smaller numbers of voices, relying more heavily on soloistic virtuosity and simpler text declamation to get the emotions of the music across.

Matthew Brown conducted the ensemble of voices whilst playing the chamber organ and was accompanied by another musician with her theorbo lute to create the perfect setting and balance and sweetness to the ear.

Our earlier concert in September by The Queenes Chappell of the music of William Byrd and his peers in England were of the same period as Claudio Monteverdi's life and music in Italy. It is the richness of these early composers and their music and how it is reproduced by the superb range of voices and their musicians that makes The Queenes Chappell better known and so enjoyed by London audiences and at St. Mary's Church.

Christopher Harwood & Matthew Brown.

*Photos showing the Queenes Chappell Choir and instrumentalists at the concert
'Monteverdi– The Secret Lives of Venetians.'*



PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERAL

We offer our condolences to the family and friends of Jean Dudley whose funeral was held on Monday 21st November.

May she Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

BAPTISM

19th November 2023— We welcome Thomas Alfred Richard Rinck into God's family and the community of St. Mary's

Are you able to help St Mary's in any way? What hidden talent do you have that St Mary's would benefit from? We are always looking for helpers, whether it be to join a rota or offer help on an 'ad-hoc' basis. We are in need of additional Sidesman, readers, people to serve coffee after the Parish Eucharist each week and car drivers to bring people who do not drive to our Sunday services and other church functions.

Could you help with any of these?

Details of this year's **Reverse Advent Calendar** are on the next pages. Please try to give as generously as possible so that people who do not enjoy the same comforts as us can have a few treats this Christmas. Donations should be brought to the Parish Office as soon as possible but by Friday 15th December at the latest. This will enable the Food Bank volunteers to work out what supplies need supplementing. Your continued support is much appreciated .



Reverse Advent

CALENDAR



Can you help families in need this Christmas?



1

UHT milk SS



2

Shaving Foam



3

Shampoo



4

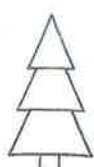
Tinned custard

5



Pkt Bread Sauce

6



Cheese biscuits



7

Stuffing Mix



8

Hot Chocolate



9

Tinned ham

10



Laundry liquid

11



Bleach

12



Conditioner

13



Washing up liquid

14



Pasta sauce

15



Tinned peas

16



Gravy granules

17



UHT Fruit juice

18



500g sugar

19



Instant coffee

20



Fruit squash

21



Cup a soup

22



Chocolate spread

23



Cleaning sprays

24



liquid hand soap

For more information call 01932 866005



Reverse Advent CALENDAR



**Purchase items off the list on the reverse,
put them all in a large strong carrier bag
and deliver to
The Parish Office,
St Mary's Church, Stoke D'Abernon
by Friday 15th December 2023**



**There is also a need for the
following Christmas Items**

**Christmas pudding
Christmas sweets
Christmas serviettes
Christmas tablecloths
Christmas snacks
Christmas crackers
Christmas tinsel and decorations**

**If you are unable to shop you can
always make a donation of £25.**