

## LECTIONARY READINGS FOR MORNING PRAYER

<b>Mon</b> <i>Nations' King</i>	Psalms 124-127	Malachi 1.1,8-end	Matthew 19.1-12
<b>Tue</b> <i>God with us</i>	Psalms 128-131	Malachi 2.1-16	Matthew 19.13-15
<b>Wed</b> <i>(Christmas Eve)</i>	Psalms 45,113	Malachi 2.17-3.12	Matthew 19.16-end
<b>Thu</b> <i>(Christmas Day)</i>	Psalms 110,117	Isaiah 62.1-5	Matthew 1.18-end
<b>Fri</b> <i>(Stephen martyr)</i>	Psalms 13,31	Jeremiah 26.12-15	Acts 6
<b>Sat</b> <i>(John evangelist)</i>	Psalms 21,147	Exodus 32.12-end	1 John 2.1-11
<b>Mon</b>	Psalms 19,20	Jonah 1	Colossians 1.1-14
<b>Tue</b>	Psalms 111-113	Jonah 2	Colossians 1.15-23
<b>Wed</b>	Psalms 102	Jonah 3-4	Colossians 1.24-2.7
<b>Thu</b> <i>Circumcision</i>	Psalms 103,150	Genesis 17.1-13	Romans 2.17-end
<b>Fri</b>	Psalms 18.1-30	Ruth 1	Colossians 2.8-end
<b>Sat</b>	Psalms 127,128	Ruth 2	Colossians 3.1-11

## DIARY FOR THE WEEK

No groups meeting in the hall or Rooms week commencing **Monday 22nd December**.

Starting on **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

<b>Mon</b>	12.45pm	GroW Babies Group, St John's Church Hall
<b>Tue</b>	10am	Simply Singing Group, St John's Lower Room
	2pm	U3A Main Meeting, St John's Church Hall
	6.30pm	Wantage Chess Club, ALL St John's Rooms
<b>Wed</b>	9.15am	St John's Toddler Group, St John's Church Hall
	<b>10am</b>	<b>Mid-Week Holy Communion, St John's Church</b>
	11am	U3A Leader's Meeting, UPPER St John's Room
	2pm	Badminton on Wednesday's, St John's Church Hall
<b>Thu</b>	9.30am	Extend Your Fitness Group, St John's Church Hall
	<b>10am</b>	<b>Mid-week Holy Communion at St Nicholas Church, Challow</b>
	2pm	Bible Study Group, LOWER St John's Room
	8pm	St John's Badminton Group, St John's Church Hall
<b>Fri</b>	2pm	U3A Yarn Group, LOWER St John's Room
<b>Sat</b>	8.30am	Morning Prayers at Frances Gillott's house
<b>Sun</b>	12-2pm	"Warm Spaces", St John's Church Hall
	3pm	Wantage Deanery Licensing Service, St John's Church

## CONTACT DETAILS

**Vicar:** Rev Alec Gill: 07739563894 [vicaralec@valebenefice.org.uk](mailto:vicaralec@valebenefice.org.uk)

**Associate Vicar:** Rev Miriam Jones: 07474095190 [vicarmiriam@valebenefice.org.uk](mailto:vicarmiriam@valebenefice.org.uk)

**Licensed Lay Minister:** Sarah Shackleton: 07587776609 [SarahLLM@valebenefice.org.uk](mailto:SarahLLM@valebenefice.org.uk)

**Benefice Office:** Grove Parish Church, Main Street, Grove, OX12 7L

Open: Mon-Fri. 10-12 noon. 01235 771479. [office@valebenefice.org.uk](mailto:office@valebenefice.org.uk)

# VALE BENEFICE NEWSLETTER

## 21st December 2025

### 4th Sunday of Advent

*Readings selected from:*

Isaiah 7.10-16; Psalm 80.1-8,18-20; Romans 1.1-7; Matthew 1.18-end

**Love!** "Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine". The fourth Advent candle focuses on Mary who carries and will give birth to Emmanuel, God with us. Not so often do we think about the shy figure of Joseph, as our Gospel does on Sunday. He too is a great example of love, protecting mother and child in a dark world just like ours, full of pain and fear. Yet Jesus the light of the world "shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." "Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine".

## Our Shared Worship

### 21st December - 4th Sunday of Advent

8am Holy Communion, St John's, Grove - Rev Alec Gill  
 9.30am Parish Eucharist, St James', Hanney - Rev Geoff Maughan  
 10am Carol Service, St James', Denchworth - Rev Miriam Jones  
 10.15am Holy Communion, St John's, Grove - Rev Alec Gill  
 11am Parish Eucharist, St Nicholas', East Challow - Rev Miriam Jones  
 6pm Carol Service, St John's, Grove - Rev Alec Gill & Rev Miriam Jones

### 24th December - Christmas Eve

4pm Carols round the Crib, St Nicholas', Challow  
 4pm Crib Service, St John's, Grove  
 5.30pm Carols round the Crib, Philberd's Manor Barn, Hanney  
 11.15pm Midnight Mass, St Nicholas', East Challow  
 11.30pm Midnight Communion, St James', Hanney

### 25th December - Christmas Day

9am Village Christmas Day Service, St James', Denchworth  
 9.30am Christmas Family Eucharist, St James', Hanney  
 10.15am Christmas Day Communion, St John's, Grove  
 11am Christmas Parish Eucharist, St Nicholas', East Challow

### 28th December - The Holy Innocents

10am Joint Benefice Communion, St James', Denchworth

#### 4th January – Epiphany

8am Holy Communion, St John's, Grove  
9.30am Parish Eucharist, St James', Hanney  
10am Holy Communion, St James', Denchworth  
10.15am Holy Communion, St John's, Grove  
11am Parish Eucharist at St Nicholas', East Challow

#### Sunday 11th January

8am Holy Communion, St John's, Grove  
9.30am Parish Eucharist, St James', Hanney  
10am Holy Communion, St James', Denchworth  
10.15am Morning Worship, St John's, Grove  
11am Parish Eucharist (with Baptism) at St Nicholas', East Challow  
3pm Area Dean Licensing Service, St John's, Grove

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## BENEFICE NEWS

**ST JAMES' CHURCH SERVICES, HANNEY** Due to ongoing building work, all information on St James' Church Services, Hanney, is provisional. Services may be changed/cancelled at short notice. See local notices.

**PLEASE NOTE:** There is **no churches' tea party** at Cornerstone **THIS Saturday** 20th December.

**ST JOHN'S CHURCH CHRISTMAS FLOWERS** There is a basket at the back of the church for donations towards the Christmas Flowers. Thank you to our flower team.

**ST JOHN'S CHURCH CHRISTMAS CARD CHARITY FUNDRAISING:** If you wish to join this, please attach your card to the board in the church foyer & make your donation either to the "Donations box" in the foyer or in an envelope (clearly labelled) and posted through the Benefice Office letterbox. This year, all proceeds will go to the "Crisis Skylight Oxford" homeless charity. Thank you for your generosity.



#### HAND-CARVED WOODEN ROBINS FOR SALE

Austin Cox from Denchworth is selling beautiful wooden robins, he has hand-carved from local hazel, to raise funds for his Explorer Scout trip to Iceland next summer.  
£5 each – perfect for Christmas!  
To order, text or call David on 07826 521243.

**ST JOHN'S Church CAR PARK GATES** will be locked from 3pm on Sunday 28th December to 3pm on Monday 29th December. Please ensure your vehicles are not left in the car park during this time. Many thanks.

**VALE BENEFICE NEWSLETTER** There will be NO newsletter on Sunday 28th December 2025 or 4th January 2026.

**NOTICES for inclusion in the newsletter** must be sent to the editor by the preceding **Monday** at [news@valebenefice.org.uk](mailto:news@valebenefice.org.uk), (not to benefice office). Thank you. It will help both the office & the editor. Items for newsletter inclusion are for 2 weeks. Please re-send your content if you wish your notice to go into the newsletter again. For specific prayer requests, please email confidentially [prayer@valebenefice.org.uk](mailto:prayer@valebenefice.org.uk).

**WARM SPACES - PLOUGHMANS LUNCH** We are delighted to offer a Ploughman's Lunch at St John's to the churches and community on the second Sunday of each month from now until April. The lunches are part of the Warm Spaces initiative. So please do recommend to friends who may like to come along. The first lunch will be on 11th January after the morning service. At least two volunteers are needed to help with the refreshments and hosting. There is a sign-up sheet in the foyer, or please contact Nicky at [nicky.gibbard@valebenefice.org.uk](mailto:nicky.gibbard@valebenefice.org.uk)

**LIVE STREAM LINK** St John's Church, Grove 10.15am Sunday service at St John's Church, Grove, is live streamed weekly on YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjvzip6GG1TzWUBwTu5KJtNQFKCfrAu0j>  
(This link stays the same each week.) Sit at the rear left to avoid being on camera. Contact the church office if you have any questions.

**ST JOHN'S CHURCH CHRISTMAS CARD CHARITY FUNDRAISING:** If you wish to join this, please attach your card to the board in the church foyer & make your donation either to the "Donations box" in the foyer or in an envelope (clearly labelled) and posted through the Benefice Office letterbox. This year, all proceeds will go to the "Crisis Skylight Oxford" homeless charity. Thank you for your generosity.

## PLEASE PRAY FOR...

**Health and healing:** Mary L, Rev Dick French, Norah L, Rob S, Peter Ch, Pat B, Emmeline (Pat B's granddaughter), Susanne C, Wendy R, Katherine S, Laura C, Ursula G & Richard H

**Friends & families mourning:** Heather Cousins, Philip Pepler, William Spindloe, Eileen Phillips, Robert Hodgson, John Terry, Shiela Goddard and Fr. Robert Teare.

**All living in:** "Inns" in the benefice: The Bay Tree, The Bell, The Volunteer, The Fox, The Black Horse, The Plough, La Fontana; Livestock farmers in the benefice; Those on their own and those struggling to make ends meet at Christmas time and all the homeless.