

*St Nicholas, Marston and St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfeld*  
**MARSTON & ELSFIELD MESSENGER**  
*November 2020 ~ a church newsletter during the pandemic*

November has always felt like the remembering month, hasn't it? We begin the month by celebrating All Saints and then have our All Souls' Memorial service. Then, of course, there are our Acts of Remembrance around Armistice Day (although I think 'remembering' and 'remembrance' are quite different things).

Remembering is such a bittersweet thing, isn't it? When we remember, it is often with the joy of a cherished time being brought back to mind, but with the sadness that that time is now past - that it can only be revisited in our memories. The memories themselves (perhaps triggered by a certain sight or smell or sound or date) bring a smile to our faces, but they often come tied up with a ribbon of grief because some of the people at the heart of that memory are no longer with us. It is not always easy to do so, but it is important that we know it's ok to hold that joy and pain together – to find moments of light and laughter in the darkness - because both the joy and the pain come from the same source: love. If we didn't love, we wouldn't grieve.

It would be very easy here for me simply to acknowledge the importance of faith in this – to remind you that God is with us in all of it - yet I know that our faith can be rattled when we experience such loss and so I don't do so lightly. But, for me - whilst I might shout at God; whilst I might demand that God acts NOW to heal the world; whilst I might question why – I am in absolutely no doubt that I shall find God there with me, holding me. God is there when it feels darkest; because God is there, there is light. Perhaps just a flicker to begin with. But even a flicker of light makes a huge difference to our darkest time, doesn't it? And the light grows and it beckons us forward. The light doesn't deny our grief, rather it illuminates it and helps us to find new ways to be, new ways to live with and despite our loss, new ways to find a balance between joy and pain.

It is no accident, I think, that our season of remembering moves into our Advent season of waiting for the light – and ultimately the explosion of that light into the world at Christmas, the light that is Jesus. My prayer is that you will trust that God's light is there for you, today and always.

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it (John 1:5)*

Love Skye

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**Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Zoom on Sunday 15 Nov 2020 at 11.30am.**

Please contact Alison Edwards, Church Administrator if you would like:

- 1) the Zoom link to attend the meeting
- 2) to vote, receive any papers presented or raise something but cannot attend the meeting
- 3) to have a hard copy of the Annual Report posted to you or emailed to you. Copies can be obtained from the website and there will be copies left in church when it reopens
- 4) to nominate someone for the PCC, Deanery Synod or Church Warden roles
- 5) be added or removed from the electoral roll. The electoral roll will also be revised for this meeting; if you wish simply to remain on the roll, no action is needed.

Alison can be contacted via 07783 024432 or email [administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk](mailto:administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk)

**Maureen Davis** would like everyone to know that her Book of Meditations on God in Creation is now available (£6.95): all proceeds to Divya Shanthy. Tel 727231. 17 Hayes Close

## St Nicholas Church Parish's Living Advent Calendar

We are definitely holding the Living Advent Calendar again this year: the list of windows is below. Whether we shall be able to meet outside each venue for a carol or reading or something else, we do not yet know but *minimally* there will be a window opened each night and people can come and admire each one. We shall publish exactly what will happen each evening in the December edition of the Messenger when matters (we hope!) will have become a little clearer.

7pm unless stated differently	<b>Advent calendar 2020 ST NICHOLAS OLD MARSTON</b>					<i>Each night a different place &amp; look out for the windows</i>
 <p>4 Elsfield Road 1</p>	 <p>3 Little Acreage 2</p>	 <p>21a Oxford Road 3</p>	 <p>Church Farm Church Lane 4</p>	 <p>72 Oxford Road 5</p>		
 <p>67 Oxford Road 6</p>	 <p>2 Southcroft 7</p>	 <p>15 Fane Road 8</p>	 <p>21 Church Lane 9</p>	 <p>4 Ponds Lane 10</p>		
 <p>98 Cherwell Drive 11</p>	 <p>3pm Fiona's 9 Salford Road 12</p>	 <p>Church Hall 13</p>	 <p>5 Little Acreage 14</p>	 <p>12 Oxford Road 15</p>		
 <p>78 Oxford Road 16</p>	 <p>74 Oxford Road 17</p>	 <p>Victoria Arms 18</p>	 <p>31 Oxford Road 19</p>	 <p>64 Arlington Drive 20</p>		
 <p>Red Lion 21</p>	 <p>46 St Nicholas Park 22</p>	 <p>The Vicarage 23</p>	 <p>5pm The Church 24</p>	 <p>Christmas Day 25</p>		
It's free	designed by  freepik.com			<i>Just come along - if the rules allow!</i>		

## What to cook in November?

**Stir Up Sunday is on 22 November**, the last Sunday before Advent. Traditionally it is when people make their Christmas puddings. However, it does not actually derive its name from 'stirring up' the pudding but from the Collect of the Day which prays *Stir up, we beseech thee, Oh Lord, the wills of thy faithful people.*

### Christmas Pudding

#### Ingredients:

450g/1lb dried mixed fruit  
(sultanas, raisins, currants, apricots)  
1 small cooking apple, peeled, cored and chopped  
1 orange, grated rind and juice  
3 tbsp brandy, sherry, or rum  
75g/3oz softened butter, plus extra for greasing  
100g/3½oz light muscovado sugar  
2 eggs  
100g/3½oz self-raising flour  
1 tsp mixed spice  
1tsp grated nutmeg  
40g/1½oz fresh white breadcrumbs  
40g/1½oz almonds chopped or ground.

#### Method

Measure the dried fruit and apple into a bowl with the orange juice and brandy/rum. Mix and leave to marinate at least 2 hours.

Put butter, sugar and grated orange rind into a large bowl and mix together until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs, adding a little of the flour as you go. TIP: Use eggs at room temperature to prevent curdling.

Sift together the flour and spice, Mix in breadcrumbs and nuts and then fold into the creamed mixture. Add the soaked dried fruits with their soaking liquid and stir well. Anyone who stirs the pudding can make a wish!

Generously butter a 1.4 litre/2½ pint pudding basin. Cut a small disc of foil or baking parchment and press into the base of the basin.

Spoon into the prepared pudding basin and press down with the back of a spoon. Cover the pudding with a layer of baking parchment paper and then foil, both pleated across the middle to allow for expansion. Tie securely with string. Put the pudding in a large pan on a trivet or jam jar lid or even part of an upside down egg box and part fill with hot water. Cover with lid and steam for eight hours, topping up the water as necessary.

TIP: Put a long, doubled strip of foil in the pan, between the trivet and the pudding basin. The ends of the strip must hang over the edges of the pan. This will help you to lift the pudding basin out of the saucepan at the end of its cooking. Alternatively, make a handle out of string (see below).



**St Nicholas Church Bazaar** ...but not as we know it!!  
**This year it's contactless!!**

For details of what's on offer, visit <http://dsms.org.uk/bazaar> or email [info@dsms.org.uk](mailto:info@dsms.org.uk)  
 Or phone 07783 024432 for a list

Jams  
 Cakes  
 Good Gifts  
 Table decs  
 Soups

Put in your orders between 21st November-5th December for collection on 12th December (at Church Hall) between 10.30am-12noon.  
 All proceeds to go to Divya Shanthi Mission Support, charity number 1091054

This year we shall be running an online Bazaar - all details are on the poster above. Divya Shanthi needs our support even more this year, so please do consider putting in an order.

**Nature notes: what to see during November**

November is a good month for nature spotting with trees mostly bare of leaves and birds easier to catch sight of. Listen for the liquid song of the robin: one is establishing his territory close to you. Winter thrushes arrive from the north in their millions this month, eager to feast on berries or invertebrates on open ground. Hedgehogs will be seeking a place to hibernate: if you have a garden, leave piles of leaves for them to snuggle into. Birds and mammals still need fresh water (and food) so don't forget to leave some out.



And finally: what to quote?

**November comes** by Elizabeth Coatsworth

November comes  
 And November goes,  
 With the last red berries  
 And the first white snows.  
 With night coming early,  
 And dawn coming late,  
 And ice in the bucket  
 And frost by the gate.  
 The fires burn  
 And the kettles sing,  
 And earth sinks to rest  
 Until next spring.

