

St Nicholas, Marston and St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfield

MARSTON TIMES

December 2020

stnicholasmarston.org.uk

30p

Tidings of comfort and joy

As we approach December how are you feeling? Do you have your usual December glow? Perhaps this time of year isn't an easy one for you normally, so December 2020 is just as empty or stretching. I think most of us can feel a bit more tired, anxious and apprehensive as we journey through Advent. As I write, the shape of this Christmas is still uncertain and all plans for services and events need to be held lightly. No wonder some of us have already put up our trees, embraced the Festival of Lights at the end of November (which looked gorgeous by the way) and left the displays to sparkle and give us continued cheer. I have even heard the singing of carols from one or two local houses! All of us will miss certain routines this year and we'll do what we can to manufacture a bit of joy when the days are long and grey: there is no shame in this. We binge-watch feel-good Christmas movies and episodes of Downton Abbey, Gavin and Stacey and The Vicar of Dibley. We stock up on yummy food, posh drinks and organise virtual Christmas gatherings with friends and family. Even my new Christmas jumper made an early appearance this year; I desperately needed to feel a bit more festive as I contemplated December without gatherings or communal carol singing.



As I think about carols, I reflect on the oldest Christmas Carol, and one of my favourites, God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen, which dates back before the 16th Century. It is probably the Christmas carol we most often sing incorrectly; you might have thought 'washing socks' instead of 'watching flocks' was in pole position, but let me explain. To begin with, the word 'ye' should never have found its way into the carol. It sounds suitably olde worlde and fits our concept of a traditional Christmas, but grammatically is completely incorrect. A bit like using you're instead of your, which I always do, using 'ye' changes the meaning of the opening line. It is not the gentlemen who are merry but the blessing, so no more images of joyful, rather tipsy men in top hats and cravats. The word rest also has a changed meaning. Although we use the word for relax or sleep, back in the 1540s it meant to keep, remain. As for that word merry, it had nothing to do with beer and mulled wine, but a sense of being bountiful, prosperous even. Perhaps a better rendition would be 'God bless and keep you, Gentlemen, Let nothing upset you' which would become the perfect carol for 2020. I think we should all be singing that version at the top of our voices ... inside our homes of course.



This year has been one of hardship and uncertainty. Fear lurks around every corner and we are continually threatened with the 'cancellation' of Christmas, which is, of course, a nonsense. Christmas will be different, but the love and hope and light and joy that Jesus brought to the manger on the very first Christmas is still God's gift to us, even in very uncertain times: that can never be cancelled. Whatever your situation is, whether you celebrate Christmas or not, the challenge is to not get submerged in the things that bring us dismay but to hold onto the things that give us blessings. As Christians we are drawn to the Light in the Darkness: Jesus was born to be our guiding light, but now we can be light in the darkness, now we can be a blessing for others this Advent and Christmas.



Blessings to you in abundance this Christmas.

Much love, Skye



Advent & Christmas

For Marston & Elsfield

ADVENT SUNDAY - 29th November

HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE ONLINE - available from 8am via YouTube

THURSDAYS/SUNDAYS - COMPLINE ONLINE - 8:30pm LIVE via St Nicholas Church FaceBook page and then uploaded onto YouTube.

ADVENT 2 - 6th December (assuming lockdown has ended)

BCP HOLY COMMUNION - 9am in St Nicholas Church

GREEN CHURCH - 10:30am meet outside St Nicholas Church

AROUND THE TREE - 4pm meet outside St Nicholas Church

Turning on the Christmas lights for St Nicholas Feast Day

ADVENT 3 - 13th December

BCP HOLY COMMUNION - 8am in St Nicholas Church

HOLY COMMUNION - 10am in St Nicholas Church

ONLINE CHRISTINGLE - uploaded onto YouTube, available from 4pm

SATURDAY 19th December 10-4pm The Nativity

Drop in at St Nicholas Church, suitable for under 5's especially - details TBC

ADVENT 4 - 20th December

BCP HOLY COMMUNION - 8am in St Nicholas Church

HOLY COMMUNION - 10am in St Nicholas Church

CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT - 6pm uploaded onto YouTube

CHRISTMAS EVE 24th Dec — book via Eventbrite

MIDNIGHT MASS in Marston - 10:30pm & 11:45pm

CHRISTMAS DAY 25th December — book via Eventbrite

FAMILY COMMUNION in Marston 10 am & Elsfield 12noon.

Please look at our Website for government updates, booking details via eventbrite & other information that will be useful.

St Nicholas Church, Marston ,Oxford.

Or you can call: 01865 580354 or email

administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk

The Marston Parish Living Advent Calendar

At time of writing we are in lockdown and don't know what the rules will be in December. At present we say, look for the Advent Calendar windows on your walks and if you live near the relevant house, please look out for each unveiling at 7pm. If and when lockdown guidelines change, please follow those updated rules. Hopefully there will be a little ceremony at each window every evening but whether people can attend depends on future government announcements.

7pm unless stated differently	Advent calendar 2020 ST NICHOLAS OLD MARSTON					Each night a different place & look out for the windows
 4 Elsfield Road 1	 3 Little Acreage 2	 21a Oxford Road 3	 Church Farm Church Lane 4	 72 Oxford Road 5		
 67 Oxford Road 6	 2 Southeroft 7	 15 Fane Road 8	 21 Church Lane 9	 4 Ponds Lane 10		
 98 Cherwell Drive 11	<div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> NOTE Change to 39 Church Lane 7pm </div> 12	 Church Hall 13	 5 Little Acreage 14	 12 Oxford Road 15		
 78 Oxford Road 16	 74 Oxford Road 17	 Victoria Arms 18	 31 Oxford Road 19	 64 Arlington Drive 20		
 Red Lion 21	 46 St Nicholas Park 22	 The Vicarage 23	 The Church 24	 Christmas Day 25		
It's free	designed by freepik.com			Just come along - if the rules allow!		





Advent and Christmas Resources

FREE At Home resources for Worship during Advent and Epiphany - ‘Worship at Home 2 Booklet’ & ‘Advent in a Bag’

**You can pick up both inside the St
Nicholas Church, (OX3 0PR) or if you would
like it delivered to you call 01865 580354 or
email administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk**

Marston and Elsfield Benefice

Worship at Home 2 Advent, Christmas & Epiphany



**“Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you
good news of great joy for all the people.”
Luke 2:10**

This new additional resource is to go with the Worship at Home booklet issued in
March 2020. If you would like new copies, please contact our administrator on
580354 or email administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk.



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
Or phone 07783 024432 for a list



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

Do visit the Bazaar online (details above)! The deadline for submitting an order is 5 December.

Sunday 6th December

*Around the Tree
for old St Nicks*

*St Nicholas Feast Day starts
at **4pm** with the switching on of lights.*



*Meet outside
St Nicholas
Church by the
Tree.*

*Come pick
up a
FREE
decoration
from the
tree!*

*Please follow
the latest COVID
restrictions.
Thank you*



**BENEFICE OF MARSTON & ELSFIELD
ONLINE CAROL CONCERT
6pm on 20th December**

Go to our Website:

stnicholasmarston.org.uk

For the YouTube Link & Order of Service



If you would like a recorded version on CD please email
administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk

What to make in December?

A star....

Cut some star shapes out of card...



Choose two stars. On Star 1 make a cut from the bottom of the star to the middle. On Star 2, make a cut from the top of the star to the middle, as shown to the left. Punch a hole in the top of the star 1.



Decorate both stars and tie a loop of string through the hole in star 1.



Fit both stars together using the slits to make a 3D

decoration. You could put the name of someone special on it and pray for them this Christmas.

Nature notes: What to see in December?

This year many of us have discovered afresh the joy of a daily walk and winter walks can be hugely pleasurable. The low light enhances nature's rich colours, not least the vibrant greens of holly and ivy which come into their own this month. Look out for mistle thrushes singing from tree tops from now until midsummer. They love to feast on holly berries and can often be seen in St Nicholas churchyard. Sunrises and sunsets are more easily visible in winter and often accompanied by mass movement of birds such as jackdaws and crows or geese returning to their evening roosts.



What to quote?

December by Dollie Radford

No gardener need go far to find
The Christmas rose,
The fairest of the flowers that mark
The sweet Year's close:
Nor be in quest of places where
The hollies grow,
Nor seek for sacred trees that hold
The mistletoe.
All kindly tended gardens love
December days,
And spread their latest riches out
In winter's praise.
But every gardener's work this month
Must surely be
To choose a very beautiful
Big Christmas tree,
And see it through the open door
In triumph ride,
To reign a glorious reign within
At Christmas-tide.

Help Wanted by Timothy Tocher

Santa needs new reindeer.
The first bunch has grown old.
Dasher has arthritis;
Comet hates the cold.
Prancer's sick of staring
at Dancer's big behind.
Cupid married Blitzen
and Donner lost his mind.
Dancer's mad at Vixen
for stepping on his toes.
Vixen's being thrown out—
she laughed at Rudolph's nose.
If you are a reindeer
we hope you will apply.
There is just one tricky part:
You must know how to fly.

We had hopes that this edition of the Marston Times, after 8 months' absence, might be a halfway house between our lockdown eLetter *Messenger* and a full return to business in January, with Parish Council minutes and local listings on the back page. Sadly, as we go to press, this looks unlikely. In the meantime Sarah Eddie has asked me to mention her (beautiful!) Oxford-based greetings card business for your Christmas cards.

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/StonePineDesignCards>

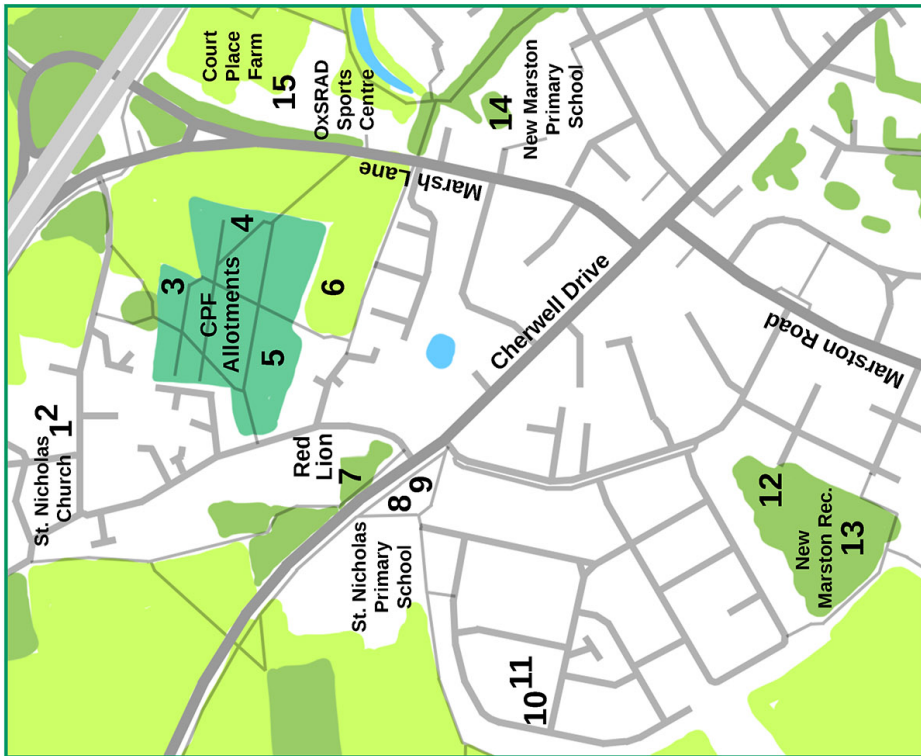
Marston Community Gardening

Join us most weekends
Everyone is welcome



Here are our key projects:

- 1. Giving Garage**
For anyone to donate their gardening equipment to be re-used by others. Building and repair projects are based here.
- 2. SESI Refill Station**
Located behind the Giving Garage at Old Marston Vicarage this is an on-going stockist of common, 'green' household cleaning products available at cost price.
- 3. Community Chickens**
Based at Court Place Farm Allotments. Our community free-range chickens have been rescued from battery farms and eggs will soon be available at the SESI refill station.
- 4. Forest Garden**
Also based at Court Place Farm Allotments, our Forest Garden folks are creating an edible perennial polyculture system for an abundance of fruit, nuts and veg so that we can learn how to grow together and share our future harvests.
- 5. Community Allotments**
All kinds of fruit and vegetables are grown here communally and shared for free with the local community. Come and join in or take on your own patch in a supportive environment.
- 6. Boult's Lane Sports Meadow**
Hedge and wildflower border, planted to increase bio-diversity, which requires on-going maintenance.
- 7. Mortimer Playground Wildflowers**
Located inside the railings, alongside the under-pass, these wildflowers need protecting and will be only mowed once a year at the end of the season, after flowering and seeding.
- 8. Orchard Triangle**
Apple, pear, plum, cherry and fig trees which are free for anyone to pick and enjoy. (Planted by the school children of St. Nick's, October 2018)



Email: hello@marstoncommunitygardening.org.uk

Facebook: [MarstonCommunityGardening](https://www.facebook.com/MarstonCommunityGardening)

Twitter: [MarstonCommunity1](https://twitter.com/MarstonCommunity1)

Marston people growing together

A community project to benefit all



- 9. Wildflower Meadow**
A border along the outside edge of Orchard Triangle, to encourage biodiversity, pollinating insects and mental well-being.
- 10. Sharing shed**
For the free loan of items that rarely get used, but are very useful on occasions such as a dehumidifier, lawn mower, etc...
- 11. Community E-Car Club**
We are promoting the use of a community-owned electric vehicle to reduce pollution and traffic.
- 12. New Marston Community Wood**
800 native trees were planted at New Marston Rec by the local community. Ongoing maintenance to clear base of trees of grass, to mulch, replace missing guards and stakes. (Planted November 2019)
- 13. New Marston Community Orchard**
Also at New Marston Rec, a selection of fruit trees grown as espaliers, along the fence-line. Freely available fruit can be picked at chest or head height. (Planted March 2021)
- 14. New Marston Primary School Coppse**
Newly planted trees and raised vegetable beds for the children, staff and parents to relax, learn about nature and grow their own food. (Planted by the school children, November 2019)
- 15. Court Place Farm Community Wood**
500 native trees planted on the bunds around the sports pitches. Planted by local residents to increase bio-diversity and alleviate flooding. On-going tree care and maintenance required. (Planted November 2020)

Working in partnership with CPF allotments and St Nicholas Church.

Supported by Old Marston Parish Council, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, CAG Oxfordshire and B&Q.