



Dear Friends,

'Christmas is really for the children' you will have heard it said. In fact, someone said it to me just last week. I sympathise with the sentiment: once the excited



anticipation of childhood and the squeals of glee on opening presents have passed, Christmas can feel like a whole lot of noise and mess. It can involve a whole lot of work and spending on presents which seem to get smaller and more 'useful' every year. Of course Christians believe that it's a whole lot more than that and the story of a baby born in a stable is only one part of a very grown-up narrative about why we are here, about being loved beyond measure, about ultimately the whole of creation being redeemed from the darkness and the pain that so often afflicts it. It's a grown-up story about holy insurrection against a cruel Roman regime and the powers throughout history that have wanted to own and control; about a child who grew to be a man who told people to live and love and accept something different to what was deemed acceptable at the time – and who died for that (you always did if you were anti-Roman establishment). It's a story about resurrection and wonder and abundant life and unearned, unending love and grace for all.

But – it's Christmas! It's the baby in the manger bit of the story. It's time to celebrate! It's time to chase



away the darkness with feasting and lights and sparkle and gifts. It's to remind ourselves, as humankind has been doing since the dawn of – well, humanity - that the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never overcome it – that the cold and fear of winter will not last forever and that the light will return once more. And for Christians, and all who want to believe it, that the darkness, cold and fear of the world will not last forever either. We should make merry, because we have something to celebrate: let's try and remember that, through all the preparations and chaos.

So perhaps people are right when they say Christmas is for the children really. Christmas is for us all, small or grown-up children as we may be. We can be reminded that Jesus said we



should all become like children (Matthew 18:1-4). In other words, try to stop worrying and making things so hard for ourselves and for other people. Be like children this Christmas, however old you are, whenever you can find a moment. Smile at the colour and the glitter and the music; make time for family, or friends, or community in some way; feast for a day or two and give gifts that bring smiles but don't break the bank.

For unto us a child is born,
unto 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

Isaiah 9:6

God bless you as you prepare your celebrations,
Love Skye



BENEFICE OF MARSTON & ELSFIELD



Welcome to St Nicholas and St Thomas.

Further details can be found on our website - stnicholasmarston.org.uk
Or call the office on 01865 580354 & speak to Debbie.

On Wednesday at 9:30am we have Holy Communion & Thursdays at 5pm Evening Prayer at St Nicholas

Sunday 3rd - ADVENT SUNDAY

10am - Community Celebration Service with Holy Communion *with Jr choirs/choir & Worship band* at St Nicholas Church. LIVE streamed straight onto YouTube.

6pm - **ADVENT SERVICE: LONGING FOR LIGHT** at St Nicholas Church

Sunday 10th - ADVENT 2

8am BCP Communion Service at St Nicholas Church

10am Holy Communion Service at St Nicholas Church, with Sunday Service (ENERGY)
LIVE streamed straight onto YouTube

Sunday 17th - ADVENT 3

8am BCP Communion Service at St Nicholas Church

10am Morning Prayer at St Nicholas Church

10am **Christmas Messy Church in the Parish Hall**

6pm **Traditional 9 Lessons & Carols** at St Nicholas Church.

Sunday 24th - ADVENT 4 & CHRISTMAS EVE

8am BCP Communion Service at St Nicholas Church.

10am Holy Communion Service at St Nicholas Church, with Sunday Service (ENERGY)
LIVE streamed straight onto YouTube

Monday 25th - CHRISTMAS DAY

10am Holy Communion at St Nicholas Church.

12noon Holy Communion at St Thomas in Elsfield

Sunday 31st - CHRISTMAS 1

8am BCP Communion Service at St Nicholas Church

10am Holy Communion Service at St Nicholas Church

**A Church For
Everyone**

**St Nicholas Church has
joined Inclusive Church**



Vicar: Skye Denno 01865 202988
Administrator: Debbie Bailey 01865 580354

Churchwardens Judith Piggott 01865 764693
Jan Lawrie 01865 250862
James Plunkett 07507 885169
Justine McCool 07426 463119

What to quote in December?

Born in December by Muriel Rukeyser

You are like me born at the end of the year;
When in our city day closes blueness comes
We see a beginning in the ritual end.

Never mind: I know it is never what is seems,
That ending: for we are born, we are born there,
There is an entrance we may always find.

They reckon by the wheel of the year. Our birth's
before.

From the dark birthday to the young year's first stay
We are the ones who wait and look for ways:

Ways of beginning, ways to be born, ways for
Solvings, turnings, wakings: we are always
A little younger than they think we are.

Nature notes: What to see and hear in December?

At first glance it might seem that the natural world has gone to sleep but there is plenty to spot in early winter: squirrels remain active, collecting and caching nuts, then trying to find them again; and birds are active feeding in the daylight hours to ensure they survive the long winter nights. Look out for muntjac deer, which are most active at dawn and dusk. If you can, go and see a starling murmuration (Otmoor is a good place) and witness one of nature's wonders. Arrive well before dusk to watch thousands of starlings gather in huge numbers to form swirling flocks which merge and form incredible patterns.



What to cook in December - Chocolate Brownies

Ingredients

300g 70% dark chocolate
250g unsalted butter
450g dark muscovado sugar
6 eggs
180g plain flour
2 tsp vanilla essence
1 tsp baking powder

Method

Preheat oven to 190C
Melt chocolate and butter in a bowl over simmering water. Pour into a food processor, add the sugar and mix thoroughly.

Break all six eggs into a jug and add, one by one, alternately with spoonfuls of the flour, blending thoroughly as you go. Add the essence and baking powder, scrape down the sides of the mixer and give one last, thorough whizz. Pour into a baking tin measuring 24cm x 16.5cm x 2.5cm high and lined with baking parchment. Bake for 19 mins. Remove and allow to cool thoroughly in tin, then chill in fridge. Do NOT be tempted to bake for any longer: you will simply



get very boring, dry sponge. Alternatively, come and buy brownies at Jen and Jan's stall at the Divya Shanthi sale on 2 December and save yourself the bother of all that washing up...

Bereavement Support Group

The Bereavement Support Group will not meet in December this year. If you are interested in joining the group in the New Year please contact Eileen on 01865 725423.

WI

Marston Women's Institute meets every second Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm in St Nicholas' Church Hall, Elsfield Road, Old Marston. Our next meeting will be on Tue 12 Dec when we shall each be making a Christmas table decoration. Do come along as our guest for an initial visit. Tea, cakes and a raffle afterwards!

Coffee Pot

Our Christmas Coffee Pot will meet in the Church Hall on **Mon 18 Dec** from 10.30am to 12 noon. All those who have been bereaved and anyone who would like to meet more people are welcome to join us and enjoy company and light refreshments. Please contact Eileen Palayiwa on 01865 725423 or via eileen.palayiwa@yahoo.com for details.

Lunch Club

There is no lunch club in December. However we do have our New Year meal at the Vicky Arms on **4 January 2024**. Please see the poster.

Christmas is coming...

On Fri 15 Dec we shall be decorating candelabra to hang in the church for the Christmas season. This is a lovely way to start the festivities and anyone is welcome to come and lend a hand. Come and join us in the Church Hall from 10am. From 9.30am on Sat 16 Dec we will be finishing the floral decorations in the church to be ready for the Christmas Tree service at 4pm. Come and help! If anyone would like to join our team of church flower arrangers, contact Jennie on jennie.burrow@gmail.com. No experience necessary.

Celebrating **CHRISTMAS**

Marston & Elsfield, December 2023

stnicholasmarston.org.uk

Sun 3rd - Advent Service: Longing for Light - 6pm

Sat 16th - Carols & Nativity round the Tree outside - 4pm

Sun 17th - Christmas Messy Church in the Hall - 10am

Sun 17th - Traditional Nine Lessons and Carols - 6pm

Mon 18th - Carols & Mince Pies at Bradlands - 3pm

Mon 18th - Carols & Mulled wine at the Vicky Arms - 7pm

Wed 20th - Yule Celtic Gathering with Fire pit - 6:30pm

(Outside Marston Vicarage, wrap up warm)

Thurs 21st - Carols by Candlelight at St Thomas, Elsfield

- 6:30pm with the Elsfield Singers

Fri 22nd - OPEN HOUSE at Marston Vicarage - 3-9pm

Sat 23rd - Beers & Carols at the Red Lion - 7pm

CHRISTMAS EVE - Sunday 24th

Carols for All - 5pm

Midnight Mass - 11:30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY - Monday 25th

All Age Holy Communion in Marston - 10am

Holy Communion at St Thomas in Elsfield - 12noon

Come along - your local, warm, friendly and inclusive church

Contact Debbie - administrator@stnicholasmarston.org.uk

or call 01865 580354 for more information.



MULLED WINE | ROAST CHESTNUTS | GIFTS | CAKES | CRAFTS



Christmas Market

TOMBOLA | CAROLS | REFILL STATION | GINGERBREAD | BOOKS | MUSIC

SATURDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2023
2.30 – 4.30 PM

At the Marston Eco Hub, Marston Vicarage, Elsfield Road, Marston
In aid of Divya Shanthi, Bangalore, India




Messy Church at St Nicholas, Marston
Church Hall, Elsfield Road
Sunday 10 – 11.30am

November 19th 2023
December 17th 2023
January 21st 2024

Crafts, Bible Stories, Singing,
Prayer, Breakfast

All ages welcome
(children need to bring an adult with them)




Loaves & Fishes

MARSTON COMMUNITY LARDER

Along with a few essential items there will be **fresh produce** (bread & veg, fruit etc) from Oxford Food Hub. Any left will be moved into the SESI refill area

oxford food hub
Sharing surplus, reducing waste

Marston Community Larder is supported by Old Marston Charity Trust

THE GIVING GARAGE
Marston Eco Hub - OX3 0PR
OPEN EVERY SATURDAY

Pick up or drop off FREE plant pots, vases, mugs, wellies and other garden/household items, and BORROW garden equipment (rakes & spades, ladders, strimmers, wheelbarrows, lawn mowers, leaf blowers, bike rack etc).

Further details email Skye: joskso@yahoo.co.uk or call 01865 202988



St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfield

Saturday 16th Dec
Carols round the Tree starts 6pm (outside)

Thursday 21st Dec
Carol service 7pm with the Elsfield Singers

Refreshments are served at both Services.
ALL ARE WELCOME




Monday 18th of December
Carols and Mince Pies

Starts 3pm
Meet us in the Lounge
or join us for refreshments at 3:30pm

At Bradlands on Mill Lane, OX3 0FQ
With Revd Skye Denno




Carols & Mulled Wine
Monday 18th December
Starts at 7pm
At The Victoria Arms OX3 0QA
led by Revd Skye ALL WELCOME




NEW HOMEGROUP



Starts: Friday 3rd November
Time: 7pm - 8:30pm
venue: Marston Vicarage (OX3 0PR)

Future dates on Fridays:
3rd & 17th Nov
1st & 15th Dec
5th & 19th Jan

CONTACT: REVD SKYE 01865 202988
OR vicar@stnicholasmarston.org.uk



Beer & Carols
Sat 23rd of December
Starts 7pm
Come and sing your heart out
at the **RED LION***
with your favourite drink!

Organised together with the Red Lion
by St Nicks Church for ALL ages

* 42 Oxford Rd, Old Marston, OX3 0PH

HOLY GROUND
Gatherings to mark the **CELTIC YEAR**

Prayers and Reflections are from David Cole's book 'The Celtic Year'



DATES FOR 2023/24. Always starting at 6:30pm

- 21st of September 2023 - Autumn Equinox
- 31st of October 2023 - Winter Season
- 20th of December 2023 - Winter Solstice
- 1st of February 2024 - Spring Season
- 21st of March 2024 - Spring Equinox
- 30th of April 2024 - Summer Season
- 20th of June 2024 - Summer Solstice
- 1st of August 2024 - Autumn Season

Meet around a fire pit outside Marston Eco Hub OX3 0PR
Bring something to share, a chair and a blanket if it's cold.
ALL ARE WELCOME



Longing For Light

a special service
for
Advent Sunday

6pm
Sunday 3rd December

www.stnicholasmarston.org.uk



Bellringers' report for December

The festive period sees us ringing for Christmas and New Year services on top of our usual exploits, plus requests for handbells – this year, three performances on the same day. We have such a small band, it is difficult to be everywhere, but we are doing our best.

Sun 15 Oct's quarter peal was dedicated to Sir Brian Smith whose family were present to hear us ring. He was a long-time resident in Old Marston, having moved to Apple Tree House on Boults Lane in 1966 with his then wife Peggy and their children - Caroline, Mark and Nick. He became active in village life and was Master of St Catherine's College, later moving to Wales where he became Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff University. Knighted in 1999, he returned to Apple Tree House on his retirement in 2001. Throughout his years in Old Marston the sound of St Nicholas' bells held a special place in his heart.

Another commemoration was made on Sun 22 Oct, this time for the life of Sir Bobby Charlton, most widely regarded as England's finest ever footballer.

Alison Merryweather-Clarke is aiming to ring a quarter peal every day of 2023 in different towers. St Nicholas' has been pleased to support her on several occasions throughout the year.

At the time of writing, we are about to welcome the youth group to the church to learn to ring and we will be attending Wolvercote church to see its new video cameras in the bell tower.

Merry Christmas to everyone who supports the ringers, be that in kind words or donations. Over the past year, we have really felt you get behind us as we have been able to be more visible. If you wish to make a New Year's resolution, maybe ringing could feature on that list? Blessings to you from all the ringers.

Roy

Great news from Court Farm Allotments



At this month's prestigious Oxford Preservation Trust awards, in the category **Landscape and Public Realm**, this year's plaque winner was **Marston Community Gardening, Court Place Farm** which was hailed as an exemplary community project. Debbie Dance, the director of OPT, said: *It is one of the joys of the OPT Awards that we can recognise entries that are both large and small, from the international to the local so that this year's award to MCG at Court Place Farm Allotments for their contribution to our green landscape was particularly welcome.*

Old Marston Parish Council report for November

There was no objection to the planning application from 32B Oxford Road. An application from 46 Oxford Road gave rise to concerns about unsuitable vehicle access and the size of the site for a residential property. Oxford City Council has approved applications from 2 Broughton Close and 82 Arlington Drive.

The proposed development at Almond Farm has been approved. With this approval and the potential developments at Hill View Farm and land north of Bayswater Brook, the PC is planning a meeting between the parish, city and county councils to discuss the traffic implications for the whole parish.

There were three candidates for the vacancy created by Peter Cox's resignation. The PC elected Mr Martin Smith as parish councillor until the next election in 2026. The PC would like to thank all three candidates and hopes the two unsuccessful candidates will be interested in any future vacancy.

The PC has agreed to buy three new picnic benches for the Mortimer Hall Recreation ground, making a total of five. Additional seats in the play area are also being considered.

The next meeting will be on Monday 4th December at 7pm in Mortimer Hall

The clerk, Tim Cann, can be contacted by phone (203139) Mon to Wed from 9am until 1pm.

Otherwise a message can be left or emailed via: clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk

For information and agendas go to www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk, Facebook or Twitter. A complete record of minutes of all Parish Council meetings can be found on its website: <https://www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk/>



Dick Watlington comes to Oxford

Auditions: Saturday
16th December,
2.30pm - 4.30pm,
Scout Hall, Marston Rd

Rehearsals: every Saturday afternoon,
Scout Hall, Jan - March 2024

Performances: 22 - 24th March 2024

We need actors, back-stage people, makers of props & costumes, musicians, front-of-house, & lots more:
To get involved: marstonpanto@gmail.com

Calling all gardeners and garden lovers..

Marston village gardens will be opening for visitors on **Sunday 9 June 2024**: start tidying your lawns, potting plant donations and make a date in your new diaries!

Parish Organisations

Allotments Associations

Court Place Farm, Boults Lane. Chair: Jane Wilson
membership@cpf-allotments.org.uk

Sunday mornings 8.30 am – 11.00 am.....07530 068977

Mill Lane Chairman: Dr. M. Unkovskaya07771 702548

Treasurer Dana Vlad07919 493580

Secretary Christine Mitchell07789 991051

Baby and Toddler Club Weds 9.30-11.30 term time in Parish Hall

Gill Hale, 64 Arlington Drive01865 248260

Bellringers:

Practice Friday 7.30pm Learners welcome

Hugh Deam, Tower Captain01865 247574

Roy Peach, Secretary.....07788 746157

Choirs and Musicians at St Nicholas

Junior Choir, SATB Choir, Music Group

Practices at various times.

Neil Barker.....musicdirector@stnicholasmarston.org.uk

Coffee Pot

Coffee morning, monthly, Monday

Eileen Palayiwa, 27 Ouseley Close01865 725423

Rainbow, Brownie, Guide and Ranger Units

Evenings throughout the week. Adult volunteers as well as girls welcomed!

District Commissioner, Lesley Dentry,07765 418067

Leisure:

OXSRAD Sports and Leisure Centre,

Court Place Farm, Marsh Lane.01865 741336

Library (next to Mortimer Hall) opening hours

Tuesday 2-5pm; 5.30-7pm

Thursday 2-5pm; 5.30-7pm

Friday 10-12noon; 2-5pm

Saturday 9.30-12.30pm01865 726823

Hedena Health Medical Centre.01865 597023

Marston Community Gardening

Alistair Morris01865 724081

Kate Robinson01865 766620

Marston Saints Football Club

Andy Winchester (Treasurer)..... www.msfc.org.uk

Mortimer Hall (Village Hall)

Chris Crane, 2 Raymund Road01865 727995

Oxford City Council (Marston Representatives)

Mary Clarkson, 8 Dunstan Road, Oxford OX3 9BY01865 751493

Alistair Morris, 55 Arlington Drive, Oxford OX3 OSJ.....07804 847285

Oxfordshire County Council (Marston Representative)

Mark Lygo07765 665 726

Oxford Preservation Trust, Marston Area

Lucy Hughes, Cross Farm.01865 244570

Parentline

Confidential helpline for parents01865 726600

Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Tim Cann, 8 Nicholas Avenue01865 203139

(Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm)

Chairman: Duncan Hatfield07706 998224

Pre-school at Mortimer Hall

open 9 sessions a week.....07818 236348

Royal British Legion Club Hall:

Steward01865 243991

Schools

Friends of St Nicholas School.....01865 242838

Scouts — 43rd Oxford (St. Nicholas) Scout Group, Boults Lane

Group Scout Leader, Tim Greaves..... tim.greaves@keble.oxon.org

Beaver Scout Leader, Sue Springett01865 251515

Cub Scout Leader, Matthew Kennedy.....matthew.kennedy500@gmail.com

Scouts Leader, Linda Phillips07804 925705

St. Nicholas Church Hall and Committee Room

Debbie Bailey, Parish Office.....01865 580354

Women's Institute

Meetings at 7.30 second Tue of each month - new members welcome!

President, Judy Youngjudithyoung732@gmail.com

Secretary, Jennie Burrow.....jennie.burrow@gmail.com

Trade Directory

Architectural services for Planning Permissions/ Building Regulations

Digby Architectural: 4 Broughton Close07979 756918

Bathroom installation, plumber, glazier, tiler

Roger G Turner.....07914 925757

Building/Builders Services

Colin Simpson: High Class painting, decorating and coving etc:

10 Dent's Close OX3 0NP01865 742842

Trevor Dines: No job too small - plumbing, complete bathrooms

from fitting a door to building an extension. Free estimates.

8, Raymund Road01865 452851, 07889 263140

Daniel Kelly: Painting and decorating services:07917 607949

Cleaning Carpets & Upholstery

Grimebusters: Quality carpet, rug & upholstery cleaning at competitive

rates. Free estimates01865 726983

Complementary Medicine

Oxford Therapies: pain relief, stress, management & more

www.oxford-therapies.com.....07913 503257

Oxford Reflexology: relaxation, stress-relief and rebalance

www.oxfordreflexology.co.uk.....07726 312719

Holistic Therapies with Dr Paola Bisicchia: Massage, Reiki, 07722 474735

Chakra Reading, Life Coaching email: info@yourawakeningpath.com

Dog grooming in your own home by Tania (NVQ level 3)

20 Harlow Way, Oxford OX3 0QS.....07877 183281

Electricians

Brian Turner: Registered NICEIC domestic installer01865 728729

All work guaranteed 33, Salford Road07538 382683

.....brian.r.turner@ntlworld.com

Craig Holloway Electrical Ltd:07868 706392

.....enquiries@craigholloway.co.uk

Elderly wellbeing

Foot Clinic

Oxfordshire Foot Clinic: We provide fast & efficient foot treatments,

including nail cutting and corn/callus removal. We visit you at home.

Appointments07742 964282

Funeral Directors

C S Boswell Independent funeral services.....01865 553737

Homewood Funerals (Family-owned and managed)

14 Cherwell Drive, Marston OX3 4LY01865 570000

Garden & small machinery service/repair.....taylordannyuk@yahoo.co.uk

Danny Taylor, 5 Ouseley Close, Marston OX3 0JS.....07796 573319

Hair and Beauty

Fiona's Hair Salon:

Salford Road, Old Marston OX3 0RX01865 241632

Home decluttering & organising: Marie Kondo certified.....07877 183281

Monumental Mason

Reeves Memorials: New memorials, removal for burials, added

inscriptions & renovations.

147A Magdalen Rd, Oxford. OX4 1RL.....01865 251231

Plumbing, Heating & Gas

Lemmarsh Building Services – plumbing and heating

22 Marsh Lane.....01865 761896, 07484 274331

S. J. Moore: Installation and servicing for all gas appliances.

Gas Safe Reg. 146337.

76, Arlington Drive.01865 724037, 07970 470176

Andrew Job Plumbing & Heating Ltd:

Gas Safe Registered Engineer 125206 ..01865 761896, 07710 390980

Tree Surgery, Fruit Tree Pruning

R. Timms: 80 Oxford Road.....01865 244608

Window Cleaning - MRF Window Cleaning Services

Mick Fry: 37, Green Hill Oxford OX4 7UD. Fully insured member of the

Federation of Master Window Cleaners.. 01865 777889, 07887 515168

