

St Mary's Monthly Message

December 2021



Photo by Tony Kerwood

A Note From David

BY THE RECTOR

Newsletter editor: Louise Fell

Dear Church Family,

I wonder if you've ever stopped to think about the messages the angels gave to Joseph and Mary, preparing them for the birth of Jesus. To Joseph was given the message: "Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife... she will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus". To Mary was given the message: "Do not be afraid, Mary...you will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus". Now receiving messages from angels is hardly an everyday experience, and so perhaps we can understand why the angels needed to start their messages with the words, "Do not be afraid". It does get you thinking, though. For if I asked you what is the most common command in the Bible, I wonder if you would know the answer? I suspect many would think it would be something to do with being more loving, after all, isn't this close to God's heart? However, God's most frequently repeated instruction is: "Fear not". Which is why, on a number of occasions, we read commands like: "Do not be afraid", or "Be strong and courageous", or "Trust in me", or simply "Fear not". In fact, as I have mentioned in my preaching, it was Lloyd Ogilvie who first recorded that there are 366 "fear not" verses in the Bible – one for every day of the year, including one for leap years!

Over this last year, life has been really tough for many of us, and we are still living with a great deal of uncertainty, which can cause us to fear. However, with the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph trusted quietly in God, as their world was turned upside down, and they came to know deep joy and peace. The message of Christmas is one of hope and new life, of new beginnings, and great joy! May we be people who are prepared to trust in God and not be afraid, and may I wish you a joy-filled Christmas and a happy New Year as you respond to God's calling and love.

Merry Christmas and many Blessings, David.

IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

A Note from David

*Helen Lidington's
role with the
Children's Society*

*Christmas with the
Princes Centre
Jinglers*

In Other News...

Dates for your Diary

*Prayers for
December*

The Interview: Helen Lidington

Helen Lidington is a retired teacher who was at Speen school for 13 years and before that has taught at a number of schools in the local area and in London. She is married to David, a senior cabinet minister until his retirement in 2019. They have four sons. Helen has recently taken over the role of Children's Society Coordinator for Risborough from Diana Parker.

Q. What prompted you to take on this role with the Children's Society?

A. The short answer is that I was asked if I would take it on! However having spent my career as a teacher I have come across a number of children, who would benefit from the work the Children's Society carries out. For example, children with a violent father; with a parent who is in prison; homes with drug or alcohol abuse. Having seen the damage this can do to children's mental health, I felt it was a charity which should be supported at St Mary's.

Q. What does The Children's Society do?

A. The Children's Society works with children to ensure they can have a future and helps them achieve it. They work not just with individual children, but also with their families and communities. Over the pandemic this work has not been easy and the Children's Society workers have had to come up with creative ideas in order to maintain contact with these children and continue working with them in a safe way.

Q. What about the Children's Society at Christmas?

A. Here at St Mary's, as in many other churches, we have a Christingle service to raise funds for the Children's Society and their vital work. Christmas is a magical time for children and the Christingle service is a chance for children to understand the true meaning of Christmas and at the same time help those for whom Christmas may be a difficult time. This year more than ever we need to raise funds.

Q. And how will you be spending Christmas?

A. Our Christmas will be a bit different this year as we shall be celebrating it on the 29th rather than the 25th. This is because my youngest son is a paramedic and last year he did not have a Christmas at all as he was isolating. This year he is working over Christmas, so we decided to celebrate on his first day off.

The Jingers' Christmas Entertainment

The Jingers recently performed their Christmas entertainment in St Mary's on the theme of HOPE and it was a joyous occasion! The Jingers are all clients of the Princes Centre, our much-loved, award-winning day care centre here in Risborough which caters for elderly people who might be isolated, lonely or whose carers might need a break; adults with mild or moderate learning disabilities, and people with mental health difficulties.

Led by the talented Sue Newton, the choir performed a mixture of old and new favourites to an audience looking for fun and laughter on a Friday morning. I asked Julie, a member of the Jingers, and indeed a soloist, what Christmas means to her: "It's so special", she said, "It's all about being loved and caring, and giving our Christmas presents out." Sally, a talented keyboard player, told me what she likes about this time of year: "Having plenty of fun, never a disappointment".

St Mary's has had a long involvement with the Princes Centre and currently has two members on the board of trustees. I asked David, our Rector and one of the trustees, what having the Jingers come to perform at St Mary's means to him: "It means the World!" he said.

If you know someone who might benefit from getting to know more about the Princes Centre, give them a ring on 01844 345105.



*And anyone
who
welcomes a
little child
like this on
my behalf is
welcoming
me.*

MATTHEW 18:5



**The Jingers Choir
with Sue Newton**

In other news...

Alpha will be coming in the new year and we will be asking our church family to prayerfully consider someone within their network of friends, family or work colleagues who they could get alongside and do Alpha with. You would watch the Alpha video in your own time and then agree a time to talk, meet up, zoom, or phone to discuss for half an hour what you have watched. This will make it more personal and, we believe, reach people from a place of trust. There will be more to follow on this in the coming weeks.

Would you be able to help with a **Parent and Toddler Group** in the new year? St Mary's is keen to bring this opportunity to the community and already has a management team for it. With a few more team members, we can make it a reality. If this is you, please contact the Parish Office.

Malcolm Clouett's Remembrance walk to raise money for the British Legion was a huge success: he raised £3,851 plus gift aid. He also celebrated his 101st birthday on 29 November. Many congratulations, Malcolm!

Christmas services are being publicised via a flyer again this year. Don't forget to check times.

Do you like to show **support to charities** at Christmas? Hamlin Fistula have announced that all donations made to the charity online during the week 30/11-7/12 will be matched so this is a great opportunity to support their medical work and midwife training www.hamlinfistulauk.org
For all our knitters, Kaye Lillycrop can also receive blankets again to send on to the charity.

For this year's **Advent Study**, St John's, St Mary's, Kimble Free Church and the Baptist Church are all running the same course based on Tom Wright's Book: 'Advent for Everyone – a journey through Luke'. All are welcome to join in the course which best suits them – just contact the Parish Office for details. The book is priced at £7.99 and is available now from the Parish Office.

Services at **Icknield Court** have resumed, on the third Sunday of the month (although the next one is on Sunday 12th December). Please let Michael Hunt know if you would like to help, and your prayers would be very welcome.

Can you spare half an hour on Saturday afternoon, 4 December, to help out on the **CTR stall at the Christmas Lights event** in Risborough? This year we have life-size wooden nativity figures on display which can be used for a photo opportunity. Putting Jesus firmly at the heart of Christmas, our Churches Together teams will be chatting to passers-by and handing out Christmas booklets. Please pray for those involved in this act of witness.

St Peter's Ilmer needs your help. It was originally built in the Norman period, then, in the 14th century, it was rebuilt in the Perpendicular style but in 1349 the Black Death devastated the thriving town. By 1860 the church had become very dilapidated and the then vicar paid for its restoration. In 1979 the medieval timber framing of the tower was repaired. In 1973 St Peter's became part of the parish of St Mary's Princes Risborough. Can you help towards current urgent repairs? See St Mary's website for a giving page.
<https://www.stmarysrisborough.org.uk/2021/11/st-peters-church-ilmer-needs-your-help/>

Any comments or suggestions about the newsletter would be very welcome to msrlouisefell@icloud.com. **Photos for the January edition**, please.

*Could you
help out
with a
new
Parent
and
Toddler
Group?
Contact
the Parish
Office
01844
273300*

*Sign up for our
weekly e-news
by going to the
homepage on
our website.
Receive all the
news from St
Mary's direct
to your phone!*

Dates for your Diary

Advent Study Group 7.30pm on Wednesdays 1, 8, 15 & 22 December in Chapter House and on Zoom

Monthly Lunch Club – Weds 1 December

Christmas Lights Switch-on in High Street, Saturday 4 December, 3:00-6:00pm. CTR stall in High Street

PR School Christmas Concert in St Mary's at 7:00pm, Thursday 9 December [private event - tickets available from the school]

St Peter's, Ilmer, Carols by Candlelight at 6:00pm on Sunday 12 Dec

Bereavement Group Meeting in Chapter House, 3:00pm, on Monday 13 Dec

Carol singing around Risborough, 5:00-7:00pm, Wednesday 15 Dec

Longwick School Christmas Service in St Mary's at 6pm, Thursday 16 Dec [private event - tickets available from the school]

... **and looking ahead to January 2022**

Men's Breakfast Sat 8th Jan, 9am, Parish Hall - Andy Kind, christian Comedian

Monthly Lunch Club – Wednesday 12 January, 10am to 3pm

New Year Prayer Evening - Tuesday 25th Jan in Church

Services at St Mary's and St Peter's

In order to keep everyone safe at this time, we encourage the wearing of masks whilst in church.

Parish Communion continues at 9.30 on Sundays in church and live streamed to your home. See the St Mary's website for the link to our YouTube channel.

Singing has resumed at this service but we ask everyone to wear a mask.

Live@St Mary's all age service continues at 11.15 both in church and live streamed to your home. A zone is set aside in church for those who wish to wear a mask & social distance.

Mid week Holy Communion is on Thursdays at 10.30.

Third Sunday in the month, **Evensong at St Peter's Church, Ilmer** at 3pm (check website for variations).

For your Prayers in November

A Prayer for All

Loving Jesus,
you were born in a stable but
worshipped by the angels.
Be with our community and all who are
lonely,
and with all who feel distant from
celebrations.
Be for us a living hope that lightens our
hearts.
Amen.

Prayer for our Earth at this Time

Heavenly Father,
You have taught us
That all creation is your handiwork.
Grant us your grace that we may
Exercise wise stewardship of this Earth;
Tread lightly upon it;
And cherish its resources;
That our children may enjoy its riches,
throughout all generations,
And your name be glorified through all
that you have made.
Amen.

We give thanks for the baptism of Mel Rolfe on 5th December.
Please pray for Susan Hopkins and family. Michael's funeral is on 16th Dec at 12 noon.
We remember all those who are grieving, lonely or ill during this Christmas season.
And, as usual, let's share the love of Christ with all this week.

*Copies of this
newsletter are
available in
Church for you
to collect and
pass on to
friends and
neighbours.*

*Join our weekly
prayer meeting
on zoom every
Wednesday at
9am – zoom
invite available
from the Parish
Office .*

*Prayer requests
can be made
via the Prayer
section on the
website
homepage or
via the Parish
Office.*