



All Saints' Welcomes Everyone



## True priorities

As we edge into the Advent season and look towards Christmas and on to Epiphany, my mind is often drawn to Thomas Merton. He died just over 50 years ago. He was born in France and as a young man lived in the UK and New York. Following these hedonistic years, he became a Cistercian monk in Kentucky and then later he retreated into silence as a Trappist monk.

Merton died on 10 December 1968. Shortly before his death he made some remarks on Marxism and Monasticism. While noting some similarities between them, he noted the important difference between them is found in their relationships to the world. Marxism is concerned with the structures that make our society function, most of all economics. The Marxist believes that we can transform human life if we transform those structures.

The Christian knows that real transformation is found in *metanoia*, repentance, a change of heart. Christianity teaches us to be concerned about the structures that make society function because they are directly connected to our effective care for others. When we care for the hopeless, the sick, and the poor, we must talk about economics and politics, all sorts of structures in our world. But our conversion does not come from a structure. Our hearts are changed by grace.

Merton is plain. Christianity is not found in a structure. Christianity is found in the heart of each person who seeks to love God and to love their neighbour as themselves. This love comes to us first in Jesus, born amongst us in Bethlehem. We love because He loves us first.

Our nation and some of the world's structures are strained to breaking point. I'm writing this as war continues to rage between Israeli

forces and Palestinians in Gaza and Hezbollah and as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine notches up another level.

The church is not immune to this stress either - with shrinking congregations and a general distrust in the wider community in our message; with internal conflicts about sexuality and gender continuing and the awfulness of the years of abuse by John Smyth brought into the light in the Makin Review - drawing into sharp focus the scandalously poor way that certain members of the church covered up the abuse and failed to report Smyth.

What can we do? What can we say?

Merton catches it, reflecting on this time of year,

*'...Into this world, this demented inn, in which there is absolutely no room for him at all, Christ has come uninvited. But because he cannot be at home in it, because he is out of place in it, and yet he must be in it, his place is with those others for whom there is no room. His place is with those who do not belong, who are rejected by power because they are regarded as weak, those who are discredited, who are denied the status of persons, tortured, exterminated. With those for whom there is no room, Christ is present in this world...'*

This is such a simple idea that we all too easily forget. Amid all the controversy and heated argument, this simple and essential message of hope is needed more than ever. The Baby who comes in our midst this Christmas still offers us hope - a hope that our world can be different.

The hope of the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany invite us to trust in a loving God who enters our world uninvited, who found no welcome and still who desires only to be closer to us - all because he loves us, all of us,

unconditionally and always - and he invites us to do as He does

As we move into Advent and journey towards Christmas and beyond, I hope that those of us who are struggling with failing structures in the church or the world, may find hope again in the love the child Jesus, born in Bethlehem.

Simon

## Safeguarding in the Church of England and at All Saints.

You will have heard in recent days of The Most Reverend Just Welby's decision to resign his office in the wake of the publication of the Makin Review into the Church of England's handling of serious abuse by John Smyth QC, for which he takes personal and institutional responsibility.

You can read Archbishop Justin's letter of resignation here:

<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/news-and-statements/statement-archbishop-canterbury-0> and the Bishop of St Alban's response to it here:

<https://resource.stalbansdiocese.org/newsletters/resignation-of-the-archbishop-of-canterbury-nov-2024/>

Here and in every parish I have served I have been supported by, careful and energetic Diocesan Safeguarding teams and Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO) and PCCs determined to discharge their duties to do all we can to keep our communities safe for all.

We are blessed in this parish by the energy and commitment of our PSO Lyn Paddon, our churchwardens, PCC and all of you. We are working hard never to be complacent and to ensure we are always up to date with policies and procedures and their practical implementation.

Safeguarding is a standing item at every PCC meeting, and I meet monthly with Lyn to ensure that we are progressing these matters. Together, we are seeking to embed exemplary practise at every level and in every decision, as we build a culture of our welcome and care of all who come to us

and safeguarding lies at the very heart of that.

Last Sunday (17/11/24) we ran the Church of England's Basic Safeguarding module in the meeting room straight after the service as a group.

I want as many of us as possible to undertake this training - especially if you undertake any role which places you in contact with others e.g. serving refreshments and lunches or welcoming people as they come to our building to visit or for worship. If you have yet to do so, please do speak to me or Lyn and we will arrange another occasion.

These have been difficult days, again, for our Church nationally. Irrespective of the discomfort and shame we may feel, can I ask you to join with me in continuing to pray for all who been affected by the abusive actions of others.

Simon

## Travelling Cribs

We have travelling cribs available, suitable for all ages & would love them to visit your home until Christmas Eve. All sets include an Advent Calendar, books & activity sheets.



If you would like a crib, please contact Ann Stephens-Jones on 01992 447726 to arrange collection or delivery.

There will be some available at the All the Family Service on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December.

# Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November



We are really looking forward to welcoming you to the All Saints Christmas Fair! The day is themed around community. We will be serenaded by local school choirs and have contributions on the day from local groups, organisations and schools to celebrate our theme!

Expect some favourite stalls and activities - chocolate tombola, a Grand Draw with superb prizes, table-top games and activities for all ages and delicious refreshments will, be served.

The day runs from 11am-3pm in All Saints.

## Green Watch talk

The Threats and Challenges facing our Oceans, and the Solutions. Rowan Byrne

Rowan Byrne, an Irishman, wrote to scientists when young asking for advice on how to work with sea life, sharks etc. Taking their advice, he has had a varied and interesting career, spanning many continents.

In his talk, Rowan concentrated on plastics – how they have now infiltrated everywhere on land and sea and are now found in everything and everybody. Plastic fragments are inescapable on land, in the air and in the waterways and seas. Depressing, but true.

Once in the water, fragments cannot be avoided, but there are millions of larger items

that are dangerous and should never be in the water at all. Plastic bags have the appearance of jelly fish, and as a result, can be eaten by sea turtles, which are normally very long lived, but then suffer a slow and agonizing death. Others have adopted plastic in their lifestyle, for example, hermit crabs using plastic items as shells.

The fragments of plastics ingested can lead to an increased risk of cancer, including in the human population. There is something in the plastic fragments that encourages and feeds tumours.

Much of our clothing and other items contain man-made fibres with high plastic content. Fragments and “fluff” are discharged into our drains every time we do our laundry. Natural fibres like cotton and wool do not have this effect, and are recommended, as is avoiding unnecessary laundry. Wet wipes are a major culprit – flushed away and indestructible. Since Covid, face masks too have been an issue, both the material and the attached strings.

Rowan touched on many aspects of ocean destruction. Between 8 and 10 million tons of plastic enter the world's oceans every year: Scale wise this is the equivalent of one garbage truck of plastic being dumped into the ocean every minute. If flattened, it would cover an area the size of a small country, like Jamaica, Qatar, or the Bahamas. Plastic in the water causes over acidification which weakens the shells of animals and causes coral bleaching. Other areas are oils spills, the extreme damage done by deep sea mining for minerals often used for modern technology, noise pollution for sea creatures, damage to fish stocks, including slow growth rates, fibreglass, sunscreen and other cosmetics.

One positive development is the use of 'sea bins' to scoop up floating items which then need to be disposed of along with all the other rubbish in the world.

Rowan's talk was a wakeup call indeed, but he was insistent that we should not give up on it. Humans have caused this, so humans must – and hopefully can – clear up the mess.

*Fiona Earle*





December can feel like chaos – lots of social events, services, Christmas presents to buy, never-ending to-do lists and the pressure to create the perfect Christmas. But in the midst of this chaos, our churches can offer an opportunity to find peace during this busy time.

The Church of England's theme for Advent and Christmas 2024, *Follow the Star: Calm and Bright*, draws on the world-famous carol, Silent Night:

*"Silent Night! Holy Night!  
All is calm, all is bright..."*

One of the reasons that this carol is so universally loved is the way it invites us into the still centre of the Christmas story, to contemplate Mary holding the new-born Jesus, the Light of the World.

The angelic messages we encounter in the biblical story of Jesus' birth typically hold together the need for calm in the present ("Do not be afraid" ... "Fear not") with the hope of a bright future ("for you have found favour with God" ... "for behold I bring you tidings of great joy").

Throughout Advent, we will focus primarily on how to find Calm during this busy period, with reflections offering people a chance to pause during the busy season and tips on how to prepare for a calm Christmas.

Then through Christmas, we will focus particularly on Bright, with a series of daily reflections from Christmas Day to the Eve of Epiphany (5 January) by Sammi Tooze, Discipleship Adviser for the Diocese of York,

both in digital form and as a full-colour booklet to share locally.

We will also share reflective content throughout Advent and Christmas for those who find this time of year difficult, with some Blue Christmas resources.

Resources for individuals

- **Reflections via email:** Sign up to our Christmas reflection emails and receive daily messages straight to your inbox. Our daily emails will offer Bible readings, short reflections and a practical challenge, as well as prayers linked to weekly themes.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/faiith-life/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/calm-and-bright-christmas-reflections>

- **Daily reflections via Everyday Faith app:** You can read and listen to daily Advent and Christmas reflections from 1 December through the Everyday Faith app, the new daily devotional app from the Church of England, which is available to [download here](#).

<https://www.churchofengland.org/faiith-life/exploring-faith/everyday-faith>

- **Online services:** Can't make it to church this Advent and Christmas? [Watch our weekly online worship services](#) from across the Church of England and worship with us this festive season.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/faiith-life/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/advent-and-christmas-services>

- **Social media:** Be sure to follow us across our social media channels – [X/Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Threads](#) – this Advent and Christmas for a variety of thought-provoking and inspiring content, aimed at bringing peace in the midst of a busy Advent, and celebrating the joy of Christmas.

## Burns Night Supper 25<sup>th</sup> January 7 for 7.30



We are holding a Burns Night Supper in St John's Hall and we would love to welcome you to celebrate the chieftain of the puddin' race!

### MENU:

Haggis, bashed neeps and tatties (vegetarian haggis available - mention at booking.)

Raspberries, cream and Scottish shortbread.

BYO drinks

£15 per person payable by 20/01 at the latest please.

## Lead from the Front

(From an article by Alice Whitehead in the Autumn/Winter edition of *The Organic Way*.)

All green spaces are important, and often front gardens, the smallest of local green spaces, have an outsize impact on wildlife and the environment. According to research by RHS in 2020, in more than a third of front gardens, plants cover less than a quarter of the area, while 2.5 million front gardens have nothing growing at all. Recently many people have opted for low maintenance, and secure and tidy gardens, partly because these spaces are highly visible. Instead of growing lawns and plants, many people have chosen paving or artificial grass and have replaced hedges with walls or fences. The space is also often dedicated to bike sheds, wheelie bins, driveways and cars.

There are many advantages of front gardens brimming with plants:

1. Stress is reduced; well-being and mental health improved.
2. Working in the front garden yields opportunities for chatting to neighbours or passers-by.
3. Front gardens raise the look and feel of the community.
4. Wildlife and the wider environment benefit greatly from an abundance of vegetation in many ways, for example:

Vegetation provides insects, birds and small mammals with shelter and food.

Tarmac or paving can increase run off by as much as 50%, adding to drainage and saturation problems leading to flooding. Uncovered areas soak up the rain.

Plants reduce and regulate temperature and provide shade. Surface temperature in a green space can be 15-20 degrees lower than the surrounding areas, and air temperature 2-8 degrees cooler.

Some suggestions:

1. Use vertical spaces – walls and window planters.
2. Wheelie bin screens with room for pollinator friendly plants.
3. A pallet wood roof to a cycle shed planted up sempervivums.
4. Pay attention to the look of the front garden from the house, not just from the street. Diagonal lines suggest a wider area.
5. Plants protected from the rain will need more watering, so consider a water butt. Good compost – topsoil, peat free or homemade compost and water-retaining sand is a good mix for containers. Large containers dry out more slowly.

Other ideas:

1. Large shrubs suggest more space.
2. Think of growing food – peas, climbing beans and squash can be grown up wigwams or walls or over an arch. Salads and carrots in repurposed recycling boxes.





Hertford Choral Society presents

# Christus Natus Est

## An Evening of Christmas Music and Carols

5.00pm, Saturday 14th December 2024  
All Saints' Church, Hertford SG13 8AY

**Programme:**  
C McDowall *Christus Natus Est*  
A Corelli *Christmas Concerto*  
with carols for choir and audience

**Orchestra:** Serafine Sinfonia  
**Conductor:** Manvinder Rattan  
with the choir of Benington C of E Primary School

**Tickets:**  
£20 reserved / £15 unreserved / £5 students

Email: [tickets@hertfordchoral.org.uk](mailto:tickets@hertfordchoral.org.uk)  
Online: [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk) (booking fee applies)  
In person: Hertford Town & Tourist Information Centre  
10-12 The Wash, Hertford SG14 1PX (unreserved only)

For more information please visit  
[www.hertfordchoral.org.uk](http://www.hertfordchoral.org.uk)



Registered Charity No. 276220

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**FESTIVE SERVICES**

Sunday 1 December 2024 • 6.30pm

**Advent Carol Service**

Sunday 22 December 2024 • 6.30pm

**Service of Lessons and Carols**

Tuesday 24 December 2023 • 4.00pm

**Blessing of the Crib**

Family Christmas Service with Carols

Tuesday 24 December 2024 • 11.30pm

**Midnight Mass**

Wednesday 25 December 2024 • 10.00am

**Christmas Day Family Eucharist**

Sunday 5 January 2025 • 10.00am

**All the Family Service for Epiphany**

Sunday 5 January 2025 • 6.30pm

**Epiphany Carol Service**

**WE WISH YOU A PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS WITH EVERY BLESSING FOR THE NEW YEAR**

For all Regular Services, please check the website

**ALL SAINTS CHURCH - Queens Road, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 8AY**  
[www.allsaintshertford.org](http://www.allsaintshertford.org)

# Parish Diary December 2024 & January 2025

## Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> Advent Sunday

**10.00 am** All the Family Service  
**12.00 noon** Holy Communion  
**3.00 pm** Rehearsals  
**6.30 pm** Advent Carol Service  
*From Darkness to Light*

## Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**9.00 am** H&WSMA reh  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer  
**7.30 pm** Herts & Ware School Music Assoc service

## Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> (Francis Xavier)

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**2.30 pm** Abel Smith Christingle  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer

## Weds 4<sup>th</sup> (John of Damascus)

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer

## Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**11.00 am** Holy Communion  
**12.00 noon** R Hale set up  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer  
**7.30 pm** Concert by R Hale school

## Friday 6<sup>th</sup> (Nicholas)

**5.30 pm** Choir Practices

## Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> (Ambrose)

**9.30 am** Morning Prayer  
**5.00 pm** S2S reh  
**7.30 pm** Concert by Somewhere2sing

## Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

**10.00 am** Holy Communion by extension  
**6.30 pm** Choral Evensong

## Monday 9<sup>th</sup>

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**8.30 am** Organ Tuning  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer

## Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer  
**6.00 pm & 8.30 pm** Concerts by Illuminated Orchestra

## Weds 11<sup>th</sup> (Ember Day)

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**9.00 am** Abel Smith reh  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer  
**6.30 pm** Abel Smith event

## Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**9.00 am** Wheatcroft Setup  
**11.00 am** Holy Communion  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer  
**7.00 pm** Wheatcroft Carol Service

## Friday 13<sup>th</sup> (Lucy)

**1.30 pm** Morgans School Christingle  
**5.30 pm** Choir Practices

## Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> (John of the Cross)

**9.30 am** Morning Prayer  
**7.30 pm** Concert by HCS

## Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

**10.00 am** Family Eucharist  
**6.30 pm** Choral Compline

## Monday 16<sup>th</sup>

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**9.30 am** Simon Balle set up  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer  
**7.00pm** Simon Balle Carol Service

## Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> (O Sapientia)

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**10.00 am** Simon Balle Carol Service  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer  
**6.00 pm** Simon Balle Carol Service

## Weds 18<sup>th</sup> (O Adonai)

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer

**10.00 am** Simon Balle Carol Service

**4.00 pm** R Hale setup

**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer

## Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> (O Radix Jesse)

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer

**9.30 am** Richard Hale Founder's Day Service

**11.00 am** Holy Communion

**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer

## Friday 20<sup>th</sup> (O Clavis David)

**5.30 pm** Choir Practices

## Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> (O Oriens)

**9.30 am** Morning Prayer  
**6.00 pm & 8.30 pm** Concerts by Illuminated Orchestra

## Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent (O Rex Gentium)

**10.00 am** Parish Communion  
**3.00 pm** Rehearsals  
**6.30 pm** Service of Lessons and Carols

## Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> (O Emmanuel)

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**9.00 am** Church decorations  
**5.00 pm** Evening Prayer

## Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve

**8.00 am** Morning Prayer  
**4.00 pm** Crib Service  
**11.30 pm** First Communion of Christmas

## Weds 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day

**10.00 am** Family Eucharist for Christmas Day  
**6.30 pm** Evening Prayer

## Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> (Stephen)

**9.30 am** Holy Communion

## Sat 28<sup>th</sup> (Holy Innocents)

**11.00 am** Holy Communion

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
10.00 am Holy Communion  
6.30 pm Evensong

#### JANUARY

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> (Basil the Great)**  
11.00 am Holy Communion

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
5.30 pm Choir Practices

**Epiphany Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>**  
10.00 am All the Family Service  
12.00 noon Holy Communion  
6.30 pm Epiphany Carol Service

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> (Epiphany)**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Weds 8<sup>th</sup>**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
11.00 am Holy Communion  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer  
7.30 pm All Saints Art

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> (William Laud)**  
5.30 pm Choir Practices

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> (Mary Slessor)**  
9.30 am Morning Prayer  
11.30 am Greenwatch Coffee  
12.00 noon Light Lunches  
1.00 pm Talk  
7.00 pm Concert Lumos Live

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> Baptism of Christ**  
10.00 am Holy Communion  
6.30 pm Choral Evensong

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> (Hilary)**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Weds 15<sup>th</sup>**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer  
7.30 pm PCC

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup>**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
11.00 am Holy Communion  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer  
7.30 pm All Saints Art

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> (Anthony of Egypt)**  
5.30 pm Choir Practices

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins**  
9.00 onwards Work Party  
9.30 am Morning Prayer

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany**  
10.00 am Family Eucharist  
6.30 pm Choral Compline

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> (Richard Rolle)**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> (Agnes)**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Weds 22<sup>nd</sup> (Vincent of Saragossa)**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
11.00 am Holy Communion  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer  
7.30 pm All Saints Art

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> (Francis de Sales)**  
5.30 pm Choir Practices

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> (Conversion of St Paul)**  
9.30 am Morning Prayer  
7 for 7.30 Burns Night in Hall

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany**  
10.00 am Parish Communion  
3.00 pm Christian Unity service at Methodist Church

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup>**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> (Thomas Aquinas)**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Weds 29<sup>th</sup>**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
12.00 for 1.00 pm Soundbites  
TBA  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> (Charles)**  
8.00 am Morning Prayer  
11.00 am Holy Communion  
5.00 pm Evening Prayer  
7.30 pm All Saints Art

**Friday 31<sup>st</sup> (John Bosco)**  
5.30 pm Choir Practices

#### FEBRUARY

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> (Brigid)**  
9.30 am Morning Prayer

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> Presentation of Christ in the Temple**  
10.00 am All the Family Service  
6.30 pm Parish Communion with hymns

#### Contact information

[www.allsaintshertford.org](http://www.allsaintshertford.org)

   AllSaintsHerf

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