



www.cofebishopstoke.com

Showing and Sharing God's Love

**1 December 2024
Advent 1**

And a very special welcome if it's your first time here!

- You are very welcome to stay for refreshments at the end of the service if you can.
- If you would like to know about other things that happen in our church life, please see our website – www.cofebishopstoke.com
- During one of the songs in our service a collection is normally made. If you are able to use one of the Gift Aid envelopes, it really does make a difference and is most appreciated. At St Mary's we are also able to take card donations following the service. If you would like to find out about regular, tax-efficient giving, please let us know or take a look at <https://www.cofebishopstoke.com/giving-to-our-church>.

Today

St Mary's

10.45 am Parish Communion

St Paul's

4 – 6 pm Messy Church

Bible Readings

Jeremiah 33.14-16 (p.797)

Psalms 25.1-9

Luke 21.25-36 (p.1056)

Contact: Revd Richard Wise on 8061 2192, email. rwise@talktalk.net

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The Lighting of the Advent candle



People of God: awake!
The day is coming soon
when you shall see God face to face.
Remember the ways and the works of God.
God calls you out of darkness
to walk in the light of his coming.
You are God's children.

All **Lord, make us one as we walk with Christ
today and for ever. Amen.**

Collects / Prayers for this week

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Almighty God,
as your kingdom dawns,
turn us from the darkness of sin to the
light of holiness,
that we may be ready to meet you
in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Items for prayer...

- **the unwell** – Tim, David, Fiona, Denise, Pauline, Edna, Joy, Chris, Margaret, David, Robert, Jocelyn, Shane, Julia, Amelia, Margaret, Glyn, Finn, David, Karen, Joan, Tracy, Maureen, Liz, Charlotte, Janet & Michael, Brenda, Tommy
- **we commend Stephen Saunders to God**, and pray for his family and friends
- **confirmations** – those preparing to be confirmed on 8 December: Adam, Ben, Karen, Natalie & Robert
- **treasurer** – we give thanks for Mike and his years of service as our treasurer, and pray for someone to take on this task from him
- **our parish** – Stoke Park Junior School; all the pupils, staff and governors
- **School Pastors** – Tuesday lunchtimes at Stoke Park Juniors; those training to be School Pastors
- **Open the Book assemblies** – Wednesday morning at Stoke Park Infant and Junior Schools
- **the ecological and climate emergency** – those suffering most from this; the decisions and actions of world leaders in response to COP 29; for each of us to do whatever we can to make a positive difference
- **peace** – for all whose lives have been shattered and for a just, lasting peace in Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, and across the Middle East; for peace between Ukraine and Russia, and in other parts of the world where there is conflict

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

This Week

Mon	2.30 pm	Prayer Healing Fellowship (St Paul's)
Tues	9 am	Morning Prayer (Methodist Church)
	9.30 am	Tots and Tinies (St Mary's)
	8 pm	Home group (Zoom)
Wed	7 pm	Christmas choir practice (St Mary's)
	8 pm	Compline / Night Prayer (Zoom)
Thurs	9.30 am	Morning Prayer (St Paul's)
Fri	7 pm	Open Sight Christmas Concert (St Mary's)

(please see notice below)

Sun	8 am	Holy Communion – BCP (St Mary's) NO service at St Paul's
	10.45 am	Church Together <i>with confirmations</i> (St Mary's)

Christmas Café We had a wonderful café last Saturday. There was a really good turnout, despite the inclement weather; a lovely variety of stalls; and we raised £533 for the Urgent Repairs! A huge thank you to everyone who came, all the stallholders, and everyone who helped.

Confirmations On Sunday 8 December at Church Together, five members of our church and one from another church will be confirmed by Bishop Philip. Please come along to support and affirm them! The service will be followed by a bring-and-share lunch, which everyone is most welcome to attend. If you're staying for lunch, please bring something savoury or sweet for the table. (There will be no service at St Paul's that morning, but BCP Communion will still take place at 8 am at St Mary's.)

Come and experience a Georgian Christmas! On Friday 20 December St Mary's will be host to *The Maddening Crowd* with their Christmas programme. They will perform authentic music, readings and a mummers play from 18th century sources, all in period costume. It will start at 7.30 pm and last about two hours, including an interval with refreshments. Admission will be free, but donations towards the Urgent Repairs will be most welcome.

Prayers of Love and Faith Many thanks for all your responses to the survey regarding offering prayers for those in same sex relationships in our churches. A good majority of those who responded were in favour, and Richard will therefore offer the prayers knowing that there is good support from our church family. At the moment, the prayers may only be used in private or in an existing church service, but we will use them in standalone services when the Church of England gives the go-ahead for this. If you have any concerns about this, please have a word with Richard.

St Mary's Urgent Repairs Fund Thank you so much for all your giving and fundraising so far for this. We have now raised over £17,500. If you would like to make a gift, please see the leaflets or poster at the back of church, or simply put your donation in an

envelope marked 'Urgent Repairs'. We would also be very grateful if you can Gift Aid it – there are Gift Aid forms at the back of church. Alternatively, please go to <https://www.cofebishopstoke.com/urgent-repairs> Many thanks!

Grant finders Could you help the church by applying for grants for the Urgent Repairs? We will be able to give you all the information you need, as well as some ideas of where to apply to, and a PCC member will be able to support you in doing it. You would need to be able to access the internet. If you think you might be able to help, please have a word with Richard. Many thanks!

Your contact details If you come to church regularly but have never completed a Church Contact Consent form, we would really encourage you to do so. There are copies at the back of each church.

Open Sight Christmas Concert THIS FRIDAY at 7 pm, Hampshire charity Open Sight will be using St Mary's for a fundraising concert. They write, 'Join us for a heartwarming evening of Christmas music and festive cheer! Open Sight's Christmas Concert features the talented Raise Your Voice Choir along with beloved traditional carols. All proceeds will directly support Open Sight's work, empowering blind and partially sighted people across Hampshire to lead confident, independent lives.' Tickets are £12.50 for adults (under-18s free), and if you're interested in going, you can find out more and book tickets [here](#) or by phoning 023 8064 1244.

Safeguarding in our church If you have any concerns about a child / young person or vulnerable adult in our church, please contact our Parish Safeguarding Officer, Margaret Ward, on 07778 691302 or by emailing cofebishopstokesafeguarding@gmail.com. You can find out more about Safeguarding and other people who may be contacted on the posters at the back of each church or [on our website](#).



The Makin Review Following the recent publication of the Makin Review into the horrific abuse of John Smyth, much of which took place in Winchester, and which has led to the resignation of the Archbishop

of Canterbury, the Diocese has issued a [statement](#), and Bishop Philip has also circulated a [letter](#).

How should we respond to this? (by Revd Marianne Foster)

Lament - Let us bring our sorrow and grief to God for the harm caused by Smyth's actions and the inaction of church leaders, including Archbishop Welby, which has re-traumatised many.

Pray - For victims and survivors of abuse, especially those affected by Smyth, as well as any in our own congregations who may find this news distressing. If you need to talk, please reach out.

- For our safeguarding team and for continued improvements across the Church of England. Progress has been made, but much remains to be done.

- For Archbishop Welby who has given himself fully to serving, though imperfectly. Pray for him and his wife Caroline as they transition out of this demanding role.

- For the Church: amid these challenges, let's pray for unity and humility, that we may learn, change, and glorify God as one body.

Take courage - Though Archbishop Welby is stepping down, the true Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, remains with us. His kingdom is everlasting, and He continues to work through the church, despite our flaws.

Repent - We are each part of this institution and its renewal. Let us examine our own actions and omissions, particularly when it comes to safeguarding.

Stay vigilant - As Christians, it's important to recognise how organisational cultures can fail to prevent wrongdoing. Let's remain alert, willing to speak up, and open to learning from past mistakes.

Remember safeguarding is everyone's responsibility - This includes all of us. If you have concerns, please reach out to your Parish Safeguarding Officer (see Safeguarding poster in church, [our website](#), or Safeguarding notice above), or report directly to the Diocese [here](#), or local authority if needed. In an emergency, call 999.

Continue to share the good news - Even in difficult times, our message remains: Jesus is our hope, perfect and trustworthy. May we continue to make Him known in a world that needs Him more than ever.

Eco Actions for December - Christmas Crackers



Could you manage to do some of these this month – where relevant? They could soon become habits – good ones! Some might save you money, but even more important, they will all really help in caring for the world and its people.

1. Real trees have a much lower carbon footprint than artificial ones, especially if disposed of by wood-chipping. An artificial tree would need to be reused for ten years to be comparable.
2. This Advent ponder Jesus' coming to be with us on earth. How are we preparing his creation for him to live with us here? Pray for grace and wisdom to play your part in caring for creation.
3. Watch your shopping trolley. In the UK our food spend increases by 16% in December, so make sure that you are not over catering and that extras are not going to end up in the bin.
4. Celebrate the joy of Jesus coming to be with us. Wonder at his incarnation: he embraced being human, vulnerable, and very much part of the creation that he made, in order to restore it all to peace with God.
5. Calculate your carbon footprint for 2024 at Climate Stewards www.climatestewards.org. Did you make any reductions this year? Take responsibility for your 2024 emissions by carbon offsetting. Set a target for 2025.

Eastleigh Basics Bank are always very grateful for our support, and at the moment, due to the rise in the cost of living, the need is greater than ever. Donations of food can be made at many local supermarkets, the Basics Bank in Wells Place, or brought to church. You can see the most up-to-date list on their [website](#) as well as the supermarkets which receive donations. They would also be very grateful for unwanted carrier bags, which are becoming scarcer! You can bring them to church too. Many thanks for whatever you are able to give.

Church compost bins We have compost bins in St Mary's churchyard (near the hedge on the east side of the church) and at St Paul's (behind the hedge in the far corner of the grass). You are very welcome to put the following items in them: cut flowers, vegetable peelings, fruit cores and peel / skin, nettles, compostable cups. Please do not put plastic, dog poo, hedge cuttings, grass cuttings, horsetail weed or other food waste in the bin. If you have any queries, please contact Jenny on compostjen@gmail.com Many thanks.

Online giving to our church If you would like to give a one-off or regular gift online to St Mary's & St Paul's, our bank details are:

Account name: Bishopstoke PCC
Sort Code: 40-46-39
Account no.: 91780646

If you would like us to claim Gift Aid, you can download our Gift Aid declaration form from [this page](#) on our website. If you can't print it off, just let us know and we'll get a copy to you. We really encourage you to Gift Aid donations if you can – if you need any help with this, please contact our Gift Aid Secretary, Natasha Redfern, on 07739 322584.

Parish Giving Scheme This enables you to give a regular or one-off gift to our church. If you wish to Gift Aid your donations, this can be done without filling in an additional form. You can also give anonymously (if you wish), whilst still enabling us to claim Gift Aid. To join the scheme, please go to our page at [PGS](#).

Many thanks for whatever you are able to give or already give!

Please follow us on social media if you can – and like or share some of our posts! It will help us spread the word about what we're doing as a church.

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CofEBishopstoke/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CofEBishopstokeMessyChurch/>

X (formerly Twitter) <https://x.com/CofEBishopstoke>