

Dear All,

How do you encounter God at Christmas? It can be hard to find Him in the middle of “season’s greetings” and piles of presents, glitter and snow! (Although I can’t remember the last time we actually had snow at Christmas!) It can be hard to find space in the diary, in our homes and in us. We will see the nativity scene a hundred times, hear carols for months, light advent candles or open advent doors... but will we really encounter God?

There are 2 problems.

Firstly, over familiarity – which means we see and hear, but can just let it wash over us. We could answer a question if asked, we know the ending of the story, we have no reason to look closer or concentrate more.

Secondly, the whole issue of taking time to be still, to reflect and to allow the events of Christmas to impact us at a deeper level. It can be hard to stop for more than a few moments, especially at this time of year. And it is even harder to stop thinking about all that needs to be organised.

How do we make space?

The inn keeper allows his plans to be disrupted, squeezes the young couple into a corner and unknowingly hosts the Son of God! Can we allow ourselves to be disrupted, to make space in an unexpected corner of our day, to invite the Son of God into our chaotic lives?

The Shepherds pick up on an invitation, prioritise it and take time out from their work to go and see what has happened. Can we look at the next few weeks and the services available; then slot into our diaries the important time out to come and see once again for ourselves?

The Wise Men set out on a journey that would take many months, following the star to find a king. We have an Advent book available, designed to take us on a journey through Advent and beyond Christmas – do pick up a copy and let it guide you into an encounter with God, so that you can worship Him too.

*‘Where is the one who has been born the King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.’ **Matthew** 1 v2.*

Claire



St. Paul's Church Tongham

a growing community of faith

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This Month's Services

Dec 2017

Sunday 3 December
8am Holy Communion
10am All Age Service – Toy Service
Wake up & Shake up
Encountering God in Comfort

Sunday 10 December
10am Holy Communion
Kate Crabtree
Encountering God in Hope

Sunday 17 December
8am Holy Communion
10am Morning Worship
Revd Claire Holt
Encountering God in Promises
4pm Carols by Candlelight

Every Wednesday
10am Holy Communion

Sunday 24 December
Christmas Eve
12 noon Crib Service
11pm Midnight Communion

Monday 25 December
Christmas Day
8am Holy Communion
10am Morning Worship
Encountering God in a Stable

Sunday 31 December
10am Morning Worship
Revd Claire Holt
Encountering God in Jesus

Morning Prayers in Church
8.30am Mon, Tues & Thu
9.30am Fri, 10am Sat

Coffee and Chat: Do come and join us in Old School after each service.

Hearing Loop operates in this church.

Recordings of the sermons can be accessed from our website.

CoffeePlus - Wednesdays 10.30am – 12pm in Old School

For pre-school children and mums, dads and other carers, with play, songs and chat (and refreshments!). The CoffeePlus Christmas party and nativity takes place on Wednesday 13th December and this will be the last CoffeePlus until January.

Toy Service - Sun 3rd Dec at 10am



Please bring your gifts for boys, girls or mums to the 10am service on Sunday 3rd December. Once again, these will be taken to the Women's refuge in Aldershot, where they are so much appreciated by the families staying there.

The children are mostly young (girls under 8 and boys under 6) but do label your gifts so we can give them to the appropriate person. Your gift can be for a mum, and baby gifts are always welcome.

Evensong - Sun 3rd Dec at 4pm

Café Church - Sun 3rd Dec 6.45pm for 7pm start in Old School

A relaxed and safe space to come together to enjoy extended worship and teaching.

Knit & Natter - Wed 6th Dec 8pm – 10pm

Bring along any craft activity (it doesn't have to be knitting!) to Little Hollow, 7 Oxenden Road GU10 1AG.

Fellowship lunch - Tues 12th Dec at 12.30pm in Old School

Come along for soup & roll lunch and the chance to chat to other members of the church family. All welcome!



Toddler Nativity – Wed 13th Dec at 10.30am

A nativity service ideal for our littlest ones - pre-schoolers and mums, dads and other carers all welcome!

Carols by Candlelight – Sun 17th Dec at 4pm

Come and join in singing some of our favourite carols. Mince pies and mulled wine to follow in the Old School.

Carols at the White Hart – Thurs 21st Dec at 7pm

Christmas Buzz - Sunday 24th Dec 10am – 12 noon in Old School

For Reception to Yr 6 children – booking essential! Forms are available at the back of church, or on the website. And after Christmas Buzz, come to...

Crib Service - 24th Dec at 12 noon

...Our special Crib Service, following on straight after Christmas Buzz. Collect your children and head straight over to the church for Christingles and a mince pie!

