

Coming shortly

- 24th December 4 pm - Crib Service, Weobley Parish Church
- 24th December 4 pm - Crib Service, Staunton-on-Wye Village Hall.
- 24th December 9 pm - 'Not the Midnight Mass', St John the Baptist, Letton
- 24th December 11.15 pm Midnight Mass, Monnington-on-Wye
- 24th December 11.30 pm Midnight Mass, Weobley Parish Church
- 25th December 9.00 am - Christmas Day Service, Sarnesfield
- 25th December 9.00 am Christmas Day Eucharist, Norton Canon
- 25th December 11.00 am Christmas Day Eucharist, Weobley Parish Church
- 25th December 11.00 am, Christmas Day Service, Byford
- 29th December 10.30 am - Eucharist, Weobley Parish Church
- 1st January 10.30 am Holy Communion, BCP, Weobley Parish Church
- 5th January 9.30 am CTIW, Ecumenical Epiphany Service, The Methodist Chapel, Weobley
- 5th January 10.30 am, Holy Communion, BCP, Letton.

The Living Word People & Steeple during the week for the *following*
insert gives Bible readings with Sunday. Extra copies with *this*
commentary to read and think about *Sunday's readings* are by the door.

Staunton & Weobley Group ministry & team

Weekday Services

Please see above for all coming services

Retired Clergy and Reader
Revd Susan Verwey 01981 500626
s.verwey@btopenworld.com

Revd Martin Loveless 01981 500311
martinloveless@hotmail.com

Revd Charles Overton 01544 327912
charlesoverton@hotmail.com

Henry Verwey 01981 500626
jh.verwey@btopenworld.com

Sunday Services 29th December

10.30 am Eucharist, Weobley

Group admin and publicity
Emma Noble 01432 761896
admin@weobleyandstaunton.co.uk

Byford, Monnington, Letton websites:
Rob Howell robhowell67@gmail.com

Copy for 5th January no later than Wednesday 1st to: admin@weobleyandstaunton.co.uk

For more news, see also www.weobleyandstaunton.co.uk or Facebook

People & Steeple

News and contacts for the Weobley & Staunton Group of Parishes
*Weobley, Sarnesfield, Norton Canon,
Staunton-on-Wye, Byford, Monnington, Letton*

Sunday 22nd and 29th December 2019

I hear it said by people who should know better —sadly, sometimes by clergy— that Christmas is really for children. I couldn't disagree more.

It's true that the stories around the birth of Jesus are quite unlike anything else in the gospels. Even walking on water, even being raised from the dead and taken up into heaven have not the same "feel" as shepherds and angels, or astrologers following a star. And it's hard to bring into perfect harmony everything that S.Matthew on the one hand and S.Luke on the other have to say about our Lord's nativity.

But these are not fairy tales, nor even legends like Noah's Ark, for they have certain points in common: Jesus was born of Mary, adopted into a carpenter's family, that Joseph was a descendant of King David, and Jesus was lucky to survive. They both insist he was shown to unexpected people : to the disreputable poor (shepherds) and to the exotic rich (wise men). They reveal that from the start Jesus was very special indeed.

God grant us the gift of mature thought and trusting hearts to see there's nothing childish about this time of year. Happy Christmas, whatever your age!

John Thewlis.

Theme: God's promise becomes reality in the miracle birth

Isaiah 7:10-16, Isaiah 9:2-7 — God's sign of a light in the darkness . The virgin who conceives and gives birth to "God with us" foretold.

Romans 1:1-7, Titus 2:11-14 — God's salvation freely offered to all in His grace. Jesus has secured for us a privilege humanly impossible to attain.

Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-14 — God's Son enters our human world. Angelic messengers appear to Joseph — and to shepherds in Bethlehem.

And also: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

29th December
Isaiah 63.7-9
Hebrews 2.10 - end
Matthew 2.13-end

Services Sunday 22nd December

10.30 am Weobley
Holy Communion (BCP)
6.30 pm Weobley
Carol Service
3.30 pm Monnington-on-Wye
Carol Service

BCP: Book of Common Prayer,
traditional form CW: Common
Worship, modern words

Prayer focus

For healing

Jan Griffiths (Weobley)

David Games

Harry Williams and his family

If you know of anyone who is unwell, please let the Administrator or any of the clergy know.

In our group of parishes

The Weobley and Staunton Group of Parishes serves a rural community and we give thanks for all involved in agriculture, we pray for them, and Seek ways to support them.

The Parish of Norton Canon, the Churchwardens Kim Hendricksen and Judy Pritchard, and all the church community.

Those who arrange flowers in our churches.

Diocese of Hereford

Pontesbury

Bishop Richard of Hereford; Bishop Alistair of Ludlow; Derek, Archdeacon of Hereford.

The wider Church

All other churches in Herefordshire and nationally and across the world who share with us to proclaim God's love to the world.

The Anglican Church worldwide

Pray for other Christians in other denominations and the work of the ecumenical movement.

The Collect

4th Sunday of Advent

O LORD, raise up (we pray thee) thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

1st Sunday of Christmas

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us, through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

News

Epiphany

On 5 January the congregation of Weobley Parish Church will be joining Weobley Methodists and Roman Catholics for an Ecumenical Epiphany Service at 0930 in the Methodist Chapel. A service of Holy Communion (BCP) will be available at Letton at 10.30 should people wish to attend.

Sincere thanks to all those who have supported the Weobley Parish Church in all the events and Services leading up to Christmas. It is very much appreciated. Have a happy, peaceful and blessed Christmas.

Wendy Hereford



Finding our New Vicar

Although it might seem that things are quiet on the 'finding a new vicar' front, there is in fact a good deal of work going on and, in short, with the answer to 'what?' first, we anticipate that we can begin advertising the post in the third week of January, and then interviewing at the end of March.

The newly formed Group Benefice Council is meeting once a month at present and working hard to keep the day-to-day running of the Benefice up-to-speed as well as produce the job-specifying documents and Group and Parish Profiles that form the basis of the 'job spec' for any prospective incumbent to view when the advertising cycle begins. Busily involved now with the work of the Benefice Council is our Group Administrator Emma Noble and a meaningful 'thank-you' to her for the positive work she does and for getting to know all the names so quickly - there are plenty to learn!

As noted, the target date for interviews, which will be led by the new Bishop Richard, with representation of course from each of our seven parishes on the panel, is the end of March. So, much to be positive about and much to look forward to in the new year when there will be further updates on our progress; but I want to turn to the here-and-now, just now!

Thank-you to our Clergy Team

On behalf of our parishes, and at one of the busiest times of the year for clergy, I extend, from us all, a warm and heartfelt 'thank-you' to our Clergy Team for leading us so well during this period of interregnum. Our regular Clergy Team, the Rev'ds Susan Verwey, Martin Loveless and Charles Overton and our Reader Henry Verwey - have quietly and successfully continued in the work they do so well - leading our worship in our churches, meeting pastoral needs in our homes and schools and in working with and guiding our lay administrators.

Joining with our Clergy Team, in part to help ensure we maintain and sustain the regular, busy rota of worship services across the Benefice as well as the occasional services such as funerals, baptisms, and weddings, have been our Weobley stalwart Rev'd Chris Rhodes and the rev'ds Guy Wilkinson, John Thewlis and Peter Houghton, and our thanks to them are equal in measure also.

As I write, at the heart of the Christmas season, it seems to me that our 'extended' Clergy Team are racing across the benefice from one church to the next, leading lively services much enjoyed by the congregations and in doing so creating the feeling that all is well, and for that we say thank-you to all our clergy, once again. And of course, A merry Christmas to you one and all!

Roger Marshall