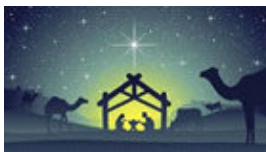


Coming up



Christmas Services

- 18th December 7 pm Carol Service - Norton Canon
- 19th December 10.45 am Carol Service - Rose Garden, Weobley
- 24th December 4 pm Crib Service - Staunton-on-Wye
- 24th December 9 pm Not at Midnight Mass - Letton
- 24th December 11.15 pm Midnight Mass - Monnington-on-Wye
- 25th December 9.00 am Christmas Day Eucharist - Sarnesfield
- 25th December 9.00 am Christmas Day Eucharist - Norton Canon
- 25th December 10.30 am Christmas Day Eucharist - Weobley
- 25th December 11.00 am Christmas Day Eucharist - Byford

The Living Word is a Bible study on the set readings www.thelivingword.uk. A linked article explores the message from this week's theme: 'Jesus — sight unseen', see <https://bit.ly/Dec20article>

Staunton & Weobley Group ministry & team

Sunday Services 27th December

- 10.30 am Weobley Parish Church
Holy Communion BCP
- 5.30 pm Zoom Service
Evening Prayer

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

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Rev'd Peter Houghton
Peter.houghton@kcl.ac.uk

Group admin and publicity
Emma Noble 07954 706182
admin@weobleyandstaunton.co.uk

Sunday Services 3rd January 2021

- 10.30 am Weobley Parish Church
CTIW Epiphany Service
- 10.30 am Letton Church
Holy Communion BCP
- 11.00 am Norton Canon Church
Holy Communion BCP
- 5.30 pm Evening Prayer (BCP)
Zoom Service

Copy for next week no later than Wednesday 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 20th and 27th December 2020

'Let it be to me according to Your word'

Today we celebrate the very important part that the Blessed Virgin Mary played in Jesus' First Coming. She uttered the above words at the conclusion of what is commonly called the Annunciation - Luke 1 v 26-38.

A problem that I have with many spoken words in the Bible is that no indication is given as to how they were uttered. Mary's conclusion quoted above has often been interpreted as a rather passive acceptance of God's will for her, and has coloured the concept of Mary as a model for the good Christian woman, submissive and obedient, even perhaps with a tinge of resentment. One suspects that such a view was largely promulgated by Christian men, who for most of church history have called the shots in teaching and leadership, and find women rather threatening!

I read an article (written by a man!) a few years ago which took a different line. Mary was very likely a youngish teenager, and girls of this age (and indeed any age!) are not known for their demure acquiescence! The account shows that Mary had questions (e.g. she was not naïve about the Facts of Life!) and dared to ask them. It was only when she received helpful and confirming answers that she said what she did. The writer of the article suggested that her attitude in speaking those words was not so much 'submission', but more one of active desire to cooperate with God in His great plan for her and through her. I rather like that idea!

God in His mercy did not tell Mary all that would result about the results of our obeying His call and request to work with Him. Neither will He tell us, otherwise we could well back off and miss out on God's blessing. As we face a new year may we be not so much merely submissive to God but eager to work with Him so that His will is done in earth as it is in heaven.

Rev'd Peter Houghton



How the glory of God is progressively revealed

OT: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 — God promises David a future descendant with an eternal reign.

NT letter: Romans 16:25-27 — Paul gives glory to God for the mystery of things formerly hidden now being revealed to all people in Jesus.

NT gospel: Luke 1:26-38 — Gabriel prepares Mary for the Holy Spirit to conceive in her a holy child to be called the son of God.

And also read: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Sunday 20th December

- 10.30 am Weobley Church
Eucharist (CW)
- 10.30 am Letton Church
Matins
- 5.30 pm Zoom Evening Prayer

Sunday 27th December

- 10.30 am Weobley Church
Holy Communion BCP
- 5.30 pm Zoom Evening Prayer

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

Prayer focus

If you know of anyone who is unwell, or if you would like us to pray for anyone whatever the reason, please let the Administrator or any of the clergy know.

For healing

Pat Claytor, Peter Watson,
Rose Pember (recovering from a broken hip)

For Comfort

The Jordan family

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 Staunton-on-Wye, the Churchwarden Ian Wood, and all the church community.

Our loyal and tireless staff, Rev Susan Verwey, Rev Martin Loveless, Rev Charles Overton, Rev John Thewlis, Rev Peter Houghton, Rev Chris Rhodes and Henry Verwey.

In the Diocese of Hereford:

Our Rural Dean Guy Wilkinson and all those who serve on the Kington and Weobley Deanery Synod.

Bromyard Deanery

The Wider Community

Pray for mission agencies and their ministry throughout the Anglican community, including the Mothers' Union around the world.

The Collect

Fourth Sunday of Advent

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever

Christmas Day

Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Worship and Prayer

Weobley and Staunton Group of Parishes Online Services

Evening Prayer (BCP) on Zoom at 5.30 pm with

The link for the service can be found below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81946640814>

The Service sheet can be found on the group website. Under the 'week-by-week' tab, click on Services should you wish to print it off.

www.weobleyandstaunton.co.uk

News

Martin and Philippa Loveless

Fourteen years ago, the village of Staunton was mourning the loss of its village shop and post office, when we heard that the new owners of the building would be a retired clergyman and his wife. Martin and Philippa Loveless are a lovely couple, and when they moved in, they quickly became splendid contributors to the life of the village, and to the ministry of the seven churches in our group. They have also been key members of the Cathedral Community, and so they have had to split their time and loyalties.



Here are a few of my memories of their time here : Martin officiating at services in all our churches, and helping us to order the altar more appropriately; sermons where he used his love of poetry to encourage us; Martin sampling his way manfully through hundreds of entries to the various Staunton church bake-off competitions; supporting our new and very young curate Chris Johnson, through his first months; running the bar at the village Flicks in the Sticks and running several marathons for charity until ill-health finally stopped him. Philippa was a leader of the Open the Book group in Staunton School and the accompanist for the Community Choir here, as well as being involved with youth music at the cathedral. Martin and Philippa are leaving Herefordshire, ultimately to be nearer their daughters, and this Sunday is their last appearance at Weobley Church. Thank you both for all you have contributed in so many ways. We shall miss you, but we wish you well in the future.

Rev'd Susan Verwey

Tier 1 - but no change in church

While I think we may have been somewhat surprised by the announcement that Herefordshire was being re-classified as Tier 1, Tier 1 it is and that means, among other things, the 'rule of six' is back. My guess however is that we'll continue to be cautious and prudent as we tip over into 2021 and begin to see vaccines on the horizon; I know some of us have already been to Leominster for the job!

But, when it comes to church attendance the rules still apply as before and, as we come up to Christmas and some of our larger congregations potentially, can we urge everyone to stick to the rules and be guided by our churchwardens. Please remember to bring and wear that mask, sanitise the hands, keep distanced and don't sing out loud when in church. In some services there will be small choirs and this is now allowed but sadly, we the congregation still can't join in, so silent admiration is the name of game.

That said, let's all share in the spirit of Christmas wherever we may be and give thanks for our many blessings as this difficult year slips away and the new year appears before us, full of hope and mutual comfort.

Roger Marshall