

Letter from the Vicar

Friday 4 December

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

So... we are back in! Public Worship has resumed at St John's and St Francis' with services on Wednesday of Holy Communion and Evening Prayer respectively. Once again it was a joy to join with people in prayer and praise, especially during these days of Advent as we prepare to welcome among us the babe of Bethlehem – God incarnate – Jesus Christ. All the Covid-secure measures we are now familiar with are once again in place with the addition of no 'socialising in church'. This addition means in practice that you can acknowledge fellow worshippers with a greeting but conversations between folk in different bubbles are to be held outside and not indoors. This is going to feel very weird as Church is not just individual but corporate and fellowship is vital for a congregation to grow in every aspect. These measures are only temporary whilst we are in Tier 2, and we will return to full fellowship in the near future, but for the time being we need to be as vigilant as possible to help prevent the spread of the virus. Sadly, as I wrote last week, services at St Stephen's will remain suspended as the T2 restrictions make the worshipping space and protecting each other impossible. If you feel able to return to Public Worship you will be made most welcome, however if you do not feel able to return we will continue to record our Parish Eucharist and have it on our website by midday on Monday.

Confidence about returning to some kind of normal this Christmas is obviously building as the box office for our Christmas Services shows. To date, 602 of the 1749 seats available have been either booked or blocked to create the appropriate social distancing between groups. That's one third of all available seats booked in 4 days which is phenomenal! There are still plenty of tickets available for our services and I would encourage you to go to our website www.stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk/christmas to book your tickets for the services you want to attend. The booking process is fast and simple. If you have any difficulties please be in touch with me or the Parish Office.

Last Sunday we started our yearly pilgrimage through Advent. Thank you to those who joined us in worship via our website for the Advent Reflections and for your positive comments. Advent is always one of my favourite times of year: the hope, the expectation, the growing excitement, the promise that light and better days are coming. This year, more than most, these characteristics of Advent are greatly needed. As my children open their Advent Calendars each morning I see their joy and their excitement, and their longing for Christmas. Speaking for myself, as I have got older I have lost something of the child-like joy and wonder, the excitement and hope of Advent, but I am determined to recover it again this year – perhaps you will feel so minded to too?

Tomorrow, miraculously, I am to officiate at only the 4th wedding to take place in the Parish this year! The happy couple held their nerve that restrictions would be lifted on time to celebrate their love for each other in public and have been rewarded. I hope you will join with me in praying for them as they embark on a new chapter in their lives and that their marriage may bring joy, support, and comfort.

Last week I signed off my letter saying I needed to help Sophie make a Chinese Dragon as part of her homework. Many of you (kindly and surprisingly) expressed an interest so I thought I'd share a picture of our efforts. This week, thankfully, the homework is much more pedestrian.



As always I trust you are all well and keeping safe. I hope to see many of you physically over the coming weeks. But for now I leave you with my prayers for each of you; keep safe; and remain secure in the knowledge of our God who loves us, cares for us, and enfolds us in his arms.

In Christ,



The Reverend Michael Macey

Vicar

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