



The monthly magazine of the
Church of England Benefice of
Rodborough, Woodchester
and Brimscombe

**Issue 23 – December
2024/January 2025**

Christmas is coming...

As we approach Christmas this year, we will be focusing on passages from Luke's Gospel, which has the greatest depth of infancy narratives and is the source of most of the nativity story.

It's often forgotten that the largest contributor to the New Testament is actually Luke, with both his Gospel and it's sequel, the book of Acts, which continues to tell what Jesus did through the work of the Holy Spirit. Luke himself was an eyewitness to some of Paul's missionary journeys. From Acts 16 onwards Luke starts to write about what 'I' and 'we' did, showing that he was there too.

Twice in the opening verses of his Gospel, Luke, tells us he has created an 'orderly account' and has referred to other eyewitness testimonies from amongst the church. He uses both the method and the language of a historical account – recording methodically the events that happened, with multiple eyewitness testimonies as his sources.

But right from the beginning Luke is clear that this is more than just an ordinary historical account. He tells us that his gospel contains events that had been 'fulfilled'. These events are the fulfilment of God's promises to his people and for the world. At the physical heart of his story (across both Luke & Acts) is that Jesus rose again, ascended to the Father, and

that the Holy Spirit is with us all. From Luke's perspective these themes are central to both the Christian story and history.

Yet despite his methodical approach, his work doesn't feel complete and seems to end abruptly. Maybe the last chapter of Acts was lost, but, I wonder whether Luke was thinking that the people he is writing to - including us - are actually living the last chapter of his book. The same Holy Spirit that hovered over creation, that brought about the birth of Jesus and came down at Pentecost – is with us now.

As we journey with Luke this year, I pray that you would increasingly know Jesus and your part within his story.

Rev Peter Francis

Rector Rodborough, Woodchester & Brimscombe

Note from the editor

Hello Everyone

Welcome to our last edition of Common Ground for 2024. I have included all the details for Christmas events etc that I have at the time this edition went to print, but please do send any others to me so that I can make sure they go into our weekly What's On emails.

Thank you for all your support and help through this year; it's very much appreciated.

I hope you all have an enjoyable Christmas and wish you a peaceful, healthy and happy 2025.

Alyson

Looking back.....

T4U Shoeboxes

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed towards the Christmas Shoebox Appeal. Local churches, schools and individuals have made a fantastic effort and 534 boxes and bags of hats, gloves and scarves and boxes of beautifully dressed dolls were loaded onto a van on Friday afternoon and are now at Evesham T4U warehouse being sorted for their next journey to Eastern Europe. Teams from T4U will then be flying out to distribute the boxes. I will keep you informed about the journey and distribution.

Thank you

Liz Hale



Eco – Church

Our November Eco Church meeting was held at Holy Trinity, Stroud. Holy Trinity have recently replaced their heating system with an eco-friendlier and more cost-effective solution. They have opted to follow the principle of heating the people rather than the space so have under pew heaters, ceiling fitted panel heaters in the fellowship space and a halo heater over the preaching space.

The system is very flexible thanks to the heaters being divided up into a number of zones which means only the areas of the church that are in use are being heated rather than the all or nothing old system. It is also very responsive and quick to warm up; to demonstrate this it was switched on while we were there and within ten minutes you could feel the difference.

It gave us much food for thought and we would like to express our thanks to Holy Trinity for taking the time and trouble to talk to us.

The next Eco-Church meeting will be held at Brimscombe on Saturday 14th December (9 for 9.30-10.30am).

Diary dates - Christmas events

Advent Communion Service, The Old Endowed School, Rodborough

On Wednesday 4th December we will be holding a short said Advent Communion Service at 10.00 in the Snug on the ground floor at The Old Endowed School opposite Rodborough Church.

Everyone including children and dogs are welcome. Refreshments are available after the service.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

Richard Spencer.

Decorating St Mary Woodchester – 21st December from 10.00am

The (sadly depleted) team of flower arrangers would like to have a few helpers to put candles and greenery on the windowsills. You do NOT need to be a flower arranger, just young enough to climb up on the pews or tall enough to reach them.

We also need greenery/holly/ivy to help us to be sustainable and avoid using too many shop-bought flowers.

Please could you let me know if you can help with either of these.

jillfarrow1689@gmail.com

Roving Nativity

Sunday December 8th, from 4pm to 6pm

Starting from Brimscombe Primary School and finishing at The Ship Inn for carols and mince pies.

Woodchester Parish Church

Crib Service

We warmly invite **everyone** to our All-Age Crib Service which will be held on **Christmas Eve at 3pm**. This will be a short service in which the last hymn will be sung by candlelight. We invite youngsters to dress up as shepherds (tea towel), kings (crown), angels or an animal (animal mask). We also have lots of dressing up clothes in church. Please stay after the service for refreshments

Liz Hale



And why not come Carolling.....



Community Coffee and Carol singing at the Long Table
Tuesday 10th December, 11am

Carols at the Coffee Pot, The Old Endowed School, Rodborough

Wednesday 18th December, 10.30am in the main hall of The Old Endowed School opposite Rodborough Church.

Refreshments will be available.

Woodchester Village Carols

Thursday 19th December

Carol singing accompanied by the Nailsworth Silver Band.

Starting in South Woodchester, walking through to North Woodchester and concluding with mince pies and mulled wine in St Mary's church.



6.30pm Frogmarsh Mill

6.45pm South Woodchester High Street (Tower House).

7.00pm North Woodchester Village Hall

7.15pm In St Mary's Church

FIVE
VALLEYS
VOICES



WINTER CONCERT

FRIDAY

13 DECEMBER

7.00- 9ish

at St. Mary's Church,
North Woodchester

Featuring :

♪ Veni, Veni Emmanuel ♪ ABBA Medley ♪

♪ The Holly and The Ivy ♪ Pirate Song ♪

plus loads more!

ENTRY

Pay as you feel
(suggested £5)

RAFFLE

BAR

Payment by card or cash

Looking ahead.....

IMPORTANT Advanced notice

iSingPOP are coming to Woodchester in the New Year

As soon as you have your 2025 diary ready – block out Thursday 16th January because iSingPOP is visiting Woodchester to lead two concerts at the church. The school children will be performing to us all, led by the iSingPOP team.



iSingPOP is a wonderful UK-based Christian charity that helps schools and churches enjoy truly joyful and inspirational worship experiences. Their vision is to bring schools, churches and communities together – crossing the generations and encouraging everyone in the process.

We believe our church is for everyone and this is a wonderful opportunity for us to reach out to the school and wider Woodchester community.

More details about the concerts will be circulated nearer the time, but the expected concert times are 2 pm and 6 pm.

Weekend for the Men

At the Woodchester November PCC, it was suggested that the men of the Benefice have a weekend away next year possibly at the Beacon at Lee Abbey.

The ladies have kindly offered to cook but the focus will be on men's activities rather than a joint event. Thank you ladies, for suggesting this idea.

So, gents, if you are interested in a weekend away, could you please email me at richardspencer2019@outlook.com.

Thank you.

Richard Spencer.

FAMILY MATTERS

WHAT	WHEN	WHERE	CONTACT
LITTLE STARS - babies & toddlers	EVERY MONDAY, 9.30am (in term time)	St Mary Woodchester	Elaine Penney 07974 208714
MESSY CHURCH - youngsters up to Year 6 accompanied by an adult (free, activity filled session of crafts, music and stories with refreshment)	WEDNESDAY, monthly (in term time). 3.20pm – 4.45pm No meeting in December. WED 22 nd January	St Mary Woodchester	Liz Hale liz@johnhale.plus.com

MID WEEK SERVICE

WHAT	WHEN	WHERE	CONTACT
CELTIC WORSHIP - a short 20 minute said benefice service based on a simple Celtic liturgy. - Followed by tea, coffee and cakes. All welcome.	EVERY WEDNESDAY, 10.00am Advent Communion Service on WED 4 th December	Ground floor, The Old Endowed School, Rodborough	Richard Spencer on 01453 872686

COMMUNITY

WHAT	WHEN	WHERE	CONTACT
COFFEE POT (coffee, cake and good company)	EVERY WEDNESDAY 10am- noon	The Old Endowed School, Rodborough	John Atkinson jka1649@gmail.com
COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNING (a chance to meet up with friends and our wider community over coffee and cake whilst supporting this local enterprise)	TUESDAY, Monthly 11am TUES 10th December with carols TUES 28th January	The Long Table, Brimscombe	Jayne Hancock 07805 259246
LUNCH WITH FRIENDS (monthly gathering of senior members of the community to enjoy good conversation and company around a hearty home cooked meal)	FRIDAY, monthly 12.30 FRI 13th December 12.00 FRI 17th January	St Mary Woodchester	Gail Birch 0787 5028671 Gail Birch 0787 5028671

Our Benefice: Prayer and Study Groups	
Monday Morning Prayer Each Monday at 9.00am (not Bank Holidays)	Prayer on Zoom
Monday Mums Each Monday at 12.30pm (in term time, no meetings on Bank Holidays)	Location varies, Contact: Gail Birch, on 0787 5028671
Prayer Group Each Monday at 7.30pm (not Bank Holidays)	Holy Trinity, Brimscombe Contact: Helen Kerr on 07834 261278
Benefice Online Bible Study By Zoom, Tuesdays at 7.30pm	Contact: Contact Peter Gee peter@pendragonuk.net or 07796 180317
Prayer Group Each Wednesday from 7.30pm (No meeting on 11 th December, but will meet on 18 th December then will resume on January 8 th)	Location varies, Contact: Gail Birch, on 0787 5028671
Soul Food Bible study and fellowship group meeting Alternate Thursdays (5 th and 19 th December; 9 th and 23 rd January)	Brimscombe 1.00-2.15pm Contact: Jenny Bernard on 07957 816313
Bible Study Group By Zoom, Thursdays at 7.30pm	Contact: Andrew Pemberton on 07973 187923

Please check with the individual group contacts for details of meetings over the Christmas period if not stated above.

Sunday Worship for December

Sunday 1st <i>Advent 1</i>	9.00am	Morning Worship Service at St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough
	11.00am	Morning Worship Service with creche at St Mary Woodchester
	11.00am	Holy Communion Service at Holy Trinity Brimscombe
Sunday 8th <i>Advent 2</i>	9.00am	Morning Worship Service at St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough
	11.00am	Morning Worship Service with creche and activities for older children at St Mary Woodchester
	11.00am	Morning Worship Service at Holy Trinity Brimscombe
Sunday 15th <i>Advent 3</i>	9.00am	Holy Communion Service at St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough
	11.00am	All Age Service with creche and activities for older children at St Mary Woodchester
	11.00am	Christingle Service at Holy Trinity Brimscombe
Sunday 22nd <i>Advent 4</i>	9.00am	Carol Service at St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough
	11.00am	Holy Communion Service with creche at St Mary Woodchester
	11.00am	Morning Worship Service at Holy Trinity Brimscombe

Christmas Eve	3.00pm	Crib Service (with dressing up for children and adults), followed by mince pies, at St Mary Woodchester
	4.00pm	Christingle Service at St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough
	6.30pm	All Age Carol Service at Holy Trinity Brimscombe
	6.30pm	All Age Candle-lit Carol Service at St Mary Woodchester
Christmas Day	9.00am	All Age Praise with Holy Communion at St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough
	10.30am	All Age Praise at St Mary Woodchester
	11.00am	All Age Praise with Holy Communion at Holy Trinity Brimscombe
Sunday 29th	11.00am	Special New Years Joint Benefice Service at Brimscombe School, looking forward to 2025

Sunday Worship for January

Sunday 5th	9.00am	Morning Worship Service at St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough
	11.00am	Morning Worship Service with creche at St Mary Woodchester
	11.00am	Holy Communion Service at Holy Trinity Brimscombe
Sunday 12th	9.00am	Morning Worship Service at St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough
	11.00am	Morning Worship Service with creche and activities for older children at St Mary Woodchester
	11.00am	Morning Worship Service at Holy Trinity Brimscombe
Sunday 19th	9.00am	Holy Communion Service at St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough
	11.00am	Morning Worship Service with creche and activities for older children at St Mary Woodchester
	11.00am	Morning Worship Service at Holy Trinity Brimscombe
Sunday 26th	9.00am	Morning Worship Service at St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough
	11.00am	Holy Communion Service with creche and activities for older children at St Mary Woodchester
	11.00am	Morning Worship Service at Holy Trinity Brimscombe

Our Benefice – contact numbers

Churchwardens	Rodborough: John Atkinson	07792 714792
	Ian Sullivan	07891 331218
	Woodchester: Liz Cole	07974 911016
	Nick Ardagh-Walter	07484 284261
	Brimscombe: Chris Short	07552 223763
	Richard Kerr	07974 207299
Rector	Rev Peter Francis (Rest days Tuesdays and Fridays) Email: Peterfrancis777@gmail.com	07740 677645
Readers	Richard Spencer	01453 872686
	Peter Gee	07796 180317
Church Admin	Email: rodwoodbrimschurches@gmail.com	07907 864919

Church opening times

Brimscombe: Open daily 8am-6pm

Woodchester: Open daily 10am-4pm

Rodborough: Open daily 10am-4pm

**Common Ground monthly magazine
and weekly What's On**

<p>Updates, news, event details, changes, errors etc. <i>Deadline of 24th January for inclusion in February edition of Common Ground</i></p>	<p>Contact: Alyson Rogers on 0750 000 5140 aly2144@icloud.com</p>
<p>To be added to the distribution list for email or hard copy format</p>	<p>Contact: Helen Jackson cground101@gmail.com</p>

ZOOM DETAILS for Prayer times and Services

Zoom app: Meeting ID: **883 864 9918** Passcode: **blessed**

Zoom Access by telephone: Dial 0330 088 5830 local rate number

- When asked for a meeting-id enter **883 864 9918** on the keypad, followed by **#** -You will be asked for participant-id but just type another **#** You may also be asked for a security code – enter **866912**

All details are, to the best of our knowledge, correct at the time of publication but please don't hesitate to contact us with errors or additions.

Please see our weekly What's Ons for updates.