

Parish News



St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Swards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry



December 2022 - January 2023

FREE



Eighteen young people and adults confirmed by the Bishop of Colchester

At an exciting confirmation service on Sunday 16th October 2022, eighteen young people and adults, ranging in age from 11 to 82, affirmed their faith in Jesus Christ. The candidates came from parish churches throughout the Saffron Walden Deanery.

In a thought-provoking sermon entitled "Keep on Keeping on", the bishop said we all have bad days and that living faithfully as a Christian can be tough, but Jesus told his disciples to keep on, supported by each other. Keeping on with our persistent prayers genuinely changes the world.

The Rector and Area Dean, Rev'd Jeremy Trew commented, "Each person being confirmed, whatever their age, represents a journey of faith. That journey does not end with confirmation, but rather begins a new chapter. As I was told when I was confirmed many years ago; 'Life has been changed for you and you have been changed for life.'"

Clifford Want

An audio recording of the bishop's sermon is on the church website at www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/sermons

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PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **February** issue is **Sunday 1st January**.

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www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews

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St Mary's Church Website:

www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org

The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

Jeremy writes...

On the wall of a house near the Market Square in Saffron Walden is a small plaque. It reads: "On this spot in 1834 nothing happened." It's not true. I know.

Round about 2022 years ago in a quiet backwater of the Roman Empire nothing happened either. And that's also not true. Well, kind of.

Certainly nothing happened that made the front pages of all the papers (if they'd had newspapers in those days). And if a few people were interested in the events that began to unfold at that time, for the most part they kept fairly quiet about it. No-one slipped a brief note to Rome, warning them of what was to come. Even when a strange group of foreigners turned up at Herod's Court, we're told the initial response was, "Oh yea, there's something written about that somewhere in Micah."

The significance of that first Christmas was only understood much later on. At the time it was, for most, just another day. Even for those who were involved, the birth of a baby was nice, but not exactly rare. If the child survived infancy they might just begin to become interesting, but that was still a way off. An ordinary couple had a child, and they probably were not the only ones. Some shepherds caused a bit of a kerfuffle, but no-one paid that sort any attention. The wise men may not have arrived for a couple of years.

Heaven, it would seem, was found in the ordinary. That's often where it is found today. This Christmas heaven will be found in a person giving you a smile and a bit of space in a busy Christmas shop. Heaven will be found in a children's nativity play, performed with a great deal of commitment, but perhaps a little less skill. Heaven will be found in the recognition that the giver is more important than the gift. All of that is important, and all of that is wonderful.

Yes, heaven will also be found in beautifully crafted carol services, and exquisitely thought-through gifts, but at the heart of the Christmas message is this simple idea: That God breaks through into this world, not so much into the great and majestic things, but into the ordinary lives lived by ordinary people. You and I are of interest to God, and in a way that might astound us.

When, after the life of Jesus, the message of this Nazarene Carpenter



began to spread, part of its power was the audacious idea that God was on the side of the ordinary. In a world where great power was held by a few, who seemed less and less accountable every passing year, this was good news indeed.

In God's new economy there are no ordinary people, and there are no ordinary days. You would be very welcome to celebrate that at your local church this Christmas, in ways ordinary and extraordinary.

Happy Christmas

Jeremy

New Service Times to start across the team on 1st January 2023

Following a detailed consultation over recent months, Team Council has agreed to a new pattern of services across the team which will use our ministry resources more effectively and promote stronger cross-team support. A key change for St Mary's, St Johns and St James is that from 1st January, the main morning service in each church will start at 10.30am. The patterns of services across the month is also changing. Further details on the website.

Judith Hasler
Team Facilitator

A Prayer for December and January

provided by the Prayer Team

Jesus, new-born child of all time, we greet your birth with wide-eyed delight.

You are precious beyond words for our world needs your presence more than ever.

Let the angels' promise of your good news offering joy and peace to all the world be heard by those who lead and guide.

Let kings bow down and all creation greet this holy moment as we seek to grasp its magnitude.

For you are God's gift silently delivered to every human heart.

Amen.

Carbon Budget

While Rishi Sunak and Jeremy Hunt grapple with balancing the UK budget, with all the implications for our taxes and the balancing of our domestic finances, a much bigger and more dangerous budget is ticking away.



Photograph: Edward Gildea

We are living on a ‘Carbon Budget’: the amount of carbon we can put into the atmosphere and still reasonably maintain human life on earth. At the moment we have used up 90% of the budget which would give us a 67% chance of staying within the 1.5°C of warming. UN reports published in November warn that there is no longer a ‘credible pathway to 1.5°C’. Indeed, the trajectory of our current policies is driving us to 3.2°C of warming by the end of this century.

I don’t believe the human race and the eco systems we depend on can possibly survive that, and yet it is within the lifetime of the children in our nurseries and primary schools.

Antonio Guterres, secretary-general to the United Nations has said: “We have dramatic situations in Ukraine, but *this* is the crisis of this moment. It is the crisis of our lifetime. The defining issue of today’s world. Climate change must be a central priority for all governments, all companies, all cities... civil society everywhere. If we are not able to reverse the present trend that is leading to the greatest catastrophe in the world, we will be doomed.”

Science tells us that Greenhouse Gas emissions must be halved by 2030 if we are to avoid the worst effects of Climate Crisis. Yet the latest pledges from governments around the world suggest that in 2030 emissions will still be

increasing by 10% each year. We are still heading at breakneck speed in the wrong direction. "So what I do can make no difference."

In many ways I agree. Massive changes are needed on a global scale to make a real difference. There needs to be a carbon tax, applying the 'polluter pays' principle and providing the dividend for new, fossil-free technologies to take off at scale. We need to reassess how our economies work so that we only aspire to growth that can be accommodated on one planet. Massive fossil fuel multinational companies need to be held accountable and to change direction. The trillions of dollars in the private sector need to be set to work in effecting a swift and radical transition, rather than in applying greenwash.

The extent and the depth of the changes needed is almost unimaginable and certainly puts my daily efforts to reduce my carbon footprint into the shade.

But the alternative is to 'rubber stamp' the direction in which we are headed. To wash our hands of it and the consequences for our children. We are the global north. Three billion of the world's population have an annual carbon footprint smaller than that of our refrigerators. We should shoulder our responsibility and speak out!

Since the summer I have been working to re-launch 'Ring out for Climate!', encouraging church bells around the world to ring out their warning about the crisis and to speak up for Climate Justice on the eve of COP 27. In addition to writing to all the bishops and deans in England, Scotland and Wales, I wrote individually to over 100 Episcopalian bishops in the USA and all the Anglican bishops in Australia in an attempt to develop the global reach of the initiative. I just hope it achieves something.

We are part of a vast global community and together surely our voice can make a difference!

Edward Gildea, Eco Team Leader

From the Registers

Baptisms

| | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 9th October | Grace Rachel Stephanie Meichen |
| 23rd October | Leonie Christiane Thomas Beazley |

Funerals

| | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 11th October | Lynn Smith |
| 13th October | Robert Rushmer |



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Mothers' Union Branch Meeting—October 2022

On behalf of members and guests Brenda Sheath welcomed Tammy Blest, a police and Fraud Protection Officer in North Essex. It is her job to educate the public on fraud and associated matters. Today, it is an enormous problem, but much of it is preventable, so Tammy is here to encourage us as individuals to make ourselves aware.

Personal Identity Your name, age, address, telephone number, card numbers, internet connections, etc can be stolen. To avoid revealing this, shred any letters or documentation where this is printed. Keep credit cards safe, preferably in a foil pouch which Tammy issued us with.

Preferably use a credit card for purchases because it is more likely that you will recover money in the event of fraud. Handbags should be kept closed at all times and a strap secured across the body, will give extra security.

Telephone and online Scams - Never transfer money, if requested, to a caller or emailer you don't know or recognise. It may be a fake lottery, investments, inheritance, windfalls, health cures etc. There are all sorts of telephone and online scams. The caller may say they are from well-known organisations, banks, building societies, the police or similar, also saying there is a problem. Always ignore this. They probably want your card pin number or online banking password.

Romance and Chat Sites – Victims are looking for a possible relationship or through loneliness looking for a friend. You do not know the person and they do not know you. Do not give away personal details that could be used to your disadvantage.

An early warning is asking for money. They may give you a hard luck story, a family problem, a stranded overseas family member- (reasons are endless) Beware if you are discouraged from telling your family. Victims can feel a complete fool for being 'had,' but it happens.

These are some of the situations Tammy dealt with and more.

At the end of the meeting, she issued everyone with a set of booklets and leaflets published by the police. These covered advice for a comprehensive range of fraud situations, including telephone numbers for reporting any incidents to help them tackle the crime of fraud.

Tammy was thanked for a very interesting and enlightening talk which was very popular with her audience.

Helen Eyles MU Committee Member

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Paddy McKeown



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Archive Group

A monthly record of pieces of interest from our past Parish Magazines

November 1952

Parish Church Christmas Fair

The Annual Christmas Fair is to be held in the Town Hall on Saturday, December 6th, from 2 to 5.30pm. Mrs Elliott-Binns of Freshwell House has kindly consented to open the Fair. A Christmas Fair Dance will follow to be held in the Town Hall on the same day from 7.45-11.45pm. Modern dancing to the music of John Goddard's Band. Tickets 3/- each are obtainable from Messrs. Hart and Son or at the door. There will be no charge for admission to the Fair, but we do hope that a large number will support us as in recent years, when we hope once again to have our stalls full of useful articles to suit all tastes, especially presents for Christmas gifts. Church expenses are still very high, and last year we helped by beating the record of £400. – we dare hardly hope for better, but we shall all do our best. The following stalls will be organised.....

Plant and flower, Household, Plain and Fancy Needlework, Toys and Books, Vegetables and Produce, White Elephant, Stationery and Books, Gift and Holiday, Lucky Dip, Beauty Box, Handkerchief, Silver Pole, China and Glass, Christmas Cards and Calendars, Missionary Stall, (*grateful for any clean white rag suitable for medical missions*) Teas, Side Shows.

Canon Chris Bishop. Archivist



Churches Together in January

Sunday 22nd January 2023

A United Service at St Mary's for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
St Mary's Church, 10am or 10.30am (time tbc)

Monday 23rd January

Agape Meal at the Baptist Church, 7 pm for 7.30 pm.

Kathryn Fiddock



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You can also book appointments online at www.hearinghelpessex.org.uk

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residents living with hearing loss, all donations are appreciated.*





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Following our Harvest Collection for the Uttlesford Foodbank we received this letter of thanks:



HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN NEED

20th October 2022

Dear Parishioners,

Uttlesford Foodbank would like to thank you so much for your amazing Harvest collection. You collected 42kg for us. All the food has been sorted and is ready to go out to people in Uttlesford. Every month we feed over 150 individuals and families for 7 days each time, and we are handing out just over 5 tonnes of food per month. Without the support of our amazing community, we couldn't do the work that we do.

We've been overwhelmed by the level of generosity, and with everything you have given us it will go a long way to making the lives of those living in poverty that little bit more bearable.

Once again thank you so much and you should all be very proud of what you have achieved this Harvest.

Best wishes from everyone at Uttlesford Foodbank.

Sophie Durlacher
Manager—Uttlesford Foodbank

Look out for our Advent Prayer Spaces ...

**5th - 12th December
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Saffron Walden**



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A Carol of our Time

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In Amazon the rafters ring,
Card machines connect in glory,
Clogged-up car-parks tell the story.

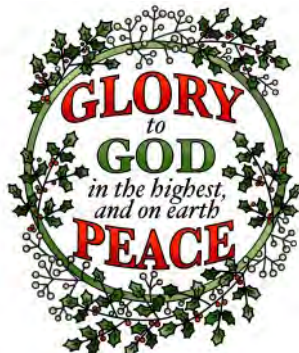
Christmas stockings, Christmas parties,
Children's faces stuffed with Smarties,
Mum has overspent the money,
Dad's been drinking – feeling funny.

Skeletons in cupboards rattle,
Aunts and uncles tittle-tattle,
Brothers row and sisters squabble,
Grandma's chins begin to wobble.

Without a whisper of the reason
Why we celebrate this season,
All flop down with bulging belly
To watch Eastenders on the telly.

And through it all, great God on high
Looks down and says: To think that I
For this lot gave my only Son!
Yet I still love them. Every one.

Christine Ractliff



Calendar for Dec 2022 - Jan 2023

This calendar is provisional. See The Grapevine or the church website for the latest information, particularly for streaming of services.

St Mary's, Saffron Walden

All services now take place in church unless shown otherwise. One service in church each Sunday is also streamed on YouTube [Y]: details on the church website.

Thursday 1 December

1pm Service with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 4 December

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am Informal Communion [Y]

6.30pm H2H Youth-led Service for All

Sunday 11 December

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am Holy Communion [Y]

4pm Christingle Service

Sunday 18 December

8am BCP Holy Communion [Y]

10am Family Service

6.30pm Christmas Carol Service [Y]

Thursday 22 December

7.30pm Blue Christmas Service: for those who find Christmas emotionally difficult



Saturday 24 December: Christmas Eve

4pm Lighting of the Christmas Tree

6pm Lighting of the Christmas Tree

11.30pm Midnight Holy Communion

Sunday 25 December: Christmas Day

10am Family Communion [Y]

2023

Sunday 1 January

10.30am Joint Team Holy Communion [Y]

Thursday 5 January

1pm Service with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 8 January: Epiphany

8am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Informal Communion [Y]

4pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 15 January

8am BCP Holy Communion [Y]

10.30am Holy Communion [Y]

Sunday 22 January

8am BCP Holy Communion [Y]

10.30am Churches Together United Service

4pm Taizé Worship

Friday 27 January

1.40pm Holocaust Service

Sunday 29 January

8am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Holy Communion [Y]

6.30pm Epiphany Carol Service [Y?]

Regular weekday services at St Mary's

Tuesdays

5pm Evening Prayer - by Zoom, see weekly bulletin for login details

Wednesdays

8am Morning Prayer

9.30am Holy Communion



St James', Sewards End

Sunday 11 December

9.30am Holy Communion

Saturday 17 December

5pm Carol Service

Saturday 24 December: Christmas Eve

11.30pm Midnight Holy Communion

Sunday 25 December: Christmas Day

9.30am Holy Communion

St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 11 December

11.15am Family Service

Saturday 17 December

5pm Carol Service

Sunday 25 Dec: Christmas Day

11.15am Holy Communion

Sunday 15 January

10.30am Morning Praise

Sunday 8 January

10.30am Family Service

Sunday 22 January

10.30am Holy Communion

YOU in the **PEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop

Kathleen Huey

Kathleen is the middle child of three. Her parents were Irish Protestants, her father from the north and her mother from the south. She was brought up in a busy GPs family in the Midlands and their house was attached to the surgery. She learnt her faith at her Mother's knee and because of her shyness refused point blank to go to Sunday school! Her Uncle George was a clergyman in the Church of Ireland. He impressed her greatly because he played with her and her siblings quite unlike her lovely father. She also has a vivid memory of her Maternal 'Granda' (her only living grandparent at the time) reciting the hymn 'There is a green hill far away without a city wall' to her whilst she sat on the guest bed beside him and another time him kneeling at the bed saying his prayers.

She was fascinated by a series of books entitled 'Doctor in Tanganyika' about a medical missionary and **knew** God wanted her to be a doctor. She would go to college, after which she would know everything like her Father and would go to Africa and save the world! Her parents' hard work and sacrifices enabled her to enter Trinity College Medical School, Dublin University. Needless to say by the time she qualified as a doctor, reality had set in and after a spell in Paediatrics she went into General Practice.

She joined the GP practice at Newport surgery in 1986 and bought a house in Saffron Walden. She naturally gravitated to St Mary's.

At St Mary's she met amazing people and made wonderful friendships. She gives daily thanks for her fortune in living here and having her St Mary's Church family. There is too long a list of enjoyable events. She benefited and learnt a great deal on the Christian studies course. Sleeping overnight in church with Lesley and Pam to raise awareness and funds for Jimmy's in Cambridge sticks in her memory. It brought nearer to her the physical discomfort and practical problems homeless people suffer.

If she had a family coat of arms she might choose her school motto "Who most has served is greatest" or the words she sometimes recited after seeing them many years ago, below a stained glass window in Guildford Cathedral: To cure sometimes, to comfort always.



London to Walsingham Pilgrimage Walk

Before Henry VIII outlawed pilgrimages and the veneration of saints in 1538, the route from London to the shrine at Walsingham in Norfolk was the most popular pilgrimage in England.

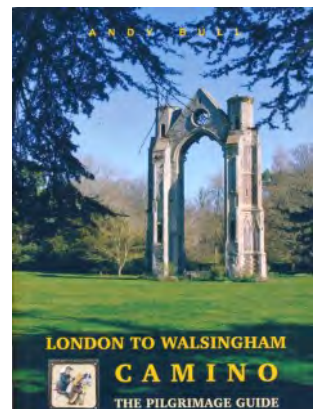
This newly-resurrected route has now been given official recognition by the Confraternity of St James, better known for their organisation of the Camino de Santiago in Spain. That means that any pilgrim who walks at least 25km of it will be able to use that 25km towards the total of 100km that must be walked in order to get the official *credencial* on reaching Santiago.

The 178 mile route is in 13 stages, each averaging about 14 miles, and passes through Saffron Walden. St Mary's is one of the 19 churches en route that now has its own pilgrimage stamp that pilgrims can use to stamp their passports. This can happen at any time when the church is open and there is no time limit.



Our pilgrimage stamp is now kept at the back of the church with information which can also be accessed on our website at www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/pilgrimage

Information in this article is taken from Andy Bull's 192 page comprehensive guide to this route called the "London to Walsingham Camino – The Pilgrim's Guide" published by trailblazer-guides.com and also available from bookshops and Amazon. This guide has a forward by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, who has walked to Walsingham twice, and says "I am delighted that the route from London to Walsingham is now better established and therefore more available for other pilgrims, and also drawn into the network of pilgrimages under the umbrella of the Confraternity of



Saint James. Walsingham is England's Nazareth, the place where we encounter, in a fresh and homely way, the truth of the incarnation that in Christ, God has come among us. When we walk to Walsingham this truth is amplified and magnified; we discover that the incarnate God is with us every step of the way."

Stage 4 describes the walk between Stansted Mountfitchet and Saffron Walden and Stage 5 is from Saffron Walden to Withersfield and is shown on this map below. You do need to purchase Andy Bull's guide to be able to follow the route which has a map of each stage and detailed walking instructions.



Information about the Confraternity of St James where passports can be purchased can be found at www.csj.org.uk

A map of the whole route taken from the guide is shown on the next page.

Martin Hugall



Restored

Changing the story for survivors of domestic abuse Conference

In 2017, in Cumbria, the first UK academic survey (conducted by Coventry University and the University of Leicester) on churchgoers' views of domestic abuse that spanned different Christian denominations was conducted and published. Rather depressingly, the research found 1 in 4 of the 438 churchgoers who responded had themselves been subjected to domestic abuse within their current relationship. The sobering statistic that 56.7% involved a Christian perpetrator highlights domestic abuse as a problem within the Christian faith community. I won't pepper readers with lots of unpleasant statistics from this report, but unpalatable as it is, those in the Christian faith community are as likely to experience domestic abuse as those outside it.

Why am I giving this information at the start of this article? Because the overwhelming finding from research into domestic abuse within the Christian community is that many find it hard to accept that this sort of thing is happening within the church.

On Saturday 5th November I went to the one day conference by Restored. Restored is a fairly new Christian charity, having started about a decade ago. Their mission is to **Speak Up** about the realities of violence against women and girls, to **Equip the Church** to stand against domestic abuse, and **Support Survivors**.

The conference was robustly informative, bible based and forward looking, and covered a difficult subject thoroughly and sensitively. We heard a presentation from Dr Lisa Oakley at Chester University about **What can be learnt from survivors of domestic abuse within the church**. In short the answer was that churches need to 'up their game', in that, for the vast majority of those being abused, disclosing to a church leader or trusted church member resulted in no change or a worsening of their situation. Furthermore, most abuse victims were not referred on to other agencies or support. This highlights we have a long way to go in learning how to respond and support victims of domestic abuse within our faith communities. Interestingly, the study data presented showed the majority of abusers 'weaponised' the bible, or mis-used it to justify their behaviour. That was addressed by the next speaker.

Rev'd Dr Helen Paynter spoke to address some of the scriptures that are commonly mis-used by abusers within Christian churches, and took us back to the original texts and context, to better understand what these passages are saying.

I can recommend Helen Paynter's book: *The Bible Doesn't Tell Me So*. It is a really good tour of passages in the bible relevant to domestic abuse and Helen Paynter writes with refreshing clarity.

Helen Paynter followed this with an afternoon session on 'How the bible brings hope' which looked at a number of questions survivors of abuse are often left with in relation to their faith, and what the bible had to say.

Other parallel seminars/talks covered topics such as Supporting survivors of abuse through the courts, and Creating a culture of consent with our children. I could not attend everything and there was no 'easy listening' in the conference, but it was incredibly thought provoking and stimulating.

So what are Restored about?

Restored aims to change the culture of domestic abuse within Christian faith communities by speaking out, and the conference is part of the message to the churches. Restored produce resources and run training for churches that want to get better at dealing with domestic abuse, which includes recognising and responding appropriately, together with effective signposting to other agencies that support victims of domestic abuse.

How does Restored support survivors of domestic abuse? There are online resources for spiritual growth and recovery, for well-being and ways for survivors to support each other. The survivors' network started in 2015 with 7 women and now numbers 500. The Survivors' Handbook was published in 2019 and brings together information on all the aspects many survivors need practical help with. This includes housing, finance, legal advice, safety, healing and recovery, and theological issues relating to domestic abuse. In my opinion the Survivors' Handbook is a very professional and high calibre resource. Restored provide this guide free to anyone experiencing domestic abuse. I generally have a copy I can give away.

I apologise if this seems a very gloomy topic for the Parish magazine, but it is a message of hope. Yes, domestic abuse happens, but thanks to organisations like Restored we can be better equipped to help those affected, and stand alongside them.

The web address for Restored is restored-uk.org and the website is really worth looking at. I think of it as like doing a first aid course. You hope the knowledge/information won't ever be needed, but it is good to know you could help someone if they needed it.

Gilly Hayes

The St Mary's parish contact regarding domestic abuse is our Pastoral Assistant Judith Hasler: 01799 525041 judithhasler@bopenworld.com



St Mary's Music News

December 2022 – January 2023

In October, the SMMA were pleased to announce the award of two bursaries, after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19. This year the award went to Eden and Isaac, both Choral Scholars in the choir. The SMMA bursary is an award for young musicians in full time education to help support their continued musical training. We look forward to seeing how they both continue on their musical journeys!

Continuing the theme of fostering young musical talent, St Mary's was pleased to play host to a group from Saffron Centre for Young Musicians (SCYM) who used the venue for one of their Saturday morning concerts on 8th October. The concert saw performances on the piano, double bass, organ and Ukranian bandura. The performers enjoyed playing in the church with the challenge of a new acoustic to contend with, so we hope we will see them again in 2023!

October also unfortunately saw a brief break in choir activities due to a number of singers catching COVID-19, depleting the ranks and making singing at services unviable. Sadly, this coincided with Eucharist and our monthly Evensong service on the 9th of October which were cancelled. However, the Juniors were able to continue with their singing, meeting on the Friday for their usual rehearsal and singing at the family service on 16th October. The adult choir were pleased to return to sing at the confirmation service on 16th, and at Eucharist on the 23rd, where they sang the beautiful setting by Oldroyd *Mass of the Quiet Hour*, as well as Harwood's *O Sacred Banquet*.

October closed with a celebratory All Saints Day Eucharist in the morning and a moving All Souls Service in the late afternoon. Every year the latter service brings in so many from the community to share in their grief and sing together, especially important following the significant losses people have experienced over the last few years. The choir sang *Funeral Ikos* by Tavener, a piece written in 1981 using a translation of the words from the Orthodox service for the burial of priests. It tackles the reality of death head on, but still looks towards the hope and light which awaits after. Oli King finished the service with the organ voluntary '*Malda*' (*Prayer*) by Lithuanian composer Jonas Tamulionus, a spacious and meditative piece of music which perfectly matched the mood as the sun set early and the candles dedicated to the dead shone from the top of the chancel steps. There is a recording of Oli playing this piece on the Music News section of the church website.

In November, the choir sang at the annual civic service to mark Remembrance Sunday on 13th November, singing an introit by Douglas Guest *For the Fallen*, and Ireland's *Greater Love Hath No Man*. Beyond this, rehearsals in November have their eyes set firmly on Advent and Christmas, which always come around much faster than you'd think! Choir members were especially busy in the run up to the Advent Carol Service as many were also involved in the Christmas Fair on the 26th of November. This was especially true of the Choral Scholars, who not only helped on the Mulled Wine and Mince Pies Stall as is tradition, they also performed some carols!

Looking forward, the choir are as busy as ever during December, singing their usual Sunday services while also preparing for the Nine Lessons and Carols service on the 18th of December, Midnight Mass and Christmas Day. The Juniors will be busy as well, involved in Nine lessons in addition to singing at the Christingle service on the 10th and at the tree lighting service on Christmas Eve. The choir will be back and raring to go again in January in preparation for the Epiphany Carol service. From all of us in the choir and the wider SMMA, we wish you a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year, and we look forward to singing with and for you in our festive services!

Ellie Beare

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE LOCAL YOUTH GROUPS

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<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/christmas-silent-disco-tickets-458342834757>

It is going to be a great night and we would love to see your young people there.

We do need volunteers to help, so if you would like to get involved, then please let Matt Williamson know.

For more information contact:
youth@stmaryssaffronwalden.org

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Gelio



Apparently 'Silent Night' was not the best choice of first Carol sung by the churches newly formed 'Carol Singing Ensemble' (as reported by a number of young families on the new estate)

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If you are looking for a final resting place for a loved one, please bear in mind Radwinter Road Cemetery where the gates are always open and there is tranquillity within. For further information please contact Elaine Baynes, Cemetery Officer, at Saffron Walden Town Council, Market Street, Saffron Walden, CB10 1HR. Telephone: 07769 167 179 or email elaine@saffronwalden.gov.uk

<https://saffronwalden.gov.uk/services/cemetery/>

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Can you help save St Mary's Rainbows?

St Mary's Rainbows, Brownies and Guides have all been working very hard during 2022. Our Guide unit is growing and is currently the only one in Saffron Walden. Our Brownies have been working hard on their badges, and two more of them have achieved their gold awards, the highest award for their level. Our Rainbows, aged 5-7, the only Rainbows in Saffron Walden, have also been very busy doing interest and challenge badges and having lots of fun in the process.



*The St. Mary's Rainbows with their Sport Interest Badges.
(All photo permissions received)*



Some of our Rainbows

All our units would love to have more volunteer helpers; however, this is a special plea for the Rainbows. The current leader, Saffy, took over the group early in 2021, when the previous leader retired. Saffy hoped to build a strong new team to take the girls into the future. This is still her hope, however her own work commitments have changed and as such is looking to hand the leadership on to someone else. The other current members of the team also have changes in their circumstances, and one will have to leave at the end of the term, the other by Easter. Saffy will stay until Easter, to train a new leader, and full support will also be given by the other Guiders within the St Mary's team, and the Saffron Walden Guiding District. If you are free on a Monday after school and would like to help to save the Rainbows, please do contact us on the email address below. We currently have 16 members and many more on the waiting list who would be very grateful.

If you want to find out more about Girlguiding please do look at the website www.girlguiding.org.uk; email: 7thsaffronwaldenrainbows@gmail.com

Julie Lester, Saffy Lester and Margaret Jacobs
The St Mary's Girlguiding team



From the editor...

Your editor will be pleased to receive copy on any topic of general interest to our readers. These can be sent at any time and will be considered for inclusion in future editions. Please note:

1. The opinions expressed in the articles in this magazine are those of the authors.
2. The Editor reserves the right to edit, or exclude, any article submitted. Please be aware when submitting articles 400 words fits comfortably onto a page and that any article over 800 words will need to be edited to ensure readability.
3. Illustrations and photographs are the property of the copyright holders and should not be reused without permission.
4. The Parish News cannot accept responsibility for the goods or services advertised in this magazine - advertisements are accepted in good faith.

Many thanks in anticipation!

Smile Lines...

After the christening of his baby brother in church, young Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That minister said he wanted us to be brought up in a good Christian home, but I want to stay with you guys."

Holy Family with a Shepherd - Titian 1510

This masterpiece by Titian in the National Gallery appears at first glance to be a perfectly conventional depiction of the birth of Christ and the adoration of a shepherd. It seems to have all the usual ingredients, but as Eric Morecambe might say, 'Not necessarily in the right order!'

The first surprise is that it is Joseph, not Mary with her baby, holding centre stage. Normally Joseph lingers in the background and shadows with not much to do, while shepherds and wise men arrive in waves to worship the baby that isn't really his. In this one, however he is the dominant figure, actively interposing himself between his wife and baby and this stranger. He leans back, holding Jesus' feet while sternly placing his staff between his family and the young man.

The vertical staff divides the composition in two and seems to have had an added section on the top: instead of ending by his shoulder, a jagged and fierce looking section has been added, silhouetted against the sky. There is no mistaking his defensive body language!



So what of the young man? He is assumed to be a shepherd. But where are his sheep? Or his lamb? And his staff isn't a crook, just a straight walking staff. The most distinctive thing about him is the barrel at his waist, presumably to hold drinking water. He could just as easily be a carter, journeyman or passing traveller. Any one of us. An 'Everyman'.

In the background we can see an angel hovering rather unconvincingly over a craggy hillside with a flock of sheep and a couple of roughly depicted shepherds. In early Renaissance painting it would be quite normal to have different time frames depicted in the same composition, so that the various key episodes of the story could be told. But this is 1510, the height of the High Renaissance. Such story telling feels anachronistic in a mature and sophisticated composition.

So that presents us with a mystery. If the angel's appearance to the shepherds is happening in *real* time and is not a narrative time shift but is contemporaneous, how did our young man, our carter or journeyman beat the shepherds to it? How does he know that this baby is special and worthy of adoration? What instinct alerted him? What spiritual intuition?

So maybe... just maybe, if our young man is *not* a shepherd and has *not* heard the message from the angels, this painting is really depicting the action by the Holy Spirit acting on the young man, leading him to kneel and worship. The Holy Spirit is a co-eternal part of the Trinity, active eternally prior to Pentecost. So just possibly Titian's painting is a celebration of the Holy Trinity just as much as it is of the birth of Jesus.

One final observation: having seen a great many dawns at sea, the sky in this painting does not seem to show the hot, vibrant heat of a sunset, but the cool, gentle warmth of a dawn. What better way to indicate that this is a Beginning?

Edward Gildea

See the painting in more detail at:

www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/titian-the-holy-family-with-a-shepherd

*Everyone at
St Mary's Church
wishes you a peaceful and
blessed Christmas*

We warmly invite you to share in our Christmas services for 2022. The main services are listed below. Details of all the services for the Christmas period can be found at www.stmaryssafronwalden.org/christmas

Advent Carol Service 6.30pm Sunday 27 November.

Join with members of all the local churches for this special service of readings and carols by candlelight.

Christingle Service 4pm Sunday 11 December.

Oranges decorated with red tape, sweets and a candle are lit during this service. Children are especially welcome.

Christmas Carol Service 6.30pm Sunday 18 December.

A traditional service of bible readings and carols sung by the congregation and choir. Also on YouTube.

Blue Christmas Service 7.30pm Thursday 22 December.

A quiet service for anyone who finds it hard to buy into the forced merriment of Christmas, or wants space, or for whom this might be a difficult time of year.

Christmas Tree Service 4pm and 6pm Christmas Eve Saturday 24 December.

These services are particularly suitable for children. Children are welcome to dress as shepherds or angels to take part in the Christmas story. A collection will be shared between the Mayor's charities. Presents will be donated to children in a women's refuge – please don't wrap.

Midnight Communion 11.30pm Christmas Eve Saturday 24 December.

The first communion service of Christmas.

Christmas Day Family Communion 10am Sunday 25 December.

Join us to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on this special day. Also on YouTube.