



First Sunday of Advent

Sunday 29th November

Readings for 29th November

Isaiah chapter 64 verses 1-9

Psalm 80 verses 1-8

Mark chapter 13 verses 24-37

Prayers:-



From Churches Together in Hitchin – we are asked to pray for Advent services in churches this weekend and throughout Advent, that even in these times of online services the message of hope would shine through to our communities.

From St Mark's Prayer Cycle – this week we pray for the Anglican mission agencies:- Church Mission Society (CMS) and United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG). We also pray particularly for children and vulnerable adults who suffer from abuse, in our community and across the world.

This week we pray for the residents of Lancaster Avenue and St Mark's Close.

Prayer Requests – please send any prayer requests for the whole church to pray for to Andrew, who will then pass them on to the groups. Do contact your own group to ask for prayer too.

ONLINE & LIVE CHURCH DIARY – links and details will be sent at 9.30am on Saturday 28th November.

Sunday 29th November – We will offer a **10am Zoom Communion** this week, live from church again, which will be available on YouTube early in the afternoon. There will be no pre-recorded service of the word this Sunday.

As Nick and the team reflect on how to provide both online and in-person church in the weeks and months ahead, please do get in touch with your feedback: we want to be as inclusive as possible.

Church open for private prayer 11am-1pm.

Monday 30th November – Morning prayer reading and reflection with John on Youtube.

Wednesday 2nd December – Online Morning Prayer led by Tricia will be on Zoom at 9.15am. Church open for private prayer 6pm – 8pm.

Friday 4th December – Morning prayer reading and reflection with Andrew on Youtube.



Advent Sunday

This Sunday is the first Sunday in Advent. Normally we'd light an advent candle together in church. We'll still light the candle in our All Age Zoom Service, but we're suggesting that ***those watching at home also have a candle with them to light!*** That way, even though we can't all be together in person, we can join together in a hope-filled act of making light shine all over Hitchin and beyond!

Please take suitable fire precautions! If for any reason you are *unable* to get a candle, but still want to participate, contact vicar@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk

Next Sunday 6th December will be our **Advent All Age Service on Zoom at 10am**. We hope that we will also have an **11.15am Communion Service in church**, with limited numbers of the congregation present, but we are still waiting for the final guidance from the government and the Church of England. As before if you would like to attend the service in church please let Maggie know, but please be aware that this will be subject to the latest coronavirus guidelines.

Christmas services – watch this space! We are finalising plans for Christmas services so hope to be able to let you know soon!

National Daily Prayer 6pm – we are joining Christians across the country in a short daily prayer session on Zoom every day during lockdown. [Here](#) is the link.

Meeting ID: 865 2017 8755

Passcode: 293874

We hope you can join us when you are able.

This week our friends without computers will receive a hard copy of the reading and reflection given by John Richardson on Monday 23rd November

CHURCH & COMMUNITY NEWS & UPDATES



Christmas Cards – as so many of us are unable to meet in church this year unfortunately we will not be able to have our usual Christmas card postbox in church.

We thought that you might like to send in a Christmas greeting message to everyone at St Mark's which will be collated onto a special Christmas Notice sheet and sent out in the week leading up to Christmas, by email to those online and a hard copy to our friends without computers.

Please send your message to Maggie by **Sunday 20th December**, either by email or drop something through her door. You may like to consider making a donation to a charity of your choice, in lieu of the cost of the cards!



Email hiccups – one or two people have said that they're having problems receiving the emails from us. The email with the links for the services on Sunday is sent out at around 9.30am on Saturday, from either Maggie or Andrew. Please do check your spam folders, but if there's nothing there then let Maggie know – she can't promise to sort it out, but she'll try!

St Mark's Travelling Crib – also known in some parts of the world as a Posada. In the Bible we are told that Mary and Joseph travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem to have their names written down to be counted. They'll need a bed each night. We're going to send them to each other's homes but in a modern way – by zoom! How? If you'd like to be part of this have a figure of Mary and Joseph and maybe even a donkey that you can show to another family on zoom. You may have some nativity figures that you use at Christmas. Or you could make some from Lego, or cardboard, or just draw them. I'll let you know who is going to zoom you and that family will hold up their figures to show you. The next night you will zoom a family and hold up your figures to show them. I'll send you some prayers and words to say to each other as you do this. Let me have your name, email and phone number and I'll make a list and let you know who will zoom you and who you will zoom the next day. You will need to contact each other for your zoom pass codes and numbers. We will start Mary and Joseph off from our All Age service on 6th December. Please contact me to ensure Mary and Joseph have somewhere to stay till Christmas day when we will then put them in the stable. Helen Richardson helenwrich@btinternet.com

In one of the photos is my very tiny matchbox Mary and Joseph from Peru, wearing Peruvian hats.



Wanted: cut out hands for the World Day of Prayer Christmas tree in this year's tree festival being held in empty shops round the town. This tree is entitled *Hands Full of Prayers* On a piece of coloured paper draw round one of your hands and then cut it out. If you wish, write a prayer on the palm of the hand. They will be hole punched on the wrist end with the fingers hanging down. Adult and children's hands needed. Please contact me for collection by Sunday 6 December Helen Richardson. You may do as many as you wish!

Safeguarding – just to remind you all that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our safeguarding officer is Pauline Banks, and you can contact her if you have concerns. Rev Nick Smith also has responsibility for safeguarding so you can also contact him on 01462 434686.

Christmas Bags for Lister Hospital & St Mark's – these beautiful sacks are handmade, steam



pressed and individually packed by a local lady from Westmill. She has them in lots of different patterns. They are approximately 50cmx50cm (20"x20"). Cost £5 each, £4 will go to the Lister Hospital and £1 to St Mark's. Email: notices@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk for details



Thank you to gardeners... Many thanks to Pauline and Kevin, Carol and John and John Richardson for helping out with a church gardening workshop last Saturday. We have cleared the weeds from the gravel down the side of the church - Carol and John F worked on their knees! - and did lots of cutting back of shrubs by the steps to the Bedford Road. Thanks to Rupert and Peter Russell for working during the week too. Helen Richardson.

Lockdown Birthday

Hi, I had my Birthday in early November and tried to make the most of it in the circumstances. I proceeded in the usual way, mirroring the Christmas traditional days. So I had "Birthday Eve" followed by "Birthday" then obviously "Boxing Birthday" then the 12 days of Birthday, after which I take my cards down. The Birthday cards are then saved and stored till next year in case of a down turn in received cards so I can put them up again so it looks as if I am really popular and have loads of friends, I do the same with Christmas cards!!! Also on both occasions I buy myself a present from me to me With Love. I wrap them up and label them then try to forget what I have purchased then look surprised and thrilled when I unwrap them. Needless to say the Husband is somewhat bewildered by these antics and thinks I am weird. I can't think why? Joy xxx

Please let us know what you would like to see in the notices, and send in any ideas, messages, photographs, poems or prayers (not too long please!)

*If you would like to have a notice included please email
notices@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk*

Please send notices by 7pm on the preceding Wednesday.