



St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter

22nd December 2024 – 4th Sunday of Advent

A MESSAGE FROM REV. GEOFF ANDREW

I think there's a part of me that's still recovering from last weekend! I'm preaching this week on 'A Time for Celebration' which is entirely fitting for these past few days when we've celebrated with a concert, a wedding and a carol service. We also held a lovely Christmas Party for our final Playgroup session of the year followed by a 'thank you' lunch for the wonderful volunteers who help us prepare food for the toddlers every week. If you would like to come along to our final Season of Music & Comedy event of the year, then we are showing the classic Christmas movie, It's a Wonderful Life in church on Saturday 21st at 5.30pm. Anne and I watch it every year and it's a beautifully uplifting film that speaks to the intrinsic worth of an ordinary human life. Very much really, like the Christmas story. Jesus, Immanuel, the one who dwelt among us to lead us toward his light and his love. May you know the truth of the love of Jesus for you this Christmas. And may he give you the opportunity to show that love to others. **Rev. Geoff Andrew**

ZOOM

Our Sunday service is streamed via <https://stoneleigh.tv>. Any problems, please let us know.

Tim Rogers

NEWSLETTER

There will be no newsletter next weekend (December 28/29)

UPCOMING SERVICE TIMES

Please note the following service times for the next couple of weeks:

- Christmas Eve: Christingle Services at 3pm and 5pm
- Christmas Day: Family Worship with Communion at 10am
- Sunday December 29: Family Worship with Communion at 10am
- Sunday January 5 and thereafter: normal service times at 9.30am (Communion) and 11am (Worship for Everyone)
- Please note that there will be no Holy Communion service on Wednesday, January 1.

Rev. Geoff Andrew

CHURCHES TOGETHER AT CHRISTMAS

Are you alone at Christmas this year? Come and join us for a traditional festive dinner. 'Churches Together in Ewell' is pleased to offer a Christmas dinner plus festive activities to all who would otherwise be on their own.

Christmas Day 12:30 – 4.15 at a local church. This offer is open to all Ewell residents. Transport can be arranged. **No charge.** To join us call: 07999 80475 or email:

Christmas.dinner@dsl.pipex.com. Please pick up a flyer at the Welcome Desk at the front of Church.

CHRISTINGLE SERVICES –TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER AT 3.00pm AND 5.00pm

We will be holding our Christingle Services in aid of the Children's Society. We will be making the candles on Monday 23rd December at 2.00pm in the Parish Centre and would be grateful for volunteers to help make the candles, you will be welcomed with coffee/tea and cake! We have 150 candles to put together so any help would be gratefully received.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON PRAYER MEETING

There will be no Thursday afternoon Prayer Meeting during the month of December.

Steve Simper

DIGGING FOR TREASURE

In Mathew 13:44 a man finds treasure in a field and then sells everything he has to buy the field. I then imagine he still has to dig out the treasure, and that as he finds treasure he realises there is even more treasure than he thought. The more I have read the bible, the more I have come to realise that there are treasures hidden both on the lines and between the lines. I only find that treasure if I take the time to look and the Holy Spirit to shine a light on the hidden gems within. This year I have read through the bible in a year on the Bible App using a plan put together by the Bible Project. The Bible Project provide short videos from which I have learned new things that brought what I was reading to life. Next year, I plan to read through the New Testament in a year. That will allow me to dig even deeper.

Would you like to join me on a treasure hunt every day next year? If you are interested, let me know, and I can point out a field to buy and which shovel to use. Contact me on WhatsApp (07990 560 363) or email (willporter2167@gmail.com).

Will Porter

UKRAINE CRISIS APPEAL

Thanks to everyone at St John's who donated chocolates and biscuits etc for the Christmas appeal. We were overwhelmed with your generosity! It is all on its way to Ukraine now. The White Eagle Club will continue to collect donations for:

Plasters, bandages, Pasta, rice, baby food, nappies and wipes, batteries, detergent, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, shower gel, hand wash and soaps, deodorant, sanitary pads, hand wipes, hand sanitizer, hand cream.

Please put them in the box marked Ukraine at the front of the church.

I also take cheques made payable to Shelly Wiczorek or you can donate money online at the "White Eagle Club Ukraine Appeal" on Facebook, Instagram or X.

Thank you again. **Shelly Wierzorek, Coordinator, White Eagle Ukraine Appeal**

FOODBANK

There will be no Foodbank collection this week. Happy Christmas and thank you everyone for all your generous support.
TheFoodbank Team

Today's Services

This is the fourth and final week of Advent and the last in our mini sermon series, A Journey Through Luke. This week we turn to the theme of celebration as represented by Mary's wonderful declaration of joy and trust in God which we have come to call The Magnificat. Mary's life was far from comfortable but she is able to see beyond her own circumstances to the promise of what God will do through her unborn child. Her joy springs both from the knowledge of her personal role within God's mission, and also from the anticipation of a new Kingdom of justice and love that will be established by her son. How can we begin to nurture joy when there is so much despair in the world and perhaps in our personal lives?

Readings

Isaiah 61:1-3

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour.

Luke 1:39-55

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!' ⁴⁶ And Mary said: 'My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me – holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful ⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants for ever, just as he promised our ancestors.'

Collect

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Music 9.30am

1. O little town of Bethlehem (carol sheet #1)
2. See amid the winter's snow (#8)
3. God Rest you Merry, Gentlemen (#16)
4. Angels from the realms of glory (#18)
5. O Come all ye Faithful (#12)

Music 11am

1. Angels from the Realms of Glory
2. While Shepherds Watch
3. Worthy of it All
4. Calypso Carol

Book of Remembrance

Christopher McCourt
Edwin Mowforth
Ian Pennington