

HARPSDEN PARISH NEWS

DECEMBER 2023 & JANUARY 2024



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To Epiphany and beyond...!

...with apologies to Buzz Lightyear from 'Toy Story' for adapting his catchphrase.

Journeying into the heartlands of Christ's kingdom isn't always an easy or straightforward route to follow; it may take us into territory we'd rather avoid. The magi who followed a star that rose in the west above Bethlehem, and whose arrival we celebrate at Epiphany, might well have wondered where on earth they were going, travelling the trade routes across the mountains and deserts of Persia or Arabia carrying their gifts.

As I journey towards my departure from this benefice to become the Team Rector of the Wallingford benefice, I feel this tension, that the path with Christ isn't always easy, or what we expect, and yet we follow Christ's star, Christ's light. It is a time of wondering. There is so much happening here, so many exciting plans and opportunities that I know God will entrust to the safe and capable hands of others as I am called to move on.

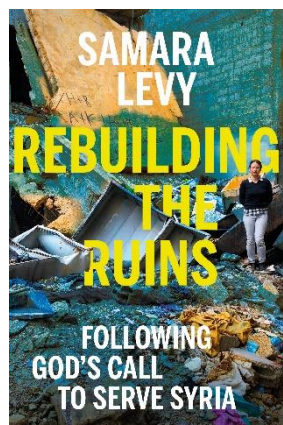
In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus said to the crowds, 'Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.' Taking the narrow gate is our invitation from Jesus into life in its fullness, life with Christ, but it's not easy. It requires commitment and consistency, which may well mean self-denial. This is what the 'narrow gate' demands. 'Father...yet, not my will but yours be done' (Jesus on the Mount of Olives).

Sarah Rowland Jones, Dean of St David's, Wales, reflects on these verses; 'Living as a citizen of this kingdom means far more than just brandishing what seems to be an appropriate passport when it's convenient for us. 'Not everyone who says to me "Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only one who does the will of my father in heaven.' (Matthew 7:21). It takes more than this to pass the citizenship test, and even this is not just a matter of knowing the rules or passing an exam.

Taking the narrow gate requires sacrifice. Leaving behind things, people, places that fill us with joy and help us to flourish. I have received such support in this benefice and been allowed to grow and be fruitful over the past six years since I first sat quietly in a pew at Harpsden considering a potential curacy here. This branch of the vine is now being transplanted, and that is painful. However, the fruitfulness that you have so generously enabled means I will take my gifts and share them with others as we continue to grow Christ's kingdom on earth.

Jesus walks this journey with us. He doesn't just hand out a map and tell us to get on with it. He walks with us, leading us forward, and has the necessary provisions and even equipment, for us to keep on journeying. We just have to ask. I have been reading about Samara Levy, a stay-at-home mother from Brighton who heard Jesus call her to serve the refugees in Syria (thank you for the book loan, Jean). She writes about the hard lessons of learning to ask and to wait on God for what seemed impossible. In 2014 God called her three times to 'start

collecting' aid to send to the Middle East. Having previously had no experience in this area, but with her heart moved, Samara's vision to fill one lorry with clothing and other supplies



to Iraq soon evolved into an extraordinary operation sending over one hundred containers and lorries of aid to the Middle East, as well as providing a number of medical facilities in Syria. To date, she has distributed aid to more than 350,000 people in the Middle East and her work continues; a new medical centre is planned for 2024. Her book 'Rebuilding the Ruins: Following God's call to serve Syria' is worth reading (available here: <https://www.samarasaidappeal.org/books>).

So, as I journey to Epiphany and beyond, celebrating Candlemas* with you as my last service before I leave, I thank you with all my heart for everything that you have given me. I pray that you will continue to flourish in God's name, building His kingdom here on earth in this benefice in whatever way He calls you to do. Continue to bring your gifts, share your talents and resources generously and walk the path through that narrow gate along which Christ leads you with love, joy and hope.

*Candlemas: 10am Benefice Service at Dunsden on Sunday 4th February

You are also invited to my licensing service at St Mary le More, Wallingford on Wednesday 6th March, 7.30pm, more details in due course.

Revd Sarah



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers

WEEKLY PRAYER GROUP



‘ANOTHER’ CHANGE TO PRAYER GROUP

🙏The Prayer Group will revert back to every TUESDAY🙏

🙏at St. Margaret’s from 2pm – 3.15 pm🙏

If you would like to join us on a ‘one-off’ or regular basis you would be most welcome 🎉😊

Or, if you would like us to hold someone, or a situation in prayer, please email

jotaylor@aol.co.uk

Tea and Cake served before or afterwards
(or both!!) 🍰 🍰 🍰 🍰 🍰 🍰

One Chapter of Bible Reading📖📖📖

Hymn 🎵🎵🎵

Praise and Thanksgiving🎉🎉🎉

Quiet meditation before prayer begins

Prayers for Creation / Peace / Justice / The Church / For Healing
& Personal petitions🙏🙏🙏

Taize chant 🎵🎵🎵

Close with the Lord’s Prayer or the General Thanksgiving and
The Grace 🙏🙏🙏

SERVICES IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY

Sunday 3 rd December	10.00 am	Benefice Sung Eucharist with Wholeness & Healing	Shiplake
Monday 4 th December	9.00 am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
Wednesday 6 th December	10.00 am	Benefice Eucharist with Wholeness & Healing	Harpsden
Sunday 10 th December	8.00 am	BCP Holy Communion	Shiplake
	10.00 am	Carol Service	Shiplake
	11.00 am	Carol Service	Dunsden
	6.00 pm	Nine lessons and Carols	Harpsden
Monday 11 th December	9.00 am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
Wednesday 13 th December	10.00 am	Benefice Eucharist	Harpsden
Sunday 17 th December	9.30 am	Sung Eucharist	Harpsden
	3.00 pm	NATIVITY The Journey Gathering at 2.30 pm In the College Great Hall	Shiplake
Monday 18 th December	9.00 am	Morning Prayer	Zoom

Wednesday 20 th December	10.00 am	Benefice Eucharist	Harpsden
Sunday 24 th December	10.00 am	Benefice Carols and Communion	Shiplake
	4.00 pm	Christingle	Harpsden
	11.30 pm	Midnight Mass	Harpsden
	11.30 pm	Midnight Mass	Shiplake
	11.30 pm	Midnight Mass	Dunsden
Monday 25 th December	10.00 am	Christmas Eucharist	Harpsden
	11.00 am	Christmas Family Service	Shiplake
	10.00 am	Christmas Eucharist	Dunsden
Wednesday 27 th December		No Service	
Sunday 31 st December	10.00 am	Benefice Said Eucharist	Harpsden
Monday 1 st January		No Service	
Wednesday 3 rd January	10.00 am	Midweek Benefice Eucharist with Wholeness and Healing	Harpsden

Sunday 7 th January	9.30 am	Sung Eucharist	Harpsden
	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist	Shiplake
	11.00 am	Morning Praise	Dunsden
Monday 8 th January	9.00 am	Morning Prayers	Zoom
Wednesday 10 th January	10.00 am	Midweek Eucharist followed by Bible Study	Harpsden
Sunday 14 th January	9.30 am	Morning Praise	Harpsden
	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist	Shiplake
	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist	Dunsden
Monday 15 th January	9.00 am	Morning Prayers	Zoom
Wednesday 17 th January	10.00 am	Midweek Eucharist followed by Bible Study	Harpsden
Sunday 21 st January	8.00 am	BCP Holy Communion	Shiplake
	9.30 am	Sung Eucharist	Harpsden
	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist	Dunsden
	4.00 pm	Tea with God Benefice Family Service	Shiplake
Monday 22 nd January	9.00 am	Morning Prayers	Zoom

Wednesday 24 th January	10.00 am	Midweek Eucharist followed by Bible Study	Harpsden
Sunday 28 th January	10.00 am	Benefice Sung Eucharist	Shiplake
Monday 29 th January	9.00 am	Morning Prayers	Zoom
Wednesday 31 st January	10.00 am	Midweek Eucharist followed by Bible Study	Harpsden

INTERCESSIONS FOR DECEMBER AND JANUARY

3rd Benefice Service at Shiplake
 10th Nine Lessons and Carols
 17th 9.30 am Paul Barrett
 24th 11.30 pm Tilden McKean
 25th 10.00 am May Mosawi
 31st 10.00 am Brenda Wright

7th Jo Taylor
 14th Paul Barrett
 21st Tilden McKean

COFFEE ROTA FOR DECEMBER AND JANUARY

17th Suzanna Rose
 31st Jo Taylor

7th Sarah Bevan
 14th Hilary Andrews
 21st James and Elsie Frost

READERS – DECEMBER AND JANUARY

3rd Benefice Service at Shiplake - David Ward (OT)
10th Allocated by the Clergy
17th Tony Wright and Sue Wright
24th 11.30 pm Valerie Nicholson and Annabel Blackwell
25th 10.00 am Kester George and Jill Wason
31st 10.00 am John Bodman and Hannelore Donohue

7th Tim Fundell and Claire Ward
14th Kester George and Sue Wright
21st Nigel Smith and Pippa George
28th Benefice Service at Shiplake – Josie Peddie (OT)

SIDESMEN'S ROTA FOR DECEMBER

10th 6.00 pm Rob and Carol Lewis
17th 9.30 am James and Elsie Frost
24th 4.00 tba
24th 11.30 pm Tilden McKean and Pat Needham
25th 10.00 am Kester and Pippa George
31st 10.00 am Jo Pavey and Brenda Wright

7th Paul Barrett and Karin Henderson
14th Annabel Blackwell and Hazel Cooke
21st Kester and Pippa George



The Nativity 'Journey'

Sunday 17th December

Meet at 2.30pm in the
Great Hall at Shiplake College

Please come in costume
or visit our wardrobe department on arrival

*– nibbles and drinks by the fire –
carols by the Christmas tree*

'The Journey'

2.00pm 'Wardrobe department' in The Ark opens

2.30pm Gather around the Christmas Tree for
drinks and nibbles in The Great Hall

3.00pm We sing our first carols, then begin the
journey to the church

United Benefice of Shiplake with Dunsden and Harpsden cum Bolney
www.shiplakedunsdenharpsden.org.uk

Tips to avoid being scammed

1. Be cautious and listen to your instincts. Do not be afraid to hang up, bin it, delete it, or shut the door. It is your home, your phone line, your email, your life – you have a right to say and do NOTHING.
2. Say no to ALL online/doorstep/phone requests to money/Amazon vouchers etc – even if they claim to be from a charity or friend/family member. If you are worried, contact the person mentioned at a known and trusted phone number, using a different phone – or even better go and speak to the person face to face.
3. If you are on-line, be aware of fake news and use trusted sources such as gov.uk or NHS.uk websites. Make sure you type the addresses into your computer yourself – DO NOT click on links in emails.
4. Only purchase goods from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with your money, or personal information. DO NOT be rushed by special offers or timed countdowns for special offers expiring soon.
5. Scammers also ask for payment for (fake) deliveries. DO NOT pay extra fees for deliveries unless it is a trusted company who have contacted you – i.e. The Post Office etc – but even then be careful as some scammers purport to be the Post Office.
6. Know who you are dealing with. If a name is mentioned, contact the named person yourself – or if they say that they are HMRC, TV licencing, or a Utility Company, hang up and phone or email the known trusted address/number that you have yourself **BUT** use a different phone line to do so – scammers often keep the phone line open so that you think you are calling a new outside number. If you only have one phone then put the phone down, pick it up and phone a friend before trying to contact HMRC etc as the scammer cannot then pretend to be your known friend. Keep trying different friends until you get to speak to one of them as the scammers will make you think that your friends' number is engaged.
7. Protect your financial information. **NEVER EVER EVER** give your bank/credit card details or PIN to anybody who contacts you online or on the phone. Scammers regularly pretend to be your bank/fraud investigators or even the Police to panic you. **The legitimate people will NEVER ask for your PIN number under any circumstance.**

If you do get scammed TELL SOMEBODY you trust and get advice.

It is NOT your fault.

Further information can be found at the following sites:

Action Fraud: this is the A-Z page, but it also has a phone number for people who are worried they have been a victim of fraud: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud>

Gloria Hunniford's short 'Little Book of Big Scams' - audio 'booklet' for those who prefer to listen to information: <https://soundcloud.com/metropolitan-police/the-little-book-of-big-scams>

www.gov.uk/guidance/phishing-scams-how-you-can-avoid-them

As so many people asked for a copy of the poem read at the Service of Remembrance on 12th November, we are reproducing a copy of it here.

The Eternal Soldier

I am the eternal soldier; I'm there when you need me
Fighting for your liberties down every century
Standing on the front-line, bleeding for your cause
Just a name on a memorial, at which you never pause.

I halted the Armada, stood my ground at Marston Moor
I was in the line at Minden and I heard the Zulu roar,
I was in the square at Waterloo and fought the fearless Boers
And I was gassed in the trenches of the war to end all wars . . .

I piloted a Spitfire, stormed the beach at Normandy
Froze to death in Korea and I yomped to Port Stanley,
I was bombed to hell in Basra, under fire in old Kabul
I am a deadly Exocet, a politician's tool.

Yet all I ask is wages and three square meals a day
To lay my life upon the line, to live in harms way,
But it's the same old story, when your victory is won
Then I'm just an embarrassment, with a loaded gun.
And the debt is soon forgotten, when the nightmares come to call
When each night I hear my best friend scream and helpless, watch him fall,
I'm told to snap out of it, I'm told big boys don't cry
And I'm left to drink myself to death and on a cold street die.

I march on your decision, anywhere in this wide world
In places where our flag had no right to be unfurled,
And I'm not asking for riches, I want nothing for free
The only thing I'm asking for,
Is a measure of dignity.

For I am the eternal soldier; I'm there when you need me
Fighting for your conscience down every century
And I'm standing on the front-line, bleeding for your cause
Just a name on a memorial, at which you never pause.

Mark Vine, 2007

Available here: www.warpoetry.uk/remembrance

Seeking Volunteers

Thank you to those who have come forward already. There are a number of opportunities available for supporting your church and local community:

Foundation Governor for Shiplake Primary School

If you are interested in supporting our local Voluntary Aided Church of England School as a Foundation Governor, or want to know more, please speak to Revd Robert or Sarah. It's a hugely fulfilling role.

Sacristan, Chalice Assistant, Churchwarden for Shiplake Church

If any of these roles appeal, or you'd just like to know more, please speak to one of the clergy team.

Expanding our Pastoral Care Team

We are planning to expand our Pastoral Care Team and extend an invitation to anyone who feels called to be a visitor to the housebound, taking Home Communion and/or journeying with people who have been bereaved. If this is of interest, please contact Revd Sarah for a discussion about what is involved. Training and mentoring will be offered.

Win a Christmas Food Hamper!

Raising funds for
St Margaret of Antioch Church
and 'Crisis at Christmas'



Tickets £2 each
available at church on Sunday,



The draw will take place after the 6pm Nine Lessons and Carols
on Sunday 10th December 2023

www.shiplakedunsdenharpsden.org.uk

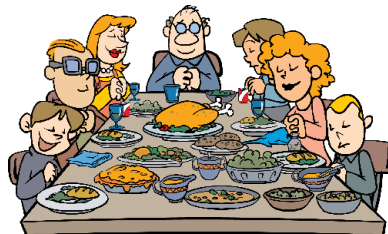
United Benefice of Shiplake with Dunsden and Harpsden cum Bolney

Sunday School at Harpsden

We started our Sunday School at Harpsden again on Sunday 1st October. Led by Shelagh Stanbridge-Bennett, there are bible stories, singing and activities from 9.30am on Sundays for children of all ages. To find out more, please email the [Benefice office](#).



Some of the young people who are enjoying Sunday School.



HARPSDEN LUNCH

Everyone is welcome to join us at the next Harpsden Lunch which will be our Christmas Party lunch at the Maltsters Arms at 12.30 pm on Wednesday 13th December.

Unfortunately, Wednesday 6th which is the first Wednesday in December which would be our normal date, is not suitable for some people so we will have it on Wednesday 13th December at 12.30.

I have been given a copy of the Maltsters Arms Christmas Party Menu so you can make your choices. Ben the chef likes to know in advance so he can prepare the meals in good time. I am sending this out early but will be in touch with you nearer the time to get your choices. It would be good if you could join us. Please let me know if you would like to come and would like to see a copy of the menu.

Please contact Hazel Cooke on 01491 575876, or email. Hazelcooke01@gmail.com

The date for the January lunch has not yet been decided. Again, please contact Hazel Cooke nearer the time.

CHURCH WARDENS

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Harpsden Parish News is written for and by the people of this parish, and contributions are always welcome. However, the views expressed therein are those of the writers and are not necessarily shared by the Rector, the Editor and Churchwardens.

Benefice Website:

<http://www.shiplakedunsdenharpsden.org.uk>