



St HELEN'S CHURCH
ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

Advent 2020

Dear Parishioner(s),

We're just about half-way to Christmas so the wardens and I thought it opportune to make contact with you by means of a seasonal letter. First of all, we want to wish you and yours a joyous, holy and safe Christmas. For most of us that will include time spent with family or our 'bubble', and we hope that such occasions will help make your Christmas bright!

If you've been reading the weekly *Newsletter* you'll know that our round of Christmas services is largely the same as in years past. There are some changes in service times and, chiefly, the fact that we cannot hold the very popular Christingle service on Christmas Eve afternoon as a live event. However, there *will* be an on-line pre-recorded Christingle service at 4.30 pm and just before that an on-line Zoom Christingle for younger children which will include interactive Christingle-making with help from the Christingle kits we'll distribute from the West Porch of the church in the week before that. Helpers are needed for that, so if you have some time to offer, contact details are in the *Newsletter*.

On the mind of many of us is the status of the major work in the church. The workmen and architect have done an efficient job in driving the repairs forward. Repairs were more extensive than we expected (is that a surprise in an ancient building?) but the end is in sight. The scaffolding in the main nave-altar platform area should come down this week. That will enable us to return to the main worship space in the weeks before Christmas. In the North Aisle (Baptistry end) one major repair remains. That will begin at the start of the New Year and take a few weeks. By Candlemas that work too should be 'done and dusted'.

The repair work has taken longer than anticipated. Those who've been working on the project have ensured that delays have been kept to a minimum. Soon we will all have the benefit of their commitment of time and effort to our church building. The annual maintenance grant from The Friends of St Helen has funded most of the work, complemented by a grant from the government's Culture Relief Fund. (You may have been the article about the grant to St Helen's in the local press.)

For all of this we have reason to give thanks. But above all we give thanks to Almighty God for the blessings of faith, togetherness and care for the common life of our community, Christ's 'little flock'.

Thank you all for your place in the life of St Helen's.

Charles Miller (Team Rector), Linda Hobbs and Geoff Meen (Church Wardens)