

Sunday 28th December 2025
First Sunday of Christmas

10.00 a.m. Church Family Communion

Collect for Today

God in Trinity, eternal unity of perfect love: gather the nations to be one family, and draw us into your holy life through the birth of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Service Readings

Isaiah 63:1-5 (*p.703*), Hebrews 2:10-18 (*p.216*) and Matthew 2:13-23 (*p.2*)

Please pray for

... Mark & Jan Knott, Jenny Powell and Mike Woodcock.

... the family and friends of Anthony Tye and Ernest Ede whose anniversary of death is at this.

... those who live and work in Palmers Lodge, Pentreath Avenue, Poltimore Road and Powell Close.

... the Koens family in Papua New Guinea supporting the work of Bible translation through vehicle maintenance, teaching, missionary care.

Post Communion Prayer

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: help your Church to live as one family, united in love and obedience, and bring us all at last to our home in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Financial Giving

We take a collection during our services. If you don't give regularly by standing order or the envelope scheme, please put your donation in the bag, tap the card reader on your way out, or use the QR code on the back of this news-sheet. Thank you.

Dear Friends

Today, in the Church's calendar, we remember 'The Holy Innocents'. These were the young children in Bethlehem, under the age of two, who were condemned to death by King Herod, following Mary and Joseph's flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-23). When Herod realised he had been outwitted by the Magi, who had returned to their country by a different route, he orders the mass killing of children in the hope of putting to death the infant Jesus. It's a harrowing story, and not necessarily one to face up to on this first Sunday after Christmas.

But the suffering of innocent children is not something we can escape from in our own times, and the loss of innocent lives in Gaza over the past few years brings that home to us. Where is God when it hurts? Why does God allow suffering? How do we make sense of it all? They're questions that confront us from time to time; and questions that - for some people - are more urgent during this season of Christmas.

Our reading from the Letter to the Hebrews for today, and chapter 2, addresses those questions in a radical way. It calls us to start by looking at Jesus, his birth, his life, his teaching, and his own suffering. If we can focus our thoughts here to begin with, rather than starting with the questions that suffering presents, we may find a pathway to a new understanding; and in that new understanding we may find comfort and hope in our own times of need. I pray that will be true for us as we study the Scriptures together today.

Wishing you blessings for this Christmas season,

Beverly

Mission Focus for December: Mosaic Middle East (MME)

Our prayers are again requested for the Middle East, and, with the Gaza conflict in the forefront of our thoughts, it is easy to forget that Iraq still faces a veritable storm of trouble. MME's friend in Baghdad is the Rev'd Canon Faiz Jirjees MBE, from St. George's Anglican church there. His message is that tensions between the communities and recent regional conflict have sent shockwaves through Iraq, heightening insecurity, increasing instability and deepening fear. So, as Christmas approaches and is celebrated, let us remember the people of Iraq, of whatever religion or sect, and pray that peace will prevail and that tensions there will die down. Further information on the work of MME will be found in the December magazine.

Notices

Thank you to Toby who is playing the organ for us today whilst Jeremy takes a short break.

Coffee after church today: The coffee team are up and running so please do stay afterwards to share refreshments and catch up with your friends.

Tea Time Church: Please note, there will be no Tea Time Church today.

Sunday 4th January: We will be celebrating Epiphany Sunday with an 8am communion, 10am Café Style Altogether Worship and Tea Time church at 4pm.

Christmas rest period: From Monday 29th to Thursday 1st, the church office will be closed and there will be no Morning Prayer or Thursday Communion. In an emergency during this period, please call Beverly.

Diary for the Coming Week

There will be no weekday services this week.

Saturday 3rd Band Rehearsal, Church, 10.00am

Sunday 4th *Epiphany Sunday*

Holy Communion, Reading Room, 8.00am

Café Style Altogether Worship, 10.00am

Tea Time Church, Reading Room, 4.00pm

Daily Readings for the coming week

Mon 29th Ps. 19, Jonah 1, Colossians 1:1-14

Tues 30th Ps. 113, Jonah 2, Colossians 1:15-23

Weds 31st Ps. 102, Jonah 3-4, Colossians 1:24-2:7

Thurs 1st Ps. 103, Genesis 17:1-13, Romans 2:17-end

Fri 2nd Ps. 18:1-30, Ruth 1, Colossians 2:8-end

Sat 3rd Ps. 127, Ruth 2, Colossians 3:1-11

Service Readings for Sunday 4th January: Epiphany Sunday

Isaiah 60:1-6, Ephesians 3:1-12 and Matthew 2:1-12

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