

DECEMBER 2024 - MARCH 2025

DENHAM PARISH NEWS

THE POWER OF PROMISE

THE JESSE TREE



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Cover: Frosty rose, by Christoph

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FROM THE EDITOR

When do you put your Christmas Tree up? When our sons Jon and Tim were at university, we always waited until they were back for the holidays so that together, we could listen to Christmas carols and 'dress the tree'. However, with Jon now married and living in Plymouth, it's usually just three of us... and rather contentiously, we keep the tree up for as long as possible during the long winter nights! There is something rather special about sitting in a dark room with just the Christmas tree lights twinkling away! Whatever your Christmas rituals, it would be lovely to see you at some of the Christmas celebrations at St Mary's this year, full details on page 31 and 32, do come and join in!

The Jesse Tree (centre pages), share some of the key moments in Jesus' family history. You could even cut the pictures out from this magazine and hang them on your tree! As part of the Advent countdown to Christmas, you can find all 24 of the Jesse Tree stories around the churchyard, why not pop down and have a look!

This edition of Denham Parish News also includes adventures in Rome (p.24), an invitation to learn about and join the Denham, Gerrards Cross & Chalfonts Community Board (p.6) and a reflective Christmas poem (p.14).

I would like to thank everyone for reading Denham Parish News over the past year, and in particular thank all those Distributors who faithfully hand deliver the magazine to our many Subscribers across the Parish, we couldn't do this without you.

December is traditionally the time for renewing your annual Subscription to Denham Parish News. This remains at £5 for 4 Issues if you pay in advance, or £1.50 for an individual copy. Current Subscribers, please have your money ready to give to your named Distributor in the next few weeks. If you would like to become a Subscriber, please contact me at magazine@denhamparish.church for more details.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas



Blessings,

Cathy Macqueen

magazine@denhamparish.church

THE POWER OF PROMISE

MESSAGE FROM CHRISTOPH LINDNER, RECTOR

“The person who makes a vow makes an appointment with himself at some distant time or place.” G.K. Chesterton



“The same location, thirty years apart!”

Dear friends,

This year my wife Edda and I celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary. It was during our sabbatical in the summer and we went back to the same hotel on the Lago di Maggiore in Switzerland, where we spent our honeymoon. It was a happy day full of gratitude. Later in the year, we renewed our marriage vows, saying to each other, “all that I am I give to you and all that I have I share with you, within the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” Some of you will have said the same or very similar words when you got married.

After all these years I still sometimes wonder what a strange thing marriage is! Two people, who had no connection when they were born, make solemn vows to become husband and wife for the rest of their life. And it all rests on a promise!

Making such a huge commitment may feel a bit like entering a room, locking the door and throwing the key away. No way back! Lewis Smede writes: “If you fear, as I do, our penchant for promise breaking, consider this: it is almost a miracle that anyone should

ever dare to make a promise. When we make a promise we take it on ourselves to create our future with someone else no matter what fate or destiny may have in store. This is almost ultimate freedom."

Those promises, made 30 years ago, have indeed led Edda and me into a wonderful freedom: No one forced us to make them and at times when things are hard, when the romance has got lost among the challenges of life, we can go back to them. And we remember that we made those promises "within the love of God".

Promises and vows are not just for couples. In fact, they reflect the love and commitment of the God who made us. When God calls Moses from a burning bush to lead his people from Egyptian slavery into freedom, Moses asks, "What is your name?" And God answers, "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14). Someone has translated God's response like this: "I am he who will be there with you." That is a promise from God we find again and again in Scripture.

Centuries before he is born, God promises that he will send a rescuer who will be born in Bethlehem. Isaiah announces that a virgin will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.' In Matthew chapter 1 an angel instructs Joseph to call him Jesus, which means 'the Lord saves'. When Jesus is born in a lowly manger, angels sing, lowly shepherds and wise men from far away come to

worship him: God has kept his promise! After he grows up, this man from Galilee talks to his friends about sealing the ancient promise of God in his own blood and at the age of 33 he dies on a mound called Golgotha. "I am he who will be there with you," gives his life for us, rises again and then promises in his parting words to his disciples: "I am with you always, until the very end of the age."

No one on earth can predict what 2025 will bring or what kind of future awaits us. No one, except the God who has promised to be with us. And in his Word he announces that at the 'end of the age' he will create a new heaven and a new earth and will dwell with us. That's why St Peter can write, "In keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth."

When we celebrate Christmas this year, we can look to the future with hope, because God will remember and fulfil his promises, just as he remembered the promise to send us a special rescuer in the person of Jesus. It also means that whenever you and I make and keep a promise we are as close to being like God as we can ever be. Lewis Smede again: "When you say to anyone that you will be there with her, you are only a millimetre beneath the angels."

Happy Christmas!

THE DENHAM, GERRARDS CROSS & CHALFONTS COMMUNITY BOARD BY LIZZIE WRIGHT

COMMUNITY BOARD MANAGER (AMERSHAM & VILLAGES; DENHAM, GERRARDS CROSS & THE CHALFONTS)

Community Boards were setup in 2020, when the County Council and four District Councils combined to form Buckinghamshire Council, as a way of enabling local communities to come together to discuss the issues that affect them most and work in partnership to develop initiatives that would make a real difference to residents' lives.

The Denham, Gerrards Cross & Chalfonts Community Board covers the following town and parish areas: Chalfont St Giles, Chalfont St Peter, Denham, Fulmer, Gerrards Cross, Hedgerley, Jordans and Seer Green. The Board is made up of 12 Buckinghamshire Councillors, chaired by Cllr Santokh Chhokar and vice-chair Cllr Jonathan Rush, working in partnership with the local community.

Everyone is welcome to get involved in the Board to help design and deliver new local projects. We work closely with the town and parish councils, statutory partners such as police, health and fire, voluntary and charitable organisations, residents and local businesses.

Over the past four years, we've been getting to know the area better, building relationships with our local partners, and hosting meetings and events that bring the community together to explore issues and develop solutions.

Each year we agree priorities that help us to determine the issues we will focus on and how we will spend our allocated budget. The priorities for 2024 to 2025 are:

- Sustainability
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Safety, Infrastructure and Highways.

We host regular action groups that explore these themes in more depth and members of the group work collaboratively on projects.

Some of the projects we've supported or are working towards this year:



The Low Carbon Homes Show

Working in partnership with Bucks Community Energy, the Community Board have supported the delivery of a free event to provide the local community with information and guidance on how to reduce and decarbonise energy use, and save money while having warmer, healthier homes.

The event, which took place on Saturday 2 November, offered the chance to hear talks from local trusted experts about upgrading homes with natural insulation, solar PV, battery storage, air source heat pumps, smart ventilation, heating controls and much more!

Attendees could find out about any grants available and whether they were eligible to apply – or get an idea of costs of energy efficiency measures and start their journey to a home upgrade!



Vache Baroque

Vache Baroque held community performances of “A History of Sound” with performance workshops on 26 July as part of Bucks Open Weekend ‘Together we Celebrate’. The Vache was open to residents to enjoy the grounds, picnic and interact with community stalls. “A History of Sound” is Vache Baroque’s flagship music education programme; their goal is to increase access to classical music through the removal of perceived and real barriers, showcasing singing and playing instruments as something everyone can do and derive joy and pride from.

The project also included a relaxed performance of L’Olimpiade on 7 September, which was adapted to be more inclusive and accessible to those members of the community who may often be excluded, for example, neurodiverse, very old and very young, as well as those who have not

experienced opera previously. The libretto of L’Olimpiade was set to music by over fifty composers, making it one of the most popular in opera history. Based on the story of the ‘Trial of the Suitors’ by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, it has all the materials necessary for a work of high drama, loyal friends, crossed lovers, secret backstories, deception, disguise, and possible ruin.



Milton’s Cottage

This November marked the 350th anniversary of Milton’s death, offering a unique opportunity to engage local residents by showcasing Milton’s enduring influence and celebrating the village as the place where his best known poem was written. Paradise Lost.

Funding from the Community Board was provided to enable a programme of workshops that invited local residents to take a key role in this co-curatorial process, gaining new skills and interests in the process.

To find out more or get involved with your local Community Board, contact:

www.denhamgxchalfonts@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

facebook.com/denhamgxchalfontsCB

www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/improving-your-local-community/denham-gerrards-cross-chalfonts-community-board/

SO WHAT NOW?

BY PAUL DAVIS



On the 9th September 1976 at the age of 16, I started working not knowing what lied ahead. On my second day I was asked to fill in a load of forms and in one box I recorded 20th February 2020. Why I chose that date I had no idea apart from it would be a week after my 60th birthday! Anyway, I thought it didn't matter as I would be working somewhere else by then. How wrong I was, those 43 years had passed by so quickly and the retirement date I had selected was fast approaching.

That old saying 'choose a job you love and you don't work a day in your life' applied to me. I had worked for the same company but had 23 different roles, which exposed me to all sorts of things and situations, good, bad, difficult, challenging and rewarding. The greatest blessing of all were the people I met and worked with along the way, many of whom became friends and more like a second family, in fact one person in particular did become family as we got married nearly 35 years ago.

It's like many things in life, you don't miss it until its gone. Transition from work to retirement is a strange phenomenon. I felt a little lost, not being able to add anything to society. The work pressures had gone, someone else now carried that baton, my new freedom was becoming more of a worry than a joy.

Whilst I had community involvement and interests, it wasn't quite the same.

Little did I know like all of us that the world was about to change and day by day it was clear that our freedom was going to change too. Plans were being cancelled, and what/where we could go was decided by others. Trips to the supermarket became a highlight and local walks were a treat. I needed to do more and little did I know that the 'What Now' was about to reveal itself in the form of volunteering to help with the covid vaccination roll-out programme. This would start a new chapter in my life and I ended up working 2 or 3 days a week at the vaccine center at Heathrow, working with wonderful doctors & nurses in the co-ordination of this important programme. Whilst it was a difficult time for all of us, what was so gratifying was talking to people from all walks of life about their current situation and being able to offer help, support and encouragement.

Once the covid vaccine roll out programme had come to an end, I started to think once again 'So What Now?'

They say all things happen for a reason and it was not long afterwards that I was asked to support the local community

district nursing teams. A role which 18 months earlier was totally alien to me. My role now provides that vital link of communication between the patient and medical teams. I have come to realise that the things that make us most anxious in life are when we don't know what happens next, so having the reassurance that someone will listen and take the necessary action is such a blessing.

So how does this all link in with my faith and my Christian journey?

I started going to Church from 3 weeks old (not that I remember this) but Church and the Christian fellowship has been an import part of my life. My illustrated Bible which was given to me when I was five, is one of my treasured possessions.

I find my time in Church, at Home Groups and the Bible Book Club a key part of my life, it's a bit like a spiritual gym for

my mind, body & soul. The messages and learnings from Church and our group have given me a far greater understanding and insight of God's word. Do I spend enough time in pray and reflection? No, but it is a work in progress.

I have used my learnings from the Church family and the Bible, to shape my conversation and actions in life. My faith has guided, comforted and protected me in both good and bad times, for which I am so grateful. I view myself as a Good Samaritan in the ways I conduct my life and my awareness of others who may have different opinions and beliefs.

I am by no means perfect, but throughout my life my faith has always been with me, and I feel blessed and thank God for all the love and support that I have experienced, by being part of a Christian family.

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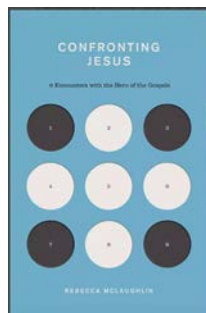
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BOOK REVIEW: CONFRONTING JESUS 9 ENCOUNTERS WITH THE HERO OF THE GOSPELS

by Rebecca McLaughlin. *Reviewed by Janet Allen*

Rebecca McLaughlin's *Confronting Jesus*, offers a thoughtful exploration of who Jesus is through the lens of the Gospels. Her aim is clear: to present Jesus in a way that is both intellectually satisfying and spiritually engaging for a wide audience, including sceptics, seekers, and believers alike. The book is structured around nine encounters with Jesus, which are drawn directly from the Gospels. Each chapter dives into a different facet of Jesus' identity, mission, and teachings, tackling some of the most challenging questions people might have about Him.



She contrasts Jesus's role as Son with the ancient concept of kingship where kings were often referred to as sons of gods, but Jesus' sonship far surpasses human rulers.

Jesus the King

Focusses on Jesus as the rightful King and ruler over all creation. She emphasises that

while many in his time, including Jesus's disciples, expected a military or political leader, Jesus redefines kingship. His rule was marked by *humility, sacrifice and service* rather than earthly power, riches and dominance. He offers his people a kingdom of justice, peace and eternal life.

Jesus the Jew

This chapter emphasises the importance of understanding Jesus within his Jewish context. He was born, lived and died as a Jewish man and his identity and mission is deeply rooted in the Jewish faith and scriptures. Jesus often quoted Jewish scripture, reinforcing his role as the expected Messiah who came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets rather than abolish them. McLaughlin offers a concise yet insightful overview of the Old Testament, along with a solid summary of the defence for the historical Jesus and the reliability of the Gospels.

Jesus the Son

Here she explores the meaning of the term 'Son of God' as it might have been understood at the time of Jesus.

Jesus the Healer

Looks at accounts in the Gospels where Jesus heals not just physically, but also spiritually and emotionally, revealing his compassion and authority. His healing ministry was often directed towards the marginalised and outcasts from society, not just acts of mercy but also signs pointing to his divinity. Jesus the healer invites us to trust in His power both now and in the future, even in the face of ongoing pain and brokenness.

Jesus the Teacher

Explores the extraordinary teachings of Jesus, which have shaped history and continue to challenge and inspire today. His parables are simple but profound stories that convey deep spiritual truths, which often flip societal expectations

upside down. For instance, Jesus taught the last would be first, that greatness comes through serving others and that love for enemies was essential. These teachings were and still are both revolutionary and countercultural, presenting a vision of life that values humility, compassion and sacrificial love.

Jesus the Lover

McLaughlin focuses on how the Gospels portray Jesus as the embodiment of God's love, offering unconditional love and compassion to all people, especially those who are marginalised, broken or outcast. His love is both personal and universal, inviting everyone into a life changing relationship with him.

Jesus the Servant

Reflects more deeply on Jesus' ultimate act of servanthood – death on the cross. By willingly giving up his life for the salvation of humanity, Jesus embodies the suffering servant prophesied in the Old Testament. His death is portrayed not as defeat but the final victory over sin and death accomplished through self-giving love.

Jesus the Sacrifice

This chapter explains the Old Testament sacrificial system, where animals were offered to atone for the sins of people and shows how Jesus fulfils and surpasses these sacrifices. She emphasises that Jesus' death on the cross is central to the Christian faith, serving as the means by which God reconciles humanity to himself.

Jesus the Lord

Exploring Jesus' identity as Lord, emphasising his divine authority over all creation. She highlights how the Gospels and the New Testament repeatedly declare Jesus as "Lord",

a title that not only signifies his kingship but also his equality with God. An affirmation that is central to the Christian faith.

Conclusion

Throughout the book, McLaughlin skilfully weaves together biblical analysis with sometimes surprising cultural references and personal anecdotes, including a list of books and films to explore from fresh angles. McLaughlin also doesn't shy away from addressing the moral challenges posed by some of Jesus's teachings, offering a robust defence of traditional Christian doctrine. She supports her arguments with logic and historical context. Even if her points don't fully convince you, they offer valuable insights into this perspective and invite deeper reflection on your own views.

Bibliography of contemporary cultural references.

Books

Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie – Zikora
Dan Brown – The Da Vinci code
Charles Dickens – Tale of two cities
Tom Holland – Dominion
Matt Haig – The Midnight Library
J K Rowling – Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows
Yaa Gyasi – The Homecoming
Bryan Stevenson – Just Mercy
J R R Tolkien – Lord of the Rings
Richard Dawkins – Outgrowing God
T. S. Eliot – The Wasteland
Bill Mounce – Why I trust the Bible.

Films

Collateral Beauty, The Hunger Games, Gladiator, My Big Fat Greek Wedding, The Princess Bride, Shang-Chi and the Legend of the 10 rings, Sound of Music, The Zookeepers wife.

DO YOU HAVE AN ENGLISH BIBLE?

BY JOAN BELL



There are now many different versions of the Bible available in English, from the historic beauty of the King James' Authorised Version, first published in 1611, to more colloquial 21st century versions, such as The Message.

Less well known is an earlier English translation, the work of John Wycliffe and his colleagues in the 14th century. The Roman Catholic Church disapproved of this enterprise and regarded Wycliffe as a heretic. It was deemed sacrilegious to translate the sacred text of the Holy Bible into the vulgar language of the common people.

There is a certain irony to this objection, since the version of the Bible used in the Middle Ages was the Latin Vulgate of St Jerome, translated around 400 AD from the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek into the common language of the Roman Empire. Centuries later Latin was still used by educated people, such as scholars, lawyers or senior clergy, to communicate across Europe in the Lingua Franca of the day.

Wycliffe's determination to make the Bible available in English inspired many of the leaders of the Reformation in Europe in the 15th century: for example, Martin Luther translated the Bible into German. For the first time ordinary people could read, or hear read, the very words of scripture in their own language. This process was greatly helped by the invention of the

printing press, making the production of copies much quicker than hand-written manuscripts.

Today we take it for granted that we could find a version of the Bible in any bookshop, but the work of translating the Bible into new languages continues in other countries around the world. Members of the church in Denham have supported Wycliffe Bible Translators for over ten years, by sponsoring Samuel Kpagheri, a Bible Translation Consultant (photo above). His main work is in Togo, but he also assists other translation teams in neighbouring French-speaking countries in West Africa.

We are hoping that Samuel will come to the UK in early 2025, and that he will spend time in Denham, as well as visiting other supporters in other parts of the country.

Editor, 2024 is the 700th anniversary of the birth of John Wycliffe!

To find out more see

www.wycliffe.org.uk/john-wycliffe-700

**Wycliffe
Bible
Translators**

**For further information please contact
Joan Bell. j.belldgv10@outlook.com**

Where is Your Happy Place?

Reading a good book

Walking in nature at any time of the year and if by chance I pass a coffee shop on the way out or on the way back, then I am even happier!

When playing Senior County Cricket with a group of old friends who think they are still 25!

Chiltern Open Air Museum

Shared laughter with loved ones, the peaceful quiet of prayer, and the deep understanding that I am never truly alone. It's the knowledge that I am loved unconditionally, guided by a higher power, and part of something much bigger than myself.

The place does not matter if I am not with my loved ones. Those places are happy for me even when I am on my own because they are in fact connected to my loved ones.

Wimbledon Centre Court SW19

A steam room!

When I am helping others

ANOTHER YEAR PASSES

Joyce Hobson, Christmas, 2018

I remember, in December
...or around that time...

My grandma telling me the ancient rhyme.

"Christmas comes but once a year,
And when it comes it brings good cheer"

I certainly loved making paper chains.
And the presents like dolls and miniature trains.

Later, of course, as churchgoer I was able
To learn of a babe, that was born in a stable.

It was a wonderful story it seemed to me.
But nothing to do with the Christmas tree.

The tree with its fairy lights, baubles and star,
All shiny at night, and seen from afar.

But what is the Angel, atop, doing there,
Along with the trappings of sumptuous fare?

Is it there to remind us how we can mix
The Christian message with the festive tricks?

And should it not be the other way round

When the joyful singing of carols abound

That the cheer is to honour that heavenly birth
When Jesus came down for us, here upon earth.



The Jesse Tree

"Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot."
Isaiah 11.1

Have you ever seen a family tree? It shows how all the relatives in your family fit together, stretching back many generations. A Jesse Tree is a family tree of Jesus. You may know all about the baby in the manger, but the story starts much earlier ... a LOT earlier. Advent is a great time to prepare for Christmas and to explore Jesus' family tree. Here are eight of those stories - find the rest in our churchyard!



Creation: Life begins as a love story

"So God created human beings in his own image." Genesis 1.27

In the beginning God created the world. God spoke and created humankind in his image. God saw everything he had made and it was very good.

READ: Genesis 1

You are made of the dust of this earth, and you are made of the happiness of heaven. No matter your story before, you were formed by Love... for love.

UNWRAPPING THE GIFT: What could you create today with a gentle heart of love (a letter, a treat, a surprise)? Create something out of love!



Adam and Eve: Where are you?

"They hid from the Lord God among the trees." Genesis 3.8

God created a beautiful garden for the first human being to live in with God. They were to look after God's world and could eat the fruit from all the trees, except from the tree of knowledge. But they were tempted and ate its fruit. Afterwards they hid in shame from God and had to leave his beautiful garden.

READ: Genesis 2 and 3

In all humanities religions, people reach out for God. But in all His relationships, God reaches out to us. He refuses to give up on you.

UNWRAPPING THE GIFT: Jesus is calling for you: "Where are you?" Sing a Christmas carol and invite him to come and be with you. (*O little town of Bethlehem is a good one*).



Moses: Covenant of Love

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other Gods before me." Deuteronomy 5.6-7

Joseph was sold to Egypt as a slave, but God's plan made him a powerful leader there. During a severe famine in Israel, his family moved to Egypt and they thrived. A long time after Joseph died, a new pharaoh made the Israelites slaves and ordered all their new-born sons to be drowned. But baby Moses was saved by Pharaoh's daughter. When he was grown up, God told him to lead his people from slavery into freedom. After ten plagues, Pharaoh let them go. At Mount Sinai, God wrote ten laws on stone tablets for them to follow.

READ: Exodus 20

The Ten Commandments are more than a legal code. They are a command to relationship, to love God and to love your neighbour. God gives Jesus and Jesus shows us perfect love. He fulfils all the laws and then dies for all our law-breaking so we can be children of God.

UNWRAPPING THE GIFT:

Find a quiet place to read the Ten Commandments. Thank Jesus for his amazing grace.



Ruth and Boaz: Every little thing will be okay

"Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." Ruth 1.16

When her husband and two sons died, Naomi decided to return to her home town of Bethlehem in the land of Judah. One of her daughters-in-law, Ruth, chose to go with her. Boaz, a local farmer, allowed her to pick the grain that the reapers had missed. He was kind to Ruth and later married her. Ruth became the great-grandmother of King David.

READ: Ruth 1

Naomi returns to Bethlehem as a bitter woman. But God has a plan: Ruth ends up in Bethlehem, she 'happens' to glean in the field of Boaz, who 'happens' to become her husband and, with her, the ancestor of King David, who in turn becomes the ancestor of Jesus. God is working through every little thing, even through a manger. His gifts often come out of the unseen and hidden places.

UNWRAPPING THE GIFT: Write a card of thanks to someone today, or pick up the phone and give a lonely person a call. How can you be part of bringing a small miracle to someone else?



David: Looking on hearts

"People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

1 Samuel 16.7

When God asked the prophet Samuel to pick a new king for Israel, he chose the youngest son of Jesse, David, although he didn't look like a future king. But David's heart trusted God. As a young man he was a shepherd and showed courage by killing the giant Goliath with his slingshot. He eventually became King of Israel and made some big mistakes, but he said sorry to God. David wrote songs and prayers in the Bible book of Psalms.

READ: 1 Samuel 16.1-12

In our materialistic society we can often be blinded by the outward appearance of things, our desire to buy the latest shiny thing. God never stops looking at the heart and Jesus is the great 'eye surgeon' helping us to see what truly matters.

UNWRAPPING THE GIFT:

Find someone today who doesn't look like one of your friends. Ask how their day is going. Look on the inside and lovingly listen to them.



John the Baptist: Preparing the way for Jesus

John was the son of a priest named Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth. He also was Jesus' cousin. When John grew up, he lived in the wilderness near the River Jordan. He told people to prepare for the coming of God's promised King. Then John baptised them in the river. One day Jesus came and asked John to baptise him. When Jesus came out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended on him and a voice from heaven said that Jesus was God's beloved Son.

READ: Matthew 3.1-3

John wasn't the main act. The spotlight wasn't on him. But he had an important role in preparing the way for Jesus, the king. Sometimes our lives seem quite ordinary, but God has good purposes for all of us - whether we are in the limelight or not!

UNWRAPPING THE GIFT: As you go about your daily tasks today, breathe a silent prayer, asking God to turn these tasks into little acts of love for him and other people.



Mary: Be a dwelling place for God

When Mary was young, she was visited by an angel. She had been chosen to be the mother of God's promised King. She was to have a son and name him Jesus. Mary lived in Nazareth and was engaged to be married to Joseph, a descendant of King David.

READ: Luke 1.26-38

Mary willingly made space for God in her life, and we can make space for his grace in our life, trust him for today and for our future, even if we cannot see the road ahead. Jesus will come to us in unexpected places and people. Are we ready to receive him?

UNWRAPPING THE GIFT: Take ten minutes today. Five minutes of silence just with God. Then five minutes of your undivided attention for someone else.



Jesus: God in the manger

Jesus was born in a place where the animals were kept and he was laid in a manger (a food trough). His mother Mary wrapped him tightly in cloths to protect him. God's promised King had humble beginnings in Bethlehem, the city of King David. He came as the light of the world. Today many people around the world worship him as King, Saviour, Son of God and friend.

READ: Luke 2.1-7

God's son comes quietly, unnoticed by people, and lowly shepherds are the first to hear the good news. Jesus enters our messy world, becomes one of us, walks with us and offers to carry our burdens. He is "God with us", out of love for us.

UNWRAPPING THE GIFT: Put on your shoes and go for a walk today. Sing a Christmas carol out loud. All the world needs to hear about the greatest gift and how he loves us!

Do join us for services this Christmas – the Carol Services on Sunday 22 December at 4pm and 6.30pm are a beautiful way to hear Jesus' family story.

What's Happening

AT DENHAM PARISH CHURCH?



TODDLER GROUP

Wednesday mornings in term time

St Mark's Church Hall

Contact: Kathy Paine

kathypaine16@gmail.com

Sign up for Email Updates

from Denham
Parish Church:



www.denhamparish.church/new

CAFÉ CHURCH

Time to chat | Food for thought

Coffee and cake

Favourite hymns and prayers

St Mark's Church Hall

Sunday 1 December,

2 February, 3 March

(no Café Church in January)

Contact: Christoph Lindner

rector@denhamparish.church

DESTINY



For young people
aged 10 and older

St Mark's Church Hall

8 December, 12 January, 9 February
5pm-7pm. Supper included!

Contact: Tim or Charlotte
destiny@denhamparish.church

Services in December

Find all carol services on page 31-32.

No 10.30am service on 22 and 29 December.

29 December: Only 9am service.



FAMILY REGISTER OF DENHAM PARISH CHURCH

BAPTISMS

14.09.24 Stanley, Reggie and Archie Barrell, Chalfont St Peter's
25.08.24 Annalise and Arlo Quinton, New Denham



Stanley, Reggie and Archie Barrell

WEDDINGS

17.07.24 Jacqueline Baker and Charlie Tizzard
07.09.24 Courtney Richmond and Jack Baker



Courtney Richmond and Jack Baker



CREMATIONS

28.08.24 Hamish Ritchie (82) Beaconsfield

BURIALS

25.07.24 Anne Elizabeth Mallach (94) Denham
29.08.24 Bary Gray (74) Denham
21.10.24 Bryan Gould (88) Denham
23.10.24 Andrew Jenkins (65) Hillingdon

THANKSGIVING SERVICE

31.10.24 Len Dane (96) Denham



ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM) ST MARY'S CHURCH DENHAM MEMBERSHIP ELECTORAL ROLL 2025

Every six years a new electoral roll is prepared and those on the previous roll are informed so that they can re-apply.

Enrolment is open to anyone residing in the parish that has been baptised and is aged 16 or over. Those residing outside the parish must also have habitually attended worship in the parish over the preceding six months before enrolment.

Application Forms will be sent via St Mary's internal post to members listed on the current roll for completion. Anyone not currently on the Electoral Roll can obtain an application form from the Church.

Further details can be obtained from Maurice Litchmore, Electoral Roll Officer, via the Church Office.

ALPHA – THE CLASS OF 2024

Every year Denham Parish Church is running Alpha, a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith. Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to open up a conversation. Alpha is for everyone; no question is out of bounds and you are free to discuss as much or as little as you wish. We don't assume any background knowledge of or belief in Christianity and everyone is welcome. We start each session by sharing food together.



Alpha is run all around the globe – in cafés, churches, universities, homes and online. No two Alphas look the same, but generally they have three key things in common: making new friends, watching a video episode about questions around the Christian faith, and good conversation.

In 2024 ten people met at the home of Edda and Christoph Lindner in Denham Village. We were a great mix of people from diverse backgrounds and over the nine weeks we had excellent conversations, tasty food and a lot of fun. In August we got together for a party (see picture above).

Here is what some of them said:

"This was an amazing experience. I feel at peace."

"Very thoughtful leading – so encouraging and enabling. I loved the videos."

"The Alpha experience exceeded all my expectations. I feel more connected with Jesus and that my faith has been re-affirmed. I feel more confident and comfortable to be open and honest with my friends that I am a Christian."

Our next Alpha Course is starting in January. Check out the advert on the next page to find out more and sign up.



Alpha

Stay Curious

— Try Alpha —

Starts in Denham in January.
Find out more:

www.denhamparish.church/alpha

ROME REFLECTIONS

Early this year our online, international but Denham-based, Bible Book Club did the amazing study on Paul's letter to the Romans, accompanied and guided by Andrew Ollerton's videos. The videos are filmed in Rome, from the perspective of those who would have first read the letter, and so we were treated to views of ancient monuments that prompted someone to suggest we visit as a group, following in the footsteps of St Paul, who, sometime after having written his longest letter, went to Rome himself, as a prisoner, and was later martyred and buried there.



AMANDA SABBA

My Italian husband Nic organised the trip and although only 3 people from our Bible Book Club were actually able to come, we soon found other willing pilgrims and became a group of 12. We had a wonderful 5 days, in which we reflected on the example and martyrdom of so many thousands of early Christians (including Paul), on ecumenism and the difficulties in trying to unite contemporary Christians of so many different persuasions, and on the extraordinary richness of the patrimony of Rome. We prayed, sang, laughed, and were silent. We walked, cycled, ate and drank. We returned home tired but happy. A thought-provoking and faith-building experience. Below are some of our personal highlights.

JAMES CRAIG

Abazia delle tre fontane – the place where St Paul was killed, is now a benedictine monastery. What made

this visit truly memorable for me was the exquisite singing of vespers (a liturgy of evening prayer) by a row of monks and nuns seated opposite each other. The beautiful alternate singing by monks and then nuns resonated throughout the church as the light faded in twilight with only a few visitors including ourselves.

The Colosseum left a memorable image despite its partially ruined state. A structure of this size, that could house over 50,000 spectators, is an incredible achievement, given the technology of the time. The arena witnessed some gruesome atrocities in the name of entertainment, but what struck me was the presence of a cross in a prominent position. It was installed on the orders of Pope Benedict the Fourteenth, in 1750, in recognition of the Christian martyrdom. Its presence in the Colosseum is symbolic of the transition from the pagan beliefs and practices of the early Roman Empire to the adoption

of Christianity authorised by Emperor Constantine in AD 313.

ALEX ELLISON

Visiting the **Catacombs of St Callixtus** and getting to them by bike on the very straight but quite bumpy Appian Way. I learned so much about the lives, challenges, and burial practices of the early Christians. I also learned why the Romans built straight roads! I feel enriched by the whole trip and will read Paul's letter to the Romans with a new insight and understanding.

JANE BROWN

Many **basilicas** had stunning frescoes and mosaics but I was most touched by the simplistic feel of the crypts, especially when we had an early morning English service in the **crypt of St Peter's**; and when we went to a Benedictine monastery where Paul was beheaded. The acoustics of all these places was beautiful - even when we broke into worship songs as a group.

It was very humbling and thought provoking to think of the apostles Paul and Peter who were martyred for their faith in Rome, followed by thousands of other Christians, in the following centuries. Seeing the underground tiny cave where Paul was imprisoned prior to execution, and then the Catacombs of thousands of early Christians, made me realise how 'comfortable' I am in Bucks. It challenged the depth of my faith - what would I do if I were faced with a life and death situation for my faith? According to Open Doors, today more than 365 million Christians

suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith, and I now feel more prompted to pray for them.

GORDON GILLESPIE

We gained a stronger understanding of the **sacrifice and commitment of the early Christians** that has enabled us to know and worship God and Jesus today. We left feeling strongly challenged as to how we can justifiably stand on their shoulders and build on the work of the early church, so that their sacrifice and commitment are not wasted.



PARISH DIRECTORY

www.denhamparish.church

Church Office: 01895 832771

office@denhamparish.church

Office times

Mon: 9.30 - 12pm

Tue: 9.30 - 12pm

Wed: Office closed

Thurs: 12.30 - 3pm

Fri: 12.30 - 3pm

Sunday Services on Youtube:

www.tinyurl.com/youtube-denham

Find us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/denhamparish.church



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01895 834733

rector@denhamparish.church

Training Curate

Revd Azita Jabbari

azita@denhamparish.church

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Christmas in Denham 2024

- Sun 1st Dec 3.30 pm Carols at Café Church. **St Mark's**
Favourite carols • Christmas treats • Time to chat
- Fri 6th Dec 6.00 pm Carols on the Green. **Denham Village Green**
- Sat 7th Dec 2.00 pm Carols and Readings for Christmas.
Denham Garden Village
A reflective start to the Christmas season
- Thur 12th Dec 7.30 pm Christmas Concert. **Holy Name**
Christmas pieces sung by the Holy Name choir and special guests with favourite carols for all to sing
- Sat 14th Dec 5–7 pm Advent Film Night. **St Mary's**
Family Film | Hot Drinks | All-Age Film
Sign up to receive email updates:
www.denhamparish.church/new
- Sun 22nd Dec 9.30 am Fourth Sunday of Advent Mass. **Holy Name**
- 4.00 pm Carols for All Ages by Candlelight.
St Mary's | YouTube
Readings, carols, anthems and songs, with contributions from all ages
- 6.30 pm Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight.
St Mary's | YouTube
Reflective service with readings, carols and choir anthems



Christmas in Denham 2024

Tue 24th Dec 4.00 pm
(Christmas Eve)



Christingle Service. *St Mary's* | *YouTube*

Celebrate Christmas with that famous orange!

A child-friendly service for all ages.

Children are invited to bring a new toy as a gift for Sunshine House School (Northwood)

8.30 pm

**Carols followed by Mass (9.00 pm).
*Holy Name***

11.00 pm

Midnight Holy Communion. *St Mary's* | *YouTube*

Wed 25th Dec 9.00 am
(Christmas Day)

Christmas Day Holy Communion. *St Mary's*

9.30 am

Feast of the Nativity Mass. *Holy Name*

10.30 am

**Christmas Day Family Service.
St Mary's | *YouTube***

A short service for all ages, celebrating Jesus' birth

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St Mary's Church, Denham (CofE)

Village Road, UB9 5BH

St Mark's Church Hall, Denham Green (CofE)

Green Tiles Lane, UB9 5HT

Church Office: St Mary's Church Vestry: 01895 832771, www.denhamparish.church

YouTube (St Mary's): www.youtube.com/DenhamParishChurch

Continue the Christmas Journey...

Alpha is a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith. Alpha starts in Denham on Monday, 27th January. Find out more: www.denhamparish.church/alpha

Alpha



Silent night, holy night

All is calm, all is bright

'Round yon virgin mother and child

Holy infant so tender and mild

Sleep in heavenly peace

Sleep in heavenly peace