



THE HERALD

The monthly newsletter from the churches of
St Nicholas Stevenage + St Mary's Graveley



www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk

www.saintmarysgraveley.org.uk

Dear friends,

December 2022

We recently had a visit to St Nicholas Church from Giles Junior School: one of the questions asked by the children as they looked around the Church was, "Why do you use candles in a church?" The answer given was that Jesus said "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12) and the presence of the light reminds us of Jesus' coming into our world and into our lives.

It can also be a symbol of Jesus coming into our presence as we meet together to worship him. Two candles on the Lord's Table point out that Jesus was both a human being and God. There are other uses of candles that point or remind us of God; we can use a lighted candle when we have committed to pray for someone or a specific event as it helps us to focus, and also acts as a reminder to pray.

At this time of Advent, churches specifically use five candles in an advent wreath at the front of church, with a new candle being lit on each of the four Sundays before Christmas, around the red candle in the middle. Churches use different colours but at St Nicholas 4 white candles and 1 red are used.

Each candle represents something different.

The first candle symbolizes hope and is called the "Prophet's Candle." The prophets of the Old Testament, especially Isaiah, waited in hope for the Messiah's arrival. Symbolizing royalty, repentance, and fasting.

The second candle represents faith and is called "Bethlehem's Candle." Micah had foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, which is also the birthplace of King David. Symbolizing preparation for the coming king.

The third candle symbolizes joy and is called the "Shepherd's Candle." To the shepherd's great joy, the

angels announced that Jesus came for humble, unimportant people like them, too. Symbolizing joyfulness and rejoicing.

The fourth candle represents peace and is called the "Angel's Candle." The angels announced that Jesus came to bring peace - He came to bring people close to God and to each other again. Symbolizing the culmination of love through Jesus.

The fifth candle represents light and purity and is called "Christ's Candle." It is placed in the middle and is lit on Christmas Day. This candle is red to represent sacrifice and victory.

The wreath itself, which is made of various evergreens, signifies continuous life, the circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God and the eternal life we find in Christ.

As we are now in Advent, you might like to use the lighting of the candles as a way of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ on the 25th, looking at the bible promises around each of the symbols as they are lit each week, or you may like to read Luke - it's a great book to read particularly at Christmas, given that it has 24 chapters.

However you are preparing for the celebration of the coming of the Saviour of the world, Lord Jesus, may you and your family know the blessing and hope we have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Love and Blessings

Mike Wilton, Church Warden St Nicholas Church

Stop Press!

Many thanks for all your prayers for the interviews on 30th Nov, however there was not a consensus of the interview panel that either candidate was God's man for the role of Rector, therefore we did not appoint someone to the position this time. We will re-advertise in the new year and will hopefully be able to give dates for this on Sunday.

Special Events this December

Four Winds Saxophone Quartet – Fri 2nd Dec at 7.30pm at St Nicholas.

Tickets £15 on the door (or £12 in advance) from: [Four Winds Saxophone Quartet at St Nicholas' Church event tickets from TicketSource](#)

Children under 18 and students in full-time education: £10 (£7 in advance)

St Nicholas Day Carols at St Nicholas Shops - with Stevenage Borough Council - Sat 3rd Dec 1.30 – 3pm.



Women's Faith and Fellowship Christmas Craft Evening – Fri 16th Dec, 7-9.30pm in the Parish Room at St Nicholas. Come and join us to hear the story behind the Christmas Poinsettia and make your own gift to take home. All materials supplied. Please sign up in church – only 30 places available (suggested donation £5). Speak to Karen, Evelyn, Sue, Jeannette or Christine for more details.

Men's Breakfast – Sat 17th Dec at 8.30am at The Standing Order.

Carol Singing at Truro and Norman Courts – dates to be confirmed but we will need singers and musicians. Details to come by email soon.

Christmas services...

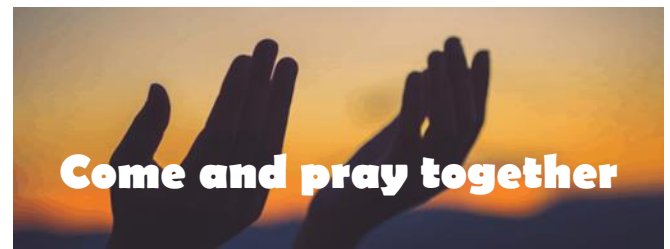
Christingle Service at St Mary's – 11th Dec at 11.30am
 Carol Service at St Mary's – 18th Dec at 6.30pm (no 11.30am service that day)
 Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight at St Nicholas 18th Dec at 6.30pm
 Nativity and Christingle Service at St Nicholas – Sat 24th Dec at 3pm
 Christmas Family Celebration and Communion – 25th Dec: 9.30am at St Nicholas, 11.30am at St Mary's
 Joint Benefice Service of the Word at St Mary's – 1st Jan at 10.30am

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Vacancy

St Peter's Church Stevenage is looking to hire a Children and Families Leader (25 hours per week) If you are:
 Enthusiastic about working with children and families? Passionate about your faith? Happy to lead and work in teams? Then this could be the role for you. Go to: stpeterstevenage.co.uk to find out more or for an informal chat please call Kate Sharples: 07505 459157. Flexible start date in 2023

PATTERN OF SUNDAY WORSHIP: Both churches will have services of Holy Communion on the 2nd and 4th Sundays, and Services of the Word on 1st and 3rd Sundays. 5th Sundays will be joint Services of the Word - starting at 10:30am, with the venue moving between the 2 churches.



This month our **Prayer Meetings** and **Services of Evening Prayer** are as follows:

Wednesdays 7th & 21st
 7pm-8pm Benefice Prayer Meeting at St Nicks

Wednesdays 14th & 28th
 7am-8am Early morning prayer on Zoom
 7pm-7.30pm Evening Prayer at St Nicks

*St Nicholas will also be open for **visitors and private prayer** on Tuesdays from 2-4pm, Wednesdays from 12noon-2pm and Thursdays from 10am-12 noon*



4th Dec Luke 1: 26-38 11th Dec Luke 1: 39-56
 18th Dec Luke 1: 57-80 25th Dec Luke 2: 1-7
 1st Jan Luke 2: 8-20

Preachers for December:

4th Dec: Stephen Lovelock 11th Dec: Bishop Alan
 18th Dec: Philip Walker 25th Dec: Rev Ray Porter
 1st Jan: Graham Squires **NB. Joint Benefice Service of the Word at St Mary's at 10.30am**

KEY CONTACT DETAILS

St Nicholas Church, Rectory Lane, Stevenage, SG1 4DA
 St Mary's Church, Church Lane, Graveley, SG4 7LY

CHURCH WARDENS:

St Nicks Mike Wilton – 07946 140909
 St Nicks Karen Walker – 07427 576870
churchwardens@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk
 St Mary's Eunice Sirkett – 07709 248625

Enquiries for weddings, funerals and baptisms – 07733 995779 or admin@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk