



THE HERALD

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



www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk

www.stmarysgraveley.org.uk

Dear friends,

January 2024

Happy new year! I hope 2024 is off to a good start for you all.

In the church calendar, the Christmas season is transitioning to Epiphany, when we particularly remember Christ's appearing (*epiphaneia* in Greek) to the nations of the world (as represented by the magi). This season lasts until 2 February, Candlemas.

'He may have appeared', some may say, 'but where is He now?' The Lord Jesus' first appearing, like Christmas 2023, may have come and gone but the Lord's latter appearing remains at hand. As we saw from Luke 21 a few weeks ago, 'your redemption is drawing near'.

The trope of the wild-eyed Christian prophesying the end times is sometimes lampooned in the media (think Lynn in *Alan Partridge*). It is unfortunate that over-interpretation of individual events by some leads to such satire, for Jesus' return is more sure to occur than Christmas 2024.

As we plan diaries for the future, let us keep in mind that event most sure to come.

Revd Edward Keene

**Rector, Stevenage (St Nicholas)
and Graveley with Chesfield (St Mary)**

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Unless otherwise stated, both churches have services of Holy Communion (HC) on the 2nd and 4th Sundays and Services of the Word (MW) on 1st and 3rd Sundays. 5th Sundays are joint Services of the Word at St Nicholas - starting at 10:30am.



7 th January	Romans 1: 1-17	(MW)
14 th January	Romans 1: 18-32	(HC)
21 st January	Romans 2	(MW)
28 th January	Romans 3: 1-20	(HC)

MIDWEEK ACTIVITIES



There are benefice **home groups** currently meeting on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings and Monday afternoons. Please ask Edward if you wish to join one.

Every Wednesday at 7pm, there will be an **act of prayer** at St Nicholas Church – either a benefice prayer meeting, or a service of evening prayer – check the church calendar for details:

[Calendar – St Nicholas Church](http://www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk)
[saintnicholaschurch.org.uk](http://www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk).

Every other Wednesday, on the same week as home groups, there will be an 8am **morning prayer** meeting on Zoom. Ask Edward for details.

*St Nicholas will also be open for **visitors and private prayer** on Tuesdays from 2-4pm, Wednesdays from 12noon-2pm and Thursdays from 10am-12pm & 2.30-4.30pm.*

Flower arranging - please see Chris Chambers for more details – full training given. Occasional Thursdays 10am-12pm, & 6.30pm-9pm at St Nicholas. More info and meeting dates are on the notice board in the parish room.

OTHER EVENTS COMING UP

St Nicholas Walking Group – The next walk is on Friday 19 January starting at 10 am from the Fisherman, Symonds Green. Approx 5-mile walk. Please let Karen Cattell know if you are walking and wish to stop for lunch.

Baptism Enquiry session – Saturday 3 February at 11am – please speak to Edward if you're interested in having your child baptised and would like to come along to find out more.

Church Weekend Away 22-24 March – There are still tickets available. Please email Edward to book.

Transport to the venue (in Suffolk) will be available for some – we can arrange lift-sharing and hope to have use of a minibus from Oak Church.

The weekend will be fully catered. Accommodation is in comfortable rooms for individuals, couples, and families.

The guest speaker is Rev Dr Lee Gatiss, Director of Church Society and a prolific author. He will be speaking on the topic of the Cross – a very apt theme for Palm Sunday weekend, a week before Easter.

JOIN A(NOTHER) SERVING TEAM

There are many teams which serve the life of our parishes. Maybe you are looking for new ways of being involved this new year. Here is a run-down for you to consider. Teams operating only on Sundays are *in italics* and those urgently in need of new helpers are **marked in red**.

Even if you don't feel drawn to join a new team, please do pray for the work of all these teams in our churches and give thanks for them.

In both churches

Bible readers – *reading lessons from scripture in the Sunday services*

Intercessors – *leading the congregation in prayer during Sunday service for the needs of the parishes, the world, and one another*

Evangelism team – conducting door-to-door outreach on Fridays (March to October) and hosting the after-school hot choc drop-in in St Nicholas on Thursday afternoons

Flower arrangers – dressing the churches for special events and seasons

Bell ringers – marking the times of Sunday service in the traditional fashion! Mid-week practise

In St Mary's only

Choir – leading the sung worship on the 2nd Sunday of each month and at special events, e.g. the annual carols by candlelight. Mid-week practise

Organ rota – *providing accompanying music for our sung worship each Sunday*

In St Nicholas only

S-Club leaders & helpers – *running Sunday school during the middle of the church service, in the upper parish room*

Music groups – *leading the sung worship on Sundays*

Hospitality team – *providing after-service hot drinks from the kitchen on Sundays*

PA & Livestream team – *operating the sound desk, slides, and video stream equipment (NB very little technical experience necessary – DO NOT FEAR!)*

Welcome team – *warmly welcoming the masses to our Sunday services!*

Maintenance & fabric team – regular Thursday morning upkeep of our building and churchyard plus occasional odd-jobs

Cleaners – preparing the church for Sundays (usually done on Fridays)

Church sitters – two-hours shifts sitting in pairs in church mid-week to welcome visitors and keep the building safe

Please contact Edward or Alison if you would like to get involved in any of the above.

KEY CONTACTS

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St Mary's Eunice Sirkett (on sabbatical)

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