



The Shrevenham and Ashbury Benefice

“Mirroring the hospitality of God”

Sunday 31st January Candlemas

Vicar: The Rev'd Norma Fergusson. Tel 01793 784338

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Associate Vicar: The Rev'd Canon Paul Richardson. Tel 01793 710241

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Licensed Lay Minister: Mr Richard Fergusson. Tel 07788 436831



Service details were accurate at the time of publication. Please visit the Benefice website for up-to-date information.

www.shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk

Sunday 31st January

11.30am Holy Communion. Live on [Facebook](#).

Canon Paul Richardson is giving today's sermon.
Watch on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#) from 9am.

Tuesday

9:00am Morning Prayer. Live on [Facebook](#).

Wednesday

9:00am Morning Prayer. Live on [Facebook](#).

10:30am The Character Course via Zoom.

2:00pm ASK Holy Communion.

Live on [Facebook](#).

6:00pm Benefice Wardens' Meeting via Zoom.

8:00pm The Character Course via Zoom.

Thursday

9:00am Matins (BCP). Live on [Facebook](#).

Friday

7:30pm Virtual Wine Tasting. Details below.

Saturday

10:00am Family Service. Join us on [Facebook](#).

Sunday 7th February

11.30am Holy Communion. Live on [Facebook](#).

5:30pm Compline and Benediction.

Live on [Facebook](#).

Virtual Wine Tasting - A taste of Australia

Join us via Zoom at 7.30 pm on Friday 5th February for a fun and informative wine tasting evening with wine expert and educator Abbie Bennington.

Guided by Abbie, we'll be taking a virtual trip to sunny Australia - from the comfort of our own sofas!

We'll be tasting a Shiraz and a Viognier. Abbie will be telling us about each wine and talking us through how to taste them like an expert.

Tickets are £10 per household

and you will also need to purchase a bottle of each wine at approximately £10 each.

When you sign up you will receive details of Abbie's recommended wines which are available from Sainsburys. If you can't get those particular ones, any Australian Shiraz and Australian Viognier will be fine.

To book your place, email

claireroutley@btinternet.com.

Payment can be made via BACS, or via cheque/cash at Teallach Cottage, High Street, Ashbury.

In aid of St Mary's Church, Ashbury

Raindrops on Snowdrops



It wasn't quite "raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens" when we went for our walk the other morning – more like "raindrops down collars and children in puddles." But it was lovely to be outside and away from the computer screen. For all its benefits, zoom can definitely be too much of a good thing! And, for those of us too old to splash in puddles, there was a moment of real joy when we spotted two clumps of snowdrops along the side of the road. A sure sign that spring really isn't far away.

Do you have snowdrops in your garden yet? We have one, now somewhat battered, snowdrop which makes me smile every time I see it. I wish I could remember which poet it was who wrote that, even under the cold blackness of our wintry gardens, "the sun touches the heart of a snowdrop." (Please tell me if you know). It's such a beautiful, comforting image of hope and a promise of new life to come.

People used to call snowdrops "Candlemas Bells" as they can arrive in time for the church's celebration of Candlemas on 2 February. The Candlemas Gospel (Luke 2: 38) also contains images of hope and a promise of new life in this world and the next.

And it's a festival of light, too: the day when candles were brought to church to be blessed for the coming year. You can even predict the weather by Candlemas! There's apparently a tradition that: "If Candlemas Day is clear and bright, winter will have another bite. If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain, winter is gone and will not come again." It will be interesting to see what happens on Tuesday.

Perhaps it's time to recover some of these old traditions. They link us back to a time when it seems to have been easier to see God in everyday life and not just in places set aside by man for holy things. The beauty of creation is everywhere: we're the ones who have stopped noticing and giving thanks. We are less than three weeks away from Ash Wednesday. Maybe this is the year to make a point of giving up time rather than chocolate? Time to go for walks; to notice and enjoy the things and the people we see; and to give thanks to the God who made snowdrops. And puddles.

Norma

Locked down, open-hearted

Living life in all its fullness



Instead of a Lent Course this year we are joining in with the Diocese's "Come and See" programme.

We have registered as a Benefice and are encouraging all our members and supporters to sign up individually to share in the resources of "Come and See", particularly Bishop Steven's daily reflections on The Beatitudes, The Creed, and The Lord's Prayer.

Sign up via the link below,
or visit our [website](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see/) for more information.

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see/>

For those who would like to meet, virtually by Zoom, we are laying on 6 sessions over Thursday evenings, and Saturday breakfast-time. Email [Lucy Laird](mailto:Lucy.Laird@oxford.anglican.org) to receive a Zoom link to enable you to join us.

Thursday from 7:30pm – 8:45pm
on 25th February, 11th and 25th March
Saturday from 8:00am – 9:15am
on 28th February, 13th and 27th March

These will provide an opportunity to discuss what Bishop Steven has said, and about how we are reacting to what we are discovering about God, and ourselves through "Come and See".

We hope that we will be able to offer the opportunity for all of us to renew our Baptism Vows at services on the Sunday after Ascension Day - 16th May. And we will be providing preparation and nurture courses for any who wish to be baptised and/or confirmed around Pentecost.

Leaflets about "Come and See" will be available for those who are not on-line.

Let us know if you would like one.

Norma, Paul, and Richard are available by telephone to anyone who wants to discuss their thoughts about "Come and See".

Norma 01793 784338
Paul 01793 710241
Richard 07788 436831

Ashbury Cycle of Prayer

Please pray this week for all who live and work in Kingstone Winslow.

Clergy Days Off

Rev'd Fergusson is off duty on Monday
Canon Richardson is off duty on Monday & Tuesday

Lost and Found

You might have wondered how far our Benefice Facebook page reaches. Helen Franks lives in Australia and is the daughter of Ashbury PCC secretary Roger Simons' cousin. Although Helen had stayed with the Simons' in 2010, she only had Roger's old email address, and had been unable to contact him to let him know that her Mother-in-Law had died. She knew Roger and Maggie had links to Ashbury Church and an online search led her to our Benefice Facebook page where she not only found the new email address but also watched Roger and Maggie leading a recent Morning Prayer! Helen is now catching up regularly with Roger, having found the up-to-date contact details.

Ashbury School Foodbank

With lockdown taking its toll on many in various ways, we would like to support our families through providing our own foodbank during this lockdown period.

We would like to invite you to support this by donating food items to our stand outside of the school grounds.

We would welcome donations of tinned food, dried foods, packet foods, anything that will not go off or perish, as well as any hygiene or sanitary products.

The aim will be to keep this topped up over the coming weeks to support everyone during the lockdown period.

Anyone is welcome to come and help themselves to things they may need to support their families.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Rachael Smith
Headteacher, Ashbury CE Primary School



Sunset over Longcot