

SERVICES TODAY, Sunday 4th January 2009, Epiphany

Highworth 8.00am Holy Communion CW, Allan Bucknall
9.00am Parish Breakfast, all welcome
10.00am Morning Worship, Arthur Woo
Hannington 6.00pm ICC Songs of Praise, URC led by HCC
10.30am Holy Communion CW, Alan Hawker
Blunston 10.00am Family Communion CW, John Rees

PARISH BREAKFAST

All are welcome at Parish Breakfast on Sunday 4th January - early risers welcome, in fact everyone will be welcome to this monthly get-together, 9am approximately in the Church Room. **Ian Miller**

SERVICES NEXT WEEK, Sunday 11th January 2009

Highworth 8.00am Holy Communion BCP, Geoff Sowden/Arthur Woo/Jean Ashton
10.00am Parish Communion, Geoff Sowden/Arthur Woo/Jean Ashton
6.00pm Informal Worship, tba
Hannington 10.30am Morning Worship, Charles Kirke
Blunston 8.00am Holy Communion BCP, Rev Dr Richard Armitage
10.00am Family Worship, Jane Ockwell
6.30pm Evensong, Geoff Sowden/Charles Kirke
Grove Hill 7.30pm Evening Service, Arthur Woo

CHRISTMAS MAIL

Please give the letter-rack another check, there are still some cards in there. Perhaps you could deliver to a neighbour? The rack will be cleared of Christmas this week so please ensure any you have posted are rescued!

CHRISTMAS STAMPS

Please remember to bring in those stamps you saved from your Christmas post for the Children's Society. The box is under the letter rack table by the south door.

RECYCLING CHRISTMAS CARDS

When you take your cards down this weekend, there are two ways of recycling them. They can go into your orange kerbside box for paper/card recycling; or they can be used by The Woodland Trust to plant more trees in the Swindon area. Participating stores in Swindon for the Trust are WH Smith, Tesco (Ocotol Way), Marks & Spencer and TK Maxx. Or you could turn them into new Christmas cards or present labels for next Christmas!
Hilary Fortnam

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Sun 4th 9.00am Parish Breakfast, Church Room - all are welcome
2.00pm Church Room booked for private hire till 4.30pm
Mon 5th 9.30am Prayers in church
10.00am Ministry Team meeting, Church Office
10.00am Monday daytime fellowship (contact Bella)
1.15pm Funeral of Daisy Smith, St Leonard's, Blunston
9.30am Pilates in the Church Room
Tue 6th 10.00am Tuesday Daytime Fellowship (contact Lynn)
9.30am Music Bugs, Church Room
9.30am Little Fishes, Cullerne Room and Chancel
7.00pm Pilates in the Church Room
8.00pm Wednesday Fellowship, 26 Priory Green (Wendy)
10.00am Holy Communion, Warneford Chapel in church
11.00am One Only in Church Room
7.30pm Alpha in Church Room
Fri 9th 7.00pm Choir Practice
Sat 10th 10.00am Coffee Morning and Bulletin folding, Church Room

FROM THE HOMERS

Jean and Alan Homer are most grateful to all who sent greetings at Christmas. It is their hope that all have been blessed at this time, and their prayer that the good Lord's blessing will continue richly throughout AD2009.

NEW DAYTIME HOMEGROUPS

If you're interested in meeting for bible study, fellowship & prayer during the daytime:
- Monday mornings from 10.00am-12noon is a group with a play area for children. Please contact Bella Fasham.
- Tuesday mornings at 10.00am starting from 6th January. Please contact Lynn Woo.

ADVANCE NOTICE

On 7th February the Saturday coffee morning will be in aid of Macmillan Care Support (Macmillan Nurses). Donations of cakes, raffle prizes or bring-&-buy items would be welcome.
Lady Robertson

CHRISTMAS COLLECTIONS

The collections from the Carol Service and the Crib Service were shared between the local charity Prospect Hospice which cares for the terminally ill, and the national charity Mercy Ships which operates a fleet of hospital ships in developing countries. Each of these charities received £235.65. Gloucester House, helping overcome addiction, benefitted from £154.86 from the church open days. Thank you to all who supported these charities.

LOST PROPERTY

We have a growing collection of items around the table just inside the main Church door - mainly umbrellas and clothes items. If you have lost anything recently, please take a look else Sue Ryder may benefit! **Hilary Fortnam**

ST MICHAEL'S FLOWER GUILD

Thank you to everyone who contributed towards the floral decorations in the Church at Christmas "In Loving Memory" - your donations were much appreciated. Thank you also to all our arrangers for their help and expertise at Christmas and throughout the year.

NEW ALPHA COURSE

After five successful Alpha Courses, St Michael's Church is hosting a new course starting **THIS THURSDAY 8th January** at 7:30pm in St Michael's Church Room. Please invite anyone you know who may be interested in exploring the Christian Faith (you need only invite them to the first night to check it out) - this is a great opportunity to enable the Gospel to be shared. Please contact either **Phil Bradley** or **Arthur Woo** for details. Alpha is open to anyone, all are welcome.

Phil Bradley & Alpha Team 2009



PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
may your light shine our way,
as once it guided the steps of the magi:
that we too may be led into your
presence and worship you,
the Child of Mary,
the Word of the Father,
the King of nations,
the Saviour of mankind;
to whom be glory for ever.

Amen

ALPHA HOSPITALITY

The next Alpha course starts this week and we are still looking for folk to help with providing the fellowship meal which starts each session. A simple meal is needed, with a 'portable' dessert. All costs will be met by the church. You would need to be at the church room by 7pm and should be able to leave by 8.30pm. The teams will need people to cook, to serve and to clear away, so even if you don't want to cook you can still help. Please sign the list in church if you are able to help. More details from **Lesley P**

PRAYING FOR THE BENEFICE

This week we pray for those living in Redlands Court, The Retreat, Rivers Way, Roman Way, for all who live or work on Sheep Street, and all who live in Sevenhampton village

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER...

...all those who are sick or troubled, praying especially for
Arthur Francis, Mick Sellar, Betty Taber
...all those who are recently bereaved, praying especially for those who love and miss
Jonathan Barclay-Timmis, Rodney Haines, Daisy Smith, Geertruida Steer, Fredrick Townsend

Parish of Highworth, with Sevenhampton & Inglesham - who to contact

All Ministry Enquiries - Rev Geoff Sowden (day off Friday) telephone 01793-765554
Church Office (Administration/General Enquiries) - tel 01793-762702 or
email to stmichaelshighworth@offices.orangehome.co.uk
Youth Ministry Enquiries - telephone 07983-507349 (day off Saturday)
www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk



Week beginning Sunday 4th January 2009, Epiphany

Epiphany Sunday is when we mark the coming of the wisemen to visit the baby Jesus. There is a lot of mystery as to the exact details of this visit. The familiar carol calls them kings, but the text identifies them as wisemen. They are often pictured as three men on camels but in fact we're not sure how many there were; we only know that they brought three gifts. The timing of their visit is also uncertain. Their travel would have been considerable and depending on when the star arose, it could have been months after the birth of Christ before the wisemen arrived.

Matthew does however give us enough detail to appreciate the significance that the wisemen attached to the birth of Christ. They travelled from far away lands to present costly gifts to a king. They were an envoy representing people who recognized Christ as a king who would be ruler over all kings, whose dominion was to be over all the earth. They sought to establish a peaceful and harmonious relationship with this king, submitting themselves to his rule.

The shepherds represented the least in society and they came and acknowledged Jesus as king. So too the wisemen represented the rulers and knowledgeable, came and acknowledged Christ as King. So we too are called to the same. Perhaps Epiphany is an opportunity for us to reflect upon those areas where we remain firmly in control, as individuals and as a church. It is our opportunity to submit to Christ in new and exciting ways.

Arthur Woo

Our reading today is

Matthew 2:1-12 (pew bible p966)

Please join us for refreshments after the 10am service today

If you prefer not to take alcohol, alcohol-free wine is available at our communion services - please take a pink card from a steward and ensure it is visible as you come for communion