



December 2024

LINK-up

Keeping Churches in Touch

www.godalmingchurches.org

facebook.com/ChurchesTogetherinGodalmingandDistrict

Message from the Chair

At the Open Meeting last month (as described below) the select group of us present talked about how our various churches serve the wider community at Christmas. But we also found ourselves discussing the different initiatives that run all the year round to improve people's welfare in both practical and non-material ways. It was a natural way for the conversation to develop: after all there's no reason why what happens at Christmas, if it's truly worthwhile, shouldn't happen at other times too. The needs are just the same, and they remain no matter what time of the year it is. The only exceptions, perhaps, are for situations people find themselves in that are more acute in the winter, such as rough sleeping; we might indeed think more about those at Christmas merely because it tends to be cold.

But really our minds turn particularly to this kind of community service at Christmas because the message of the Incarnation of Christ throws need into particular relief. God becomes human, and, more than that, becomes a poor and marginalised human with only temporary shelter, born into danger and threat, and this reminds us forcibly of the needs around us in a way we can't ignore if we're paying any attention at all to the narrative. Of course there are secular motivations too – if Christmas is a time when people get together and celebrate, at least partly involving the spending of a lot of money, it seems all the more wrong that some should suffer from loneliness or inequality at this time. But the Christian message adds urgency and a cosmic significance to those basic ideas.

We know that need isn't only for Christmas, and neither is service, but our reflections, hopes and acts can and should inform what we try to do for the rest of the year as well.

Rev James Rattue, Chair of Churches Together in Godalming and District
jamesrattue@hotmail.com

Churches Together news and events

Open Meeting, 15 November

Our Open Meeting on 15 November followed lunch at the United Church. We opened our discussion by talking about the Christmas Lunch. This is well-publicised and supported, but take-up has been declining over the last decade, possibly accelerated by the pandemic. This raises the question of whether it's the best way of serving our community at Christmas (of course our churches aim at serving the locality all year, but it seems especially important at Christmas that people are not left out of festivity and celebration). Also, the Anglican Deanery Synod had just been examining deprivation statistics for the local parishes which was interesting in terms of revealing patterns of (for instance) social housing and land use, even within a district which is prosperous overall.

It was appropriate that we'd just taken part in the weekly lunch at GUC. This is an inexpensive meal provided by one of four teams who take a turn each month. There were about a dozen-to-fifteen customers today, which was a good turnout, according to Gwen.

We discussed various elements of community service in our own church communities, not

necessarily only focused on material needs but also issues such as loneliness and grief. Angela described the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society in the RC parish, which organises social and pastoral work ranging from supplying items of furniture for Ukrainian refugees to arranging lifts to appointments for people undergoing medical treatment, and providing phone cards. Margot mentioned the Bereavement Café at Busbridge, and James described the Hearing Aid clinic and *Kettle's on* at Farncombe.

We were aware that there was potentially need of various kinds in the area but which we might not know about. The existence of the Food Bank and Community Store demonstrated that. James mentioned an occasion some years ago when he and Maggie Stirling Troy had had contact with people who struggled with literacy, but had moved no further than discussing the issue. Occasionally a visit in connection with an occasional office revealed a household in some need, but this was decreasing in frequency as the Church conducts fewer funerals and baptisms. We forgot to mention the fact that the Henry Smith Trust has now moved away from distributing its annual surplus at Christmas through the churches, and was now dividing it between Loseley Fields and All Saints Schools, as the schools were in a better position to assess material need in families; the churches would encounter it in a random rather than a systematic way.

Next prayer breakfast

The next prayer breakfast is on Saturday 25 January from 8.30am, at St Mark's (the Minster at Franklyn Road).

Christmas lunch

We are delighted that the Christmas Lunch will again be hosted by the Baptist Church and run by the experienced team. To volunteer on the day, contact Gillian Martin (gmartin1502@outlook.com or 01483 429640); to come to the lunch, contact Carole Goff-Wood (shosholozo@hotmail.com or 07501 208814 or via post at the Baptist Church).

News of the Churches and organisations

Godalming Minster

Christmas events and services

All our Christmas events and services can be found on the website:

<https://godalmingminster.org/christmas-services>

Simon Taylor

We are delighted to share that our Rector Simon Taylor was installed as an honorary canon of Guildford Cathedral on 24 November at 6.00pm at Guildford Cathedral.

We'll be saying goodbye to Simon, Catherine, Jacob, Luke and Daniel at the special All in One Service at 10.30am at Church Street on Sunday 5 January 2025. This will be an act of worship, thanksgiving for Simon's 14+ year ministry and leaving do rolled into one. All are welcome to attend.

Stay curious. Try Alpha.

The next Wednesday evening and Thursday morning Alpha courses are in the diary to start on 29/30 January 2025. Find out more at <https://godalmingminster.org/alpha>

The Bereavement Journey

The next 7-week course will start on Monday 3 February. More details at

<https://godalmingminster.org/tbj>

godalmingminster.org

St John's Parish Church, Farncombe

As always in the run-up to the Christmas season we are delighted to welcome a variety of local organisations for their Christmas events and concerts, including Broadwater School and Farncombe Infants, for their nativity services.

Our own events, among them the Carol Service on Sunday 22nd, and Carols by Candlelight on Friday 20th, as well as the Christmas services themselves, are open to everyone.

In the New Year we hope to run an enquirers' course on Monday evenings based around five presentations about what it means to be a Christian.

www.farncombe.org.uk

Godalming Baptist Church

Christmas Table Centre Workshop, Saturday 14 December, 10.00am

Come and learn from an experienced florist how to make a wonderful table centre display. All materials will be provided. All instruction will be given in a friendly informal atmosphere, with refreshments provided. You will learn how to make bows, wire cones and attach all manner of materials to your design. Please book early, cost £20 as this is sure to be popular! Contact Clarissa Harris 07957 569732 by phone, text or WhatsApp or clarissaharris27@gmail.com to book your place or for more info.

Life Issues programme

Hard copies of the Life Issues programme for 2025 are available at Godalming Baptist Church. Reception is open from 9.00am to 12.00pm weekday mornings during term time.

Forms are also available for Churches Together Christmas Day Lunch to be held at GBC.

Library Book Review

Songs of Praise - A Christmas Companion - A perfect book to enjoy on a dark winter's evening

Bullying – it's happening everywhere, Saturday 25 January 2025

Led by Revd Peter Jackson, 10.00am-12.30am (coffee from 9.30am). Come and find out ways of combatting bullying, whether for our own preservation or in coming alongside others who are experiencing this intimidating behaviour.

We wish everyone a very happy and blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year

www.godalmingbaptistchurch.org.uk

Godalming United Church

Online services: <https://guc.online.church>.

Service recordings: www.guc.org.uk, <https://bit.ly/GUCYouTube>.

Advent Bible Study: Joseph

Tuesday 17 December 10.00am, repeated Wednesday 18 December 7.00pm

Godalming Band Christmas Concert, Saturday 14 December 7.00pm

Tickets 01483 355129 or www.godalmingband.org.uk

Services

Sunday 22 December, 6.00pm - Candlelit Carol Service

Tuesday 24 December, 4.00pm - Christmas Eve Communion

Wednesday 25 December, 10:00 am - Family Service. Bring one of your presents to show

Sunday 29 December - No morning service at GUC – worship will be broadcast live from Woking Methodist Church

For more information and other future events, visit www.guc.org.uk for a constantly updated rolling calendar.

www.guc.org.uk

Roman Catholic Parish of St Edmund, King & Martyr, Godalming with St Joseph's Milford

Pope Francis' prayer intention for December

Pope Francis' prayer intention for December is that we may be pilgrims of hope. Let us pray that the 2025 Jubilee Year will strengthen us in our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

Lectio Divina for Advent

Fr Jonathan will lead a prayerful reading of the scriptures on Tuesday evenings at 8.00pm during Advent (last session on Tuesday 17 December) focussing on the readings for the coming Sunday. This will take place on Zoom, or you may come in person to 19 Croft Road if you really don't do tech! The Zoom link is available on the parish website.

<https://www.stedsgod.com/lectio-divina>

Wintershall Nativity performances

Wintershall Nativity Performances are on 12 to 16 December, 2.00pm/5.00pm. It's a great Christmas experience for the family. <https://www.wintershall.org.uk/nativity-journey-2024>

Ladywell crib building service

This beautiful interactive children's Christmas service is at 4.00pm on Wednesday 18 December in the Ladywell Chapel, Ladywell Convent, Ashted Lane, Godalming GU7 1ST. A wonderful occasion for families and grandparents.

Bethlehem Peace Light

Fr Jonathan will lead the Surrey Scout Peace light service at Bentley Copse, Shere, at 7.45pm on 19 December. If anyone would like to come, please let him know. The peace light will burn in the Lady Chapel at St Edmund's over Christmas.

Christmas Carols at Ladywell Convent

Our parish carol service takes place at Ladywell Convent on Sunday 22 December at 3.00pm, followed by mince pies, with a collection for a local charity.

CAFOD World Gifts at Christmas

CAFOD have added some great new options to their catalogue this year. These ethical charity gifts are virtual Christmas presents which help people around the world living in poverty, so please consider buying these as alternatives to wrapped presents! Order from catalogues or via: <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/>

Christmas Mass times are as follows:

Christmas Eve

5.00pm - Mass at St Joseph's, Milford - Children are very welcome to come in Nativity fancy dress.

7.00pm - Mass at St Edmund's

10.00pm - Mass of Christmas Night at St Edmund's with our Choir

Christmas Day

8.45am - Mass at St John's, Farncombe

10.30am - Mass at St Joseph's, Milford

The parish website: www.stedsgod.com gives more information on our parish activities.

Weekend Masses

Weekend Masses are celebrated at St Edmund's Godalming (6.00pm Vigil Mass) on Saturday evenings; and on Sundays at St John's Farncombe at 8.45am, with Children's Liturgy, (and with coffee after Mass on 15 December); and at St Joseph's Milford at 10.30am.

Weekday Masses

The dates, times and venues of these vary, so please check the calendar on the home page of our website: www.stedsgod.com

Parish gatherings

We offer a warm welcome to newcomers at our regular parish gatherings:

- Bumps & Babes on Monday mornings at St John's Farncombe from 10.30am to 12.00pm. The group welcomes all mums to be, as well as mums (and grandparents!)

with newborns and toddlers.

- SVP Afternoon Tea on Wednesday 11 December at 2.30pm at the United Reformed Church, Elstead (07379 108009).
- Prayer Group on Monday evenings (phone Richard for details on 01252 702230), starting at 5.00pm.
- Live Simply Our parish eco-group meets monthly. Joining details from Jo: jolewry@aol.com

St Edmund's church remains open every day usually between 10.00am and 4.00pm. (19 Croft Road, Godalming GU7 1DB).

www.stedsgod.com

The Franciscan Centre Ladywell

Days of Reflection

We are excited to invite you to our new Days of Reflection at the Franciscan Centre Ladywell! Our first gatherings will take place on Saturday 11 and Tuesday 28 January 2025. They will be held on the 2nd Saturday and 4th Tuesday of each month from 9.30am to 4.00pm.

These retreat days welcome all who seek renewal, inspiration, and fellowship in a warm and inviting atmosphere. The first theme will be hope, offering insights that promote spiritual growth and unity. You can look forward to a comforting mix of input, prayer, conversation, and personal space for reflection.

A delicious, homemade lunch, lovingly prepared with Franciscan hospitality, will be provided. The cost for each retreat is £25.

We warmly welcome everyone to join us in this journey of reflection and discovery. For more information, please feel free to reach out to us at franciscancentre@ladywell.org.uk or telephone 01483 675575.

We offer a place that allows for a deepening of your relationship with God, a place of welcome and safety as you navigate closer to your Creator. Take quiet time away from the haste of everyday life, either on a retreat or by engaging in the programmes and workshops we offer. The Franciscan Centre Ladywell is open for anyone seeking some space and quiet time. Any enquiries or to book your place please email us at franciscancentre@ladywell.org.uk

<https://franciscancentre.org.uk>

Godalming Quakers

Sunday Meetings for Worship

The regular weekly worship session continues to be held on Sunday mornings, starting at 10.30am at the Quaker Meeting House in Mill Lane, and all are welcome.

www.quaker.org.uk/meetings/godalming

Trinity Trust Team

'Tis the season for: Christmas assemblies and RE Days in local schools! We are blessed to be able to lead the children in Godalming Junior School and Chandler in RE Days, starting with a whole school assembly, a drama we'll also be taking to St Edmund's, St Mark & All Saints and Loseley Fields schools.

Every year we view the amazing events of Jesus' birth through the lens of characters who played their part; the last few years have seen 'We Three Kings', 'The Shepherds Tale', 'The Angels Story' and this year Andy has written a script viewing the events that changed the world through the eyes of Joseph.

We are still looking for volunteers or experienced youth/children's workers to join us at:

- Loseley Fields Youth Café every Monday night at Loseley Families Centre
- Fusion children's group midweek at Godalming Baptist Church
- FUSE discipleship group midweek at Godalming Baptist Church

If you, or someone you know might be interested in volunteering or paid opportunities with TTT please contact Andy Poulson on andy@trinitytrustteam.co.uk or check out our website.

Please pray for:

- positive responses from staff/students as we deliver a Christmas message
- the right team resources to continue all our various ministries
- new/existing partnerships within local churches to flourish
- local young people to want to know Jesus and be transformed by him.

We continue to thank all those who play a part in and support the youth ministry of the Trinity Trust Team. Our thanks and blessings to you all this season.

www.trinitytrustteam.co.uk

Items for next month's *Link-up*

Please send items for the January 2025 edition of *Link-up* to Matt Farrow:

farrow.matt@gmail.com by **Friday 20 December**, for publication on Friday 27 December.