



December 2023

LINK-UP

Keeping Churches in Touch

www.godalmingchurches.org

facebook.com/ChurchesTogetherinGodalmingandDistrict

Message from the Chair

Somehow I seem to have got on the mailing list of a Christian blogger who sends me (and presumably lots of other people) his thoughts from time to time. This is an occupational hazard for ministers: at least it's occasionally more useful than the email I had a couple of years ago from a Coptic Orthodox archbishop to inform me that he was excommunicating the Church of England as a whole and me for good measure. This time, though, my unknown correspondent is complaining about the way many churches (I suspect he's thinking about American megachurches rather than the congregations of Godalming) concentrate so much on getting more people in that they neglect feeding the sheep who are already in the fold. 'We're not all evangelists', he says: 'how have we made the Church for non-Christians?' This is striking because it goes directly against the phrase we often hear that 'the Church exists for the benefit of the people outside it'.

I know what he means, and yet 'the Church existing for non-Christians' is never more relevant than at Christmas, when we welcome people who would never come inside our doors any other time of the year and usually host a variety of events for organisations whose decision to use our spaces may be completely pragmatic, but still exposes them to who we are and what we stand for. The message that the Eternal comes to share their earthly lives, no matter who they are, no matter what they are doing, no matter how they have failed to be their better selves, is the most precious thing we could give to anyone, and it cannot be bad to offer it to as many as will let us. This Advent and Christmas season, in your different communities of faith, may you give the gift with joy, and find yourselves renewed as much as those who may receive it.

Rev James Rattue, Chair of Churches Together in Godalming and District

jamesrattue@hotmail.com

News of the Churches and organisations

St Peter & St Paul's Church and St Mark's Community Church & Centre

Services at St Peter & St Paul and St Mark's

Advent Sunday

Sunday 3 December, 8.00am - Holy Communion (BCP) followed by breakfast in the Octagon

Sunday 3 December, 10.00am - All Age Service at St Mark's Church

Sunday 3 December, 6.30pm - Advent Carol Service

Sunday 3 December, 9.30am - Advent Muddy at The Jack Phillips Memorial, by the Cloister GU7 1ES

Tuesday 5 December, 7.30pm to 8.30pm - Parish Prayer meeting via Zoom. Please contact Canon John for the Zoom link canonjohngodalming@btinternet.com

Sunday 10 December, 10.00am - Holy Communion

Sunday 10 December, 10.00am - Holy Communion at St Mark's Church

Thursday 14 December, 10.00am - Toddler Praise Christmas Launch at St Mark's Church
Sunday 17 December, 6.00pm - Carol Service at St Mark's Church
Sunday 17 December, 6.30pm - Nine Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve, Sunday 24 December

8.00am - Holy Communion (BCP)
4.00pm - Crib Service at St Mark's Church
4.00pm - Candlelit Celebration (0-11's) Please book here
5.30pm - Candlelit Celebration (11+) Please book here
11.30pm - Midnight Holy Communion

Christmas Day, Monday 25 December

10.00am - Christmas Day Family Communion
10.00am - Christmas Day Family Communion at St Mark's Church

Sunday 31 December

10.00am - Minster Eve Service at St Mark's Church NO SERVICE AT ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH

Please note Godalming Minster Pattern of Services from January 2024: Sunday 7 January, 9.00am - Choral Eucharist at St Peter and St Paul's Church Sunday 7 January, 10.00am - All Age Service at St Mark's Church

www.parishofgodalming.org.uk

St John's Parish Church, Farncombe

At St John's we began Advent with our traditional Service of Light on the evening of Advent Sunday, enjoying the quiet and reflective atmosphere.

Over the course of the next few weeks, we'll welcome Farncombe Infants School to tell the story of the Nativity, Broadwater School for their Christmas Concert, and Godalming Community Gospel Choir, Godalming Choral Society, Guildford Jazz Society, and the Big Group Sing for their own seasonal events.

We host the Mayor of Waverley's Carol Service on the evening of 10 December. Our own Carol Service will be on the evening of Sunday 17 December, and Carols by Candlelight on Friday 22 December gives the community a chance to contribute music and readings. There'll be barely any time to think about anything else!

www.farncombe.org.uk

Busbridge&Hambledon Church

Godalming Minster

BHC is counting down to the creation of Godalming Minster on 1 January 2024, when the churches of Busbridge, Hambledon, St Peter and St Paul's and St Mark's will unite. In the meantime, we are celebrating Christmas together as an opportunity to introduce Godalming Minster to the community. The dates for Christmas services and events are now available on [A church near you](#). There is now a very simple holding page for www.godalmingminster.org to direct everyone to Christmas events and services, and the existing church websites. Development of an exciting new website for January is getting underway.

There will be a celebratory launch service for Godalming Minster, led by the Bishop of Guildford, on 14 January 2024 at Godalming Minster St Peter and St Paul's Church Street. The new service pattern, which includes the addition of contemporary family worship to traditional choral services at Godalming Minster Church Street, will start on Sunday 7 January, then break

for the Minster-wide launch service on 14 January, and the Churches Together service on 21 January, and resume fully on 28 January.

Alpha course

The Alpha course will start at Godalming Minster St Mark's Franklyn Road on Thursday 11 January. All welcome.

Godalming Baptist Church

Advent wreath demonstration, Friday 1 December

6.30pm for 7.00pm start. Come and enjoy a special evening learning about the history, cultural and religious significance of the Advent wreath while watching a demonstration. No charge but donations appreciated towards the Shining Lights group and The Leprosy Mission. Please contact Maureen Jones to book a place: 01483 424515 or maureen.jones30@gmail.com

Coffee Stop, Saturday 2 December

From 10.00am until 12.00pm. Please do call in for coffee and mince pies. No charge but donations very much appreciated towards the vital work of the Shooting Star Hospice. Please do come and bring a friend!

Christmas table centre workshop, Friday 15 December

10.00am for 10.30am. Come and learn from an experienced floristry tutor how to make your very own Christmas table centre. All materials will be supplied, and full instructions will be given in a friendly, informal atmosphere. Cost £25. To book a place please contact Clarissa Harris on 07957 569732 or clarissaharris27@gmail.com.

Christmas Eve celebration

Finally on Christmas Eve at 10.00pm GBC are joining with Conservatoire Concerts for a beautiful evening of music, singing and reading in preparation for Christmas. Please see attached poster for more details.

Overwhelmed - Finding Balance in a fast-paced World, Saturday 27 January

Life issue session led by Andy Peck. The session promises to be so worthwhile covering issues such as What makes us overwhelmed and how do we respond? Learn from what Jesus modelled and taught His followers Come for yourself and those who need our ministry.

The Life Issues Brochure is now available -see attachment or do call in for a hard copy when reception is open on weekday mornings.

www.godalmingbaptistchurch.org.uk

Godalming United Church

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

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

Looking ahead

Saturday 2 December - Christingle Party 6.30pm. Bring the family and your favourite Christmas snack to share, and have fun making Christingles with informal Christmas music-making. Hot chocolate provided.

Sunday 3 December, 10.30am - Annual Gift Service with Christingles. An advent service with the opportunity to bring gifts to our Christmas tree for the less fortunate in our community - toys and gift vouchers please (to be distributed by the Cellar Camino Café)

Saturday 9 December, 3.00 to 5.00pm - Messy Church - Nativity-based activities for all the family. messy.church@guc.org.uk 01483 414778

Saturday 9 December, 7.00pm - Godalming Band Christmas Concert. Tickets 01483 355129 or www.godalmingband.org.uk

Friday 15 December - last Friday Lunches of 2023

Sunday 17 December, 6.00pm - Candlelit Carol Service

Sunday 24 December, 10.30am - Morning Worship, 4.00pm - Christmas Eve Communion

Monday 25 December, 10.30am - Christmas Day Family Service – bring along one of your presents to talk about

After a memorably wet autumn we remain vigilant in our delightful river-side setting: sandbags and other flood defences are at the ready – hopefully they won't be required! For other events, please 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' intention for December

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation.

Preparing for Advent with 'Invited'

This Advent we are hosting weekly sessions to help everyone prepare for Christmas. The theme is the 'Incarnation', and we will be reflecting on the Sunday readings and the Christmas message. Each session includes a film and discussion with small groups at the Franciscan Centre, Ladywell, on Thursday evenings (30 November, 7, 14 and 21 December); or small groups either on Tuesday afternoon or evening (27 November, 5, 12, and 19 December); or you can register to join the 'live' Thursday sessions online from home.

Invited is accessible to everyone, no matter where you are in your faith journey, so we look forward to welcoming you because in the Kingdom of God, we are all Invited!

The sign up is via the calendar on the homepage of our website: www.stedsgod.com

Christmas Fete at St Edmund's School

All are warmly invited to come for Christmas shopping, to meet Fr Christmas in his Grotto, and enjoy mulled wine and minced pies. The Drive, Godalming, GU7 1PF, Saturday 2 December, 10.00am to 1.00pm, £2 per family.

Ladywell Crib Building Service

Ladywell Crib Building Service is on Thursday 14 December at 5.00pm in the main Chapel of Ladywell Convent. This is a beautiful, interactive children's Christmas service, and the FMDM Sisters look forward to welcoming everyone.

Parish Advent Carol Service

This enjoyable parish get together is at 2.00pm on Sunday 17 December in the chapel at Ladywell convent. As last year, the Sisters will be handing out bags of homemade mince pies at the end of the Service!

Bethlehem Peace Light

Fr Jonathan will lead the Surrey Scout Peace light service at Bentley Copse, Shere, at 7.45pm on 20 December. The peace light will burn in the Lady Chapel at St Edmund's over Christmas.

Wintershall Nativity

This unmissable and very popular event is from 13-18 December, with performances at 2.00pm and 5.00pm. You can book tickets at www.wintershall.org.uk

Christmas schedule of Masses

Christmas Masses at 5.00pm (St Joseph's), 7.00pm and 10.00pm (St Edmund's) on Christmas Eve, and 8.45am (St John's) and 10.30am (St Joseph's) on Christmas Day.

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 3 and 17 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 our website: www.stedsgod.com

Parish gatherings

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

- Bumps & Babes on Mondays at 10.30am at St John's, Farncombe (last session before Christmas is on Monday 18 December)
- Live Simply Our parish eco-group meets monthly on Zoom. Joining details from Jo: jolewry@aol.com
- SVP Afternoon Tea on Wednesday 13 December at 2.30pm at the United Reformed Church, Elstead (phone 07379 108009).
- Prayer Group on Monday evenings (phone Richard for details on 01252 702230).
- St Edmund's church remains open every day for private prayer, usually between 10.00am and 5.00pm. (19 Croft Road, Godalming GU7 1DB).

www.stedsgod.com

The Franciscan Centre Ladywell

Loving the Dust We Are: Exploring Franciscan Ecospirituality

Led by: Fr. Daniel Horan OFM

Date: Sunday 10 December

Time: 9.30am to 5.00pm

Suggested offering: £35 includes lunch

In an age of climate emergency, we are increasingly aware of the threats to the human and more-than-human world. So much of the Christian spiritual tradition has focused not only on human interiority but also human exclusivity in relationship to the divine, reinforcing a distorted image of humanity as over and against and separated from the rest of creation. This day of reflection invites participants to revisit their own sense of creation and our individual and collective place in God's community of creation. Drawing on the profound but often misunderstood Franciscan spiritual tradition, Franciscan friar Prof Daniel Horan will suggest ways that we can renew our sense of cosmic creatureliness while deepening our appreciation for nonhuman creaturely agency, arguing for a Christian spirituality that encourages us to "love the dust we are" and work for justice for all God's creatures.

Fr. Daniel P. Horan, OFM, PhD is Professor of Philosophy, Religious Studies and Theology and Director of the Centre for Spirituality at Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana. He is also Affiliated Professor of Spirituality at the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. A columnist for the National Catholic Reporter, he is the author or editor of more than fourteen books. His academic research, writing, and teaching focuses on medieval and contemporary spirituality, theological anthropology, Christology, antiracism and LGBTQ issues, and theologies of creation. Prof. Horan regularly lectures around the United States and abroad; and serves on several university, academic, and publication editorial boards. He is recipient of numerous awards for his writing and service and is co-host of The Francis Effect Podcast.

Our programme of events offers participants the opportunity to experience the Beauty, Goodness and Generosity of God in a reflective hospitable Franciscan environment, through retreats, quiet days and workshops. There is also the opportunity for Spiritual Direction from our Spiritual Directors.

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

Christmas crib building service, Thursday 14 December, 5.00pm

A warm invitation for You and your children/grandchildren to join the Franciscan sisters at Ladywell to help us build the Christmas Crib in Ladywell Chapel, Ladywell Convent, Ashstead Lane, Godalming GU7 1ST. This year marks the 800th anniversary of the creation of the first Christmas Crib by St Francis in the Italian hillside town of Greccio. The service will be livestreamed.

Lent Retreat

Led by: Fr. Caoimhín Ó Laoide OFM

Date: 16 – 18 February

Suggested offering: £180

A Reflective Lenten journey led by Fr Caoimhin O Laoide

“The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. (Mark 1:12)”

During Lent we’re invited to shed what is superfluous and enter into the desert with Christ.

What are our deepest desires? Have they become lost in the clutter and busyness of our lives? What is preventing me from living an authentic life in the Spirit?

All are welcome to a retreat experience which includes optional daily Mass and an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, if desired.

Led by Fr. Caoimhín Ó Laoide OFM, a Franciscan friar, who will integrate insights inspired by the spirituality of Sts. Francis and Clare of Assisi into the celebration of this holy season.

Praying the Passion – Living the Gospel

Led by: Brian Purfield

Date: 15 – 17 March

Suggested offering: £180

In Holy Week the gospels of Mark and John are enticing gateways into both the familiar sequence of the passion story and the perhaps less known, but very beautiful, world of each evangelist’s portrayal of Jesus.

Brian Purfield is a team member at the London Jesuit Centre and has worked alongside the Jesuits since 2001. Prior to that he taught at the International Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury. He studied theology at the Gregorian University, Rome and at St. Bonaventure’s University, New York. His particular interest is in deepening a knowledge and love of the Scriptures for people, young and old, at a level that they can understand and seek to apply to their daily lives.

Franciscan Triduum Retreat

Led by: FCL Team

Date: 28 – 31 March

Suggested offering: £255

Come join us at the Franciscan Centre Ladywell for our Easter Triduum: Holy Thursday Evening to East Sunday.

Join our community as we celebrate the Easter Triduum, as we recall and journey with Jesus in his last days, from his final meal with His disciples to His resurrection from the tomb. Experience the liturgies as part of a community and take time and space in our beautiful centre to reflect more deeply on these profound events. Be alongside the Franciscan family, as we celebrate Easter in our unique way with daily prayer, reflections, liturgies and celebration.

Our programme of events offers participants the opportunity to experience the Beauty, Goodness and Generosity of God in a reflective hospitable Franciscan environment, through retreats, quiet days and workshops. There is also the opportunity for Spiritual Direction from our Spiritual Directors.

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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

Godalming Community Gospel Choir

Christmas Showcase, Saturday 9 December

St John's Church, Farncombe. Join us this Christmas for our exciting new repertoire. Adult ticket £10, children free. Tickets at gqgcinformation@gmail.com, from Record Corner (cash only) or pay on the door. Wine and refreshments available during the interval.

Festive Christmas singing, Thursday 21 December

At the Inn on the Lake, 7.30pm onwards. Free admission.

www.gqgc.org.uk

Feba

Although we enjoy the freedom to worship God in the way we want, there are many parts of the world where this is not the case. Feba Radio produces programmes on radio and internet and podcasts which can be heard in these places. Join us on Zoom on Wednesday 6 December at 7.00pm to learn more about Feba's work and to pray.

www.feba.org.uk/prayer

Trinity Trust Team

We head into December ready for our visits to local schools with our '23 assembly 'Silent Night' a short drama we have written giving the angel Gabriel's view on the life changing events surrounding the announcement then delivery of Jesus into the world. It is always such a delight to take these assemblies into local schools and we are blessed to be made so welcome.

On 7 December we will be combining the performance of the assembly with the delivery of bespoke Christian themed sessions to each year group at Godalming Junior School (school years 3-6) where the usual timetable is suspended for the morning (and whole day for the lower school) to help the children focus on the Christmas narrative and related themes.

Thank you to everyone who so kindly responded to our request for accommodation for Ola. He has been given a lovely room with a generous friend from Busbridge&Hambleton Church until the end of this year, so if anyone knows of a self-contained annex or similar, available from 1 January, do please get in touch.

Please pray for:

- Another accommodation base for Ola as he puts roots down in the Godalming area and seeks to become part of the community here
- Continued opportunities to prosper the gospel in schools and communities in the coming school year and for new partnerships within local churches
- All those who currently donate to TTT (both corporately and individually).

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 Christmas.

Items for next month's *Link-up*

Please send items for the January 2024 edition of *Link-up* to Matt Farrow:

farrow.matt@gmail.com by **Friday 15 December**, for publication on Friday 22 December.