



# Inspire

December 2019

Dear sisters and brothers,

At the beginning of November our Pathfinders put on a brilliant service about the life, ministry and murder of John the Baptist. As we enter the season of Advent John the Baptist is one of the Biblical characters that features prominently. It is John who heralds the fulfilment of God's promise to send the Messiah, a saviour for the people of Israel. It is John who calls people to prepare for the coming Messiah by turning back to God in repentance and faith. It is John who warns of coming judgement when people will be held accountable for how they have lived. Advent is an important time to step back and reflect on how we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus at Christmas and how we prepare ourselves for that day when Jesus will return as Lord and judge of all things.

John the Baptist was a prophet, raised up to speak God's truth without fear or favour in difficult times. In his ministry John challenged those with power and influence including the King. Many of us are familiar with the story of how John was imprisoned by Herod for daring to challenge the king's actions and eventually it cost John his life. We live in challenging times as our country faces a General Election and as the issues around Brexit continue to rumble on. One of the most disturbing features of the present situation is the way that lies, dissembling and false information are being churned out on a daily basis by political parties, their leaders and individuals seeking election. 'Fake news' has become one of the well-known phrases of recent years. I confess that at times I find myself despairing at the conduct of the election and also how it is being covered by the media. In a recent message the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have called on us as Christians to pray for those standing in the General Election and they go on to write this:



*'As followers of Jesus Christ each of us is called to honour the gift of truth, both to speak it and to seek it. We all have a responsibility to speak accurately, to challenge falsehoods when we hear them, and to be careful to separate facts from opinion'. (the full message is included in this month's Inspire)*

As Christians we are being called to speak prophetically in our time, to challenge what is false and to uphold the truth. We are also called, like John the Baptist, to point people to Jesus as the one who is The Way, The Truth and The Life. May God give us grace and courage to do this during the weeks and months ahead.

You may find it helpful to use the following prayer:

*God of grace and truth,  
send your Spirit to guide us  
as we discover your will for our country.  
Help us to discuss the issues before us  
with courtesy, truth and mutual respect,  
and grant that all who stand for parliament  
will seek to serve the common good,  
through him who came not to be served but to serve,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

On a personal note, as this is the last Inspire article I will be writing as Team Rector, I wanted to take this opportunity on behalf of Kate, Kristin, Daniel and myself to thank you for your love, encouragement and support over the last eight and a half years. There will be the opportunity for goodbyes over the next couple of weeks and time to look back and give thanks for all that God has been doing amongst us at St Mary's and in the Great Baddow Team Ministry.

My service of licensing to my new role as Mission and Ministry Adviser for the Colchester Episcopal Area will be on **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January, Epiphany**, at St Andrew's, Halstead at 7.30pm and there will be further details to follow. It's a particular joy that the service will take place where Katie de Bourcier ministers. We will be praying for you all over the coming months during this period of change and would value your prayers for us, particularly that all the arrangements for moving to a new house will fall into place!

With love and prayers, Philip (Team Rector)

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## **Archbishops' General Election Message**

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*As we approach this General Election, we also herald the season of Advent, the birth of Jesus Christ and the reminder of his return as our judge. In Christ's birth God chooses to come and live among us, intervening in our imperfect world, and offering the hope of life reordered and restored. At his return he promises the setting right of all things. It is time to set aside apathy and cynicism and to be people of hope.*

*We often forget that our political leaders face huge responsibilities and challenges, and these come with personal sacrifices too. In our prayers for this election we should be thankful for those who put themselves forward for public service and ask that they will seek the common good and justice. We should take part, as important decisions are being made that will affect us all. That includes fulfilling our democratic duty to vote.*

*As followers of Jesus Christ each of us is called to honour the gift of truth, both to speak it and to seek it. We all have a responsibility to speak accurately, to challenge falsehoods when we hear them, and to be careful to separate facts from opinion.*

*Offering facts and opinions should be done with humility and in love. People who hold different political views are not our enemies.*

*Two people can look at the same facts and in good faith interpret them very differently. Issues need to be debated respectfully, and without resorting to personal abuse. We should engage responsibly, especially on social media. If we leave our echo-chambers and make a conscious effort to listen to people and ideas we disagree with it will help us understand where others are coming from in this election period, even though we may disagree vehemently. As Christians, in recognising God's image in others who are not in our own image, we can start to build relationships that bridge political divides.*

*We will be praying for debates that seek to unite rather than divide, to bring us together and to rebuild trust in each other, in our institutions, and in our politics. As Jesus did, through his birth in poverty, his actions and words and his warning of judgement for those who seek only their own wellbeing, we must put the vulnerable and those on the edges of society first. Taking part in a democracy is a privilege and a responsibility, so let us be guided by a love for our neighbours, near and far, and seek that common good that truly benefits us all. That includes justice for the oppressed, protection for the persecuted, and a commitment to combat climate change and adapt to its effects. It also includes a just economic system, open and encouraging to aspiration and ambition, supportive of those who struggle.*

*We call on all standing for election to reject the language of prejudice and not to stoke stigma or hatred towards people on the grounds of their religion, their culture, their origin, their identity or their belief. Several groups, especially in Jewish and Muslim communities, feel threatened and are in much anxiety. No individual or community in our shared society should have reason to lack confidence in their belonging or security, so parties must make it an absolute priority to offer positive reassurance and avoid anything that increases the perception of fear.*

*Let us seek the wisdom and guidance of our Heavenly Father, the source of all wisdom, who inspires us as we wrestle to address the questions and challenges of our time and is both authority and judge over all human beings. May His wisdom and His vision guide our debate, campaign and vote, for those who will be elected as our representatives.*

*As we head into the season of Advent, as Christians, let us be filled with hope and call on Him, who is the ever-present guardian and final judge in our nation and in our politics.*

*In the Name of our Risen Lord, who was and is and is to come. Amen.*

**Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby**

**Archbishop of York, John Sentamu**

Please do come along and join our very welcoming and friendly choir to sing at our annual Carol Service on **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 6.30pm.**

There is no need to feel daunted as everybody is welcome, and you don't need to be able to read music either! A Sign-up sheet is at the back of church.

Rehearsal Dates:

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> and Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December** for 7.45pm start in Church.  
**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December** 10am start.

For further information please contact Anne Fitz on:  
Telephone: 01245 471249 Email: [anne@lamp7.com](mailto:anne@lamp7.com)



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## Carol Singing at Broomfield Hospital

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Calling all carol singers to create a merry & festive group of singers to entertain patients at Broomfield Hospital with our brothers and sisters from St Paul's Church on **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December.**

You need to be 18 or over, in good health and voice. Please meet by the giant statues in the hospital atrium at 6.10pm. We will sing from 6.30pm for an hour or so. Please let the Church Office know if you are able to sing. Thank you.



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## Decorating the Church for Christmas

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We will be decorating on **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December** at 11am. Please come and help to arrange the windowsills, pulpit and porch. We will be using white painted twigs, evergreen trails and white silk flowers.



Gifts of potted white cyclamen and white Hellebores would be really appreciated. White will show up beautifully by candlelight for the midnight service, any more creative ideas welcome!  
Looking forward to seeing you. St Mary's Flower Group

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## Messy Tea

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Dates for December – **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December**

Normally every **2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday** for families with children aged 0 to 11, with children being accompanied by an adult (over 18). The sessions are from **3.30 to 5.00pm** with a craft, Bible story and a tea consisting of toast with toppings.

**Messy Tea**

Come and join us for Tea!

Messy Tea is a fantastic opportunity to continue building relationships with families and encourage family time while sharing Gods love, do come and join us!  
It's also not too late to join the team, so please speak to Kirsty Houghton or Revd Sue Finch if you are interested. Many thanks.

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## Little2BigVoices Christmas Concert

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**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 3.00pm**  
**at St Mary's Church**



A Christmas concert organised by Jane Parker  
with donations to: Mid Africa Concern (MAC) and Little2BigVoices.

Come and hear a medley of Christmas songs, Christmas Carols and pop songs!  
Refreshments will be available. Website: [www.little2bigvoices.com](http://www.little2bigvoices.com)

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## **Breakfast & Bibles**

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**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December starting at 9am** for breakfast, in Bell St Hall.

The last meeting of 2019 will be on **Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December** 9.00am  
onwards at Meadgate Church, The Orchards Café.

Children are very welcome. No previous Bible knowledge necessary.

Please ring Dot Cumming for further information on 07971 808170.  
We look forward to seeing you there.

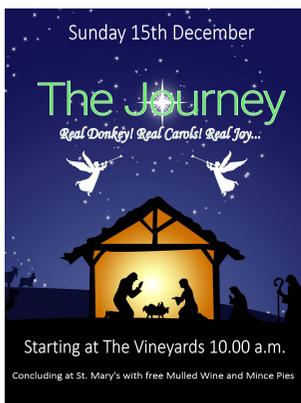


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## **'The Journey' 2019**

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**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December,**  
**starting at The Vineyards at 10.00am**



Over the past few years the local churches in Great Baddow have combined together to stage "The Journey".

Come and join us once again, starting at the Vineyards, and follow 'The Journey' which tells the Christmas story with carols, narration, acting and a real donkey!

Then we conclude inside the church, followed by complimentary mince pies and drinks (including mulled wine)!

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## **Church Diary for December 2019**

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<b>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December – Advent Sunday</b>		
	8.00am	Holy Communion
	10.00am	Holy Communion with Powerhouse
	6.30pm	<b>Gt Baddow Team Joint Advent service at Meadgate, The Orchards</b>
	6.30pm	Pathfinders in Bell St Hall
<b>Monday 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	8:30am	Morning Prayer in Prayer Chapel

	10.00am	MAC group in Bell St Hall
	7:00pm	Prayer meeting for the church and the world
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Church Office Closed</b>	
	8:30am	Morning Prayer in Prayer Chapel
	9:30am	Meditation group in Prayer Chapel
	<b>6.00pm</b>	<b>Carol Singing at Broomfield Hospital</b>
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup>	8:30am	Morning Prayer in Prayer Chapel
	10:00am	Holy Communion
	10:00am	Coffee Pot in Bell Street Hall
	7.30pm	Crossfire meet at Ben & Nicki's
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	8:30am	Morning Prayer in Prayer Chapel
	11.30am	Church open until 2.00pm
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup>	11.30am	Church open until 2.00pm
	7.00pm	Bellringing Practice in Church
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	PAT Testing in all buildings
	3.00pm	Little2Big Voices Christmas Concert
<b>Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December – The Second Sunday of Advent</b>		
	8.00am	Holy Communion
	10.00am	Morning Praise with Powerhouse and <b>Farewell to Phil &amp; Kate Ritchie, Kristin &amp; Daniel</b>
	4.30pm	<b>Lathcoats Farmyard Nativity (parts from 4.00pm)</b>
	6.30pm	Pathfinders Christmas Party in Bell St Hall
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup>	8:30am	Morning Prayer in Prayer Chapel
	9.00am	Breakfast & Bibles meet in Bell St Hall
	7:00pm	Prayer meeting for the church and the world
	7.45pm	Carol Service Choir Rehearsal
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	8:30am	Morning Prayer in Prayer Chapel
	9:30am	Meditation Group in Prayer Chapel
	3.30pm	Messy Tea in Church
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	8:30am	Morning Prayer in Prayer Chapel
	10:00am	Holy Communion
	10:00am	Coffee Pot in Bell Street Hall
	2.30pm	Carol Singing at Kingfisher Lodge
	7.30pm	Crossfire meet at Ben & Nicki's
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup>	8:30am	Morning Prayer in Prayer Chapel
	11.00am	Café Club Christmas Lunch in Church
		<b>NO Church Open</b>
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup>	11:30am	Church open until 2.00pm
	6.30pm	'The Journey' rehearsals
	7.00pm	Bellringing Practice in Church
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup>	'The Journey' rehearsals all day in Church	

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December – The Third Sunday of Advent**

	8.00am	Holy Communion
	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>'The Journey' starting at the Vineyards</b>
	6.30pm	Quiet Holy Communion
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup>	9.00am	Breakfast & Bibles at Meadgate, The Orchards Café
	10.30am	Baddow Hall Juniors rehearsal in Church
	1.45pm	Baddow Hall Juniors Lower School Carol Service
	7.45pm	Carol Service Choir Rehearsal
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Baddow Hall Infants School Christmas Service
	1.45pm	Baddow Hall Juniors Upper School Carol Service
	<b>7.30pm</b>	<b>Carol singing at the White Horse</b>
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	10:00am	Holy Communion
	10:00am	Coffee Pot in Bell Street Hall
	11.00am	St Mary's Playschool Christmas Service
	4.00pm	Crossfire Social in Church
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Event in Church until 4pm
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Event in Church until 4pm
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup>	10.00am	Carol Service Choir Rehearsal
<b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December – The Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>		
	8.00am	Holy Communion
	10.00am	Family Service
	<b>6.30pm</b>	<b>Candlelit Carol Service in Church</b>
<b>Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Eve</b>		
	<b>Church Office closed for Annual Leave until Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2020</b>	
	3.00pm	<b>Crib Service</b>
	4.30pm	<b>Crib Service</b>
	11.00pm	<b>Midnight Communion</b>
<b>Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Day</b>		
	8.00am	<b>Christmas Holy Communion</b>
	10.00am	<b>Christmas Morning Praise followed by short service of Holy Communion</b>
<b>Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December – The First Sunday of Christmas</b>		
	8.00am	Holy Communion
	10.00am	<b>Family Holy Communion</b>
		<b>No Evening Service</b>

## The Church Office

### Hours of Opening:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday:

Wednesday & Friday

Tuesday evenings

Email: [stmaryschurchoffice@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryschurchoffice@gmail.com)

01245 477501

9:30am to 12:30pm, 1:45pm to 3:00pm

9:30am to 12:30pm

7:00pm to 8:00pm (wedding applications only)

Website: [www.stmarysgreatbaddow.org.uk](http://www.stmarysgreatbaddow.org.uk)



## Christmas at St Mary's, Great Baddow

# Christmas St. Mary's



## ***Sunday 15th December***

**8am** Holy Communion

**10am** **The Journey** *An all-age Nativity beginning in  
The Vineyards and ending at St Mary's*

**6.30pm** Holy Communion

## ***Sunday 22nd December***

**8am** Holy Communion

**10am** Family Service

**6.30pm** Candlelit Carol Service

## ***Christmas Eve***

**3pm** **Crib Service** *Come dressed as a favourite Nativity character*

**4.30pm** **Crib Service** *Come dressed as a favourite Nativity character*

**11pm** **Midnight Communion**

## ***Christmas Day***

**8am** **Christmas Holy Communion**

**10am** **Christmas Morning Praise** *An all-age celebration of the birth of  
Jesus followed by a short service of Holy Communion*