

ELSTOW ABBEY CHURCH MAGAZINE

December 2018 – January 2019

70p



An historic church with a living pilgrim faith

Church Contacts

Priest in Charge

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Lay Minister (Reader)

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Church Wardens

Mr Stephen McDonald

Mrs Andrene Kerr-Robinson

Director of Music

Mr David Ewbank

**Baptism & Wedding enquiries should be made in Church
on any Saturday morning between 10.00am – 12 noon**

The Elstow Abbey Website can be found at
www.elstow-abbey.org.uk

Find us on Facebook
[www.facebook.com/Elstow Abbey](https://www.facebook.com/Elstow_Abbey)

and on Twitter
[@Elstow_Abbey](https://twitter.com/Elstow_Abbey)

Keep Dancing you Star!

'It's nice to see you, to see you nice!' Thus Bruce Forsyth use to welcome my family and me, and millions of others every week, to the Saturday evening tv and *Strictly Come Dancing*. Who could have predicted, after the demise of *Come Dancing* in 1998, that *Strictly Come Dancing* – now in its 15th series – would prove such a triumph?

The extent of that triumph can be gauged not just from the number of people who watch it (an average of 10 million this year) but – and this is perhaps more significant – from the *diversity* of people who do so. How many other primetime TV shows can you think of whose hosts feels obliged to welcome 'ladies, gentlemen and children'? This really is for the whole family. And consider the footage each week of the contestants' families and friends rallying round to support and encourage them. Generation, gender and even cultural and racial divides are being broken down. And we delight in it.

But, beyond delight, can't we also see here, albeit through a TV screen, a glimpse of the glorious possibilities for the Church? Here is an indication of St Paul's vision of the Church as a united community (Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 2:11-22). One of the things that has really struck me since I arrived two years ago, has been the wide range of ages that are present every week in church. We all have a role we can play to help the growth of Elstow Abbey church as one family.

The vision of the future of our Abbey Church is exciting. The PCC are fully committed to developing our goals on the Mission Action Plan (MAP). I am also looking forward to relaunching the fundraising campaign early in the new year for the much needed development of the Church Hall.

But the vision, like each new routine on *Strictly Come Dancing*, is not easily achieved. It requires total commitment and the hard work of training – or, as we might put it in the church, obedience to the demands of being a Christian. It is only in engaging in the hard work of being a Christian that we truly flourish and experience life in the fullness Christ intends for us (John 10:10).

Strictly Come Dancing, X Factor, I'm a Celebrity... TV seems to be full of

programmes for wannabe celebrities. But when the stardom fades, what then?

Jesus, the Son of God, started life in an innkeeper's stable with a feeding trough for a bed. There were no paparazzi or headlines to announce his arrival, but the angels and a few shepherds knew a star who was born that day – a star whose light continues to blot out people's disappointments, failures and darkness. Forever.

I do hope that you will join with me and discover how Jesus can light up your life this Christmas.

Our task in the dance of discipleship is not ourselves to think up steps we feel comfortable with but to learn, perform and so be transformed by those that the Master came to teach us.

Have a wonderful Christmas and “keep dancing...”

Fr. Paul



Elstow Abbey Church

4th Annual

Community Christmas Dinner

Saturday 15th December.

Sherry served from 12noon

Please be seated by 12.30pm

This year we are offering FREE tickets for a Christmas meal to ANY pensioner who lives in Elstow (non residents £10).

Tickets available from the clergy and Joyce Willis.



When You Wish Upon a Star has a simple mission, to grant the Wishes of children living with a life threatening illness.

The charity was founded in Nottingham by Barbara White who was so inspired by a seriously ill four year old with a dream to meet Mickey Mouse that she wanted to bring smiles to the faces of many more brave and courageous children. Wishes have the power to transform the lives of the children and families they work with and since 1990 they have granted over 17,500 Wishes across the UK.

Some children Wish to be a fairy princess or soldier for the day, meet celebrities or sporting heroes that range from the Red Arrows to Mary Berry and others Wish for a laptop to keep in contact with their friends and family whilst in hospital. One of the most popular Wishes remains the exciting opportunity to swim with dolphins and meet all their favourite characters in Disney World, Florida.

In addition to Wishes throughout the year, the charity also organise a number of days out and treats for the children. Every December the charity also enables hundreds of children to swap hospital beds for sleigh rides transporting them away from appointments, treatments and injections to the winter wonderland of Lapland on board special Santa Express flights.

‘When You Wish Upon a Star’ believe every child deserves to smile and with your support this Advent we can help the charity give children and their families something to look forward to.

On Christmas Eve the collections at the Crib Services and Midnight Mass will be donated to the Wish Upon A Star Charity.

Are you Struggling? Help is at Hand – Just Ask!

Have you heard about our Village Agent, who is here to help older people to access the services and support they might need? Her services are free of charge, and she will phone or visit you at home.

Some of the things your Village Agent can help you with include:

- Blue Badge applications and renewals
- Assessing eligibility for Pension Credit
- Claiming Attendance Allowance if you need personal care
- Free home security checks
- Aids and adaptations for the home
- Support for carers

Do You Need Help with Filling in Forms? If you are struggling with paperwork, such as Blue Badge, Council Tax Reduction, Housing Benefit and Attendance Allowance applications, our Village Agent can help you.

Are You a Carer?

There are several excellent organisations who give support to carers in our area. **Carers in Bedfordshire** offers a range of support services, and also offer grants to help carers keep well and alleviate stress. **Tibbs Dementia Foundation** offers a range of activities for people with dementia and their carers, including Cognitive Stimulation; Music 4 Memory, swimming, gardening, counselling, walking and walking football. **Respite at Home** provides a befriending service and will provide a volunteer to sit with someone with a life-limiting illness, to give their carer a break.

Help for Pensioners on Low Incomes – Are you receiving the basic state pension and struggling to manage? Your Village Agent can tell you if there is any help available. In addition to Pension Credit, you might get help with NHS costs, or a rebate on your energy bill, or a small quarterly gratuity from the St Johns Hospital Trust (if you have been living in Bedford for at least 15 years). Get in touch for a confidential review.

You can call your **Village Agent** on **Freephone 0800 039 1234**

‘Little Pilgrims’

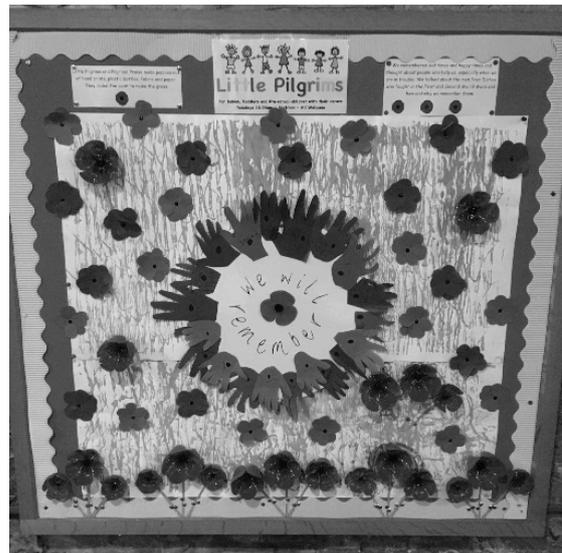
Little Pilgrims continue to meet in the Abbey on Tuesday mornings between 10am and 11.30am. In the summer we said farewell to the three older children who were to start school in September and to one who moved away, and we have since welcomed several new children and carers, so numbers remain buoyant.

One of the joys of the group is its stability. With the same children and adults coming every week, it provides a really good opportunity for us all to get to know each other. The children love coming to meet their friends and play together beautifully, learning to communicate

and share and solve problems together. The older children look after the little ones, and all of them quickly become confident to interact with whichever adult is close at hand. With the children all safely and happily ‘doing their own thing’, the adults have a chance to chat with each other and with the children. We provide a healthy snack of fruit and veg, which the children enjoy sharing together around a table. Each week there is a craft activity, often linked to the Church’s year (see the Harvest and Remembrance displays above!) We end each session with a story (mostly from the Bible) and a chat, singing (often with musical instruments) and a mad ride around the church on scooters, trikes and mini-cars.

I am enormously grateful for the support of all those who help week by week. Little Pilgrims wouldn’t happen without that help. If you would like to get involved as a helper, or attend with a pre-school child or children, we would love to see you. Please speak to me, Sarah, Chris, Carrie or Lainey for more information.

Rev’d Kate



SMART! Prebend Centre

STATISTICS

FROM JANUARY - SEPTEMBER 2018 WE HAVE:



SUPPORTED

440 unique visitors who have attended over 8000 times

PROVIDED

Over 2200 items of clothing



PROVIDED

Breakfast every day of the week

SERVED

7510 lunches



PROVIDED

1601 showers

On average we complete 26 assessments each month so we can best support our service users

Find us on
 Facebook

www.smartcjs.org

Throughout the winter there will be a box at the back of Elstow Abbey Church to collect donations towards the Prebend Centre, Bedford.

They currently require:

Toiletries

- Deodorant sprays
- Deodorant sticks
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Shower gel
- Shampoo
- Hand gel
- Pocket tissues
- Baby wipes
- Wet wipes
- Dry shampoo
- Sanitary products
- Shaving foam/gel
- Disposable razors
- Lip balm
- Face flannels
- Plasters


Elstow Abbey
Church of St Mary & St Helena

New Archdeacon of Bedford

The next Archdeacon of Bedford is to be the Rev'd Canon Dave Middlebrook, currently Vicar of the thriving St Luke's Church, Watford. He will be one of three archdeacons in the 1100 square miles of the Diocese of St Albans. Their role is popularly and historically described as being 'the eyes and ears of the bishop'.

Archdeacon Dave, as he will be known (he associates 'David' with being told off!) will live in Luton with his wife of 31 years, Anne, and daughter Katie and will, diary permitting, become a familiar sight on a local Parkrun, which he currently enjoys in Watford.

Dave has ministered in St Albans Diocese since his ordination in 1998, serving also in Chorleywood and Adayfield (Hemel Hempstead). His new role will involve contact with the hundred or so parishes of Bedfordshire, including those in Luton. The urban, suburban and rural communities of the area are ethnically and religiously diverse.

Dave is no stranger to Bedfordshire, having studied at Cranfield Institute of Technology and worked in Bedford for National Freight, as it was then known. With that experience and his love of walking, Dave is confident that he will soon get to know Bedfordshire and Luton. He is already thinking about a walking tour of parishes one summer, spending time between churches as well as in them, where people can get to know him as they share the walk. He also expects that this will take him to a fair few pubs as well!

'Alban Life' Magazine is coming to St Albans Diocese

Named after our founding saint, St Alban, Alban Life is a new quarterly printed magazine for the people of St Albans Diocese.

To be published at Advent, Lent, Pentecost and Harvest, each edition will give you 28 pages of encouraging, informing and inspiring stories about current issues and themes relevant to the life of people and churches in St Albans Diocese.

Look out for issue 1 at the back of church. We hope you will enjoy the issue which will ask if you are a tourist a traveller or a pilgrim when you go on holiday; how you can have a green Christmas, what makes a welcoming church and more!

Abbey every After!

We love weddings at Elstow Abbey. And why not... the Abbey Church does create a beautiful venue for that special day and a wonderful backdrop for some spectacular wedding dresses.

On February 15th – 17th we would like to welcome back to the Abbey a large number of dresses that have graced the aisle through the years. Were you married at Elstow Abbey? Do you still have that dress? If so we would love to exhibit it over the weekend in February along with a photo of the big day. We plan to open the Church for all day on Saturday 16th with a 'pop-up café' and on the Sunday evening to hold a special service, during which a mass renewal of vows will take place for those who wish. Followed by Fizz and Chocolates. All this should provide a wonderful backdrop to recall fond memories and an opportunity to meet with those planning and considering a wedding at the Abbey.



If you have a dress that you would be happy to exhibit over the weekend please email info@elstow-abbey.org.uk as we want to make sure we have the correct number of mannequins.



It may seem as if brides have been getting married in white forever, but this is not the case. In 1840, Queen Victoria married Prince Albert wearing a white wedding gown. In those days white was not a symbol of purity, blue was. In fact, many women chose the colour blue for their wedding dresses for specifically that reason. White, on the other hand, symbolized wealth. Before that, brides wore their best dress. The colour and materials of the dress varied depending on a woman's social status. On her wedding day, Grace Kelly wore a dress with a bodice made from beautiful 125-year-old lace.

Financial support

A big **THANK YOU** to all those who already have signed up to the 'Parish Giving Scheme' your financial commitment (irrespective of the size) is already making a difference. It is enabling us to set a budget and manage our financial obligations with ease.

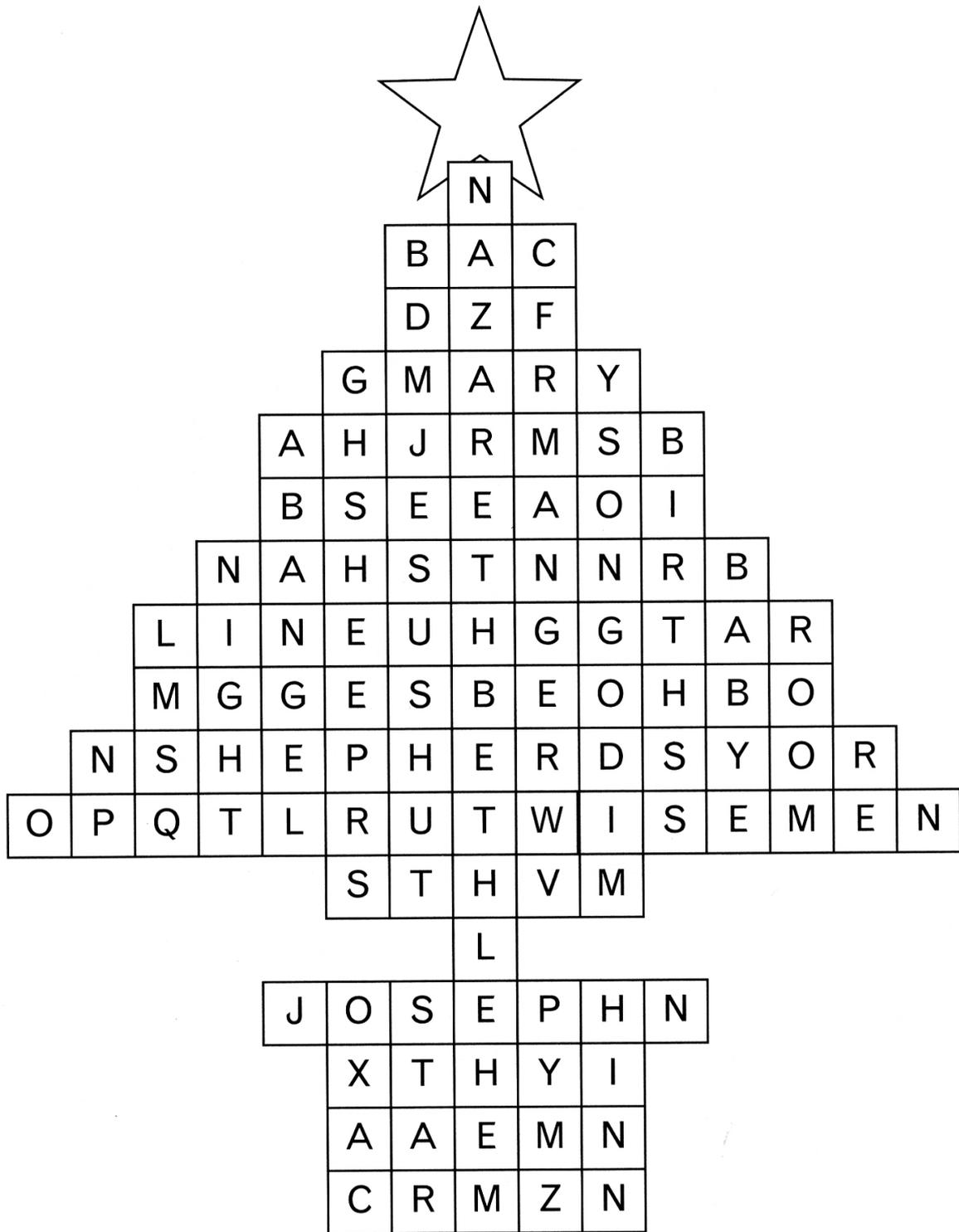
Like every household our church needs to keep up with the cost of living. While we are as careful as possible with our funds, expenses like heating, insurance, our clergy and many other day-to-day costs mount up. You may not realise that this comes to a staggering **£1,483.00** each week. We receive some money from funeral and wedding fees and also from fundraising during the year, but the vast majority comes from regular church members giving faithfully each week.

If you would like to make a regular financial contribution to the Church, please do consider joining the Parish Giving Scheme. If you don't quite understand how it works, please do ask. Over 65% of our regular givers have now joined the scheme. However, there are plenty of other ways that you can support your Church. Please do speak to one of the clergy to find out more.

Parish Pilgrimage Retreat to Iona

Led by The Revd Dr Rob Marshall (Writer, Broadcaster & Parish Priest of Digswell) 22nd - 26th August 2019

There are still a few places left. However we will need to close new bookings before Easter. A deposit of £100 will secure your place to experience a special break on the beautiful island of St Columba where Christianity took root. If you would like to know more please do speak with Fr. Paul. Brochures and booking forms are available at the back of church.



Mary
Joseph
Nazareth
Bethlehem
Baby
Angel

Son
God
Room
Inn
Jesus
Night

Shepherds
Sheep
Birth
Manager
Wise Men
Star

DECEMBER

Saturday 1 st December	9.30am Morning Prayer
Sunday 2nd December	9.00am BCP Sung Mattins 10:00am Holy Communion 6.30pm BCP Evensong
Tuesday 4 th December	10:00am – 11:30am ‘Little Pilgrims’
Wednesday 5 th December	11:00am Holy Communion (said) 11:30am – 12:30pm Soup and Natter
Friday 7 th December	10.30am Bedford Schools Christingle 2.30pm Funeral – Mario Bland
Saturday 8 th December	9.30am Morning Prayer
Sunday 9th December	9.00am BCP Sung Mattins 10:00am Holy Communion 6.30pm BCP Evensong
Tuesday 11 th December	10:00am – 11:30am ‘Little Pilgrims’
Wednesday 12 th December	11:00am Holy Communion (said) 11:30am – 12:30pm Soup and Natter 1.30pm Elstow Primary (Years 3+4) 7.15pm WI meeting on Vestry
Friday 14 th December	9.00am – Elstow Primary (Years 5+6)
Saturday 15 th December	9.30am Morning Prayer 12noon Community Christmas Lunch
Sunday 16th December	9.00am BCP Sung Mattins 10:00am Holy Communion 6.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols
Monday 17 th December	2.00pm – Funeral Carol Rose
Wednesday 19 th December	11:00am Holy Communion (said) 11:30am – 12:30pm Soup and Natter
Saturday 22 nd December	9.30am Morning Prayer 4.00pm Christingle
Sunday 23rd December	9.00am BCP Mattins (said) 10:00am Holy Communion 6.30pm Evening Prayer (said)
Monday 24 th December	2.00pm & 4.00pm – Children’s Crib Services 11.30pm Midnight Mass
Tuesday 25 th December	10:00am Holy Communion
Wednesday 26 th December	11:00am Holy Communion (said)
Saturday 29 th December	9.30am Morning Prayer
Sunday 29th December	9.00am BCP Mattins (said) 10:00am Holy Communion 6:30pm Taizé Worship

JANUARY

Wednesday 2nd January

11:00am Holy Communion (said)
11:30am – 12:30pm Soup and Natter

Saturday 5th January

9.30am Morning Prayer

Sunday 6th January

9.00am BCP Sung Mattins
10:00am Holy Communion
3.00pm Christening Service
6.30pm BCP Evensong

Tuesday 8th January

10:00am – 11:30am 'Little Pilgrims'

Wednesday 9th January

11:00am Holy Communion (said)
11:30am – 12:30pm Soup and Natter

Saturday 12th January

9.30am Morning Prayer

Sunday 13th January

9.00am BCP Sung Mattins
10:00am Holy Communion
6.30pm BCP Evensong

Tuesday 15th January

10:00am – 11:30am 'Little Pilgrims'

Wednesday 16th January

11:00am Holy Communion (said)
11:30am – 12:30pm Soup and Natter
7.15pm WI meeting on Vestry

Saturday 19th January

9.30am Morning Prayer

Sunday 20th January

9.00am BCP Sung Mattins
10:00am Holy Communion
12noon Christening Service
6.30pm Choral Evensong

Tuesday 22nd January

10:00am – 11:30am 'Little Pilgrims'

Wednesday 23rd January

11:00am Holy Communion (said)
11:30am – 12:30pm Soup and Natter

Saturday 26th January

9.30am Morning Prayer
4.00pm 'Pilgrims Praise'

Sunday 27th January

9.00am Holy Communion (said)
10:00am All Age Worship
6:30pm BCP Holy Communion

Tuesday 29th January

10:00 – 11:30am 'Little Pilgrims'

Wednesday 30th January

11:00am Holy Communion (said)
11:30am – 12:30pm Soup and Natter

OUR WORSHIP TIMES

Elstow Abbey welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds and provides traditional Anglican services as well as those with a modern style of worship.

SUNDAY SERVICES

9.00am BCP Mattins

The traditional Prayer Book service with sung responses and two hymns. The service lasts about 30 minutes.

10.00am Holy Communion with Sunday School

A Common Worship service with hymns, choir and a sermon. The service lasts about 60 minutes.

6.30pm BCP Evensong

The traditional Prayer Book service with sung responses, hymns and a sermon. The service lasts about 45 minutes.

SERVICES FOR THE 4th SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

9.00am Holy Communion (said)

A simple said service lasts about 25 minutes

10.00am All-Age Contemporary Worship

with a worship band, short talk and involvement for all ages. The service lasts about 45 minutes

6.30pm BCP Holy Communion

The traditional Prayer Book Communion service with hymns and a sermon. The service lasts about about 45 minutes.

WEDNESDAYS

11.00am Holy Communion (said)

A simple said service with a short talk lasts about 30 minutes

EVENING SERVICE WHEN THERE IS A 5th SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

6.30pm Taizé Worship

A service of prayer, song and contemplation