



PARISHIONERS' NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2025



Iris stylosa, flowering from Nov - March; also in All Saints Rd - Brigid

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Who's Who at All Saints

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<p>Hon. Secretary PCC Vivienne Larminie pcc.secretary@allsaintsheadington.org.uk</p>	<p>Social Committee Chair Susan Newey</p>
<p>Hon. Sacristan and Flower Coordinator Valerie Boulter</p>	<p>Children's Team Catherine Donaldson Andrew Steane Emma Steane</p>
<p>Garden Brigid Crofton Valerie Boulter John Macaulay</p>	<p>Welcome Team Valerie Boulter Veronica John Susan Newey Lucy Whitworth John Whitworth Alison Kempson William Marx</p>

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A Message from Paul

Welcome to 2025!

[as I write this it's two weeks before Christmas "Last Year"]

What a year 2024 was, so much change, so fast and in every part of life and the World. No doubt this New Year will see even more, even faster and touching the lives of even more of us. What we all need is some stability and a little slowing down, some peace, a place where we can feel safe, supported and secure.

Church had a bad press last year but offers all that so many are looking for, not least here at All Saints. We saw many many new faces during my first five months here, for services, events, concerts and more. We already have three weddings booked and a variety of people showing interest in our "Space".

It's vital for us all that Jesus is the centre of "Our Space", our lives and our worship, and that others see this in us and through us and our Church. So many feel so hopeless, alone, unhappy and stressed, we have the answer and we need to share Jesus with others in both our hospitality, actions and words.

This year we'll hear new and different voices in our Worship. We'll see ongoing developments in our building and my hope is that we'll welcome new faces into our congregation who will welcome all that All Saints is as a blessing in their lives, just as we do.

We also need to all welcome Jesus into our homes, our hearts and all of our happenings, as well as when we come together in Church.

In wishing YOU a very Happy New Year, may I wish peace, that peace which the world cannot give, the peace which comes from The Father, through The Son in the power of The Holy Spirit.

May God bless you and keep you throughout this new year and may we all, individually and together delight in that blessing.

Paul

Worship in January

After the excitement of Advent and Christmas, January is a quieter month.

A January highlight will surely be the special service on **Sunday 19 January**, which is in the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**. This week does not get the attention it used to, but we will be making an effort to rectify this by having a joint service with our friends and neighbours at Lime Walk Methodist Church, and also with the Oxford Chinese Christian Church. The latter has two congregations, one Mandarin-speaking which worships in the Methodist Church, and the much larger Cantonese-speaking congregation which meets in ours. Both have their services on Sunday afternoons. The service will not be a communion service, but will be close to the style of Methodist morning worship. The details are being finalised, but it will be an interesting, bilingual service, that I hope we will all make a special effort to get to. We did a similar thing last year, and all who were there appreciated it. An important point to note is that **the service will start at 10:30 am**, a little later than usual.

After being stopped to allow room for the lovely Advent Carol Service and the wonderful Nine Lessons and Carols, Choral Evensong returns at the end of the month.

Summary of Main Services in January

Time	Date	Occasion	Service
10:00 am	5 Jan	Epiphany	Holy Communion – Rev. Paul Niemiec
10:00 am	12 Jan	Epiphany 1	Holy Communion – Rev. Paul Niemiec
10:30 am N.B.	19 Jan	Epiphany 2	United service with the Oxford Chinese Christian Church and Lime Walk Methodist
10:00 am	26 Jan	Epiphany 3	Holy Communion – Preacher James Larminie, celebrant Rev. Paul Niemiec
5:30 pm	26 Jan	Epiphany 3	Choral Evensong, with soup supper

Morning Prayer

Tuesdays at 8:30 am, Book of Common Prayer

Wednesdays at 8:30 am, informal

The All Saints team will lead worship in McMaster House, St Luke's Hospital and The Headington Care Home during January as usual.

James

Advent and Christmas Services

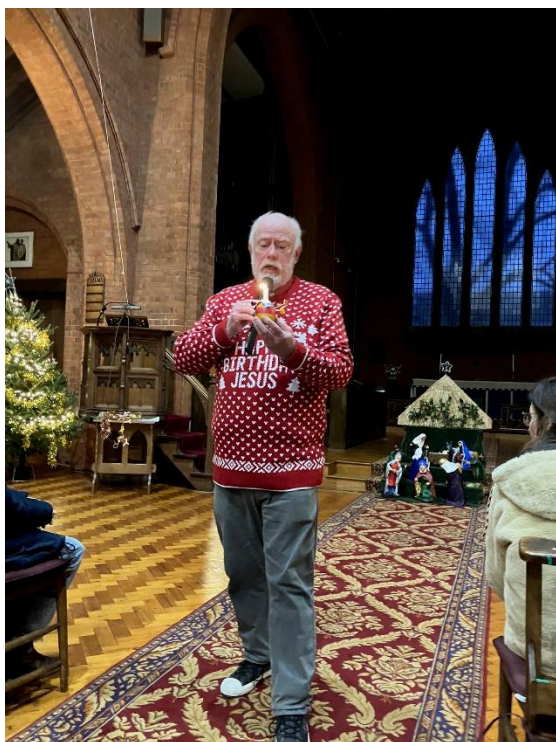
It was wonderful to see the church so full during our special services over Advent and Christmas. The choir was swelled with people who joined us specially for these occasions, and sang magnificently at the two carol services.



While still much less than the Christmas services, the Advent Carol service had the highest attendance ever. This is a service that has only been going about 20 years, but is, at last, now beginning to attract greater interest.



The Nine Lessons and Carols festival service had higher attendance than for about 30 years, which was a great joy. For a few years now the Crib and Christingle service has attracted the largest congregation of our Christmas services, and this year was no exception, with again the largest crowd for at least 30 years, with around 185 people in all.





Paul introduced a new service this year, which was an evening Christmas Eve Communion service at 7:30pm. This could have been called a ‘Midnight Mass at 7:30pm’. It was an interesting and quiet service which was attended by a few more than were in attendance at the Midnight Service, when it was last held in 2019, with several visitors.

With all the emphasis on carol and Christmas Eve services, the actual Christmas Day service has been a very quiet service in recent years, without large numbers. But that too was attended by more people than for many years.

We rejoice that we reached more people at this season than for a good long while. One reason must have been the Christmas Card produced by Catherine Donaldson and distributed to every house and flat in the parish. Thank you Catherine!

James

Sheila Fitzgerald (1929 – 2024)



On 11 December we said good-bye to our dear friend Sheila Fitzgerald, who had died a couple of weeks earlier, at the age of 95. Her funeral was a sad occasion, but also one where we, together with neighbours and her small family, celebrated a wonderful life.

Sheila had been a member of All Saints Church since 1954 when she and her husband moved into Highfield Avenue, in the parish. She lived in the same house till a few months ago, when she moved to St Luke's hospital, as she had become too frail to live at home.

Their children Nigel and Claire were born in the years that followed their arrival in Headington. In 1956 Jim Cocke became vicar, and Sheila became a particular friend of his wife Margaret. She was much involved in the All Saints 'Young Wives' group that Margaret started. The bond between the families became stronger when the Cockes' youngest child Elisabeth and Claire became 'best friends', going together to Milham Ford School.

Sheila volunteered at the Friends of the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre shop and café for decades, and she was a familiar sight cycling around Headington. As well as faithfully attending church week after week, Sheila was much involved with the Social Committee, and was a key member of that group helping with events as long as anyone can remember. For many years she was a highly effective and efficient treasurer of the committee.

A reading of 'The Mayonnaise Jar' was included in the thanksgiving service (see next page).

The Mayonnaise Jar

A philosophy professor stood before his class with some items on the table in front of him. When the class began, he wordlessly he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of small pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly and the pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

Next, the professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up the space between the golf balls and pebbles. Once more, the professor asked if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous “YES.”

The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the grains of sand. The students laughed.

“Now,” said the professor, as the laughter subsided, “I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. **The golf balls are the important things** – God, family, children, health, friends and passions. Things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter – your job, house and car. The sand is everything else, the small stuff.”

“If you put the sand into the jar first,” he continued, “there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for your life. **If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you.**”

“So ... **pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness.** Worship with your family. Play with your children. Take your partner out to dinner. Spend time with good friends. There will always be time to clean that house and fix the dripping tap. Take care of the golf balls first – the things that really matter. **Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.**”

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented.

The professor smiled and said, “I’m glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, **there’s always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend.**”

Christmas Lunch

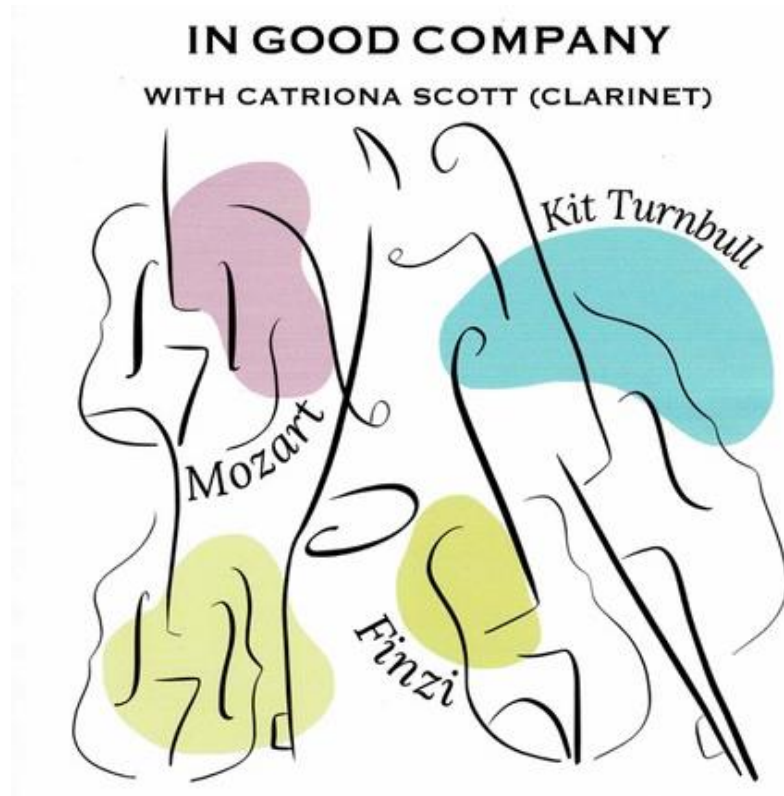
On Wednesday 4 December a small group from All Saints gathered at the Britannia to enjoy a Christmas Lunch. The tables looked very attractive with Christmas napkins and crackers containing the usual corny jokes. There were three courses on offer with a good selection in each section. Most people chose the traditional turkey dish served with pigs in blankets, Yorkshire pudding and a selection of vegetables. Christmas pudding with brandy sauce was the most popular dessert from a selection of richer puddings.



The Social Committee Paid for a wine package with everyone having a choice of red or white wine. It was a very convivial and enjoyable occasion.

Susan

OXUS Concert, 30 November 2024



On the last day of November All Saints was delighted to welcome back the OXUS String Quartet (Kate, Louise, Heather, and Spike) for a concert entitled 'In Good Company'. On this occasion they were joined by Catriona Scott, a noted clarinetist. This was not just a return visit to All Saints for OXUS but also for Catriona, who used to live and work locally and practise in our church because she was not allowed to make any noise in her flat! Catriona has performed widely as a soloist and as an orchestral musician and in festivals throughout the UK. The concert began with 'Pastime in Good Company', which was composed by King Henry VIII and arranged for this performance by Peter Martin and Heather Birt. This was followed by Gerald Finzi's 'Five Bagatelles' and Kit Turnbull's 'Carbrooke Dancers' from 'Three Cautionary Tales'. The main item was Mozart's 'Quintet in A major'.

There was a wonderful audience of around eighty people, many of whom stayed for refreshments afterwards. I can pass on the news that many people expressed – to me, to Vivienne, and to James – their appreciation of the new cushions!

We look forward to the next concert by OXUS which will be in March.

Janet

Suomalinen joululauluilta (Finnish Christmas Carols)



On Saturday 13 December the Finnish Saturday School was once again in All Saints Church for its annual Christmas celebration. The afternoon always begins with the traditional song Santa Lucia to celebrate Saint Lucy. Her day is traditionally celebrated in Finland and the Scandinavian countries on 13 December. She is a saint associated with light and it is appropriate that her name day, the 13 December, is near the winter solstice when there are few hours of daylight. She is actually the patron saint of Syracuse in Sicily and also of virgins.

The youngest members of the group started the concert dressed in white with a candle in each head band (battery lit) and processed to the front of the nave singing Santa Lucia. The concert continued with songs, piano recitals and a Bible reading, Luke 2 1-20. This was read in Finnish by three adults from the Saturday classes who were learning Finnish as their second language. The concert ended with O Come All Ye Faithful. We all joined in with the words in our own language.

After the concert we enjoyed a delicious selection of Finnish and English savoury and sweet food and mulled wine. To conclude the evening Father Christmas appeared with a large sack containing a present for every child.

Susan

Project Shoebox Oxford 2024



In December people who visited church during the week may have wondered what had happened to the Lady Chapel. The chairs used during Morning Prayer were moved back, tables set up and laden with donations of soap, shampoo, shower gel, and many other items.



Overall we sorted and packed 58 gift boxes for the women and children in refuge with the Oxfordshire domestic abuse services. Then we produced 12 gift boxes for women and 30 for men who are moving on from homelessness in Matilda House in Cowley. After this came gift boxes/bags for Asylum Welcome and the 12 women, 30 men, and

9 children who are being housed in one of the hotels in Oxford. Finally we produced gift bags for the Women's Support group of Refugee Resource, 50 women and 31 children. Various items that remained were distributed among those projects as well as a local community kitchen & food bank in Marston and The Porch in Cowley. Over 220 gift boxes/bags and extra items helped people facing tough times in our community.

Several people commented to me that it was a lot of work and I could only agree with them. However it is easy when several people come together to help work towards a common goal, obviously it needs co-ordination but again - many hands make light work.

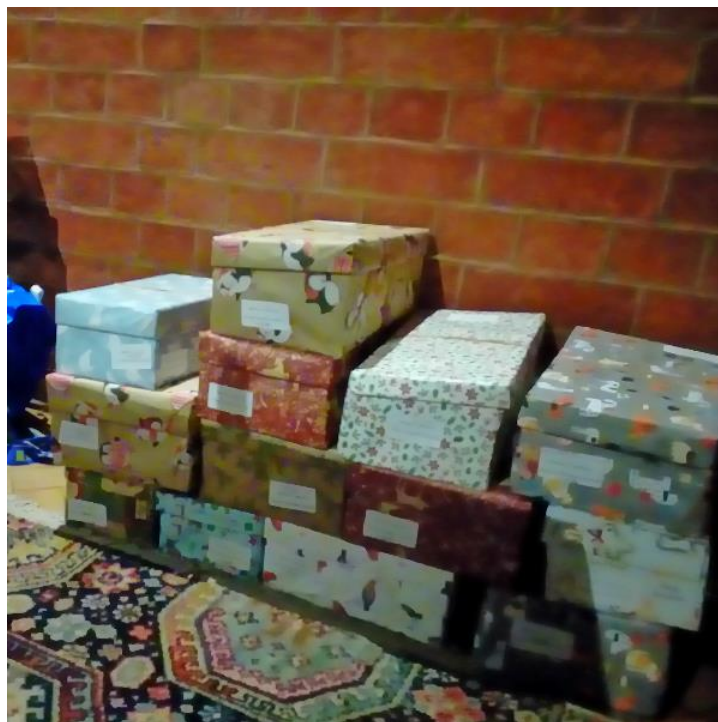
Our first event as Project Shoebox Oxford was in December 2014, when four people got together in Ruskin College to sort out the donations and produce 50 gift boxes for the women in refuge with the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Services (ODAS). Times have changed, the amount of donations sought has increased as the requests upon our project have increased. While last year the sorting and packing was done in Abingdon due to personal circumstances, in 2024 it returned to All Saints' Church House in November and moved to the Lady Chapel in church during December.

This year we are very grateful to all the people who donated items, as well as various companies that organised collections from their staff for us. As well as the help of All Saints we could not have done it without the support of Thame Therapy, the Headington Fairtrade Shop, the imaging centre at the Churchill Hospital, Classlist, St. Cross College, Cowley Library, Sunningwell and Bayworth WI and the Gigaclear office in Abingdon.

Of equal importance are all the people who turned up to help with all aspects of the process, whether it was to help with wrapping shoeboxes to make them look like gift boxes, decorating gift bags, making up gift bags of sweets for the children, writing out greeting cards, sorting donations, making up the gift boxes & bags, and eventually helping with the collection / delivery and clear up of the chapel.



Finally we couldn't have done it without the financial support of people who were unable to help themselves but enabled us to buy extra items where possible to make up the boxes. If we shake a box and it rattles, it usually meant that there was space for us to put another gift item into it.



So, will we be doing it again in December 2025? If the need is still there we will and if you would like to know more about being involved please contact us via email shoeboxoxford@gmail.com or phone / text 07367 961 994.



Christine Tucker

on behalf of Project Shoebox Oxford.

From the Editors

Our New Year newsletter was ready on Monday morning when we heard the so sad news of Phyllis' passing. What can we say? We have lost a beloved friend and remarkable example of a dedicated Christian life. We will mourn Phyllis greatly but also rejoice in our inspirational memories of her. We will, of course, be paying full tribute to Phyllis in the February newsletter. Our thoughts and prayers are now with Christine and family. We hope that the recognition of the great love for Phyllis and the high esteem we all held for her, will give them some comfort in their loss. We are aware that many people will want to send messages and cards of condolence to Christine. Initially we ask you to email messages to Paul who will pass them on. Cards may be left at the back of the church.

Many thanks to our excellent contributors who give generously of their time, even at what is probably the busiest time of year for them. They are getting the newsletter off to a good start in 2025.

Carol Glasson celebrated her eightieth birthday on 30th December. We are sorry we did not mention it in the December issue and we hope Carol had a wonderful day with her family; a belated very happy birthday, Carol.

Our thoughts turn to the members of All Saints' who are no longer able to attend church because of poor health. In particular, we ask you to remember the following in your prayers: Eve Vause, Marian Loudon, Joan Turner, and Audrey and Derek Woodcock. Our thoughts and prayers also turn to Nigel and Claire, mourning the loss of their beloved mother and our dear friend Sheila Fitzgerald.

All of us who worship at All Saints' will be greatly heartened by the increased attendance at the special services over Advent and Christmas. It is particularly encouraging that the Christingle, which has seen high attendance levels for some years now, achieved a 'record' attendance again. Some of the pictures of the Christingle show what a great job Elsie Steane made of restoring the Nativity figures, so thank you again, Elsie.

Thanks for the photos for this issue from Brigid, Catherine, Joanna, James and Susan.

Readers should find much in the newsletter to sustain a spirit of faith and optimism for our church. With all good wishes for 2025.

Catherine and Catherine

A brief word from Catherine Senior:

I just wanted to thank those of you who sent me Christmas cards and to apologise for not sending any myself. In the days before Christmas I succumbed to flu and I failed to get my cards written.

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