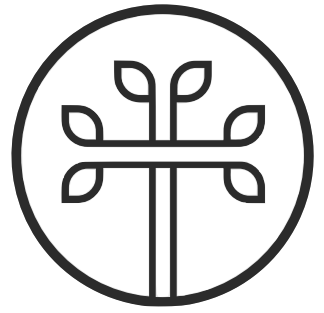


ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

across the PARISH of WAREHAM



Dear Friends,

Do you have a favourite carol ?

This time of year is special partly because of the distinctive music; whether it's carol singing, Christmassy pop music, or concerts and classical music, like Handel's *Messiah*.

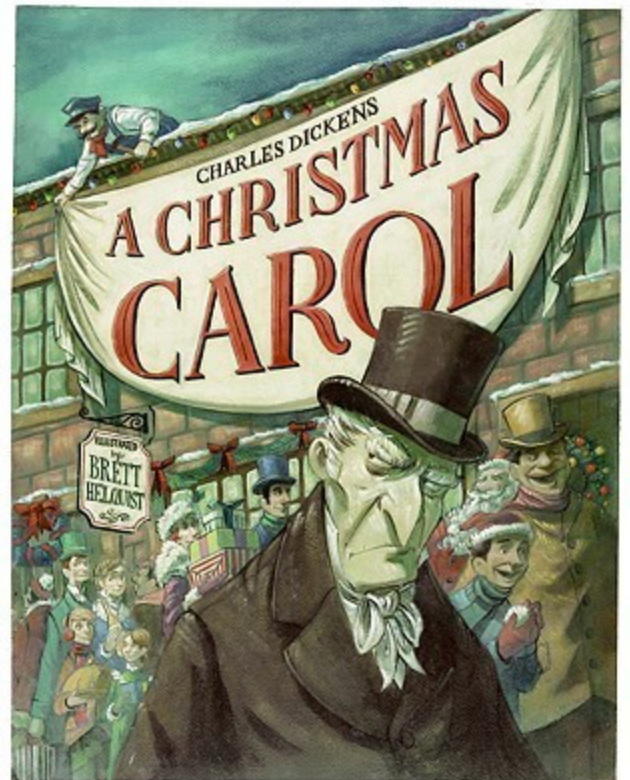
Music, like it or loathe it, in the month of December, signals the season and in the Church, the four week season of 'Advent', leading up to Christmas.

Singing, has been shown to be good for health and well-being and encouraging a sense of togetherness. It's integral, to many ceremonies and celebrations, including Christmas. Usually, this is one time in the year, when even people who don't usually sing, end up having a go.

Maybe it's the upbeat and lively tunes, many of folk music origins, or perhaps carolling is a way of making Christmas special, even when the religious reason doesn't resonate.

Not everyone likes carols. In the perennial favourite, *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens, the miserly, mean character of Ebenezer Scrooge, is revealed by his response to a young, hungry carol singer:

"... at the first sound of 'God bless you, merry gentlemen! Let nothing you dismay!', Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost."



It took Bob Marley's ghost and hauntings by the Spirit of Christmas Past and Present and the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come, for Scrooge to 'get' the message, of the carol.

Dicken's story of 1843, at a time when carol singing, was having a huge renaissance, is about a man, finding redemption. Scrooge came to understand how he had 'gone astray' in life; he had stopped caring for others.

Through a crisis, he learns how to practically share the *'tidings of comfort and joy'*, at the heart of Christmas and the chorus of one of the oldest English carols, *God rest you merry, gentlemen*.

In the spiritual preparation and conscious slowing down, that the Church encourages in Advent, we have the opportunity to question afresh, how and why, the coming of Christ, in the past, in the present and yet to come, makes a difference to how we live our lives. Faced by the challenges and uncertainty around us, the changeless story and meaning of Jesus Christ's birth, can be a deep source of comfort and joy to us too, even in the midst of loss, grief and fear.

This year, like every year, there are people around us and across the world who cannot feel festive, or happy at Christmas, because of their experience and circumstances. Thankfully, celebrating Christmas is not about feeling happy. It's about affirming the hope that the Christ child embodies.

God's coming to us, to be with us, as a vulnerable baby born into obscurity and poverty, is like God waving a white flag to catch the attention of our warring world. He says to us through his Son; I come to you, in peace, to show you the way to wholeness and healing, the way to make things right again in my creation, to create a kingdom of justice and mercy, where all, are loved.

Perhaps one of the most important questions we can ask this year, in the context of all that is happening, is: how can we bring comfort and joy to others? We could follow the advice of *God rest you merry, gentlemen*:

*... With Christian love and fellowship
each other now embrace,
and let this Christmas festival
all bitterness displace
O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy ...*

*Lady St Mary Handbell Ringers, play Christmas Carols
at the Community Christmas Tree Festival – The Church of St Martin on the Walls, Wareham*



Wherever and however, we all end up singing, or listening to music and carols this year; outdoors, indoors, at home, or online ... we hope you do find comfort and joy, this Advent and Christmas.

God bless you and keep you

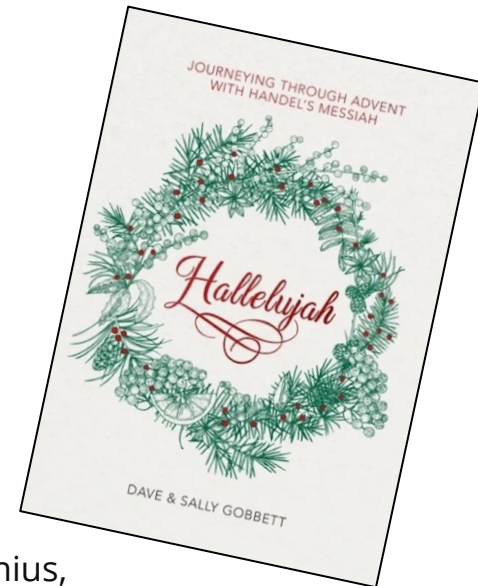
Deb Neil

The Revd's Deborah & Neil
Team Rectors of Wareham

Advent Book: Hallelujah

Journey through Advent with Dave and Sally Gobbett's new book '*Hallelujah*'.

Handel's *Messiah* is one of the most celebrated and beloved pieces of music. Every Christmas, thousands of people around the world treat themselves to performances of *Messiah*. The genius, and uniqueness, of Handel's *Messiah* is that every single word is taken directly from the Bible: no more and no less. A great Advent read Dave and Sally Gobbett's new Advent devotion uses Handel's masterpiece as a springboard for a daily meditation.



Special offer - only £2

Available from the Church bookstall.

2026 Lady St Mary's Church Calendar

Now available (£15) - designed and produced by Jean Dixon, this beautiful calendar features a variety of images depicting the stained glass of The Priory Church of Lady St Mary. Money raised from the sale of the calendars will go towards the work and maintenance of Lady St Mary's Church. Thank you to Jean for this lovely gift idea.



Quiet beginnings Silent Night



The Christmas Carol, *Silent Night*, from the original German, *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht*, has previously been voted as the UK's favourite Carol. It's been translated into around 140 languages and is known across the world. The song was sung simultaneously in English and German by troops during the Christmas truce of 1914 during World War I, as it was one carol that soldiers on both sides of the front line knew. But what's the story behind the Carol we love?

The carol began as a poem, written by a young catholic priest, Father Josef Mohr. It was set to music when he was priest of St Nicholas Church in the village of Oberndorf, Austria. Fr Josef asked his friend Franz Xaver Gruber, schoolmaster and organist, to create a melody.

They sang the Carol at the Christmas Eve Mass in 1818 in St Nicholas Church. Fr Josef played his guitar and the choir repeated the last two lines of each verse. Apparently, the organ was out of commission – hence the guitar.

Weeks later, well known organ builder Karl Mauracher, arrived in Oberndorf to fix the organ. Gruber tested the organ by playing *Silent Night*. Deeply impressed, Mauracher took copies of the music and the words of the carol back to his own Alpine village. There, two well-known families of singers, the Rainers and the Strasses heard it.

Captivated by *Silent Night*, both groups put the new song into their Christmas season repertoire and sang it all over far and wide. Twenty years after *Silent Night* was written, the Rainers brought the song to the United States, singing it (in German) outside New York City's Trinity Church. It was translated into English and published, by an Episcopal priest at the Church, John Freeman Young.

Part of the 'miracle' of *Silent Night* is perhaps to do with the ordinariness and relative obscurity of the people who created and shared it. The words flowed from the imagination of a modest curate. A musician who was not known outside his own village composed the music and a priest whose hobby was translating European songs communicated it in English. And in addition, there was the serendipitous involvement of the organ builder and family singers. Through such people the powerful message of heavenly peace has crossed many borders, conveying something intangible that is beyond the language of words and culture. From humble and quiet beginnings came something amazing and extraordinary, like the story of the Christ child.

DJS

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright ...

Saint of the Month

Bishop Nicholas



St Nicholas was the Greek Bishop of Myra, in the early 4th Century AD. Many miracles are attributed to his intercession and, over the centuries, he became a hugely popular saint. He had a reputation for secret gift-giving, such as putting coins in the shoes of those who left them out for him, and thus became the model for Santa Claus, whose English name comes from the Dutch Sinterklaas. In 1087, his relics were furtively translated to Bari, in south eastern Italy; for this reason, he is also known as Nikolaos of Bari. His feast day is December 6th.

Saint Nicholas is the Patron Saint of sailors, merchants, archers, thieves, pawnbrokers, children, and students (amongst other things). He is shown here in classical Episcopal attire, with a few of the symbols assigned to him on the right—the 3 golden balls (pawnbrokers), a ship (sailors) and the infants in a barrel (children).

The most famous story about him involves helping out a poor man with three daughters. The father was so poor that he couldn't afford a dowry for his three girls—in those days it would have meant they remained unmarried and possibly be forced into prostitution. St Nicholas interceded by secretly donating 3 purses of gold coins over 3 nights, one for each of the 3 daughters. In some stories he threw the purses in through a window to avoid being identified as the donor, in others he dropped the money down the chimney, where it landed, into the stocking of one of the girls. Hence the pawnbroker's balls, Christmas stockings and gift-giving associated with the saint.

Eternal God,
in your great love
you gave your servant
Nicholas
a perpetual name for deeds
of kindness on land and sea.
Grant that your Church may
never cease to work for the
happiness of children,
the safety of sailors,
the relief of the poor
and the help of those who are
tossed by tempests of
doubt or grief;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and for ever.

Amen

Visit our own historic Church of
St Nicholas, in the beautiful surroundings
of the RSPB Reserve at Arne. Overlooking
Poole Harbour this beautiful church is
open daily and has services at 10.30am
on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month.



A Christmas invitation

Join us to celebrate Christmas
across the Parish of Wareham



Come and Sing the Story

14th Dec 3pm Carol Service St John the Evangelist
Church, East Holme

20th Dec 10am Carols on the Quay, Wareham
With Lady St Mary's Handbell Ringers, Choir &
Wareham Choral Society

20th Dec 4pm Community Carols with
Sandford St Martin's Church
Join the fun, for all-ages, community carol singing at
St Martin's Primary School, Sandford

Sunday 21st December

10.30am Carol Service St Nicholas Church, Arne

6pm Traditional Service of Nine Lessons & Carols
Lady St Mary's Church, Wareham



CHRISTMAS EVE

Wednesday 24th December

3pm	Crib Service	Lady St Mary's Church, Wareham
7pm	Holy Communion	Sandford St Martin's Church
11.15pm	Midnight Mass	Lady St Mary's Church, Wareham

CHRISTMAS DAY

Thursday 25th December



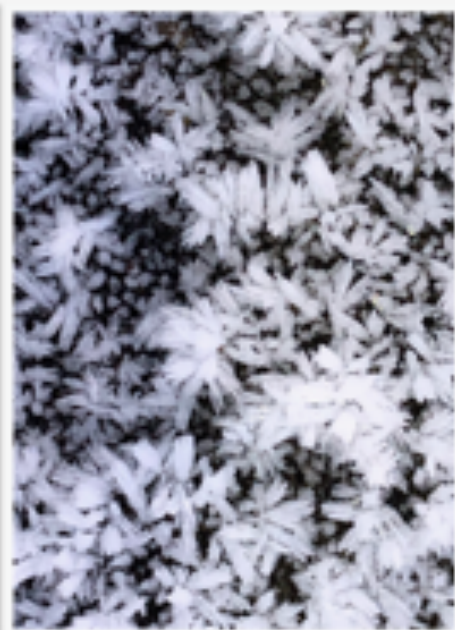
8am	Holy Communion	Lady St Mary's Church, Wareham
9.30am	All Age Communion for Christmas Day	Sandford St Martin's Church
10am	Christmas Day Family Communion	Lady St Mary's Church Wareham
10am	Holy Communion	St John the Evangelist, East Holme
10.30am	Holy Communion	St Nicholas's Church, Arne





December 2025

Outdoor Spirituality



Everyone is welcome

A reflective walk as day turns to night. December 3rd, 4pm starting at Holme Priory, East Holme. The walk will last about an hour and be on flat surfaces. It will be the day before the full moon.

The Fire Pit Gathering for the shortest day of the year. December 21st, 4pm, Holme Priory. A place that is spiritual but not religious. We will share words, silence, tea, and cake.

email hilary.bond@mac.com for more info.

An Advent Reflection: Watching and Waiting

As I step out of the back door the sky high above me is already blue, but the sun is still below the horizon and the few streaks of cloud are every shade of pink, orange, golden yellow and purple; a foretaste of what is to come.

The bare branches of the winter trees make beautiful silhouettes against the sky; the graceful droop of the birches, the curves of the beech and the spikiness of the stag headed oak.

Under my boots the frosty grass crunches softly and my breath makes small satisfying white clouds in front of me as I walk.

I go slowly across the field, stopping every now and then to look at a flock of just woken starlings starting their day, the almost imperceptible movement of wispy clouds, and a fallen maple leaf edged with frozen silver.

I pass through the kissing gate, and turn to lean on the fence as I watch and wait. The underside of the lowest cloud shines with gold - the sun is close now. A song thrush begins to sing in the holly - perhaps like me she is anticipating the glory that is coming.



As I stand and wait, I think about advent - the arrival of a notable person or thing.

We - the thrush and I - are waiting for the arrival of the sun - waiting in anticipation for something life giving and beautiful. In Advent Christians watch and wait not just for the celebration of Christmas - but for the day when Jesus will come again in such a glorious way that no one will be able to miss it;

coming to re-make the world with the compassionate love that will restore everything to the way it was always meant to be.

The sun peeps over the horizon. The treetops turn golden. The frost sparkles. The birdsong swells and my heart is full as God, through his creation, speaks his love into his world once again. This moment was worth the wait.

The Revd Hilary Bond

A POEM

In winter's hush, the promise gleams,
A light that breaks our darkest dreams.
Hope whispers soft,
"The King will come,"
Prepare your heart –
make Him your home.

A PRAYER

Lord Jesus, as we wait for You,
fill our hearts with hope and peace.
Help us prepare a place for You
and share Your light.

Amen

The Welcome Table at Not Just Sundaes

'I loved it! – and I don't even like curry' (child aged 11) 'Everyone is so friendly' 'It's the only time we get to sit down as a family and talk'. 'It's a Godsend! I've been ill and my kids have lived on tinned soup all week'

There are lots of reasons why people come to the Welcome Table, but all get a delicious 2 course meal at no charge. (Donations are welcome).

At a time when so many are struggling under soaring bills and cost of living pressures, the Welcome Table was set up to provide support for families on stretched food budgets. But it also feeds the heart. Guests come back week after week, enjoying the chance to meet friends – or make friends. The wonderful army of volunteer servers, kitchen helpers and washer-uppers create a warm, friendly atmosphere that is relaxed and fun. Menus range from shepherds pie and apple crumble, to chicken korma and lemon drizzle cake, to chilli followed by chocolate brownie. The ice cream and sprinkles station is very popular with the children - and several of the adults too! The unique venue, in a converted 14th Century church (Trinity Church on South St) adds its own quirky appeal. We're the only restaurant in England to have a 14th C baptism font in the dining room!

Every Thursday at Not Just Sundaes, from 5.15pm, last sitting 6.30pm.

The Welcome Table provides companionship for the lonely, allows families a chance to eat together, and forges new friendships and a deep sense of community. We have been supported by a grant from Dorset council, and Talbot village trust, but we need to raise more funds to keep this valuable service going.

If you feel able to support a place at the table please donate on our facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Not-Just-Sundaes-Community-Cafe-Wareham-100091323885507/>



Advent Calendar

He will come like last leaf's fall.
One night when the November wind
has flayed the trees to bone, and earth
wakes choking on the mould,
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.
One morning when the shrinking earth
opens on mist, to find itself
arrested in the net
of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.
One evening when the bursting red
December sun draws up the sheet
and penny-masks its eye to yield
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,
will come like crying in the night,
like blood, like breaking,
as the earth writhes to toss him free.
He will come like child.

Rowan Williams
The Poems of Rowan Williams,
Perpetua Press 2002



Experiencing times of stillness is known to be
good for us—and yet it is often
elusive in our daily life.

At The Kitchen Table, we offer a time of
quiet stillness and a thoughtful reflection.

Do join us when you can.

1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month.
7pm for a 7:15pm start—8.45pm Finish
@URC Hall (opposite Sainsburys) Wareham

£5 suggested donation.

Message Naomi on 07437 474167 or
Penny on 07949 041777 for more details.

Donations



Please consider making a Donation to
support the ministry and mission of
the Church in the Parish of Wareham.

Contactless donations can be made
by selecting your donation amount
and tapping the digital giving machine
in church. Alternatively, you can
simply scan the QR code.

**Thank you very much for your
generous support of this Church.**

Contact Us ...

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Pioneer Priest & Schools Worker

Revd Hilary Bond **E:** hilary.bond@me.com

Revd Michael Young **E:** myng110@gmail.com

Assistant Curate

Revd Shelma Vaughan **E:** rev.shelma@gmail.com

What's On

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Wednesday 3rd to Sunday 7th December

Church of St Martin's on the Walls, Wareham

Open 10.30am – 4pm

Entrance FREE - donations to support Wareham Parish

Live music each day and refreshments available with visitors asked to vote for their favourite Christmas Tree.



Thursday 11th Dec OPEN HOUSE

2.30pm Sandford Heritage Hall - Come and enjoy refreshments and good conversation with friends.

Everyone Welcome

Saturday 13th Dec Purbeck Village Quire

4pm St John the Evangelist, East Holme.

Come along and enjoy the music, mulled wine and festive cheer. Retiring Collection in aid of the church.



With a further performance on **Sunday 4th January, 4pm at Wareham Parish Hall.**

Saturday 20th Dec Wareham - Lady St Mary Handbell Ringers & Wareham Choral Society

playing and singing carols from 10am outside the Parish Hall, collecting to support the work of Christian Aid.



Saturday 10th January 2026 Men's Breakfast

8.30am at The Bear Hotel, South Street, Wareham
Please contact Charles Donnelly by 31st December
to book your place on **T: 01929 555178** or
07772 520290 E: charles291066@outlook.com



The Parish Office, Church Green, Wareham, BH20 4ND
01929 550905 parish.office@warehamchurches.org.uk
www.warehamchurches.org.uk

Charity No. 1132868

