

Hurrah! We have reached the end of another national lock-down and now find ourselves as a community in Tier 2 restrictions. This does mean that we can re-start church services from Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December beginning with 8am and 10am services.

### Church at Christmas

>> Christmas services are still slightly unsure, but please look at the parish website for the most up-to-date information [www.stlawrencelechlade.org.uk](http://www.stlawrencelechlade.org.uk).

A traditional *Lessons & Carols* service will be held on Sun 20<sup>th</sup> Dec at 5pm. We are still not allowed to have congregational singing, but this service will remain a poignant part of our worship at Christmas.

>> We are planning to have *ticketed* services on Christmas Day at 9am and 11am - please book tickets (no charge) for these services through the website [www.stlawrencelechlade.org.uk](http://www.stlawrencelechlade.org.uk) (follow the Christmas link). Seating is very limited, so don't delay! (You will also see some information in the December edition of the 'Ripples' magazine.)

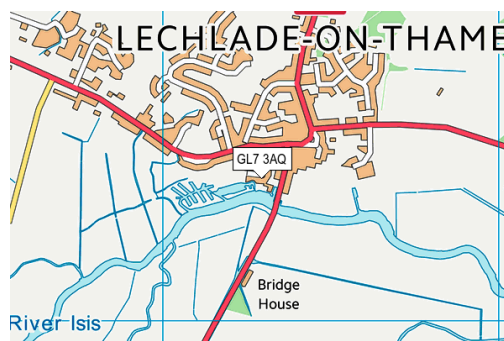
>> Sadly, we cannot put on a Christingle service safely in the church this year, but we are taking all the necessary supplies into the school and the vicar is hosting an interactive session on Christingle-making on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December. Many thanks to Sylvia Dennish for organising this festive treat for the school.



>> We are slowly beginning the process of re-starting Sunday groups for children and youth, beginning with the GRID for secondary school age children. Please pray that we can get enough leaders and helpers to operate in a safe and fun environment. It will be great when we can once again offer a full range of activities for our young people.

### Christmas cards for the parish

We are still intending to distribute Christmas cards to every household in the parish, though without a full listing of Christmas services. Again, we are asking people to check the website or contact the Parish Office for full details. We hope to deliver all the cards within a week or so, the Churchwardens are contacting people to help with this in the same way as we did at Easter, as we are still unable to safely have the usual envelopes in the church.



### Advent Windows

Around Lechlade windows are lighting up to brighten winter nights and also to remind people of the season of Advent to prepare us for Christmas. From 1st-24th December a different window will be lit each day on a different theme. We are all invited to discover a new window each day until 25<sup>th</sup> December!

The trail sheet (see below) has been given to all children in the school and is also on the church website.

**December 1<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> 3.15 - 9pm each evening**

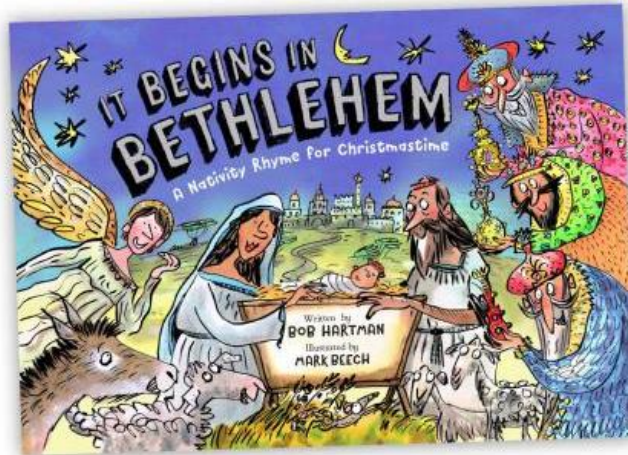
A new window will be opened each evening in Advent until 24<sup>th</sup> December.  
 Follow the trail round and find the word in each window to complete the competition.  
 Post your completed sheet into Church Cottage by Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> January to qualify for a prize.

Date	Word	Address
1		The Cottage next to Church Cottage Look each day for something new
2		Library
3		5 Abbots Walk
4		The Vicarage
5		2 Kingsmead
Sun 6		40 Swansfield

7		24 Roman Way
8		5 Gassons Road
9		7 Katherine's Walk
10		18 Lodersfield
11		8 West Way
12		16 The Spinney
Sun 13		Box Tree House High Street
14		27 Old Railway Close
15		69 Perrinsfield
16		5 Katherines Walk
17		45 Swansfield
18		20 St Lawrence Road
19		28 Roman Way
Sun 20		19 St Lawrence Road
21		5 Roman Way
22		8 Katherines Walk
23		Park House St Lawrence Road
24		Church Cottage

**Nativity stones & Christmas story books for families**

As Christmas approaches in the midst of many limitations, we are seeking new ways to reach out to our community with the good news of Jesus coming to us. One of the ways we will be trying to encourage families and children to engage with the Christmas story is through nativity sets painted on stones which will be hidden around Lechlade on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> for families to find and take home. We will be providing 20 sets, as well as additional single figures of Jesus, all accompanied by the Bible Society's new rhyming and fantastically illustrated retelling of the Christmas story. On the same day we will be distributing additional copies of the booklets in the Market Place. The stones are currently in production by various members of the church family. If you would like to be involved in this project, we would welcome help with painting stones, packaging up sets of stones, placing stones around Lechlade on the 19<sup>th</sup>, and giving out booklets and speaking with families in the marketplace on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Please would you pray that God would help families to 'find Jesus' this Christmas and for this to be a reminder to them that God is with us, even whilst we all have to socially distance from one another. Contact Kate Cinnamon for details.



>> Lock-down has been really tough for many children and their families. Please do remember our CE primary school and families in your prayers at this difficult time. We also pray for 'Little Lights', our pre-school group that has not been able to meet together. They have very much been missing each other and especially the care and love for the parents who attend so faithfully.

>> Please pray for Kathy Newton as she puts the finishing touches to a recorded nativity play filmed in a local barn (brrr...) and for preparations for a Gospel 'bake-along' activity for young children (mmmm...) The 'bake-along' video features Martha Collison the youngest ever contestant on TV's the 'Great British Bake Off'.  
 LINK: <https://faithinkids.org/christmas-bake-along>



## Christmas shorts...

>> The Lighthouse Christian Bookshop, Highworth re-opened on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

The Lighthouse is well stocked with Christmas cards from various Christian Charities such as Samaritan's Purse, Tearfund, Leprosy Mission and others. They also stock Advent books, Advent Calendars (including the Meaningful Chocolate Co) and Advent Candles to help with your preparation for Christmas.

NB. When you buy charity cards from the Lighthouse you are supporting 2 charities – the one of your card choice, and also Seekers Light Trust (for which The Lighthouse Bookshop is the trading name).

Opening hours: Mon-Thur 9am-3pm; Friday CLOSED; Sat 9am-1pm.

Find the Lighthouse Bookshop at 40 High Street, Highworth, SN6 7AQ; Tel: 01793 763337; email:info@lighthouse.books.plus.com

>> Sylvia Dennish is selling Christmas cards on behalf of the Children's Society. Please contact Sylvia on 01367 252477.

>> *Christmas tree of remembrance* – This year has been immensely difficult for so many people. Some have lost loved ones. Others have been ill or have had to self-isolate for an extended period. Many have experienced loneliness, isolation and mental health issues. As a church family we pray for one another and for the wider community. There is a small tree at the back of church to remember loved ones who are no longer with us. Please do tie one of the available coloured ribbons on the tree in remembrance of that person. You can also write a prayer on a paper fish and tie it on to our net in the Prayer Corner. These prayer requests are regularly looked at and prayed over.



>> *Christmas trees*- thank you to Hilliers for supplying our Christmas trees this year and to those who helped decorate them. It is looking good both inside and out!



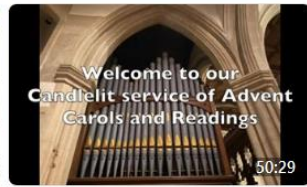
## Video resources

Do have a look at our videos page for some audio-visual spiritual refreshment. As well as recordings of services, we also have a series from Niv Lobo on questions Christians often get asked, some musical items from our choir (including a full Advent Carols service and an anthem for Remembrance), a few youth videos, a short series on the Psalms and many more. Thank you to all those who record and edit these videos!

## All Videos



Live worship 29 November  
3 days ago · 133 views  
👍❤️👎 10



Advent Carols 2020  
4 days ago · 130 views  
👍❤️👎 9



Advent is coming- and what is that wreath all about???  
6 days ago · 144 views  
👍❤️👎 9



Apologetics- why do Christians believe the Bible?  
3 weeks ago · 55 views  
👍❤️👎 2

## Festival of Faith (aka Parish Mission 2021)

2020 has been a very difficult year for our nation and for the Church. The temptation is to retreat, to just be concerned about ourselves and our present situation, but the Lord calls us to go out into the harvest fields and invite people to come and share in the good things He has prepared. 'We have a Gospel to proclaim/ Good news for all throughout the earth', as the hymn reminds us. In September 2021 we are inviting Revd Roger Simpson, a retired vicar and the Archbishop of York's Evangelist for the Northern Province, to help us in a 'Festival of Faith' for the whole community. There will be a focussed week of various events and services leading up to a special harvest-themed invitational service. Please pray for the organising committee who are making plans and preparations for this exciting week of mission. Pray that the Holy Spirit would be moving in our community, sowing seeds of faith, and drawing people to Himself.



## Finally...

I leave you with a great prayer for this time of year, the Collect for Advent:

*Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*



**Revd Andrew Cinnamond**

Vicar of Lechlade, Eastleach and Southrop