



The Benefice of Aldermaston and Woolhampton, comprising the parishes of  
Aldermaston, Beenham, Brimpton, Midgham, Wasing and Woolhampton

# THE PEW

## February 2024 NEWS





# WHAT'S INSIDE THIS EDITION?

---

## NEWS PAGES

For this month's letter from our Rector, the Reverend Jane Manley, or news and articles from our churches and communities, Eco Church, food bank or benefice administration.

## SERVICES AND LIFE EVENTS

Weddings, baptisms and funerals, services in the benefice, 'what happens in church', community events.  
Things to do and pictures from past events.

## FOR CHILDREN AGED 0 - 100 +

Competitions, stories. news from our schools and how to get involved - joining in with church doesn't have to be Sunday, and it doesn't have to be 'at church'!



Receive this cross of ash upon your brow,  
Brought from the burning of Palm Sunday's cross.  
The forests of the world are burning now  
And you make late repentance for the loss.  
But all the trees of God would clap their hands  
The very stones themselves would shout and sing  
If you could covenant to love these lands  
And recognise in Christ their Lord and king.

He sees the slow destruction of those trees,  
He weeps to see the ancient places burn,  
And still you make what purchases you please,  
And still to dust and ashes you return.  
But Hope could rise from ashes even now  
Beginning with this sign upon your brow.

*Malcolm Guite*



I was asked the following question recently 'What does the word Lent mean?'

The word Lent is derived from the Old English *lencten*, which means "lengthen." It refers to the lengthening of the daylight hours that occurs in the northern hemisphere as spring approaches. It is in this period of transition from late winter to early spring that the season of Lent falls.

But what is Lent about for us as followers of Christ and how can we use that time fruitfully? Lent reminds us of the forty days that Christ spent in the Wilderness, coping with the temptations of the world and spending time in prayer and contemplation preparing himself for his ministry.

So how for us today can we use this season of Lent? We are unlikely to be in a position to go off for 40 days, tempting as that might seem, and anyway, I would want somewhere much more comfortable than a Wilderness. For many, Lent is a time to give up something like chocolates or wine. But although that is a good discipline, it is not very productive unless you use the money you have saved for a good cause. Lent is rather a journey of self-discovery, an opportunity to deepen our relationship with God, to take time out to read the scriptures, read a spiritual book, spend time listening to God, soak in the wonders of his creation. In the benefice there will be the opportunity to join the Lent course as we explore the 'Women of Holy Week'. We will be looking at the Easter journey through the lives of some of the women in Jesus' life. Women who are brought into the centre of the drama of Holy Week and how we are the beneficiaries of the stories that they tell. Details of the course are elsewhere in this magazine.

So, as we begin that journey turning away from the crib towards the cross let us find time in all the busyness of life to deepen our relationship with God and to experience the abundance of his love for each one of us.

I wish you a truly fruitful and blessed Lent.

Yours in Christ

*Rewd Jane*



## News from our communities



### WORSHIP ON WEEKDAYS FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

- <sup>th</sup> Wednesday 14 February 2024
- 10 a.m. to midday
- St. Peter's Woolhampton, RG7 5TB
- Join us as we come together for WOW!  
This relaxed, informal and friendly session starts with **tea, toast and toys** and a chance for parents, grandparents and carers to get together for a chat.  
A short, informal worship starts at 11 am and we finish it all off with cake! What better way to spend a Wednesday morning?  
**FUN, FRIENDLY, FREE**



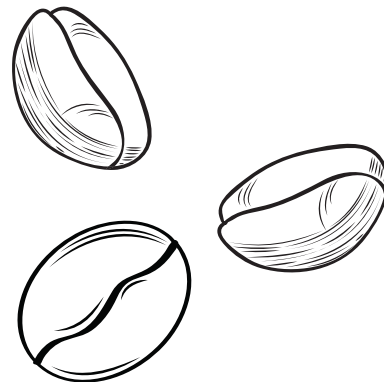
## News from our communities

### COFFEE MORNING (SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH) IN BRIMPTON CHURCH

DROP IN ANY TIME BETWEEN  
10:00 am-11:30 am

WEDNESDAY 14th FEBRUARY 2024  
WEDNESDAY 13th MARCH 2024  
WEDNESDAY 10th APRIL 2024

Everyone (including dogs) welcome



Fancy learning a new skill whilst helping in your community?

TiM Friends and Café B need your support in raising funds to continue operating in your community!

Can you help fundraise by running events or writing grant applications?

Can you help with marketing or with our social media presence?

Are you interested in helping us to steward the services we offer?

For more details contact Emma Shumsky on 07931 305996, or via email [emma.shumsky@gmail.com](mailto:emma.shumsky@gmail.com)

Or donate via <https://localgiving.org/charity/tim/>

For more information see our website:  
[www.togetherinmission.org.uk](http://www.togetherinmission.org.uk)

**Without your help we cannot continue.**

## New Year New You



**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2024**

**FRIDAY 1 MARCH**

**A SERVICE FOR EVERYONE!**

**I beg you, bear with  
one another in love**

**2:00PM**

**ST MARY'S CHURCH**

**BEENHAM**

**RG7 5NN**

You are warmly invited to stay for  
Light refreshments after the service

The 2024 World Day of Prayer service has been prepared by an ecumenical group of Christian women from Palestine, the land where Jesus was born, ministered and died, where the Christian faith began.

This service is part of a great wave of prayer held in native languages encircling the globe. Beginning as the sun rises over Samoa, continuing its way around the Earth and ending back in the Pacific as the sun sets over American Samoa. 146 countries and islands around the world join together to pray with and for the people of Palestine.

The service shares stories of the experiences of three Palestinian Christian women from three different generations.

**INFORMED PRAYER, PRAYERFUL ACTION**

24-7 • 365 DAYS A YEAR • PRAYER MOVEMENT • ECUMENICAL INTERNATIONAL • WOMEN-LED

**[wwdp.org.uk](http://wwdp.org.uk)**

Registered Charity Number 233247

# MIDGHAM

February 1st, March 7th

Join us for tea, cake and fellowship  
2.00pm

Please note, for Feb and March,  
Cafe Church will be held at  
14 Hatch Close, Chapel Row, RG7 6NZ

Contact Sarah Henderson for more information  
[henderson.sarah.c@outlook.com](mailto:henderson.sarah.c@outlook.com)

## Advertising for local businesses

We are keen to support small, local businesses and would love to offer to advertise for you, for free, in this digital magazine. If you have a service which you feel that our 1000s of local readers could benefit from, please email for a chat. There is a limited amount of space that we'd like to use for adverts, so be quick!

**For more details, and to book your advertising space,  
please get in touch with Michelle  
[weddings.awb@gmail.com](mailto:weddings.awb@gmail.com)**





## **William Nicholson MBE**

My sister Jennifer and I have strong memories of a very young William building a road network round the garden at The Garth (on School Hill in Midgham). A few years on, a canal holiday and a family boat meant that he transferred his enthusiasm to canals, and at 17 started doing voluntary restoration work on the Kennet and Avon Canal. Since then he has been deeply involved in voluntary canal restoration and has taken on roles at all levels to achieve this.

When he left university in 1980 and started work as a town planner Bill got involved with the Newbury Branch of the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust (KACT), and then formed the Newbury Working Party Group (NWPG) to recruit people to become actively involved in canal restoration. Many members were recruited by word of mouth, or through seeing posters in libraries, but it was a very dangerous thing to be related to, or a colleague of Bill's if you weren't planning to spend your spare time restoring canals! Bill has been the driving force of this group, which has participated in canal restoration projects all over the country through a regular programme of weekend working parties and canal camps. 43 years on the group is still going strong.

In addition to his roles as organiser and leader of working parties and camps Bill has been responsible for specific projects on a number of canals. In the past he has been a trustee of the KACT and the Chair of the Newbury Branch, and since his retirement has been appointed a trustee of the Wey and Arun Canal Trust.

It is for this work that Bill has been awarded the MBE. His role in all these projects has made a huge contribution to the restoration of canals, recognising their legacy and creating amenities which provide recreation, nature conservation, water management and wonderful spaces for everybody to enjoy. If you want to see this for yourself, pop down to your local section of the Kennet and Avon Canal!



# West Berks Foodbank

If you're worried about money and struggling to afford essentials, call our free helpline for personalised support

**0808 208 2138**

**Help Through  
Hardship Helpline**



**Free phone service open  
Monday to Friday 9am-5pm**

**Closed on public holidays**

**The Help through Hardship helpline  
is a free phone service  
delivered in partnership with  
Trussell Trust and Citizens Advice.**

**The Help through Hardship  
helpline is a free phone  
service delivered in  
partnership with Trussell  
Trust and Citizens Advice. For  
all other information call:  
07836 500610**

---

**If you are in need the foodbank is available 7  
days per week. Food parcels delivered to you.  
Call 01635 760560**

## **URGENTLY NEEDED ITEMS**

**Details of items urgently needed and low in stock can be found by visiting  
<https://westberks.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>**

***WHEN PEOPLE ARE GOING WITHOUT....  
IT IS TIME TO GUARANTEE THEIR ESSENTIALS***

## **Drop off locations:**

**Aldermaston and Wasing: The Rectory, Wasing Lane and 19 Swan Drive, The Wharf.**

**Beenham: Inside the gate at Beenham Primary School**

**Brimpton: Inside the porch at St Peter's Church and Georgina Hairdressers**

**Midgham: St Matthew's Church. Open daily between 09:00-15:00**

**Woolhampton: Inside the porch at St Peter's Church**

**[www.awb.org.uk](http://www.awb.org.uk)**

# ALDERMASTON CHURCHYARD



## Visitors to Aldermaston churchyard

Over the past 3 weeks ornithologists have been gathering at Aldermaston Estate and the Church to photograph and watch the waxwings which have flown over from Scandinavia.



The Waxwing is a plump bird, which is slightly smaller than a Starling. It has a prominent crest (head feathers that stick up). It's reddish-brown with a black throat, a small black mask around its eye, yellow and white in the wings and a yellow-tipped tail. It does not breed in the UK, but is a winter visitor. In some years, we see larger numbers of visiting Waxwings, called irruptions, when the population in their breeding grounds gets too big for the food available.

Photos courtesy of Richard Baldwin and Catherine Lovell



# BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



**HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY TRUST**

*Learning from genocide -  
for a better future*

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place each year on 27 January, marking the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp.

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) encourages remembrance in a world scarred by genocide. They promote remembrance of the 6 million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, alongside the millions of people murdered under Nazi persecution of other groups and during more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

*'The Holocaust threatened the fabric of civilisation, and genocide must still be resisted every day. Our world often feels fragile and vulnerable and we cannot be complacent. Even in the UK, prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by us all.'*

*Each year across the UK, thousands of people come together to learn more about the past and take action to create a safer future. Together they bear witness for those who endured genocide, and honour the survivors and all those whose lives were changed beyond recognition.'*

*To mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2024, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has chosen two Holocaust memoirs so followers of The Queen's Reading Room can learn more about the Holocaust through literature.'*

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

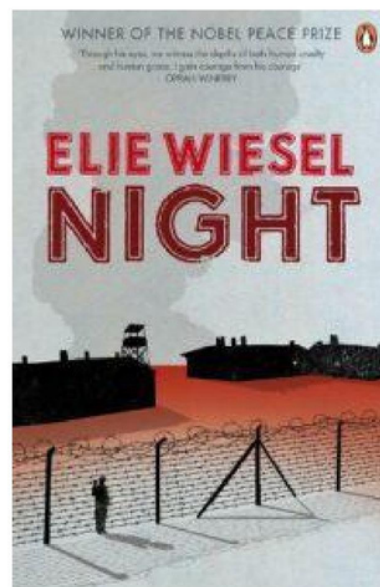
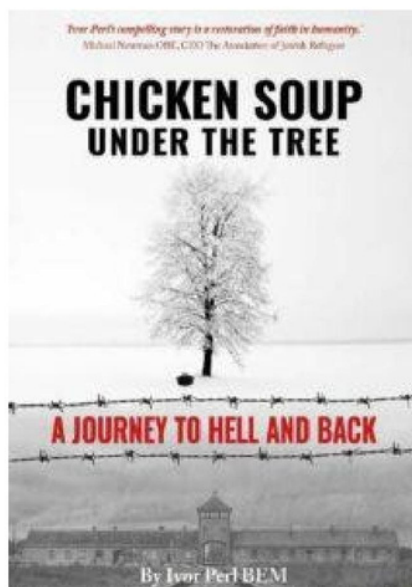


# BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

## *Chicken Soup Under the Tree*

by Ivor Perl BEM

Ivor was just 12 years old when he was taken to Auschwitz. He survived with the help of his older brother, but the rest of his family – his mother, father and five siblings – were murdered in the Holocaust.



## *Night*

by Elie Wiesel

As a boy, Elie Wiesel survived Auschwitz and Buchenwald camps. As an adult, he dedicated himself to commemorating the Holocaust and to ensuring its lessons were learnt. He was an acclaimed author and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. He died on 2 July 2016, aged 87. *Night* is the account of Elie Wiesel and his father's experiences in Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps.

# SERVICES AND EVENTS

## SERVICES DURING DECEMBER 2023 THROUGHOUT THE BENEFICE

### **Sunday 4 th February: The Second Sunday before Lent**

St Mary's, Aldermaston 10.45am Holy Communion  
St Mary's, Beenham 9.15am Holy Communion  
St Peter's, Brimpton 10.45am Holy Communion  
St Matthew's, Midgham 9.15am BCP Communion

### **Sunday 11 th February: The Sunday next before Lent**

St Mary's, Aldermaston 10.45am Holy Communion  
St Mary's, Beenham 9.15am Morning Praise  
St Peter's, Brimpton 9.15am Holy Communion  
St Peter's, Woolhampton 10.45am Holy Communion

### **Wednesday 14 th February: Ash Wednesday**

St Peter's, Woolhampton 10am WOW (Worship on Weekday)  
St Mary's, Beenham 7.30pm Holy Communion with the Imposition of Ashes

### **Sunday 18 th February: The First Sunday of Lent**

St Mary's, Aldermaston 10.45am Morning Praise  
St Mary's, Beenham 9.15am Holy Communion  
St Peter's, Brimpton 9.15am Morning Praise  
St Matthew's, Midgham 9.15am Holy Communion  
St Peter's, Woolhampton 10.45am Informal Communion

### **Sunday 25 th February: The Second Sunday of Lent**

St Matthew's, Midgham 4pm Sung Evensong  
St Peter's, Woolhampton 10am Benefice Holy Communion

**Everyone is welcome to any of our services.**

**We aim to be entirely inclusive, if there is something you need in order to ensure church is a welcoming and comfortable place for you, please let us know.**

**For further details about our churches and services:**

**The Rev'd Jane Manley 01189 712 891**

**jmanley.awb@gmail.com**

**For information about weddings and baptisms:**

**Michelle Galbraith 07568 184704**





## **Holy Communion with the Imposition of Ashes**

**14<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

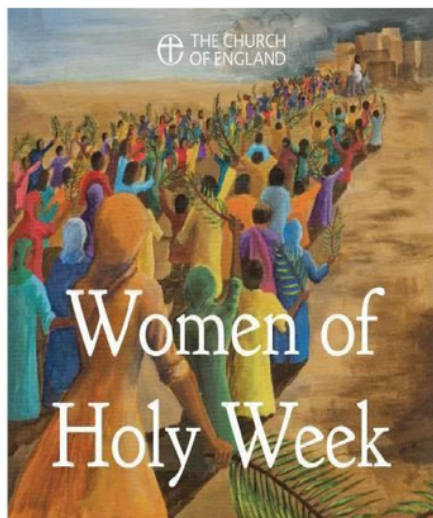
**7.30pm at St Mary's, Beenham**

### **What is Ash Wednesday?**

Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence; from the middle ages it became the custom to begin Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross. The calculation of the forty days of Lent has varied considerably in Christian history. It is now usual in the West to count them continuously to the end of Holy Week (not including Sundays which are feast days), so beginning Lent on the sixth Wednesday before Easter, Ash Wednesday.



# SERVICES AND EVENTS



## **Come and join us for our Lenten study group.**

The stories imagine what it might have been like to accompany Jesus in this final week of his life from the perspective of nine women. Some of them we know with certainty were there because the Gospels tell us they were: the widow with two coins, the woman with the ointment of pure nard, Mary wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of Jesus. Some are not mentioned at all, but someone like them was probably present: a woman journeying to Jerusalem for the Passover, the wife of a scribe, and a female disciple at the Last Supper. The stories also aim to travel from the outside in: from people who had the most fleeting encounters with Jesus at the start of the week to his most devoted followers at the end.

**The sessions will be at 2pm on Wednesday afternoons at the Rectory on the following dates:**

21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February

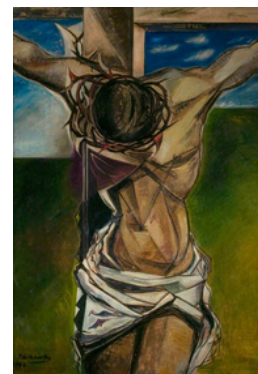
6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March

Sessions leaders are Jane, Katy and Derek.

Please contact the Rector, for further details and to book a place.

Revd Jane

[jmanley.awb@gmail.com](mailto:jmanley.awb@gmail.com)







# SUNDAY READINGS FEBRUARY 2024

---



	New Testament	Gospel	Colour
<b>4<sup>th</sup> February</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Lent</b>	Colossians 1.15-20 —	John 1.1-14	Green
<b>11<sup>th</sup> February</b> <b>Sunday next before Lent</b>	2 Corinthians 4.3-6	Mark 9.2-9	Green
<b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February</b> <b>Ash Wednesday</b>	2 Corinthians 5.20b – 6.10	Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21	Purple
<b>18<sup>th</sup> February</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent</b>	1 Peter 3.18-end	Mark 1.9-15	Purple
<b>25<sup>th</sup> February</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent</b>	Romans 4.13-end	Mark 8.31-end	Purple

# Occasional services during December 2023 and January 2024

## WEDDINGS

9 th December Jon Rooney and Emma Evans at St Nicholas, Wasing  
10 th December Ryan Field and Jessica Dancy at St Nicholas, Wasing  
21 st December Stephen Tookey and Rebecca Hawley, at St Nicholas, Wasing  
30 th December Gregory Pratt and Hannah Lawson-West at St Nicholas,  
Wasing

**‘And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three: and the greatest of these is love’**

## BAPTISMS

3 rd December Max, son of Alistair and Maria Hewit at St Peter’s, Woolhampton  
21 st January Oliver and William, sons of Nicholas and Joanne Oke at St Mary’s,  
Aldermaston

**‘Today God has touched you with his love and given you a place among his people’**

## FUNERALS AND BURIAL OF ASHES

13 th January Burial of Ashes of Gordon Maslin at St Peter’s, Woolhampton  
17 th January Funeral of Elizabeth Everton at St Peter’s, Woolhampton  
17 th January Burial of Ashes of Alexander Grant at St Mary’s, Beenham  
18 th January Funeral of Frank West at St Mary’s, Aldermaston  
19 th January Funeral of Hazel Weston at St Peter’s, Woolhampton  
24 th January Burial of John Dowling at St Peter’s, Woolhampton

**‘I am the resurrection and the life,’ says the Lord.**



## CONFIRMATIONS



Eva E Galbraith  
William Thorne  
Sarah Leijton  
Simon Wheeler

**The Confirmation service on the 10th December in Reading Minster was the culmination of several months of a journey by the four candidates. Together we had explored different aspects of the Christian faith, using the material by The Revd Dr Sam Wells and the Revd Sally Hitchiner (of St Martin-in-the-Fields church) called 'Being With'. The course was an immersive experience of learning how to be with ourselves, with others, and the world around us, and learning how to be with God. We all learnt so much from the material and from each other. I felt so privileged to watch each of the four being confirmed by the Bishop of Reading with the words:**

**God has called you by name and you his own.  
Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit.  
Being a travelling companion on someone's faith journey is a very special experience.**

**Revd Jane**

We were invited to a beautiful ceremony in December to celebrate the confirmation of our daughter, Eva, alongside three other members of the benefice. Bishop Olivia's service was really lovely, and we all felt very welcome at The Minster in Reading. The decorations were so nice, and our Reverend, Jane, so supportive and kind throughout. We are very proud of Eva and everyone looked so smart and happy. It was a joyous occasion for all.



# FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES



## SAINT VALENTINES DAY – 14TH FEB

The day gets its name from the famous saint, but there are several stories of who he was. The widely accepted and popular belief is that St Valentine was a priest from Rome who lived in the third century and is thought to have died around 270 AD.

At the time, Emperor Claudius II had banned marriages as he thought single men made better soldiers. However, St Valentine took it upon himself to arrange and perform marriages in secret so couples could still celebrate their love.

### **What happened to St Valentine?**

Unfortunately, the Emperor found out and imprisoned Valentine, sentencing him to death for his crime. One account suggests that, whilst imprisoned, Valentine fell in love with his jailer's daughter and on the day of his execution (February 14) he sent her a love letter signed 'from your Valentine.'

### **Where is St Valentine buried?**

Love is all around – and, somewhat less romantically, so are the remains of St Valentine. St. Valentine, the patron saint of love, was executed in Rome and buried there in the 3rd century, as previously mentioned. However, in 1835 an Irish priest, Father John Spratt, convinced Pope Gregory XVI to dig up St. Valentine's remains and take them home as a gift to his fellow Irishmen and women. So his remains now lie under Whitefriar Church in Dublin.

Except... it's also thought that a flower-crowned skull is that of St Valentine's, and this is exhibited in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome. And it doesn't end there. It is thought that some of St Valentine's remains are in Scotland. In Glasgow, the church of the Blessed John Duns Scotus also claims some of the bones of St Valentine.

### **How did Valentine's Day start?**

Valentine's Day is said to have originated from a Roman Festival known as Lupercalia, according to History.com, with the first Valentine's Day thought to have taken place in the year 496. It was held on February 15 as a festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman God of agriculture.

It's thought that as part of the celebrations, boys drew names of girls from a box. Interestingly, they would be boyfriend and girlfriend during the festival and sometimes these matches would lead to marriage.

Later on, the church wanted to turn this festival into a Christian celebration and decided to use it to remember St Valentine too. Lupercalia continued for some time but was outlawed at the end of the 5th century when Pope Gelasius declared February 14 as St Valentine's Day.



# A VERY SPECIAL DAY! – 29TH FEB

## Quick facts about leap years



Leap years happen every four years.



**The next leap year will be in 2028**



It takes the Earth 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 45 seconds to rotate around the sun.



If we didn't have leap years, after 100 years, our calendars would be off by 25 days.



Leap years add a couple seconds a year over time, adding up to three extra days every 10,000 years.



The chances of being born on a leap day is one in 1,461.



An old Irish legend says women can propose to their significant other on a leap day.



# WOW – CHURCH ON A WEEKDAY – WITH TOYS!

WE ARE READY TO CHALLENGE THE MISCONCEPTION THAT CHURCH IS A SERVICE, IN A BUILDING, THAT IS VISITED ON SUNDAYS. COME ALONG AND JOIN US FOR THIS NEW EVENT, TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND TO ENJOY SOME TEA AND CAKE. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU TO THIS FREE EVENT.



## WORSHIP ON WEEKDAYS FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

- <sup>th</sup> Wednesday 14 February 2024
- 10 a.m. to midday
- St. Peter's Woolhampton, RG7 5TB
- Join us as we come together for WOW!  
This relaxed, informal and friendly session starts with **tea, toast and toys** and a chance for parents, grandparents and carers to get together for a chat.  
A short, informal worship starts at 11 am and we finish it all off with cake! What better way to spend a Wednesday morning?  
**FUN, FRIENDLY, FREE**

# NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH SCHOOLS

## ALDERMASTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### ALDERMASTON C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Happy New Year. We have been making a noise about bullying as part of the national Anti-Bullying week. Our aim behind the focus for the week is to ensure that children know how to recognise bullying and how to get help. It's important to us that the children feel that they are listened to and helped if there is anything at school which is causing them worry. This year, there was a clear focus on children knowing that 'just a joke' or 'banter' is not an excuse for bullying behaviour. We talked a lot about taking pride in our differences and celebrating the fact that we are all unique and individual.

Our Year 4 children have been travelling each week to Tadley swimming pool for swimming lessons and their achievements were marked in an assembly when they were presented with their certificates. Swimming lessons are part of the National Curriculum and an important life skill for everyone, especially as we live in an area with canals and rivers.

Possibly our favourite whole school trip of the year is to the Watermill Theatre to enjoy their Christmas production. We were treated to a performance of 'The Wizard of Oz'. The cast of these productions are incredibly talented. It's hugely inspiring to see them sing, dance, play multiple musical instruments and tell a wonderful story in such a unique setting. The children are always transfixed by what is happening on the stage. Thank you to our volunteers who joined us for the morning and to the PTA for funding the coaches.

The PTA team held a popular disco which was great fun and the children enjoyed showing their dance moves in the school hall.

The carol service at Douai Abbey is a lovely event which allows us to celebrate alongside children, staff and families from other local schools. This year, alongside participating in the service, we also provided a reader and musicians to accompany some of the carols.

Starlings Class (Year 6) were great ambassadors for our school. We also held our traditional service at St. Mary's and our annual Christmas Lunch which was much enjoyed by everyone.

Finally, our KS1 children delighted parents and special visitors to their performances of our Nativity play 'Little Angel Finds Her Wings'. Our thanks go to parents for helping with the learning of lines, both spoken and sung, costumes and general preparation and of course the dedicated staff team which pulls it all together behind the scenes.

The new term has brought our annual 'Healthy Living Week' when a varied number of activities were enjoyed including ice-skating, crazy golf, ultimate frisbee and rocket ball plus regular laps of the school field. A busy and fulfilling week for all the pupils and staff.

**Cathy Jones, Foundation Governor**

# NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH SCHOOLS

## WOOLHAMPTON SCHOOL

**Feb 2024**

The end of last term was, of course, full of Christmas cheer for the children of Woolhampton Primary School. Highlights included the Christmas Dinner Day – attended by children, staff and governors - where the school hall was transformed to match the festive spirit, sparkle and excitement of the school community! The children took great joy in dressing up in their wonderful Christmas outfits and not only was there a visit from Father Christmas but a real-life 'reindeer' (aka horse!) came to surprise the children too – much to their delight! The school's new cook, Donna, did an amazing job of cooking a wonderfully tasty Christmas lunch for over 100 hungry tummies and the celebrations continued in to the early evening with the children attending a festive disco, arranged by the Friends of Woolhampton (FOWS). What a day!

The children also enjoyed rounding off the year with the much-loved Crib Service and Christingle Service at St Peter's Church and the children of Beech class were even invited to decorate the church's Christmas Tree – they did such a wonderful job!

With festivities behind them, the children then returned to school in the second week of January, eager to embrace a fun-packed 2024!

Many of the children in years 4, 5 and 6 have begun rehearsing for the annual Berkshire Maestros Junior Music Festival which, this year, is to be held at the Hexagon in Reading in March, and has the theme of 'Rainforest Rumble'. The children will delight in singing much loved songs from The Lion King and The Jungle Book – it's sure to be an amazing evening and we are always so proud of the children for taking part.

Continuing on the musical theme, the children in Oak Class (year 6) have been enjoying learning to play the Ukulele and the children in Chestnut Class (years 4/5) have been learning the cornet. Having shown such responsibility and enthusiasm, the children were even allowed to take the instruments home with them to practice – much to the delight, no doubt, of their lucky parents and carers!!

Oak class are looking forward to attending a Poetry Event at Elstree School at the end of January and, as always, are really grateful to have been invited to attend.

Looking ahead to the rest of the year, there is so much to look forward to for the children of Woolhampton Primary School. There are residential trips planned in the summer for the older children – always a great source of anticipation and excitement! – and the whole school will enjoy learning new topics, nurturing their friendships, taking part in sporting events and, of course, participating in the much-loved Forest School days, which always prove to be a great mixture of learning and fun in the beautiful woodlands surrounding our school.

If we're not too late to say it, everyone from Woolhampton Primary School would like to wisher the wider community and very happy, healthy and fun-packed new year!





# **Brimpton Church of England Primary School**

## *Diary Adventures at Brimpton School*



**It is hard to believe that Christmas has come and gone already and we are nearing the end of January 2024! We have a busy spring term ahead of us and this year it is really short!**

Thank You - I would like to thank all of you who came along to our Church Nativity at the end of last term; it is always nice to see familiar faces from the local community and to see our beautiful church full with family and friends. I hope you all stayed for a cuppa and a mince pie!

We had an amazing fundraising month during December with lots of events and workshops. Our PTA made just over £750 which is such an amazing amount of money for our small school, and enables us to do little extras for the children. A massive thank you to them.

We are busy rehearsing for the annual Junior Music Festival, which is such a highlight in our school calendar. This year it will be held at The Hexagon in Reading, so new songs and a new venue.

This term we have Reading Football Club coming into school every week to do football with our key stage 2 children, which is always a great hit.

We hope you enjoy seeing what our amazing school takes part in over the school year. As the term progresses we shall have lots of wonderful stories to tell the Brimpton Community so watch this space!

**If you require any other information regarding Brimpton School  
Please contact Mrs Sarah Vockins on 0118-9712311  
[office@brimpton.w-berks.sch.uk](mailto:office@brimpton.w-berks.sch.uk) [www.brimpton.w-berks.sch.uk](http://www.brimpton.w-berks.sch.uk)**