Great St Mary's eMag

1-25 Dec 2026: Issue 208





From Alex Berry

I often start Advent Sunday choir rehearsals by wishing the choir a Happy New Year. The beginning of the church year is a wonderful time for church musicians: not only is there the anticipation of Christmas, with its high-altitude descants and uplifting music, but there is also a wealth of music for Advent itself to explore. For our choristers and teenagers, music is an excellent vehicle for teaching the faith, and in this season we have the opportunity to discuss the important and distinctive themes of Advent: not simply the coming of Christmas in the incarnation (lovely as it is), but also Christ's sacramental presence in the Eucharist; the themes of expectation and prophecy running throughout the Old Testament and culminating with John the Baptist; and the doctrine of the second-coming of Christ.

The beginning of a new year is also a time to reflect on the last twelve months and set priorities for the year ahead. This Advent, Great St Mary's is launching *The Gift of Music*, our new Music Patrons' scheme. This is a membership scheme through which members of the congregation, choir families and supporters of GSM's music from the wider community can contribute specifically towards the cost of our music ministry. Music costs around £100,000 a year to fund, most of which is met by the PCC, with the remainder supported by grants and donations. Patronage offers a way to make this funding more sustainable, while giving our congregations a greater sense of ownership over the music here. It will help us to continue employing an Assistant Director of Music and offering vocal coaching to our Choristers and Youth Choir. There are different levels of patronage: from £3 a week to become a St Cecilia Patron to larger contributions from individuals or businesses wishing to become a St Mary Patron. I would encourage you to look at our Music Patrons' webpage to find out more: https://www.greatstmarys.org/music-patrons.

December is a month when we hear the very best of what our musicians offer. At our *Carols by Candlelight* services on 20 December, the full foundation of nearly 80 singers will offer some ravishing music to a full congregation, to our city, and to God. All of this is made possible because of the musical tuition and faith formation we offer our children and teenagers week in, week-out, and the commitment of our Parish Choir and Lay Clerks. As you look back over the last twelve months and consider your priorities for a new church year, I do hope you will consider becoming a Music Patron and helping to sustain this vital and life-giving ministry. I wish you all a blessed Advent and a wonderful Christmas (when we get there!).



Alex Berry
Director of Music

Deadline for submissions for the next eMag Tues 8th Dec

Livestreaming of Services

Live and past services can be accessed via the Great St Mary's YouTube page on https://www.youtube.com/c/greatstmarys

Please note: If you have any comments regarding the on-line live-streaming, please email office@gsm.cam.ac.uk

Worship Schedule

December services - see www.greatstmarys.org for details

Sunday 6 Dec - 2nd Sunday of Advent

- **8am** BCP Holy Communion
- **10am** Choral Eucharist and Children's Church
- **11.05am** All Together Event: Bulb Planting for Advent in Churchyard + Advent trail in GSM

Sunday 13 Dec - 3rd Sunday of Advent

- **8am** BCP Holy Communion
- **10am** Choral Eucharist (**No Children's Church**)
- **4pm Choral Evensong -** Messiaen's La Nativité du Seigneur

Sunday 20 Dec - 4th Sunday of Advent

- **8am** BCP Holy Communion
- **10am** Choral Eucharist and Children's Church
- **4pm and 6.30pm** Carols by Candlelight (tickets required)

Thursday 24 Dec - Christmas Eve

- **4pm** Nativity Service
- **11.30pm** Midnight Mass

Friday 25 Dec - Christmas Day

- **8am** BCP Holy Communion
- **10am** Choral Eucharist (**No Children's Church**)
- **11.45am** Choral Mattins

Regular Weekday Worship Regular Weekday Worship

- Monday—Friday 9am **Morning Prayer** in church and on YouTube
- Mondays 12.30 pm **Christian Meditation** *in Michaelhouse - followed by soup lunch*
- Wednesdays - 12.30pm **Holy Communion** in GSM

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Sign up for our mailing list at greatstmarys.org/emag



Advent

Engaging with Advent

Advent is a very special time of year as we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas. As the days get darker and colder, our wonderful Advent services with their beautiful music and liturgies create spaces for reflection and anticipation that draw us deeper into the mystery of God's coming among us. For many of us, it is a busy time of year – and yet, making space for prayer and reflection keeps us connected to the deep and rich meaning of this season. You may already have the Church of England Everyday Faith app on your phone. It offers resources for prayer and reflection all year round. During Advent it provides all the content of the 'Advent A to Z' booklet, delivered to your phone daily. You can also buy the Advent A-Z book if you'd prefer to have it all at once – see the reading suggestions below.

We will have an engagement station in church again during Advent. You will be able to find resources there for several 'pathways' through the season. You will be able to share your reflections on Advent using the Post-It notes, helping us to recognise that this is a season through which we travel as a community - as a Church - not just as individuals. There will also be a Jesse Tree trail, which will be accessible to all, and especially good for children.

Advent and Christmas COMPLINE at Home
Join us for our weekly Compline services during Advent and Christmas, via Zoom , from the comfort of your own home. This peaceful and reflective service offers a gentle way to bring the day to a close.



Wednesdays 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 December at 8pm. Each 45-minute service will include:

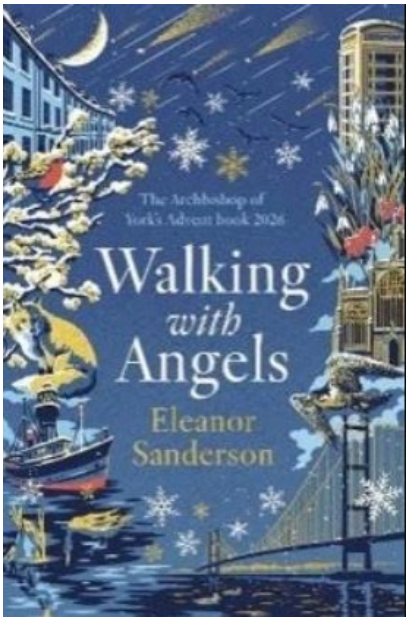
- A time to greet one another
- A short reflection inspired by themes selected for each Wednesday from the Church of England's *Advent A to Z* and *The Gift of Christmas* journeys
- A Taizé chant to prepare us for 10 minutes of shared silence
- The traditional spoken words of Compline to end the day

Sharing a few minutes of silence with others can be a surprisingly peaceful experience, offering space to slow down, quieten our minds and simply be in God's presence. You are welcome to keep your camera off and to use the time in whatever way feels right for you.
Everyone is welcome. Amid the busyness of Advent and Christmas, these evenings are an invitation to pause, find stillness and enjoy some time for prayer and reflection before settling into 'a quiet night and a perfect end'."
To join, use the Zoom
link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83412531694?pwd=W8arO6JxOYEgbQY2wtLaiXNmD7jiAC.1
If you'd like more details or prefer the link by email, please contact Charlotte Labalette (email: charlotte.labalette@gmail.com).

Reading suggestions, and there are more on the website.

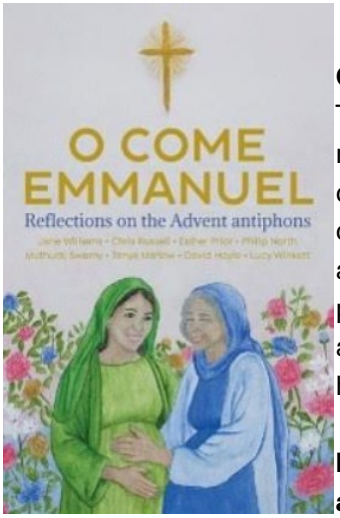


Advent from A to Z
A day-by-day guide to the season £ 4.99 (copies available in GSM)
Imogen Ball, Philip North, Andrew Zihni
Advent from A to Z invites you on a journey to explore what the season of Advent is all about, offering twenty-four daily reflections, each taking as their starting point a different letter of the alphabet. Together they invite you to discover afresh the people, places, traditions and symbols of Advent. Each day includes a Bible reading, a reflection, an opportunity to respond and a prayer. Whether you are keeping Advent for the first or the hundredth time, Advent from A to Z can help you prepare to celebrate the great gift that God gives us of himself in the birth of Jesus at Christmas.



Walking with Angels. The Archbishop of York's Advent Book 2026 by Eleanor Sanderson

Drawing on the words spoken by angels in Scripture, this book explores how these messengers of God reveal the good news at the heart of the Christian story. Through the spiritual practice of prayer walking, it encourages readers to slow down, step outside, and engage both body and spirit as they journey through the Advent season. Each of the four weeks of Advent focuses on a different aspect of that message, helping readers grow in love for God, for their neighbours, and for themselves. It includes vivid accounts of the author's own and others' personal experiences of angelic encounters as well as journalling prompts and

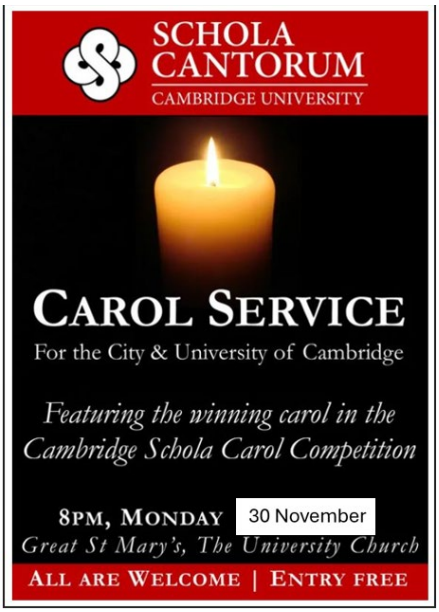


O Come Emmanuel. Reflections on the Advent Antiphons

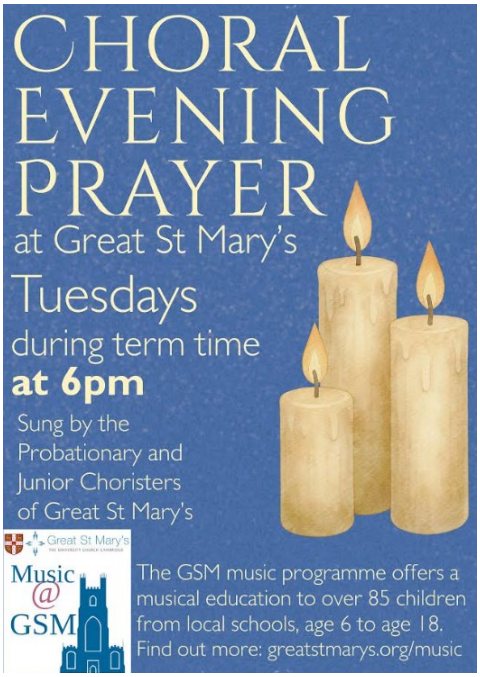
This beautifully illustrated daily Advent companion explores the ancient biblical names and images for the coming Messiah familiar to most people from the hymn, 'O come, O come Emmanuel'. Well-known writers offer a total of twenty-four reflections, one for each weekday of the four weeks of Advent. Each day includes the text of the antiphon from Common Worship, a Scripture reading exploring its biblical roots, paintings of the antiphon as a focus for meditation, a reflection, a challenge to ponder and an Advent prayer. The book also includes an introduction explaining the rich history of the antiphons, recommendations for further resources including musical settings.

Please, see the Great St Mary's website Advent & Christmas | Great St Mary's for all our Advent and Christmas services, reading suggestions and resources for children and families for this special season.

Mon 30 Nov - Schola Cantorum Carol Service



Tues 1 Dec - Choral Evening Prayer

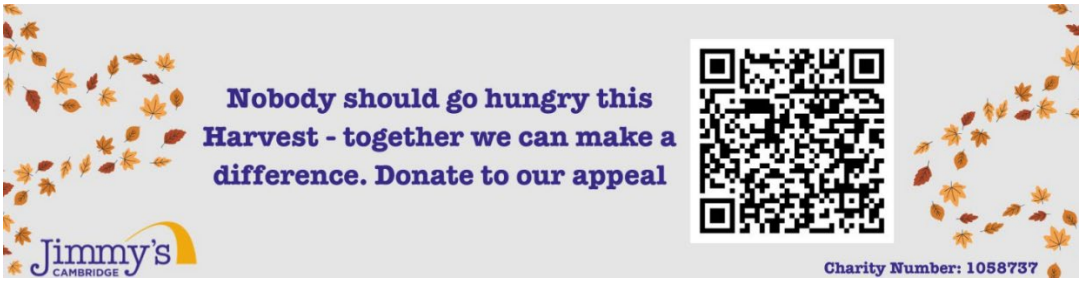


Wed 2 Dec - First Wednesday Lunch



Lunch will be in the Michaelhouse Chancel, 1-2pm. It follows on from the 12.30 Holy Communion service in GSM but there is no obligation to attend that! It is a simple lunch of soup and bread, together with fruit and home-made cake/biscuits and we invite a contribution of £5. If you find standing in a crowd at coffee on a Sunday morning a bit tricky, this might be the place for you to come and sit and chat.

Wed 2 Dec - Jimmy's Carol Service



Jimmy's Cambridge has been providing housing and tailored, long-term support to people experiencing homelessness in Cambridge for over 30 years. This winter, Jimmy's will continue to be here for everyone who needs us, offering a warm welcome, a hot meal and the help to take the first steps from Street Floor to Front Door.

We are holding a carol service at Great Saint Mary's Church in Cambridge on Wed 2n Dec 6pm- 7:30pm. Singing carols with the community, for the community, this event will help raise the vital funds needed to help keep our service running and support the individuals who rely on us. With performances from the Grove Primary School and The Kingsmen, it promises to be a wonderful evening of music, seasonal cheer and an opportunity to come together as a community during the festive season.

Please scan the QR code or visit our website to book tickets. All donations from this event will go directly towards Jimmy's services.

Thurs 3 Dec - Read, Mark, Learn

Read Mark Learn will meet virtually on Thursdays from 5 to 6 p.m. to study one of the lectionary readings for the following Sunday's Choral Eucharist.
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84052562470?pwd=SWJnZ1dCcFFOTzRWdll4WGhpSG9ydz09
Meeting ID: 840 5256 2470
Passcode: 876406

Meeting date	Passage
3 December	Mk 1.1-8
10 December	Jn 1.6-8, 19-28
17 December	Lk. 1.26-38

Sat 5 Dec - Christian Aid Carol Singing



Sun 6 Dec - Academy of Great St. Mary's

Academy of Great St Mary's Concert SUNDAY 6 December 7.30pm
Do join us for a feast of wonderful music with the remarkable Symphony No. 2 by Rachmaninov - a 'tour de force', plus the enchanting Peer Gynt Suite No. 1 by Grieg, and the evocative Marche Slave by Tchaikovsky, conducted by Adam Pounds. Tickets £10-£18 from ADCticketing.com and the GSM gift shop (under 16s free). A fund-raising event for Great St Mary's.



Sun 6 Dec - Advent Bulb Planting



All Together Advent Event: Bulb Planting + Advent Trail on Sun 6 Dec after the 10 o'clock service

We had a lovely time at the Creationtide art workshop in September painting with watercolours in the churchyard garden. Our next All Together event will also be in the churchyard garden (as long as the weather isn't truly terrible), but this time it will be December, so you'll need to wrap up warm! We'll be **planting spring bulbs** together **after the 10 o'clock service**, ready to watch and wait for signs of growth over the following weeks (watching and waiting being good Advent-ish things to do)! There will also be an opportunity to do an **Advent trail**, which will be there in GSM for all of Advent. This event is for people of all ages, young and old and in between! All are welcome, and there is no need to sign up beforehand.

Mon 7 Dec – East Anglian Air Ambulance Carol Service

Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge
Monday 7 December at 7.30pm

Tues 8 Dec - University Staff Carol Service



Sat 12 Dec - Women's Breakfast - 9.30am



Women's Breakfast at Michaelhouse

Starting with Communion in the Montefiore Room followed by breakfast

All are welcome - you can just turn up.
Please contact office@gsm.cam.ac.uk for more information.

Sat 12 Dec - Saturday Prayers - 11am

Saturday Prayers for Daily Life at 11am in St Andrew's Chapel, Great St. Mary's Church.

Sat 12 Dec – Friends of Michaelhouse Concert in Michaelhouse

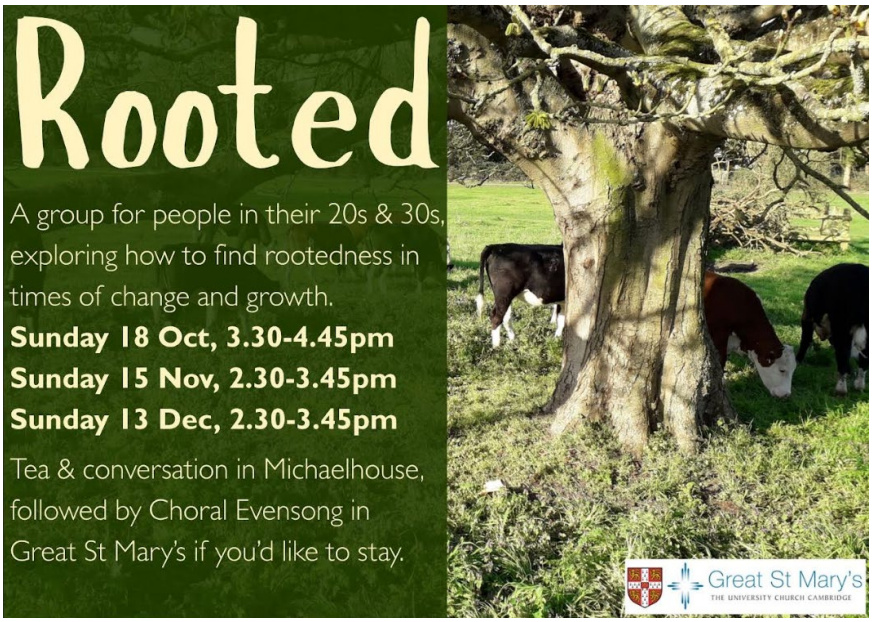


Sat 12 Dec - Carol Service at GSM

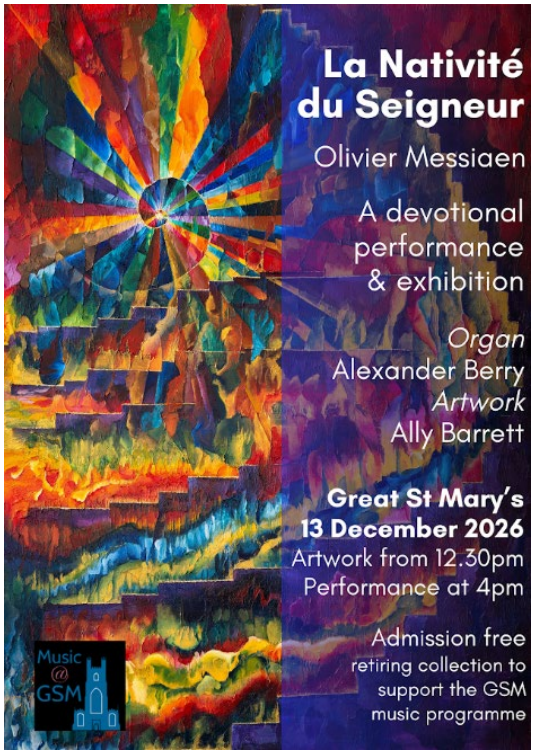
Addenbrooke's Kidney Patients Association Carol Service



Sun 13 Dec - Rooted



Sun 13 Dec - La Nativite du Seigneur



Tues 15 Dec - Something Understood



'Something Understood' - the GSM Poetry Group
Will meet on Tues 15 Dec 7.30-9.00pm

Our Themes will be: **Heaven on Earth and Eternity**

NB New Venue - We will meet and David and Angela Bridges' House: 97, Queen Edith's Way, Cambridge CB1 8PL

Any questions, please contact:
juliet@jmcj.org
Illustration: 'Moses and the Burning Bush' - 15th Century, Unknown Artist

Sat 19 Dec - Men's Breakfast

Men's Breakfast 9.00am
(and women are welcome too!)

Starting with Communion in the Harvey de Stanton Chapel (Michaelhouse)
Followed by breakfast in the Montefiore Room.

All are welcome - you can just turn up.
Please contact office@gsm.cam.ac.uk for more information.

Sat 19 Dec – Friends of Michaelhouse Lunchtime Concert



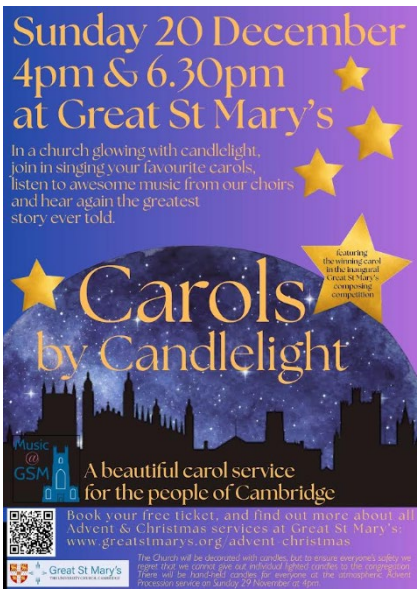
Michaelhouse, Trinity Street, Cambridge **1.00pm (until 2.00pm)**
Lunchtime Concert: Double and Squeak
Flutes & clarinets Simon Andrews & Anne Bury
Flutes & clarinets Sally Gogna & James Harvey
Wind quartets in a wide variety of styles, on a selection
of flutes and clarinets of different sizes!
Free entry, with retiring collection
http://greatstmarys.org/lunchtime-recitals

Sun 20 Dec - Occasional Choir

Do you enjoy singing church music but cannot currently commit to a weekly rehearsal and services? Then the Occasional Choir might be for you.
On 20 |Dec we will form the choir for the 10am Choral Eucharist in Great St Mary's. Rehearsal 9.00am.

Kyrie: St Anne's Mass (James MacMillan)
Mass Setting: Aurora & Gloucester Street Mass (Sarah MacDonald)
Anthem: Gabriel's Message (arr. Pettman)
Please contact Stanley Godfrey stanleyg@gsm.cam.ac.uk for any more information.

Sun 20 Dec - Carols by Candlelight



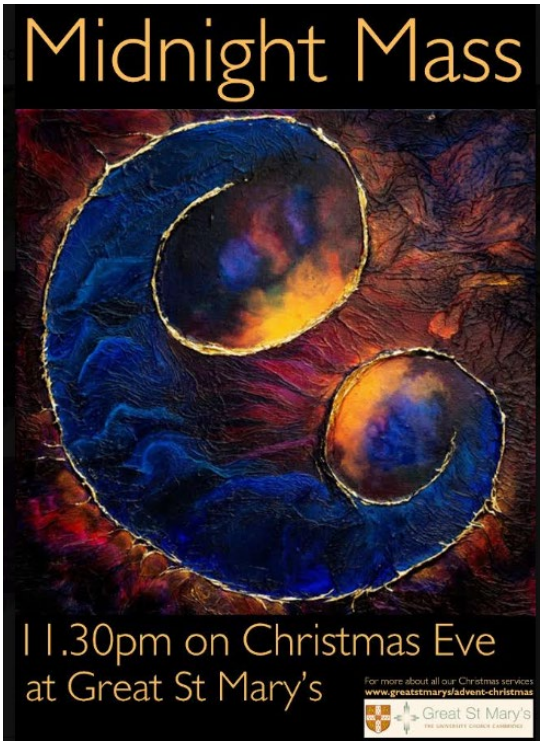
To book tickets, click on the appropriate concert time or scan the QR code.
Carols by Candlelight 20 Dec 4pm

Carols by Candlelight 20 Dec 6.30pm

Thurs 24 Dec - Nativity Service

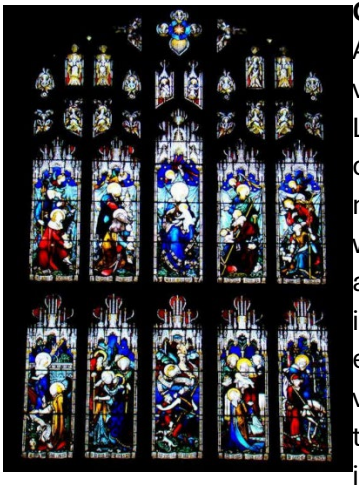


Thurs 24 Dec - Midnight Mass



Stewardship

Great St. Mary's - Legacies



Giving for future generations – remembering Great St Mary's in your will
All churches rely entirely upon the support of generous Christians. Our giving is vitally important and helps sustain the ministry and flourishing of our church. Leaving a legacy to Great St Mary's is one of the most valuable and lasting ways you can help GSM continue to thrive with its wonderful buildings and very special ministry, for the benefit of generations to come. Many of the improvements in GSM we enjoy today—such as the renovated West End which has trebled our income—are thanks to generous past legacies. Making a will and keeping it updated is an important part of Christian Stewardship, and leaving a gift as part of this is an expression of our gratitude and thanksgiving towards God. Leaving a legacy is also very tax efficient. All gifts to charities (including churches) in wills are tax-free. Gifts to Great St Mary's would be deducted from the value of your estate when inheritance tax is calculated. If you have a will already, a legacy can be added as a signed codicil to an existing will.

The Church of England website Leave a legacy in your will | The Church of England provides very helpful information, including a link to Farewill (www.farewill.com), with whom the Church of England has partnered. Farewill offer a free online will writing service.

More information on legacies is also available in the Church. **Margaret Johnston, Gordon Campbell** and **Revd Jutta** are happy to answer any questions.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care and Prayer at Time of Need

Pastoral Visits and Home Communions
If you would appreciate a pastoral visit at home or to receive prayer (either by the Home Intercessors group or as part of the intercessions in GSM services) please do talk to one of the ministry team either in person or contact them via email on clergy@gsm.cam.ac.uk
Please know that **you can request a visit from one of the clergy who would be delighted to share Holy Communion with you and your loved ones at home.**
If you would like to know more about either the Home Intercessors or the Pastoral Care Groups from the point of view of joining either group, do please talk to Jutta or Ally (or send an email to clergy@gsm.cam.ac.uk).
Funeral Plans
Many people find it helpful to think about their funeral wishes well in advance, and to talk to their family about this, or to a member of the clergy. To help you think about funeral planning please feel welcome to download this Funeral Wishes Form and use it to record your thoughts. When you are ready, please share what you have noted with your next of kin, and consider if you would like this to be shared also with the clergy team at Great St Mary's so that we can keep it safely for you.
In a pastoral emergency the phone number remains 01223 747277 (messages left on this number will be responded to within 24 hours.

Year's Mind

Almighty and eternal God, from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted, either by death or life: hear our prayers and thanksgivings for all whom we remember this day; fulfil in them the purpose of your love; and bring us all, with them, to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Margaret Robertson	2 December
Alan Griffiths	4 December
Arthur Henderson	4 December
Felicity Webster	5 December
Gladys Irene Rand	7 December
Ivy Mabel Jaggs	8 December
Margaret Pearson	8 December
Olive Montgomery	9 December
Margaret Samson	10 December
Fergus Wilson	10 December
James Atwell	12 December
Walter Mitchell	12 December
John Boursnell	17 December
Louise Pirouet	21 December
Janet Oswald	27 December
John Scott Price	31 December



Service

Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust

Please consider supporting church congregation member Jonathan Goddard Peake's participation in the Cambridge half marathon. He is running in memory of his beloved late wife Carol, raising money for Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust (ACT).
https://addenbrooke.enthuse.com/pf/jonathan-goddard



Ride & Stride

Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust

RIDE+STRIDE for Churches 2026

The Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust, have sent us ***£297.50*** *as* a donation to our funds, being half the proceeds raised by the people who nominated GSM on the annual sponsored Ride and Stride event. Quite separately they gave us a grant for £1,000 for the pews project.

Eco Tip - a sustainable Christmas



- You can rent a real Christmas tree for the 2026 holiday season through various companies in the UK that offer delivery and collection services, with most accepting orders now. Companies like Love a Christmas Tree, Good Elf, and Green Elf Trees provide potted living trees that are returned to their farms to be cared for until the following year.

- Go for a natural wreath and decorations. A great family activity. Holly sprigs, ivy trails, pinecones, rose hips... Take a bag, go for a walk, and see what you can find! Make sure that you have permission from the land-owner before you start snipping. Source as much as you can from what's already dropped. Then get creative!

- Re-use cards and wrapping. Make Christmas tags by re-using old Christmas cards. Recycled brown paper has a much lower ecological footprint than Christmas wrapping paper. Create homemade gifts. Baked goods for example, or buy gifts from a charity shop.

- Give the gift of time. What about a gift of cooking for someone once a month for a year, taking them for a coffee, babysitting, house cleaning... or whatever. Just make a 'gift of time gift voucher' and put it in a card for them.

- Remember the reason for the season. Practising generosity and hospitality is a great way to show Christ's love at Christmas. Invite someone who'd otherwise be on their own, to join you on Christmas Day. It's also a way of reducing energy consumption as they'll share your heating and cooking!

Wider Concerns Committee

Treats for Christmas for the Foodbank!



During Advent, we invite donations of Christmas treats on **Sunday 6 and 13 December** for the Foodbank e.g. sweets, chocolates, mince pies and Christmas puddings! They are so delighted we are doing this.
N.B. *Everything must be pre-packaged and have a good shelf-life e.g. a packet of mince pies from M&S (but not bakery fresh food packed on site). Sadly, homemade food is not acceptable. Chocolates should not contain alcohol. (Some mince piece or Christmas puddings may contain a small amount of alcohol and that is all right as they have been cooked.)*

Advent procession November 29th

Our retiring collection is for Whitworth House, Cambridge and the ministry of Great St. Mary's. Donations may be made on line at https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/great-st-marys-advent-procession-collection
"A Safe Place to Begin Again" - for over 25 years, the Whitworth Trust has supported vulnerable, precariously-housed young women in Cambridge — offering a home, hope, education, training, community building and a pathway to independence. It is one of the few organisations in Cambridge providing residential accommodation for young women. Please help us to support young women rebuilding their lives.

Crochet gifts for Christmas



Handmade Crochet Gifts - Supporting the RSPB

Looking for a little something special for Christmas? Charlotte and Alix will be bringing a beautiful collection of handmade crochet animals, lovingly created by Alix, at coffee after the 10am service on Sunday **13th December**. Donations are invited in support of the **RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)**, a charity doing vital work to protect birds, conserve their habitats and support wildlife more widely. Our church Eco Group continues to support and promote many of their projects.
There will also be handmade crochet crosses, which can be used as bookmarks or held during prayer. Do come and have a look, find a special handmade gift and support a wonderful cause!

Christmas Cards



Religious Christmas Cards - Once again these will be on sale at coffee on Sunday mornings with the price held at £2.50 for five cards. Of this, £1 per pack will go to support the Princess Basma Centre which continues to do remarkable and inspirational work with children with disabilities in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, under the auspices of the Diocese of Jerusalem, despite the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.
The good news is that it will be possible to take card payments this year, though cash and cheques (payable to Great St Mary's) will still be welcome.

GSM Meditation Group

The GSM meditation group that meets in Michaelhouse on a Monday lunchtime is part of the World Community for Christian Meditation. (WCCM). WCCM in the UK are actively looking for someone to serve as a trustee and treasurer. There is a paid bookkeeper and the voluntary treasurer role would suit someone with a background in accounting and/or charity law. If you might be interested, please contact Richard Summers (who is a WCCM Trustee) in the first instance (richards.rs12@gmail.com) to arrange an informal conversation.

Coming Up

VOCES8 at Great St Mary's: tickets on sale now!



We are delighted to announce that internationally renowned Grammy-nominated vocal ensemble **VOCES8** brings its programme *Give Me Your Stars* to the beautiful surroundings of Great Saint Mary's on **Monday 15 March 2027, at 7pm**.

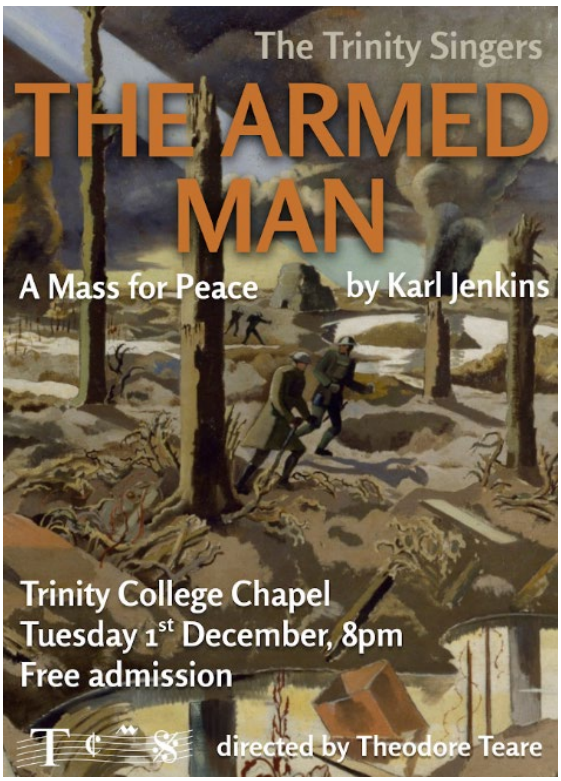
As well as the 'impeccable in its quality of tone and balance' (Gramophone magazine) singing from VOCES8, this unique event will also include performances from members of the various choirs of Great St Mary's! They will join VOCES8 for a selection of pieces, following the privilege of an afternoon workshop with the ensemble.

Tickets are on sale now! Come and enjoy an exceptional evening of music while supporting the music programme at Great St Mary's.

Book your tickets here

Proceeds will support the mission, ministry and music programme at Great St Mary's.

The Armed Man - a Mass for Peace



Litter Pick - Mill Road Cemetery



Mill Road Cemetery is off Mill Road in Cambridge. Since 2001 the cemetery has been protected as a Grade ii listed site. Ten city parishes, including Great St Mary's, share the cemetery although all plots are now full. The cemetery's management committee organise monthly volunteer litter picks. You would be very welcome to join them.

MINISTRY TEAM



Revd Canon Jutta Brueck
Vicar
email: juttab@gsm.cam.ac.uk



Revd Ally Barrett
Associate Vicar
email: allyb@gsm.cam.ac.uk



Dr David Grumett
Licensed Lay Minister
email:
davidg@gsm.cam.ac.uk



Revd Andrew Day
Associate Priest
email: acd62@gsm.cam.ac.uk



Revd Alison Kennedy
Associate Priest
email: alisonk@gsm.cam.ac.uk



Revd Canon Jeremy Morris
Associate Priest



Revd Graham Stevenson
Associate Priest
email: gs635@cam.ac.uk



Revd Rosie Hewitt
Children and Youth Minister
email: rosieh@gsm.cam.ac.uk

Great St Mary's offers a range of groups and activities for children from birth to 18.

MUSIC AT THE UNIVERSITY CHURCH

Great St Mary's has a long and rich tradition of music, with six choirs, two pipe organs, an orchestra and weekly concerts.



Alexander Berry
Director of Music
email: music@gsm.cam.ac.uk



Stanley Godfrey
Organist and Assistant Director of Music
email: music@gsm.cam.ac.uk

EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY CHURCH

Great St Mary's regularly welcomes school groups and offers education outreach around heritage, faith and sustainability. To find out more visit www.greatstmarys.org/education .



Natalie Lealand
Education and Heritage Officer
email: nataliel@gsm.cam.ac.uk