

St Mary Magdalene Langridge

Langridge Parish Newsletter December 2017 to February 2018

**Letter from Revd Mark Searle
Rector of All Saints, Weston**



Mark's first Service at Langridge

Invitations to Light

As the darkness of the autumn nights draw in we start to crave the light. We light fires in November and then as soon as we can, the Christmas lights go up. Sparkling in the longer nights, bringing joy and hope to a sun starved world. Living in the UK means that the timing of winter emphasises the language of Christmas. So the images of Jesus coming as light of the world has a particular resonance for us. John's Gospel says: "In him was life, and that life was the life of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." The world can be a place of conflict, suffering and loneliness. But Jesus comes as light in the darkness. If we invite him in, he brings joy and hope in every circumstance.

Over the Christmas period we have a wide range of services across our churches. At each one we will celebrate and reflect on the birth of Jesus, the light of the world, in different ways. Please come and celebrate with us. But could you also be thinking and praying about who you will invite and bring with you. It could be that your neighbour or friend needs to hear the message, that Jesus is the light of the world.

At All Saints in the new year we will start an Alpha course. It is a wonderful introduction to the Christian faith, a safe place to ask questions. Please could you promote this widely and invite a friend or neighbour. It starts at 7.30pm on Wednesday 10th January at the All Saints Church Centre. Please sign up on the All Saints website and let us know if you are planning to come.

I pray that you will be filled with the light of Christ Jesus this Christmas and New Year. God bless, Mark.

FRIENDS OF LANGRIDGE

The Friends continue their support of the church with their regular meetings and on 7th October arranged for Stephen Bird, Head of Heritage Services in B&NES to give a talk in the Village Hall - 'A sort of Paradise, Bath & Beyond'. He gave us a fascinating insight into very local archaeology and history and then moved on to the early history of Bath.

The **Valley Carol Singing** this year takes a different format and we are invited by Marie to stay at Court Farm at 7pm 19 December and sing round the Tree, possibly with accompaniment, and drinks and nibbles. Donations will go to Julian House as usual, and anyone needing a lift can ring Jane Lipington on 017590469949. It is hoped that a choral event and a flower festival will be arranged next year.

PAST EVENTS

Sadly, the quarter began with the funeral service for dearly loved Mavis Read, attended by her family and friends and taken by Revd Nigel Rawlinson. We shall remember her and Edwin for all they contributed.

It seems an appropriate moment to stop and consider how much Nigel has contributed to our church and community in Langridge. We know that he loves this place as much as we do, but we are indebted to him in many ways. His support and enthusiastic ideas resulted in the Survey being undertaken several years ago, which indicated the remarkable regard so many hold for St Mary Magdalene Church, whether members of the congregation, residents of the valley, visitors from far and near, or walkers exploring the beautiful countryside. This impetus has led to us establishing the monthly Family Service, and the Second Saturdays in particular, and expanding our boundaries. We shall continue to build on this enthusiasm.

Now that Nigel has finally moved on to his new role at the University of Bath, our sincere thanks for so much, and our prayers go with him. He and Pat have been a part of our life for many years and we look forward to seeing them here on future occasions.

Nigel's last service during the interregnum at Langridge



In October a group met in the church for a Quiet Day led by Claire Jones. It provided a special opportunity to spend the morning together with suggested readings and reflecting on the chance to listen to God in the peace of the church. We welcomed some visitors and once again, with the benefit of the kind hospitality at the beautiful Court Farm barn, enjoyed lunch together continuing with our exchange of ideas and experiences.

More prosaically there was an Autumn church cleaning and churchyard clearance day – not hugely well attended but very productive.

PAST SERVICES

Firstly we would like to thank all those who kept up the momentum of church life at Langridge during the recent interregnum. All the signs are that we are emerging from this period with a better understanding of our strengths and weaknesses, and better placed to face the future.

Autumn 2017 has been an exciting time in the worshipping life of our church. We began with Rev Mark Searle's licensing with Bishop Ruth at All Saints Weston – a memorable evening of great formality and symbolism. Each church within the benefice was invited to present a gift to him and so, as a rural parish, we gave him a special mixture of flower seeds from Donald MacIntyre's farm at Langridge.

The Langridge presentation by Liz & Kate



Mark's first service at Langridge followed swiftly on 10th September, and he has since been able to take one of our services each month.

On 17th September, Nigel Rawlinson "parachuted into" Langridge to baptise Lawrence Salmon after the 11 o'clock Family Service which was filled with a large congregation of the Salmon and Gibbs families and friends.



Rev Antony Claridge led our Harvest Festival in a beautifully decorated church, and bravely stayed on for the start of the ever-enjoyable auction of produce, ably carried out by Harry Umpleby and accompanied by refreshments from the Friends.

Some of you will remember Geoffrey and Jane Sellers who were married at St Mary Magdalene nearly fifteen years ago. They worshipped here for some time before they found it too difficult to drive, but continued to take an interest in Langridge. Sadly Geoffrey died recently, shortly before his 92nd birthday, and our thoughts will be with Jane.

We have had continuing strong support from ladies: Rev Geraldine Kirk and Rev Judith Harries, and Sarah Couchman, Jo Lewis, and Judith Leach from the Weston team – whose ongoing help we greatly value.

Once again Canon Roger Clifton led our Remembrance Service, strongly urging us to see both sides in conflict. The flower displays in the church for Remembrance were memorable!



FUTURE SERVICES AND EVENTS

Christmas is almost upon us. This year we have almost an embarrassment of riches in store at Langridge.

We begin our celebrations with **Christingle** on 10th December led by Sarah Couchman (at 11 am).

Mark Searle is able to lead both our **Carol Service**, which this year is on 17th December at 3 pm, and our **Christmas Day Communion** – from which he will have to make a quick exit to take his next service at All Saints.

Christmas Day being a Monday, this year we will have a rather quiet, reflective Morning Prayer on **Christmas Eve**. Then on **New Year's Eve** (again a Sunday) we have planned a morning service with a strong element of choral activity.

Looking further ahead, we are planning a **Benefice Walk** for Saturday May 5th. Details yet to be firmed up, but the broad plan is for walkers from the three churches (All Saints, Langridge and North Stoke) to converge on Langridge Village Hall for lunch and a further afternoon walk.

Tony Davies

RIDE + STRIDE

As you know, I usually 'ride' for this event; but this year I strode. I set off walking in a group of 10 walkers from Charlcombe, although I'm afraid that before long I left the others behind, and visited Woolley, Langridge, North Stoke and ASW. But then I finished off in Bath where I was able to pick up another 10 or 12 churches quite quickly.

Many thanks to my sponsors, from Langridge and elsewhere, from whom I was able to raise £383 for the Somerset Churches Trust. In time, half of this sum will be returned to Langridge Church.

Tony Davies

LANGRIDGE CONCERT TRIPS

Joanna Pelly and I have hatched the idea of 'organised' trips to concerts in Bath. We could book a row of seats and arrange shared transport into town – and possibly a meal beforehand?

My first suggested trip is to Bath Abbey on Saturday 24th February for the J S Bach Mass in B minor, with The English Concert and the Erebus Ensemble. Please let me know, by 10th December if possible, if you are interested in joining us.

Tony Davies

MEMORY CORNER A more recent memory – Meals not on wheels

Our November Family Service (followed by the Friends Soup lunch) provided a last minute challenge which was resolved by a resourceful congregation. Langridge Lane has been waiting for some years to have the many dangerous pot holes filled and this work is now finally underway – but blocking the passage of cars both sides of the church. While some climbed up from the bottom of the lane, Grace kindly opened her farm for parking from the top. Then energetic members carried the soup and heavy supplies down the hill which were enjoyed after the service taken by Judith Leach and Jenny Lewis.

Letter from the Right Reverend Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton

We've been seeing the Christmas decorations in the shops since the summer holidays ended. It starts sooner than ever each year doesn't it. At the beginning of November a checkout assistant was telling me she already had her decorations up at home due to her daughter's insistence. I remember the time when my parents would put up the tree on Christmas Eve and we weren't allowed into the living room until the next morning. Our excitement knew no bounds!

'Waiting' is something we are not very good at. Many of us are impatient in this world of immediacy. We want our needs, our wishes, fulfilled straight away. We are like that with our shopping online, paying more for next day delivery. And we can be like that with our prayer too. Challenging God as to why He doesn't appear to have heard us when we don't receive the answer we are looking for.

This season of Advent is all about waiting. Waiting and watching, not just to celebrate the festival of Christmas, the coming of the babe in the manger, but also waiting and watching for his coming again in glory. The early Christians were anticipating that Jesus would return for them in their lifetime. His words in John's gospel about "going to prepare a place for them", 'going ahead' of them, caused them to be expectant of another advent or arrival of God, breaking into their world. They couldn't understand why He didn't come back quickly particularly when they faced persecution for their faith.

I know of people now who live in that expectancy of Jesus' return each day, opening their curtains with the words, "Maybe today, Lord". Perhaps you do. I'm aware that I don't do that enough. Not because I'm fearful of life in the 'here and now' but rather thinking of each day as potentially the last here on earth and therefore thinking about how to make it count. Thinking about how I might live and tell the story of God's love to friends and neighbours, strangers and family, in a way they might hear that message most effectively. So that they can come to know a God who loves them enough to enter into their world and be present with them.

This Advent perhaps we need to become more aware that it's not only us doing the 'waiting' but also God waiting to receive the best from us.

*God Waits - God waits silently
In our inner recesses, The chambers of our soul,
Gazing lovingly On our treasure,
Awaiting our response.*

Yvonne Morland

The Right Reverend Ruth Worsley Bishop of Taunton

The popular **SECOND SATURDAYS** continue to be well attended. Please note the times are **10am to 12 noon** and we look forward to seeing you and your friends on 9 December.

Apologies from the editor who unfortunately made an error (10.30) in the last Newsletter.



LANGRIDGE SERVICES December 2017 – February 2018

Date	Time	Type of Service	Preacher
December 3	9.30	Holy Communion BCP	Revd Judith Harries
December 10	11 am	Christingle	Sarah Couchman
December 17	3pm	Carol Service	Revd Mark Searle
December 24	9.30	Morning Prayer BCP	Revd Antony Claridge
December 25	9.30	Christmas Day HC CW	Revd Mark Searle
December 31	11am	Choral Service	Tom Peryer
January 7	9.30	Holy Communion BCP	TBA
January 14	9.30	Morning Prayer BCP	TBA
January 21	11 am	Family Service	ASW Shadow Team
January 28	9.30	Holy Communion CW	Revd Mark Searle
February 4	9.30	Holy Communion BCP	Canon John Crowe
February 11	9.30	Morning Prayer BCP	Canon Roger Clifton
February 18	11 am	Family Service	Jo Lewis
February 25	9.30	Holy Communion CW	TBA

If you have contributions for the next Newsletter (March – May) please contact Liz White regarding Church matters, and Judy Rippin for the Friends' news. We would like to hear about all items of interest – comments, events or special occasions by **15 May**.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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