



St Denys Bulletin

The church is open daily from 9am

December 2024 - January 2025

Services at a glance:

- Every Sunday 10am
Sung Eucharist
- Every Wednesday 10am
Said Communion
- Mon, Tues and Thurs
8.45am Morning Prayer
- 1st Sunday 5pm Compline
- 2nd & 3rd Sunday
5pm Evening Prayer
- 4th Sunday 5pm Evensong
- 5th Sunday 6pm
United Service

Directory:

Vicar of Sleaford and Rural Dean

The Rev'd Philip Johnson
01529 304348
revdphilip@aol.com

The Parish Office

Parish Administrator
Paula Ireland
Market Place, Sleaford,
NG34 7SH
admin@sleafordparishchurch.co.uk
01529 413607

Mon, Weds, Fri 9-11am

Churchwardens

Richard Clash
07714 565678
Sarah Stentiford
07707 513225

Safeguarding Officer

Angela Clash 01529
410065 or 0303 003 1111

Director of Music

Lee Mitton-Rooke
lee.rooke@googlemail.com

St Denys Bellringers

sylvia.bird860@gmail.com

PCC Treasurer

Brenda Hitchcock
01529 302775

Letter from the Vicar, Rev'd Philip Johnson

This year feels very odd. Christmas, obviously, started weeks ago: shops are bedecked with Christmas decorations, secular Christmas songs are the muzak that fills the retail environment sound space. But in town it feels odd. At the time of writing there is no Christmas tree outside the church, and I doubt there will be this year. We do not provide that tree – it is the town Christmas tree. Normally it is the centre piece of the lights being turned on as night falls on Advent Sunday. This year, with works still on going in the marketplace, the focal points for the Christmas market have moved elsewhere in the town. The lights were turned on in the Riverside Precinct. Some months ago when we were planning for Christmas, we realised that there would not be the huge crowds in the market square on Advent Sunday and wondered what impact that might have on our annual Christingle service. As we thought through the options we settled on the idea of taking the service outside of the church. We have always timed the Christingle service so that it immediately precedes the turning on of the

lights and if the tree lighting ceremony was going to happen elsewhere why not take the Christingle service there also? The town council were supportive of our idea and this year our Christingle service took place in the Riverside Precinct.

It felt rather strange – as we are more familiar with doing services in the comfort and sanctuary of a church building. Taking church out into the streets doesn't perhaps feel typically middle of the road Anglican, it is more commonly associated with revivalist preachers (the Wesleys, for example) or the Salvation Army. Yet most of Jesus' ministry was carried out on beaches, hillsides, streets, etc – he rarely taught in a synagogue. We may think the church is open, accessible and welcoming – and in many respects it is – but it can be quite alien to many, who have little understanding of what happens in a church service. Over the next month several thousand will come through the doors for a carol service, or concert – we are fortunate that most of the schools in the town

come to the church for Christmas services – and many of those consider St Denys' to be their church. They have some affection for the building, they may even come in occasionally when the church is open to find a quite (holy) space for reflection, but they are essentially un-churched. In other words they have a limited understanding of the Christian story and no understanding of what happens in a church service: the music and liturgy are alien to them. This year we had the opportunity to take something of what we do onto the streets, to perhaps begin to break down some of those barriers that stop people coming into the church.

If the Christmas story teaches us anything, it reminds us that Christ is invariably found in the most unusual and surprising places. Wise men expected to find Jesus in a royal palace, but he was found in a cowshed. If things feel odd this year, not quite how they should be, discombobulating – fear not! Our God is a God of surprises who can be encountered in the most likely settings.

From the Churchwardens

Lady Chapel

Work on the Lady Chapel floor was completed during November. With the exception of a few pieces of flooring all the original panels have been relaid. Many thanks to Brynn Grant for the work he carried out, which did prove to be a huge task. We now move on to the next stage by covering the area with new carpet. It is envisaged the new carpet will be laid during January and then the chapel will be fully open to accommodate the mid-week communion services. All of the curtains, which surrounded the altar and west side of the chapel, have been professionally cleaned and we look forward to the chapel looking in pristine condition.

New Stable

Students from Sleaford Joint Sixth Form have completed the new stable. The stable will be presented to St Denys during the St George's carol service on the 16th December. It has been a privilege to follow the progress of the stable from the original

drawings through to its final design and much praise must go to staff and students who have been involved in its creation. A plaque commemorating the students and acknowledging the generous gift in memory of Vernon and Phyllis Temple will be attached to the stable. Members of the congregation are welcome to attend this service.

Market Place "Winterlight" event - 21/22 December

This event will mark the re-opening of the Market Place and NKDC are hosting various activities during this weekend. In conjunction with this event St Denys will be offering teas, coffees and soup during the two days. On the Saturday these will be served in the churchyard by the main West Doors from 11am till 4pm and during Sunday just inside the West Doors after the main 10am service until around 5pm. It would be nice to see as many as possible supporting, not just the reopening of the Market Place, but St Denys in general.

Bring and Share New Year Lunch - 5th January, 12 noon in Parish Rooms

It is planned to hold a Bring and Share Lunch to celebrate the beginning of a new year. There is no cost involved - just bring food to the table plus your preferred tipples. The recent Harvest Lunch proved successful and it was thought why not lay on something similar for the new year. These occasions can be a good opportunity to meet various members of our extended family in an informal environment. We will need to know rough numbers so there will be the usual form at the back of church to indicate if you will be attending.

Thank you

Sarah and I would like to thank all who have helped in the running of St Denys during 2024. We trust you will have a pleasant Christmas and look forward to enjoying your help and friendship during 2025.

... and finally

During this Pantomime time I am reminded of a quote by Groucho Marx: "I didn't like the play, but then I saw it under adverse conditions - the curtain was up."

Vicars' Perks

The first known vicar of Sleaford, Henry de Swinderby, was appointed on 4 March, 1277. The relevant document mentions a previous priest, Roger, the chaplain and states: "The said vicarage is ordained to consist in all portions and revenues pertaining to the altar under whatever name may be counted, namely, in tithes of wool, of lambs, calves, milk, piglets, and little goats, of linen [and] candles with all kinds of burials and tithes for private merchants, as well as with the tenth of the mills and fisheries, and the manse and church which Roger the chaplain was wont to inhabit."

However it seems, "Henry de Swindirby (*sic*), Perpetual vicar of the prebendary of the church of Lafford, complained that the portions of his vicarage were so

small that the obligations imposed, and especially the annual rent of ten pounds, could not be recognised." Apparently, Bishop Oliver Sutton subsequently intervened, and "with the consent of the dean and chapter and the said prebendaries [= canons of Lincoln] that the said vicar shall be entirely freed from the annual payment of ten pounds."

Whether Father Philip secretly receives piglets or little goats has not to my knowledge, been recorded in our annual accounts! P.S. On the enclosure map during the incumbency of Dr. Richard Yerburch, Carre's Grammar School playing field has written on it "The Vicar for tithe."

Douglas Hoare

Bible Reading

Isaiah 7. 14 (KJV)

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Know your PCC Who am I?

1. My wife and I were born in the same nursing-home in London, six months apart.
2. I helped a former Polish slave-labourer under Nazis to receive a pension from the German government.
3. Have always hated swede!

Answer next month
November - Terry Regan

Follow The Star
CALM and BRIGHT

CHRISTMAS SERVICES
at
Sleaford Parish Church

Carol Service
Sunday, 22nd December
5pm

Midnight Mass
11pm Christmas Eve

Christmas Day
10am Sung Eucharist

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



The Antiphon for Vespers (Evensong) on the 23rd December

O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their Saviour:
Come and save us, O Lord our God. Amen

COMMUNICANTS' GUILD

The Guild's Christmas meeting on **Tuesday 17th December at 2 p.m. in the Church Room** will take its traditional form of carols and readings. This is always a most enjoyable occasion to which everyone is welcome. Do come along and join us.

SLEAFORD KESWICK BIBLE MINISTRY

7.30pm

Friday, 6th December
Riverside Church
Friday, 10th January
Jonathan Lamb

William Alvey School Bishop's Visitor Update

We have been thinking a lot about the Alvey vision in Assembly recently and trying to help the children understand it for themselves and at their level. They were encouraged to think about seeds and plants in a garden needing different conditions to thrive and grow. In the same way they are all different and need different challenges to reach their full potential. Teachers are striving to bring out the best and cater for the different needs of every child. These are summed up in the four words – Aspiration, Tolerance, Respect and Resilience. *“Learning today helps us live tomorrow.”*

On Armistice Day we remembered the 72 past pupils of the Alvey whose names are among those inscribed on the town War Memorial who died in the World Wars, and why we wear poppies. We listened to special and relevant music including Elgar's “Nimrod” and the Last Post and Reveille.

Now, just into December, we move

into Christmas mood and the excitement builds. The Nativity play is being rehearsed already with the stage up and Bethlehem scenery for the performances for parents coming soon. A huge Christmas tree has appeared in the hall and decorations which will dangle from the ceiling are being made by every class. Windows on the Advent Calendars are being opened and the Advent candles are on display in Assembly. We count the Mondays instead of Sundays (as we do in church) to the end of term. The whole school will be coming to church for a carol service just before the end of term. On 2nd December I took in a Christingle from the Christmas Market Christingle Service (held in Riverside Precinct this year). Lots of children said they had one at home when I asked and they remembered what all the pieces mean. That is on display with the Advent candles on Mondays and on the prayer space with a crib scene during the week. All these

things help the children to remember why we are looking forward to Christmas and why we celebrate and get so excited at this time of year. There will be parties for all the classes before the end of term as well!

Also on 2nd December we had more Rotary Star certificates and badges presented – one child from each year group, nominated by teachers for helpful and good works, and also one member of staff nominated by a parent. It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to visit the school and experience all these things and feel so much part of the Alvey family. I hope you enjoy hearing about some of what happens in our church school. Remember though there is a whole lot more going on every minute of every day in every classroom all the time.

We wish them all a Happy and peaceful Christmas when it comes.
Beryl Risdell

Church Services

(Morning prayer is usually said at 8.45am on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday)

Said Communion every Wednesday at 10am (1st Weds of the month is BCP)

Sunday, 8th December

10am Advent II, 5pm Evening Prayer

Wednesday, 11th November

10am Mid Week Communion

Sunday, 15th December

10am Advent III, 5pm Evening Prayer

Wednesday, 18th December

10am Mid-Week Communion

Sunday, 22nd December

10am Advent IV, 5pm Carol Service

Christmas Eve

11pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

10am Christmas Day Communion

Sunday, 29th December

10am Sung Communion, No evening service

Wednesday, 1st January

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 5th January

10am Epiphany, 5pm Compline

Monday, 6th January

6pm Epiphany

Wednesday, 8th January

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 12th January

10am The Baptism of Christ, 5pm Evening Prayer

Wednesday, 15th January

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 19th January

10am Epiphany II, 5pm Evening Prayer

Wednesday, 22nd January

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 25th January

10am Epiphany III, 5pm Evensong

Wednesday, 29th January

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 2nd February

10am Candlemas, 5pm Compline

A dark night of grief and sorrow has passed
I awake in a new dawn

The distant sky breathes softly

It's shoulders dappled palest dove grey

Above the horizon, day breaks so beautiful

Hope whispers: soothingly touching me

Loosening my pain - and I must let her heal

Though fear always struggles for dominion

A wren calls to me, a tiny friend by my side

I cried so desperately and 'look up'

Into the Saviour's face, He understands

And for His dear sake I will take up my cross

Then meekly follow where He leads

Jenny Whybrow

(published with permission of the author)

Submitted by David Birks



Featuring:
Sleaford Training Band
William Alvey School Choir

Playing Modern and
Traditional
Christmas Music

SLEAFORD
CONCERT BAND

Christmas Festival Concert
at St Denys Church
14th of December 2024
Start: 6:30

Mulled Wine and Mince Pies available

Contact secretary@sleafordconcertband.co.uk
for tickets or more information

Tickets available at
www.trybooking.com/uk/EBNH
or Sleaford Jewellers - 01529 302845
or by using the QR code
£10 for adults - £5 for children



Sleaford Choral
Christmas Concert
with guests
The William Alvey
School Choir

St Denys Church, Sleaford,
7.30pm Sat. 21st December 2024.



Conductor: Rowland Lee
Accompanist: Rosemary Field
Tickets £10 available on the door
Registered charity No: 518318
Find us at: sleafordchoralsociety.co.uk

Disclaimer: Please note that the opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions or views of St Denys PCC.