



*Our Christmas tree at the Festival in Haddenham last weekend*

Thankyou to Sue Birrell for organising and decorating our tree. Many thanks also to everyone who answered the call to make the decorations.

### Christmas Reflections

Follow *The Star: The Great Invitation* consists of 12 reflections from a range of contributors including the Archbishops who share personal stories exploring themes of invitation.

Starting on Christmas Eve and continuing daily (Monday to Saturday) until the Epiphany (6 January), these reflections will help you make space this Christmas. On each of the 12 days, a different contributor will share something that speaks of a Christmas invitation for them, bringing the theme to life through a mixture of personal story, Bible reading, reflection and challenge.

These reflections are available from the Church of England by email, by telephone, and on [The Follow the Star App](#) For further details go to the following link <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/follow-star-great-invitation>

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**BELONG - BELIEVE - BUILD - WITH CHRIST AS THE CORNERSTONE**



Parish of Stone, Dinton and Hartwell



Churches of: St. John Baptist, STONE; Ss Peter & Paul, DINTON; Assumption of St. Mary the Virgin, HARTWELL  
[www.stonedintonhartwell.com](http://www.stonedintonhartwell.com)

## St. John the Baptist STONE Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December The Fourth Sunday of Advent



9:00am **SAID MATINS** (Prayer Book Service)  
*Led by: David Pickup*

10:30am **FAMILY CAROL SERVICE**  
 with choir  
*Led by: David Pickup & Rev'd Phil Groves*

*The collection today will be for the Community Christmas Day Lunch*  
<https://www.freechristmasdinner.com/>

Tues. 20 <sup>th</sup>	11:00am – 1:00pm	<b>CAFÉ IN THE PARK</b> @ the Jubilee Pavilion
Christmas Eve	4:00pm 11:30pm	<b>CHRISTMAS EVE CRIB SERVICE MIDNIGHT COMMUNION</b>
Christmas Day	10:00am	<b>FAMILY COMMUNION</b> at St Peter & St Paul DINTON

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## Matthew 1:18-24

### Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son

<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

<sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means "God with us")."

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

I have always sympathised with Joseph. What was he to think? and what should he do for the best? To understand his dilemma we need to consider the marriage customs of the day which involved two separate stages.

First came the betrothal, a marriage contract that could be broken only by divorce. That was followed by a second step considerably later, often including a marriage feast, after which the groom took his wife to his home. However, the drama of our text took place between the two events. The first step had taken place; the second was in jeopardy.

Joseph's reaction when he heard that Mary was pregnant was to suspect her of adultery - one of the grounds for divorce in Jewish law. However, following the visit from the angel he took Mary into his home as his wife, and then after the child was born, he named the child "Jesus" in obedience to the command.

We know very little about Joseph after Jesus was born but we do know he was faithful to the law and obedient to God, that he accepted Jesus as his son, and cared for him in the best way he could. A quiet hero.



#### Gracious God

*You chose Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour, and Joseph to raise him as his own son.*

*Fill us with your grace, that like Mary we might rejoice in your salvation, and like Joseph be faithful and obedient to your will.*

*Send us out to finish our Advent journey filled with love and joy and peace ready to receive you into our hearts this Christmas.*

*Amen.*

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### Craft sale in church after service

Due to the snow last Monday the Coffee and Crafts didn't really get going and so there are a lot of things to sell at the back of the church. As there may be some of you who don't have cash with you we have the card machine and it would be great if we could sell some of the lovely gifts and raise money for the Fabric Fund. Thank you.



*Thank you* to everyone who has hosted Mary and Joseph so far. If you are on the list but haven't received them yet don't worry – they are on their way to you. Here they are, resting in the home of one of our hosts.



### Crib Service

Our Crib Service will again be at 4.00pm on Christmas Eve. It is suitable for **ALL AGES** so please bring as many relatives, friends and neighbours as you can! We will follow the familiar format with readings, carols, and dressing up. The children will put together the Crib Scene under the altar and Mary and Joseph will arrive with the final host family on our Advent Posada.



Although the service starts at 4.00pm you will need to come before then to be sure of a seat, and if you would like to take part please get here at 3.30pm so we have time to sort out costumes. If you already have your own angel or shepherd costume please come ready dressed!

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