



December 2024

Sunday Services in December

1 st	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship with Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship
	4pm	All Saints	Christingle & Carols
8 th	9am	St Mark's	Morning Prayer
	10am	All Saints	Morning Worship with breakfast
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship with Communion
15 th	10am	All Saints	Morning Worship with Communion and breakfast
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship
	4pm	St Mark's	Carols by candlelight
22 nd	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship with Communion
	6.30pm	St Mary's	Carols by candlelight
29 th	10am	All Saints	Parish-wide Worship with Communion

Weekly services are taking place at our churches, and **everyone is welcome**. Our current plans are as published here, but they are subject to change. Please look out for email communication, and keep an eye on our social media pages, website, YouTube channel and weekly notice sheet.

The St Mary's services are put onto YouTube, and we hope they will be a blessing to those who still cannot attend in person. They can be found here:

https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCBQ0W4r1m39ixogQWR3TxoA?fbclid=IwAR2vLqbmS97lq9StSwn8qvgX_vTF11-tg0LV7z80cVFC8BZE034WNbNHhc4

Or search for: United Benefice of St Mary's and St Mark's.

You can subscribe to the sermons as a podcast too. All links are on the website at <https://www.stmarysparish.org.uk/podcasts/>.

Christmas Events



Sunday 1st

4:00pm Christingle Service @ All Saints

Wednesday 4th

12:00pm Christmas Lunch @ St Mary's

Wednesday 11th

10:00am - 12:00pm Advent Reflection @ St Mary's

6:30pm Carols @ Seaforth Hall, Warninglid

Friday 13th

4:00pm Carols on Woodgate Green

Sunday 15th

4:00pm Carols by Candlelight @ St Mark's

Friday 20th

6:30pm Carol Service @ All Saints

Saturday 21st

2:00pm-4:00pm Family Christmas Party @ All Saints

Sunday 22nd

6:30pm Carols by Candlelight @ St Mary's

Christmas Eve

4:00pm All-Age Crib Service @ St Mark's

11:15pm Midnight Communion @ St Mary's

Christmas Day

9:00am All Age Christmas Celebration & Communion @ St Mark's

10:30am All Age Christmas Celebration @ St Mary's

St Mary's: RH17 6AG | St Mark's: RH17 6EN | All Saints RH17 6DF
Woodgate RH11 9SL | Warninglid RH17 5UB

www.westwealdparish.org.uk



plus check the weekly notices for news of updates, including possible events at Woodgate which are tbc



Other Events

December

2 nd	7pm	All Saints	Youth Club
4 th	7pm	All Saints	Prayer gathering
5 th	8pm	St Mark's	Choir rehearsal
6 th	10am	St Mary's	Creative Expressions art group
6 th	7.30pm	St Mary's	Bell ringing practice
7 th	10am	All Saints	Community Pantry & Café
7 th	4.30pm	St Mary's	Slaugham Society event
9 th	7pm	All Saints	Youth Club
10 th	1pm	All Saints	Crochet & Handicraft Group
13 th	8pm	St Mary's	Bell ringing practice
14 th	10am	All Saints	Community Pantry & Café
16 th	7pm	All Saints	Youth Club
21 st	10am	All Saints	Community Pantry & Café
23 rd	1pm	St Mark's	Wedding
28 th	10am	All Saints	Community Pantry & Café

January

3 rd	8pm	St Mary's	Bell ringing practice
6 th	7pm	All Saints	Youth Club
7 th	1pm	All Saints	Crochet & Handicraft Group
8 th	7pm	All Saints	Prayer gathering
10 th	10am	St Mary's	Creative Expressions art group
10 th	8pm	St Mary's	Bell ringing practice
11 th	4.30pm	St Mary's	Slaugham Society event

Please contact the church office for details, or you can contact the following people about our regular events.

Community Pantry & Café: Barbara Butfoy at butfoybabs@hotmail.co.uk

Youth Club: Phil Hawksley at philhawksley@westwealdparish.org.uk

***All Saints:** Horsham Road, Handcross, RH17 6DF*

***St Mark's:** Brantridge Lane, Staplefield, RH17 6EJ*

***St Mary's:** Staplefield Road, Slaugham, RH17 6AG*

***Woodgate Hub:** Grace Holand Avenue, Pease Pottage, RH11 9SL*

All details are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change.

Advent

This year, the church season of Advent coincides - pleasingly - with the day our Advent calendars begin - Sunday December 1st (a rare occurrence according to Google).

Advent calendars mark the countdown to Christmas, don't they? - giving kids (big and little ones) permission to get gradually more and more excited, and adults a ticking clock for everything that needs to be done.

My step-mother brings out the same Advent calendar every year - the one she had as a child - with all the windows closed up again. Day by day she opens them, as she has done for 70 years. She knows exactly what is behind each door - shepherds, angels, donkeys, kings, finishing on December 24th with an image of baby Jesus in a crib.

I didn't grow up in a church-going family, and even as a new Christian in my twenties, I didn't really pay much attention to the church calendar. It's only relatively recently that I've begun to appreciate how the season of Advent gives us time to prepare spiritually, as well as practically, for Christmas. Practically, we prepare the gifts we lovingly want to give to others - choosing them, buying them, wrapping them; spiritually we prepare our hearts to receive the gift of love that God gives to us.

That last door on my step-mother's Advent calendar reveals that gift: Jesus, who came to show us what God is like in the best way that we could understand - as a human being himself, and in a form that would threaten no-one, a baby. To reverse the idea of the Advent calendar, Jesus gives us a window (a door) into the nature of a God. As God in human form, we see in Jesus a God who wants to be with us, in the midst of our darknesses, in the

midst of all that is hurtful and unjust and disappointing and frightening in this world. “His name shall be called Emmanuel” (which means ‘God with us’), says the gospel writer Matthew.

This baby grew up to be a man, and continued to give us windows into the mystery that we call God, as he lived out his 33 years on planet earth, showing us, at huge cost, what it means to be committed to the way of Love, and leaving us with final words of promise that reaffirm the reason he came, “I shall be with you always, even unto the end of time.” This Advent season, may you find yourself convinced over and over again that you are never alone.

Liz Cox

ALL SAINTS HANDCROSS CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

DECEMBER 1ST @ 4.00PM

A joyful celebration for children and adults remembering the light of Jesus and the Christmas message. Come and make a Christingle and take part in a short service together.



Our Bible verses for 2024

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats.

Luke 5:6-7

West Weald Community Pantry and Café

The Pantry was set up and is run by the churches in our Parish: All Saints in Handcross, St Mary's in Slaugham and St Mark's in Staplefield. Pease Pottage, Woodgate and Warninglid are also in the parish. We offer weekly provisions of food to those within the parishes who are in need of help and support.

We invite anyone in need to get in touch via our rector Rev'd Carl Smith at handcrossrectory@gmail.com or on 01444 400221. You are very welcome to call in to All Saints on a Saturday morning between 10 and 11.30am. Stay for free tea, coffee and biscuits, and chat to someone on our friendly team.

You can donate non-perishable items at:

- Handcross Hardware & Craft in the High Street.
- All Saints Church on a Saturday morning.
- St Mark's Church in Staplefield.
- St Mary's Church in Slaugham.
- The Victory Inn in Staplefield.

Financial donations can also be made: cash, marked 'Pantry', to the hardware shop, or by BACS (sort code 40-24-33, account 22095041, account name Slaugham Parochial Church Council Pantry Account).

If you would like to be a donation point for collection, or need any other information, then please get in touch. For any Pantry questions, please contact Barbara Butfoy at butfoybabs@hotmail.co.uk or on 07853 228605. Thank you.

West Weald Schools Team

Please pray for Carl and the team as they undertake the vital work in our schools, as well as for the staff and pupils.

Regular assemblies are:

Mondays	11am	Brantridge
Tuesday	9am	St Mark's Primary

Our local schools and headteachers are: Brantridge (Mr Dafydd Roberts), Handcross Park (Mr Jonnie Besley), Handcross Primary (Mrs Sharon Bondonno), St Mark's CofE Primary (Mrs Laura Kelsey) and Woodgate Primary (Mrs Sarah Neller).

Regular Notices

Hardship Fund

Financial support is available from the Hardship Fund if you or someone you know (living in the benefice) is in need. Forms can be collected from the hardware shop. If you cannot go out, please email Carl (handcrossrectory@gmail.com) and he will send a form electronically.

Gift Aid

Claiming Gift Aid on donations to our churches provides an important contribution to our income. If you are eligible under Gift Aid rules, please make sure Jane Moss (our treasurer) know. Regular giving is most efficient via the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) so please consider using that if you do not so do already. Please speak to Jane or Fae to know more.

Sunday service refreshments

At St Mark's, drinks are available after the service on the second Sunday of the month (and also sometimes the fourth).

At St Mary's, drinks are available after the service on most Sundays.

Parking at St Mary's

If you park in the car park for a Sunday morning service and are blocking in another car, please put a note in your car window to say who you are and that you are in church. This will make it easier (and much less stressful!) to identify who needs to move if anyone's car is trapped. Thank you.

Handcross Rosemary Club

The club warmly welcomes new members. Everyone is welcome but we particularly look out for isolated, vulnerable and older people in Handcross and the surrounding villages. We meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 2.30-4.00 in the Parish Hall, Handcross, and most months we have an entertainer for about 45 minutes followed by home-made afternoon tea. At Christmas we have full Christmas Lunch in the hall, our AGM in February has fish and chips as well, and we aim to go on an outing during the year. Visitors are always welcome. Membership is only £15 for the year! For more information please contact the Chairman, Mrs Helen Arnold at mrshelearnold@gmail.com or on 07540 816170.

Notice sheet distribution

If you do not already receive the notice sheet and other notices by email and you would like to do so, please email Fae at slaughtam@btinternet.com.

CONTACT

Rev'd Carl Smith

Rector, West Weald Parish

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handcrossrectory@gmail.com

Phil Hawksley

Lay Apostolic Leader, All Saints

philhawksley@westwealdparish.org.uk

Fae Widdowson

Parish Administrator

01444 400221

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Office hours: 9am-12pm Monday & Thursday

(term time only)

Helen Arnold

Safeguarding Officer

07540 816170

mrs Helen Arnold@gmail.com

Churchwardens

St Mary's

St Mark's

Colin Tomlinson

Helen Arnold

Website: www.westwealdparish.org.uk

Facebook: West Weald Parish | Facebook

