Calendar

Christmas services & events are in bold

Tuesday	01-Dec-26	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house
		7.30pm Life Group on Zoom
Wednesday	02-Dec-26	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets
		10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall
		Midday Prayer at St Mary's, St Margarets
Thursday	03-Dec-26	10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall
Friday	04-Dec-26	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
Saturday	05-Dec-26	**2pm Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's, St Margarets**
Sunday	06-Dec-26	9am All Age Eucharist at St John the Baptist (led by Bishop Jane)
Second Sunday of Advent		10.30am All Age Holy Communion at St Andrew's (led by Bishop Jane)
		2pm Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's, St Margarets
		5pm Carols amidst the Christmas Trees at St Mary's, St Margarets
Monday	07-Dec-26	9am Warm Welcome Space Coffee Morning
		9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
		7.30pm Monday Life Group at St Mary's, St Margarets
Tuesday	08-Dec-26	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house
		7.30pm Life Group on Zoom
Wednesday	09-Dec-26	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets
		10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall
		Midday Holy Communion at St Mary's, St Margarets
		7pm Confirmation Service at St Mary's, St Margarets
Thursday	10-Dec-26	10.30am Benefice Coffee Morning (The Red Lion)
Friday	11-Dec-26	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
Sunday	13-Dec-26	9am Eucharist at St John the Baptist
Third Sunday of Advent		10am Holy Communion at St Andrew's
		6.30pm Carols by Candlelight at St John the Baptist
Monday	14-Dec-26	9am Warm Welcome Space Coffee Morning
		9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
Tuesday	15-Dec-26	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house
		7.30pm Life Group on Zoom
Wednesday	16-Dec-26	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets
		10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall
		Midday Prayer at St Mary's, St Margarets
Thursday	17-Dec-26	9am Teddy Club at The Wilshere Hall
		10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall
Friday	18-Dec-26	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
Sunday	20-Dec-26	9am Eucharist at St John the Baptist
Fourth Sunday of Advent		10.30am Morning Prayer at St Andrew's
		10.30am Holy Communion at St Mary's, St Margarets
		4pm Make Church at St Andrew's
		6.30pm Carols by Candlelight at St Andrew's
Monday	21-Dec-26	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
		12pm Make Lunch at The Wilshere Hall
		7.30pm Monday Life Group at St Mary's, St Margarets
Tuesday	22-Dec-26	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house
		7.30pm Life Group on Zoom
Wednesday	23-Dec-26	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets
		10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall
		Midday Holy Communion at St Mary's, St Margarets
Thursday	**24-Dec-26**	**3pm The Christmas Journey starting at St Margarets Train Station**
		11pm Midnight Holy Communion at St John the Baptist
Friday	**25-Dec-26**	**10.30am Benefice All Age Holy Communion at St Andrew's**
Sunday	27-Dec-26	10.30am Benefice Holy Communion by Extension at St Mary's, St Margarets
First Sunday of Christmas		
Monday	28-Dec-26	*Bank Holiday*
Tuesday	29-Dec-26	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house
		7.30pm Life Group on Zoom
Wednesday	30-Dec-26	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets
		10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall
		Midday Prayer at St Mary's, St Margarets
Thursday	31-Dec-26	*New Year's Eve*

St John the Baptist Great Amwell · St Mary the Virgin St Margarets · St Andrew Stanstead Abbots

The 3 Churches Benefice

NEWS & NOTICES ~ DECEMBER 2026

Advent is a time of waiting… and God loves to wait! Or at least his time frames, his perspective on time makes it feel like he likes waiting. In reality, I think we are the ones dashing about. Advent and Lent are both seasons of watching, waiting, pray and fasting, but Advent is particularly hard to appreciate in this way, because it is a dark season and the lights of Christmas call us forward, and the expectations of the season bring anxiety and pressure.

So what should we do? Or perhaps, what should we **not** do? The phrase that sticks with me is 'Slow down!' Resist the rush, make space for the quiet, welcome some stillness and silence.

I have been listening to a beautiful song from The Porter's Gate called 'Slow me down'. It is a reflection on Psalm 23 and begins 'Oh, Good Shepherd, oh, good friend'. It explores the themes of the psalm in today's world, acknowledging the power of anxiety, fear and the world's temptations and distractions. Maybe it might help you slow down and reflect?

Or perhaps there is other music that speaks to you? In our Advent book for our Thursday Life Group, *Treasures in Straw* by Tanya Marlow, there are pieces of music suggested for listening, from Handel's 'Messiah' to modern pieces. What would speak to you? This is a season that invites listening.

Or perhaps you are more active in your reflecting? Our Advent book with the Tuesday Zoom Life Group is *Walking with Angels* by Eleanor Sanderson, and uses prayer walking to connect us to our community and the invisible spiritual world around us.

Why not join us to read and reflect? Or look out a copy of either book and see what you think? Both books are on the Big Church Read website (visit thebigchurchread.co.uk or scan the QR code) with introductions from the authors.

In this busy season, slow down! Take time, let go and let God! When we do, we find God's blessings and His peace!

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News & Notices

The Three Villages Magazine
Our FREE local community magazine publishes quarterly in March, June, September and December. If you or someone you know is not be able to get out and collect a copy of the print magazine, you can now call or text (07488 914972) for a copy. Copies are available to collect at the back of each church.

Warm Welcome Spaces
Once again this year, we are offering Warm Welcome Spaces. There will be: Coffee Morning on Monday mornings, 9–11am at The Wilshere Hall, offering a warm drink and a fun activity; and The Community Hub Drop-in on Wednesdays, 10.30–11.30am at St Mary's, St Margarets, offering a cuppa and chat, as well as practical help if needed. These spaces are free and open to all.

Christmas Tree Festival
We are still looking for tombola donations! If you have anything to donate, please take it to the vicarage or church by Friday 4th December. Thank you!

Make Lunch
Make Lunch will be meeting over the Christmas holidays on the following dates: Monday 21st December and Monday 4th January. Please do come along and join us! 12–2pm at The Wilshere Hall.

Benefice Breakfast
Please note there won't be a Benefice Breakfast on Boxing Day. As soon as the date for the next breakfast is known, an email will be sent out and the information shared within church notices.

Ware Christmas Together
If you, or someone you know, is looking for a welcoming place for Christmas, Ware Christmas Together is once again offering a free meal on Christmas Day, 12.30–3pm at The Age Concern Riverside Hall, Ware. To sign up, simply call 01992 531833. Transport can be arranged if needed. We look forward to celebrating another lovely Christmas with old friends and new!

Confirmations



On Wednesday 9th December at St Mary's, St Margarets, we will have a Confirmation Service at which we are really pleased to welcome Rt Rev'd Dr Jane Mainwaring, Bishop of Hertford.

Please keep all our Confirmation candidates in your prayers: Jamie Claridge, Hannah Dewbrey and Daniel Snook.

From the Churhwardens

Bishop of Hertford's visit to the Benefice
Rt Rev'd Dr Jane Mainwaring, Bishop of Hertford is visiting the Benefice as part of her visits to our Deanery this year. She is coming on Sunday 6th December to lead the morning services. Bishop Jane has a follow-up visit on Wednesday 9th December, where she will visit St John the Baptist Primary School, join the Community Hub Drop-in coffee morning and our midday Holy Communion service at St Mary's, St Margarets. We are really please that she will lead the Confirmation Service for our three candidates who are all part of our Wednesday congregation. Please join us for the Confirmation Service at 7pm on Wednesday 9th December as we celebrate with these new disciples.

Prayer Requests

Please keep the following people and their loved ones in your prayers this month:

Weddings
- Tracey Delaney & Mark Erskine on 6th February at St John the Baptist.
- Hannah Dewbrey & Jamie Claridge on 6th May at St Mary's, St Margarets.
- Zara Trower & Henry White on 15th May at St James's Church.

Deaths
- Jean Bullen on 2nd October.
- Elizabeth Pazzi-Axworthy on 16th October.
- Enid Willson on 27th October.



Upcoming Dates in January

4th ~ Make Lunch, midday at The Wilshere Hall

17th ~ Make Church, 4pm at St Andrew's

31st ~ Fifth Sunday Benefice Service, 10.30am at St Andrew's



Useful Links

Online Zoom Services & Events
www.tinyurl.com/3churcheszoom

A Church Near You
Benefice Page
http://tinyurl.com/3churchesBenefice

The 3 Churches Website
www.3churches.net