

Vol.65 No 1 January Online Edition

ST PETER'S CHURCH. BRACKLEY



“LOVING GOD,
LOVING EACH OTHER,
LOVING BRACKLEY”

happy new year





New Year Plans

Let me start by wishing you a happy new year!

When January rolls around, many like to plan the year ahead out. It helps them look forward to the big events in 2025. Those people are the organised ones. They start to fill in their shiny, new diary (I'm thankful for the digital calendar as I know I'd end up losing a physical one!). Each milestone and family occasion goes into the diary. Special events, anniversaries, and birthdays are all filled in. The holidays are carved out. Before too long, their diary starts to look full.

Well, whether you're organised or not, the start of the year is a natural time to make plans.

However, whatever your plans for the year ahead, whether it involves picking up new habits or hobbies, or simply flooding the calendar with events that you look forward to, it's important to remember the following important truth. When we plan, we can know that we are already part of a bigger plan. It's a much better plan too.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11).

Aren't those words beautiful?

They were written to the people of Israel who were in captivity in Babylon. The book of Jeremiah details the judgment that God's people faced as a result of their sin. That's why Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet. Have you ever visited the Sistine Chapel? There you would have seen Jeremiah, painted by Michelangelo, in a posture of anguished lament.

Indeed, so horrendous was the plight of God's people, Jeremiah was told not to marry and have children. And yet, in the book of the weeping prophet, we have those beautiful words above. Despite the rebellion of the people against God, despite the pain of their current situation, despite the captivity that would last 70 years, God's plans for his people were good.

Maybe there will be challenges for you in 2025. Maybe the feeling of exile in this world will grow. However, whatever dark valleys we walk through in 2025, we can be aware that God's plans for us are good.

So, what are the plans that God has for those who trust Christ?

He has plans to prosper you and not to harm you.

Sometimes we need to keep reminding ourselves of the simplicity of the gospel message.

God is really like Jesus. It is Jesus who fully reveals who God is. He does not want to harm you. God is not out to get you. He's not looking to trip you up. He loves you. He wants to prosper you.

If we need proof of that, the Apostle Paul reasons in this way, He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32). If our heavenly Father gave his only Son for our salvation, can we really doubt his plans to prosper us?

He plans to give you hope and a future.

Biblical hope is solid and secure because it's based on Jesus, not us. This hope is not pie in the sky thinking. In other words, it's very different from the hope I have as a Man Utd fan. Christian hope can be trusted. It's a hope that will come to pass. It's hope that is based on an event of history, the resurrection of Jesus. Because of Jesus, we can have an indestructible hope, even when things may seem hopeless.

There is a future too. We get foretastes of the abundant life that Jesus offers us here and now. We taste the grapes from Caanan. But the full enjoyment and pleasures of the land lay ahead of us. This verse in Jeremiah shows how God's plans are future oriented. No matter how bleak the present looks, the Christian can always say there is a good future ahead. As Jesus is the resurrection and the life, even death cannot prevent us from enjoying this future that God has for us. This is a future with him where there will be no more tears, or pain, or death.

As you live in Babylon (this world that is opposed to God's rule) please remember that whatever plans you may have in 2025, God has a plan for you. In Jeremiah's day, God brought his people back from captivity. We too are offered forgiveness from sin and freedom from that captivity. We are offered a hope and a future. So, let's remember God's good plans for us in 2025.



Hot water bottle injuries soar

You might think that there is nothing more comforting than a hot water bottle. You would be wrong.

For with hot water bottles, the potential for burns and scalding seems unlimited. As the cost-of-living crisis has driven more people to use them for warmth, so have the number of accidental burns and scalds soared, especially among pensioners. There are an estimated 10 million hot water bottles in use in the UK, and they are a frequent cause of burns.

During the winter of 2022-23, more than 420 people in the UK ended up in hospital with burns, according to research by doctors at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital and Southmead Hospital, in Bristol. This was up from 295 in the winter of 2021-22 – an overall increase of 40 per cent.

The hospital data found nine in 10 cases required surgery, and almost one in five needed skin grafts.

Researchers have said there is a need for “targeted public awareness campaigns to ensure a safe and proper use of these devices.”



Buckingham Palace opens its front gates to tourists

Next time you are in London, you can pop into Buckingham Palace. And for the first time, starting this month (January) tourists visiting the iconic building will be welcomed to walk in through the front gates and then proceed across the famous forecourt.

It is part of the King’s vision to give people greater access to Buckingham Palace. You can also now book a 90-minute guided tour, from January to May, to have a more in-depth look at the history of the rooms in the East Wing.

For more information go to:

<https://www.buckinghampalace.co.uk/buckingham-palace-tours.php>

Starting in January...



321

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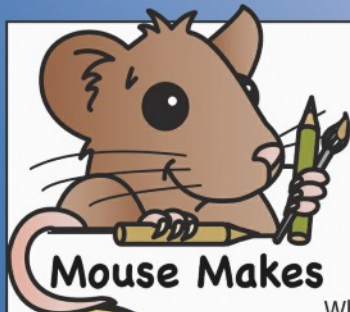
If you would like to receive an update by email from Rich every few weeks, including news and information of upcoming events at St Peter's, you can subscribe to the email list by sending an email to brackleyvicar@gmail.com and ask to receive the bulletin

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After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem looking for the child born to be king of the Jews. They had seen his star and had come to worship him. King Herod was troubled so met with the wise men to tell them to let him know when they found him.



When they saw the star rest over where Jesus was they rejoiced and gave him three special gifts. God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod so they went home by another way.




J E W S
M A R Y
W S O N
O T N A

C H I L D K H M Y R R H
F R A N K I N C E N C E
J O Y A N G E L R H
G A E G Y P T P

EPIPHANY is the Greek word for **MANIFEST** which means 'to show'. God shows us who He is through His son Jesus Christ

How many other words can you make from:
EPIPHANY

Herod wanted to destroy Jesus, but God told Joseph to flee to Egypt to be safe.
Where did Jesus finally grow up?


READ
the story of the wise men in *Matthew 2:1-23*



H L A N D T W O A
R E S T A R K I L L C
C R Y W Z J O S E P H
B O Y S A D R E A M R
M D W O R S H I P L I
E Z S H E P H E R D S
N G I F T S V I S I T
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Re-apply in 2025 to be included on the St Peter's electoral roll

Every sixth year, churches have to restart their electoral rolls from scratch (as opposed to the usual annual revision). 2025 is one of those years, so from January we're asking churchgoers to re-apply to be included on the St Peter's electoral roll (which has nothing to do with the civic electoral roll required to vote in local and national elections).

Why bother?

- 1) It helps you – being on the electoral roll guarantees you will be individually prayed for by the staff team on Wednesday mornings. That alone is hopefully incentive enough to bother re-applying!
- 2) It helps St Peter's – the roll is a register of the lay members of the church entitled to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (our next annual meeting will be 11.30am on 13th April 2025). Anyone wishing to stand for election to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) or Deanery Synod must have had their name entered on the electoral for not less than six months prior to election and be an 'actual communicant'.
- 3) It helps the wider church – the number of people on the electoral roll is an important factor in determining the number of lay representatives a church has at Deanery Synod, as well as its Parish Share payments to the diocese.

Who can?

Anyone can apply who is resident in the parish (or has habitually attended over the preceding six months), is baptised, 16 or over, a self-declared member of the Church of England (or a church in communion with it) and not ordained.

How can I?

Forms to re-apply will be available in the church from Sunday 5th January. If you wish to be on the electoral roll (again or for the first time), please put a completed form in the box in church, or in a sealed envelope in my pigeon hole. The latest date you can return your form is Sunday 9th March.

Denise Johnson Electoral Roll Officer

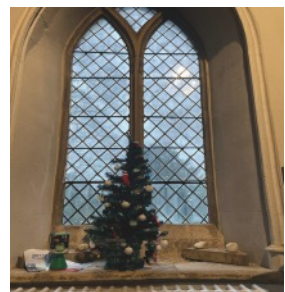
Advent Trees

A huge thank you to all of you who have contributed to the beautiful trees that have been adorning the Church during the Advent season. I know the incredible hard work ,expertise and patience given to thinking about the design and work that has gone into the decorations. If you haven't seen them yet , they will be in Church until the beginning of January.

Look out for :

Dogs for Good Brackley Care Home Brackley Knit and Natter
Brackley Food Bank Brackley WI Brackley U3A
Waynflete Infants Little Oaks Preschool Bracken lees School
St Peter's : Magazine Team, Cleaning Team, Mothers Union, Guides and Brownies.

If I have inadvertently missed a tree from this list I do apologise and will make an appointment for Specsavers in the new year !
But thank you all again and watch this space for next year.



Caroline

Wreath Making 2024

This event was even more popular than in previous years. We ran three fully booked sessions on Saturday November 30th, Tuesday December 3rd and Saturday December 7th. Everyone had a great time creating their beautiful wreaths. You can imagine the wonderful smells of the evergreens. During the sessions everyone enjoyed a glass of prosecco followed by tea or coffee and a mince pie. A fun raffle was organised at the sessions with prizes of Christmas tea hampers and other festive treats.



The flower team also ran a tabletop Christmas flower arrangement session on Saturday December 14th. Although the group was much smaller the afternoon was very enjoyable. Some beautiful arrangements were produced.



The four sessions raised a grand total of £1712

Thank you to everyone who supported the event either by attending or by helping.

Sally Hughes Flower Team Co-ordinator

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