



Sunday 28th December 2025

Holy Innocents

A very warm welcome to worship in our parishes today

growing inclusive, intergenerational churches that inspire faith, hope and love

Today's Services

Sunday 21st December

8.00am Said Communion, St Mary's

9.30am Sung Eucharist (Benefice), St Mary's

Music for today's services

9.30am Sung Eucharist

Introit: 498 Lord, thy church

Gradual: 77 Lully, lulla

Offertory: 68 In the bleak midwinter

Post Communion: 815 Thy kingdom come

The choir is on a post-Christmas break today

Prayer & readings for today

Collect - Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Reading (*Reader: A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.*) Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. [1 Corinthians 1: 26 - 29]

Reader: This is the word of the Lord. *All:* **Thanks be to God**

Gospel Reading - Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.' When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was

infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.' [Matthew 2: 13: 18]

For our prayers

Those who are ill: Terry Harding, Rosie Taylor, Rene Keogh, Sylvia Greer and all who are living with long term illnesses or health problems.

Those who have died, and those who mourn; among them Anthony Marsh (known as Richard)

Letter from John

Wonderful celebrations: A few years back, having officiated at a wedding, I attended the reception afterwards, a really happy occasion. At the end of the evening, to close the event and send guests happily on their way, there were fireworks, lots of them. The sky lit up, and I noticed that people's faces lit up too. It was magical, uplifting and so memorable.

The Christmas firework has just soared up, illuminating a deeply darkened world. And faces here and worldwide have lit up at the glorious and shared insight that God is with us, among us, woven into creation. There is a marvellous afterglow left on the face of humanity by this illuminating truth. And a joy too is left deep in the human heart that life is not a tragic waste but rather a journey with God alongside. What a relief, we are not alone.

The Epiphany firework is soon to shoot up into the sky with its own glorious illumination. On Tuesday 6th January at a benefice Eucharist at 7.00pm in St Mary's, with ecumenical guests we hope, we can all gather at the crib as the wise men did of old. What did they see, what will we see? Divine wisdom yes, but not in a library or even a holy book, rather in a life, a life just beginning, Christ's. It's a life to make thoroughly our own.

But there's just too much to take in on one evening. So we can gather again for **the Epiphany Carol Service**, a rush of musical fireworks for both choir and congregation. With food and company to follow (book your place at the table – more below)! The wise men were part of a group, and they ate very well. We can follow their example!

Every firework display closes with a grand finale. So do look out for news of **Candlemas celebrations** in this benefice. They will close the firework display for this Christmas and Epiphany season certainly not with a whimper but with a great and golden light that will carry us through the drear of winter and the demands of Lent all the way up to the greatest and finest firework, the greatest illumination of all, Easter. John.

News from the Ross Parishes

Church Office Christmas Break – The office will reopen at 9.00 on Monday January 5th. Rachael and Catherine would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. If you need to get in touch during the closure, please contact a member of the ministry team.

Lift to church needed – is anyone able to offer a lift to church on Sundays to John Spencer (widower of Jean Spencer). He lives in Corinium Road, off Roman Way. If you can help, please contact the office for further information. Thank you.

Level access to church - You will have noticed that this is now restored via the temporary ramp at the east end of the church. We suggest that you park in Crossfields car park at the junction of Old Maid's Walk and Church Street. Disabled badge holders are entitled to three hours free parking but is free for everyone on Sundays.

Celebrating the Feast of the Epiphany, Tuesday 6th January, a Festal Eucharist in St Mary's at 7.00pm. After Christmas comes very quickly another great festival day of the church, the Epiphany. To mark and celebrate the visit of the Kings to the infant Christ there will be an evening Eucharist in St Mary's, for worshippers from across the benefice. We will also be inviting friends from the other churches in Ross and area. Our Choir will offer music specially for the day. And a drinks and nibbles party will follow the service. All are most warmly invited.

Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Richard Marsh, Friday 9th January, 12.30, at St Mary's
The service will be followed by refreshments in the church. All welcome.

Epiphany Come, Sing & Sup - Sunday 11th January. Join us at 4pm to sing in the choir, or come along at 6pm for the service. There's a supper after the service (£12.50) please book then pay on the night. Booking and details at rossparishes.uk/come-sing we need to know by next Sunday (4th January) please.

Update on the Spire in Peril project

It might look like nothing is happening, but we are facing a very complex and expensive project and a lot has been going on, mainly unseen. A full, brand new team consisting of architect, structural engineer, steeplejack, health and safety adviser and professional fundraiser, is now in place and much investigative work is going on to try to find the cause of the problem with the pinnacles. Some grant applications are already going in for stage one of the works – the development stage - which will involve de-risking (to make the pinnacles safe for the immediate future) and this will also involve some investigations and dismantling to help with the diagnosis of the problem.

We are delighted that a number of individuals and organisations are, off their own bat, organising fundraising for us. This is most helpful, not just for the funds raised, but because it all helps to show community interest and engagement to major funders. If you are planning something (especially grant applications – we need to monitor those), or you know of others who are, please let Jane, Mark or Kelvin know. Keep your eye on the website after Christmas when we'll launch a dedicated page which will include all future updates. Donations so far:

- £1000 - Herefordshire Historic Churches Trust towards costs of a professional fundraiser
- £1000 has been given by an anonymous individual doner
- £1000 from Barratt Homes for the disabled ramp,
- £1500 from The Ross Choristers - from their Christmas concert (held in the church)
- The Ross Penyard Singers have held a raffle for us at a recent concert.
- Schools holding Christmas services in church have given us their retiring collections.
- A friend is pursuing a grant application of their own and funding from the Roaring Megs.

This week in the Ross Parishes

Every day	9.00am Morning Prayer by Zoom, rossparishes.uk/morning-prayer
Tue 30th Dec	9.00am Community Larder and Tea & Toast, St Mary's Hall
Thu 1st Jan	10.00am Said Communion, St Mary's
Fri 2nd Ja	6.00pm Dice and Decks, St Mary's Hall

Further ahead

Mon 5th Jan	12.00pm Prayers for St Mary's, St Mary's
Tue 6th Jan	7.00pm Eucharist for Epiphany, St Mary's
Fri 9th Jan	12.30 Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Richard Marsh, St Mary's
Sat 11th Jan	4.00pm Come, Sing & Sup for Epiphany, St Mary's (more above)

Contacts

Rector: Revd Prebendary Kelvin Price | kelvin@rossparishes.uk

Revd Prebendary Caroline Pascoe | caroline@rossparishes.uk

Revd Colin Leggate | colin@rossparishes.uk

Revd Canon Professor David Thomas | david@rossparishes.uk

Very Revd Dr John Davies | john.davies102@icloud.com

Reader: Canon Freda Davies | freda@rossparishes.uk

Reader: Dr Derek Glover | derek@rossparishes.uk

LifeLink Chaplain: Emily Goy | emily@rossparishes.uk

Safeguarding: Judith Wiggins | safeguarding@rossparishes.uk

Ross wardens: Mark Sanderson - mark@rossparishes.uk | Bryan Jones - bryan@rossparishes.uk

Walford wardens: Gay Chinn - gay@rossparishes.uk | Murray Alston - murray.alston@btinternet.com

Administrator: Rachael Daniel | administrator@rossparishes.uk | 01989 562175 (Mon & Tue)

Assistant Administrator: Catherine Lewis | administrator@rossparishes.uk (Wed – Fri)