

Services for Sunday 21st December

10.30am – Sung Eucharist, St Edburg's Church, Bicester
10.30am – Children's Church, St Edburg's Church Hall, Bicester
11.00am – Holy Communion, St Mary's Church, Launton
11.00am – Carols outside the Hub, Elmsbrook, Bicester
4.30pm – Community Carols, outside/inside Community Centre, Kingsmere
6.00pm – Nine Lessons & Carols, St Edburg's Church, Bicester
6.00pm – Carols by Candlelight, St Laurence's Church, Bicester
6.00pm – Carols and Crib Service, St Peter's Church, Bucknell
6.00pm – Nine Lessons & Carols, St Mary's Church, Launton
7.00pm – Lessons and Carols, Emmanuel, Bure Park, Bicester

Services for Wednesday 24th December – Christmas Eve

3.00pm – Crib Service, St Mary's Church, Launton
4.00pm – Crib Service, St Edburg's Church, Bicester
4.00pm – Carols in the Churchyard, St Laurence's Church, Bicester
4.00pm – Christingle Service, Emmanuel Church, Bure Place, Bicester
9.30pm – Christmas Eve Communion, St Peter's Church, Bucknell
11.30pm – Midnight Communion, St Edburg's Church, Bicester
11.30pm – Midnight Communion, St Mary's Church, Launton
11.30pm – Midnight Communion, Emmanuel Church, Bure Place, Bicester

Services for Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day

9.15am – All Age Communion, St Laurence's Church, Caversfield
9.15am – Holy Communion, St Peter's Church, Bucknell
10.00am – Family Service, St Edburg's Church, Bicester
10.30am – All Age Christmas Service, Emmanuel, Bure Park, Bicester
10.30am – Carol Service, Hope Church, Elmsbrook, Bicester
11.00am – Holy Communion, St Mary's Church, Launton

Sunday 14th December 2025 at 7.30pm - Carols by Candlelight – St Peter's Church

Step into the festive glow with The Phoenix Singers for our annual "Carols by Candlelight." Join us at the stunning St. Peter's Church, Bucknell, on Sunday, December 14th at 7.30pm. Under the direction of Peter McMullin, we will fill the historic space with joyful carols and heartwarming Christmas readings. Your evening continues during the interval with warming mulled wine and delicious mince pies. Tickets are only £14 (free for under 16s). Secure your place for this enchanting, traditional start to the holiday season!

Volunteers Needed

We are seeking volunteers for the following roles: St Edburg's flower arrangers and someone with an interest in financial matters to assist our Parish Treasurer. For further information contact either of the church wardens or the church office.

Parking outside St Edburg's

Just a gentle reminder that the area right outside St Edburg's Church is a special zone reserved for Blue Badge holders and those with accessibility needs. For everyone else, it is perfect for a quick Drop Off or Pick Up. If you do need to use a space, please park neatly and pull right up to the white line. That way, everyone can come and go with ease (and a little less stress). Thank you for helping us keep things running smoothly.

Welcome to the Bicester Area Team Ministry

14th December 2025

We welcome you to our churches today

Please take this leaflet home with you



Prayer List

For those with long term health problems:

Maria & Anthony Ratsey - Amelia Woodgate - Joyce Rothera - Alan Howling
Sheila Howling - Colin Duckworth - Joan Brown - Scarlotte Roberts
Brian Page - Hannah Cormack - Wilson Oluoch - Fr John Hudson
Luke Simonds - Karen - Lucy - Lizzie - Chris Evans - Sue Morrice - Karen
Sarah-Jane Douglas - Barbara Buckle - Malcolm Nixon - Sandra Michaelson
Faith - Janet Campbell - Barbara - John Kightley - Shirley

A year's mind:

Brian Hilton

Those who have recently passed away:

Mary Hilton - Ian Brown - Marko Prpa

Prayers for the World

As we remember how Jesus was born into the world, we think of Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Galilee, Nazareth, and all the places Jesus was familiar with, and cares so much for the communities there. We wish for peace for all the Middle East, that some sort of agreement can be reached so the fighting can stop.

The Church

We pray for the Church of England's 'The Joy of Christmas' theme for this year. May the movement reach more and more people, bringing Christ into their lives, and inspiring those of faith.

Local Community

As the community comes together for special Christmas events and services, we pray that the light of Jesus may spread from Christingles, Christmas trees and light trails into hearts and homes. We pray for organisers and volunteers who make these events possible.

Team Administrator: Mrs Julie Trinder 01869 323458 office@stedburgschurch.org

Parish Office, Old Place Yard, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6AU

Office opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 9.00am - 3.00pm

Collect of the Day

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming sent your messenger
to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of
the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading

Isaiah 35.1–10

35 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.
³ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
'Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.'
⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.
⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Psalm

Psalm 146.4–10

Second Reading

James 5.7–10

7 Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Gospel

Matthew 11.2–11

2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' ⁴Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'
7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds

about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you."
¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of *heaven is greater than he*.

Post Communion Prayer

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. nrsvbibles.org.
The Common Worship psalter is © The Archbishops' Council of the Church