

NORTH WEST

HAMPSHIRE

PASTORAL AREA

Serving the Parishes of

ANDOVER, BASINGSTOKE, HOOK,
TADLEY AND BURGHFIELD COMMON



**St Michael's Parish, Tadley,
Kingsclere,
and St Oswald's Church,
Burghfield Common**

St Michael's Church

Bishopswood Road, Tadley
RG26 4HG

St Oswald's Church

Abbey Park, Burghfield Common,
RG7 3HQ

Parish Priest:

Rev Fr Patrick Tansey
0118 981 4572

Safeguarding Officers:

Mrs Kath Murtagh (Tadley)
0118 981 4658
Mrs Ellen Goodall (Burghfield Common)
0118 983 3332

Parish Secretary:

Kathryn Garden
Email: tadley@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
Website: www.stmandsto.org.uk

Covenant to the People

If you would like help from the Covenant to the People scheme, please call Bill Reilly on 0118 9813784 during December.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament is celebrated on request at the present time in the Parish Room at Tadley. Please book with Fr Tansey by telephone.

NEWSLETTER

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

19th December 2021

A PUBLICATION OF PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE TRUST REGISTERED CHARITY NO 246871

Tadley, Kingsclere and Burghfield Common Masses

6:00 pm	Saturday Vigil Mass	Tadley
9:00 am	Sunday Parish Mass	Tadley
11:00 am	Sunday Parish Mass	Burghfield Common

Advance booking is not required for weekend Masses but please telephone or email to advise if attending so Father Patrick can ensure we keep within acceptable numbers.

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Fourth Sunday of Advent – Year C

Entrance Antiphon: Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

Responsorial Psalm: God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said be done to me. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Christmas Vigil Readings

Isaiah 62:1-5 Acts 13:16-17, 22-25 Matthew 1:1-25

Christmas Morning Readings

Isaiah 52:7-10 Hebrews 1:1-6 John 1:1-18

Next Sunday's Readings (Feast of The Holy Family)

Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28 St John 3:1-2, 21-24 Luke 2:41-52

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Mass Attendance on 4th/5th December 2021

Tadley 6:00pm: 23 Tadley 9:00am: 38
Burghfield Common 11:00am: 20

Mass Attendance on 11th/12th December 2021

Tadley 6:00pm: 20 Tadley 9:00am: 32
Burghfield Common 11:00am: 26

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SYNODAL PROCESS UPDATE

As parishioners should be aware from our Newsletter of 3rd October, Pope Francis launched the Synodal Process for the Universal Church on Saturday and Sunday 9th and 10th October in Rome. On 17th October it began for every Diocese across the world, and our Bishop engaged in it on behalf of the Diocese of Portsmouth that day.

On Sunday 10th October, speaking to his own Diocese of Rome, our Pope made it clear that this process involves everyone and involves listening to each other first and foremost. He warned against it becoming a factional forum of individual agendas, and made it clear that it is not a parliament. It is not intended to deal with matters of doctrine, but to develop pastoral expression of views about our Church and what may be good about it and that which may be bad. We are a Church of Saints and Sinners and need to engage with each other in prayer, listening to the gentle breeze of The Holy Spirit who calls us to be united in Christ, embraced by the Love of the Father. We need to recognise the "tension between disorder and harmony" which Francis spoke of during the first part of our continuing pandemic, bringing into being a different Church. The Synodal Process is part of the Church of the future we addressed at the recent Clergy Conference in Southampton. The process continues to 2023 and will develop beyond the world-wide Synod in that year.

However, it is now important that we address its initial stage, which has been in my thoughts and action over the last few weeks. Originally all submissions from each Diocese in England and Wales were to be sent to The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales before the end of February 2022, which I felt was an unreasonable timetable. In the case of our Diocese, priests and deacons were being asked to address considerable documentation for the recent Clergy Conference at the end of November and send reports to our Bishop, returning in Advent to try and sort something out as Christmas approached, all synodal reports to be completed by the end of January 2022! I don't think I was the only priest to feel this way—the Vatican agreed to an extension to the end of March! So 1st March is the date when Father John Chandler (Synod Co-Ordinator for our Diocese) needs all submissions so that a full Report may be ready by the end of that month. As he rightly states in the recent edition of VivaVoce, that "isn't much time at all".

Bishop Philip in late October, before the extension, asked all Parish Priests "to bring together for a meeting a sample of parishioners" to address the Diocesan discussion format. This I had almost completed before the November Conference, ensuring that all of the 11 parishioners I had asked, forming a cross-section of our communities, were aware of that which was being asked of them. I am grateful to them all for not only their interest but their willingness to be engaged after my consultation.

At the Southampton Conference I discussed with Fr Chandler my progress, which he was pleased about, and I asked how would be the best way to enable others to be involved in our Parish in the most effective way for him as Co-Ordinator.

His suggestion was that I progress the idea of asking various groups in the Parish if they would like to meet (e.g. cell groups, Children's Liturgy Ministers) and also send their reports to the Parish Office in good time before 1st March so that these could be sent with the report of the Parish Group I had been asked to form. Individual responses are also welcome, but Bishop Philip states that: 'What is important for this work is the actual process of listening and talking to one another in a group context, and in the context of prayer'. He also

sees this process as closely linked to the developing consultation following the Southampton Conference which will take place in the New Year!

There should be a group leader to facilitate prayer and discussion as outlined in the Diocesan guide for these groups, who should ensure that all have the time to express their thoughts equally and to be listened to respectfully without interruption. Also, a secretary should be responsible for compiling a report which embraces all viewpoints and respects the anonymity of contributors. It would also be of help, however, to list the names of those attending and to give the name of the particular group. There is no problem in a group of parishioners not involved in a particular group in the parish coming together—in fact it would be exactly what our Bishop is looking for, especially if it includes lapsed Catholics.

So, if you are interested, let me know the name of the group that you are establishing by 6th January (Epiphany) and all the necessary guidance will be issued from the Parish Office.

I express my thanks to Kathryn for volunteering in her own time to act as Secretary to the group I have assembled, and also for co-ordinating in work time the Parish Response before the end of February. This will obviously be a priority for 2022.

I look forward to hearing from those who are interested, bearing in mind that the rapid spread of the Variant may upset the best laid plans by the end of the year for group meetings. There is only one meeting of each group required. Below are the questions to be addressed.

The question:

"What changes need to be made – **in myself**, in our **parish** & in the **Diocese** – to make the Church's mission today more vibrant and effective?"

1. THE JOURNEYING COMPANIONS

How can we be more welcoming as a Christian community?

2. LISTENING

To whom do we listen?

3. SPEAKING OUT

How can we be more honest in our dealings with each other?

4. CELEBRATING

How might we celebrate better the Liturgy in our parish?

5. CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE MISSION

How well do we work together as clergy and laity for the mission of the Church?

6. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

How can our group, parish, diocese and the Church be more outward-facing?

7. WITH THE OTHER CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

In what ways might we improve our dialogue and relationship with other Christians?

8. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

How can we make the Church more participatory and increase co-responsibility?

9. DISCERNING AND DECIDING

In a synodal style Church, what new processes of decision-making and decision-taking are needed? How transparent and accountable are the decisions made?

10. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY

How do we form people to make them more capable of "journeying together"?

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND RECONCILIATION

Saturday 18th December there will be Adoration of The Blessed Sacrament in Saint Michael's Church from 10:00am to 11:00am. During this time Father Patrick will be available in the Parish Room for any who wish to receive The Sacrament of Reconciliation.

This room was approved by our previous Diocesan Health & Safety Officer as complying with guidance for the Sacrament during the pandemic. Each penitent will be required to sanitise their area so that it is available for the person who follows. It will be face to face Confession, and masks should be worn, under the new guidance.

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PASTORAL AREA RECONCILIATION SERVICE AND CONFESSIONS

This takes place at 2:30pm on Sunday 19th December at Saint Bede's Church. It would be advisable to check that it is going ahead because of the worrying spread of Covid.

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CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Christmas Eve - Friday 24th December

6.00pm Vigil Mass for Christmas Tadley (full)

Christmas Day - Saturday 25th December

9.00am Nativity of The Lord Tadley (full)

11.00am Nativity of The Lord Burghfield Common

No Saturday evening Mass

Feast of the Holy Family - Sunday 26th December

9.00am Mass Tadley

11.00am Mass Burghfield Common

The 6:00pm and 9:00am Christmas Masses at Tadley are now full. There is a waiting list and, at present, spaces at Burghfield Common are available.

We expect that present Covid restrictions will continue in force, so you must let us know if you intend to be at any of these Christmas Masses so that numbers can be assessed. This can be done by phone or email to the parish office, giving details of which Mass you would like to attend, number of people and contact details. Please also indicate if you require to socially distance at Mass. You may be asked to transfer to another Mass if a list is full.

Please arrive 10-15 minutes before Mass times. Face coverings are mandatory for those attending Mass, unless exempt for medical reasons, hands should be sanitized on entrance and at departure. A steward will be present to make sure we all remain safe. We shall update you on any changes to the pandemic situation that may have an impact upon us towards Christmas. Our Church benches will require sanitisation after all the Christmas Masses to facilitate the Masses for the Sunday (Boxing Day).

THE BIG PICTURE

An exciting new course for our Pastoral Area is coming early in 2022.

YOU, THE BIBLE & GOD'S BIG PLAN



It is called "THE BIG PICTURE" and commences via Zoom on **Monday 10 January from 7.30pm - 9.00pm.**

The subtitle of The Big Picture is "You, the Bible and God's Big Plan" - The course will cover 12 engaging sessions taking us through Salvation History, starting at the beginning with God the Creator right through to the End Times, with the Second Coming of Christ.

The course is inspiring and enjoyable and suitable for those new to Scripture as well as those with a deeper knowledge of the Bible. The Big Picture is not simply an academic journey through Scripture but a time of helping us make God's Word alive and relevant to our daily lives. **If you would like a little taster and get a feel for the Big Picture why not watch the trailer for the course using this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFIMZEgnsEM>.** Some people may have already been through this course when it ran in the Parish five or six years ago but hopefully all of us are now in a different point of our journey so there will be new insights for each of us.

Each participant will require their own copy of the excellent high quality hard back Big Picture journal which will not only provide you with the weekly Bible Reflections and an overview of the topic but also a TV quality DVD. This will enable you to revisit the weekly material if you wish, but also catch up if you have to miss a session. We will order the journal on your behalf and ensure it is with you before the course starts. This is one reason why we would ask you to register for the course as soon as possible - PLEASE. The cost of the journal and DVD will be £10, which we will collect from you when we hand the journal over to you.

Registering for the course could not be simpler. All we ask is that you email our course co-ordinator jkent@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk with your "YES". When we hear from you, we will then order your journal and get it to you in early in the New Year in advance of the course starting.

Any questions? then please do not hesitate to contact us geoffpoulter@hotmail.com or phone 01256 541052.

So why not make joining with others on this exciting journey your New Year's resolution and take another step to deepen your faith.

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CHRISTMAS IS COMING WITH CTAT!

Don't forget, two CTAT Advent events are taking place this week, the first will be at St Paul's Church on Wednesday 22nd December and the second at St Mary's Church on Thursday 23rd December, both at 6:00pm. There will be carols with Tadley Concert Brass as well as Readings. The area of refreshments is under consideration because of the pandemic.

CAFOD CRISIS APPEAL

CAFOD is combining efforts with the Disasters Emergency Committee to launch the Afghanistan Crisis Appeal. In Afghanistan, 8 million people are on the brink of famine because of drought, collapsing economy, food shortages, conflict, and COVID. CAFOD is supporting sister Caritas agencies to reach communities most in need with food, clean water, and fuel. During Advent, when we open ourselves to the needs of others, let's do all that we can to save lives. You can donate on the CAFOD website: cafod.org.uk/AfghanistanAppeal and please pray for the people of Afghanistan.

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BELONG & BELIEVE

The Sacred Heart, Hook have sent us an invitation:

Belong & Believe

**How our Celtic past can help us today
Refreshing our communities and renewing our mission**

Starting Thursday 13th January 2022

10:00am—11:30am in the Sacred Heart, Hook Parish Hall

We welcome you to join us for this fascinating course, exploring our Celtic spiritual heritage. There will be our usual time for fellowship and discussion, with a nice 'cuppa' and some homemade cake! We're really looking forward to seeing you! Please book your place via

hello@sacredhearthook.org

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CLERGY CHRISTMAS COLLECTION

Our Christmas Collection celebrates and gives thanks to our parish priests and all the dedication, guidance and care they give across our Diocese and in each parish.

If you would like to give a gift to support Father Patrick in his vocation and mission this Christmas, please visit:

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/tadley-st-michael-and-st-oswald-catholic-parish-christmas-collection-2022>

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CRIB OFFERINGS - FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

Crib offerings this Christmas will be donated to the Friends of the Holy Land.

Friends of the Holy Land help the most deprived Christian families, especially those living around Bethlehem, in Gaza, Israel and Jordan. With no pilgrims and tourism since March 2020 and no government support to individuals or businesses, many families, have lost all their income and are increasingly calling on Friends of the Holy Land for help with day to day living. This will apply at both our churches as it is a Diocesan Collection.

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BEHOLD THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD

The following is from one of the homilies (sermons) of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 - 1153): In Praise of

the Virgin Mother. It was rightly highlighted in a recent Diocesan e-news, as it is a deeply reflective, masterly exposition of the importance of our Lady in Salvation History. Well does it state the reason why she is honoured as the Mother of our Salvation. As Saint Aelred of Rievaulx (1110 - 1167), also a member of the Cistercian Order like Saint Bernard, wrote: "We owe her honour because she is the Mother of our Lord. He who does not honour the mother, will without doubt dishonour the son". Why? Because in all things a true devotion towards her inevitably leads us to her Son, our Saviour, because she is His Handmaid par excellence.

In these last days of Advent let us ask her to lead us as better servants along the road to Bethlehem. And let us not forget St Joseph, her spouse most chaste, guardian of the Church of which Mary is the Mother, because it is The Body of Christ, of which we are members.



"You have heard, O Virgin, that you will conceive and bear a son; you have heard that it will not be by man but by the Holy Spirit. The angel awaits an answer; it is time for him to return to God who sent him. We too are waiting, O Lady, for your word of compassion; the sentence of condemnation weighs heavily upon us. The price of our salvation is offered to you. We shall be set free at once if you consent. In the eternal Word of God we all came to be, and behold, we die. In your brief response we are to be remade in order to be recalled to life.

"Tearful Adam with his sorrowing family begs this of you, O loving Virgin, in their exile from Paradise. Abraham begs it, David begs it. All the other holy patriarchs, your ancestors, ask it of you, as they dwell in the country of the shadow of death. This is what the whole earth waits for, prostrate at your feet. It is right in doing so, for on your word depends comfort for the wretched, ransom for the captive, freedom for the condemned, indeed, salvation for all the sons of Adam, the whole of your race.

"Answer quickly, O Virgin. Reply in haste to the angel, or rather through the angel to the Lord. Answer with a word, receive the Word of God. Speak your own word, conceive the divine Word. Breathe a passing word, embrace the eternal Word. Why do you delay, why are you afraid? Believe, give praise, and receive. Let humility be bold, let modesty be confident. This is no time for virginal simplicity to forget prudence. In this matter alone, O prudent Virgin, do not fear to be presumptuous. Though modest silence is pleasing, dutiful speech is now more necessary. Open your heart to faith, O blessed Virgin, your lips to praise, your womb to the Creator. See, the desired of all nations is at your door, knocking to enter. If he should pass by because of your delay, in sorrow you would begin to seek him afresh, the One whom your soul loves. Arise, hasten, open. Arise in faith, hasten in devotion, open in praise and thanksgiving. Behold the handmaid of the Lord, she says, be it done to me according to your word."

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