

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN, OLD AMERSHAM
WITH ALL SAINTS' COLESHILL**



CHURCH UPDATE
February 2026

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Building a faithful community of Jesus that
provides a warm welcome where all may
come and worship God in a place that is
loving and safe

Community - Welcome - Worship

WELCOME FROM THE RECTOR!

Another few months have flown by since the last Church update! There is much to celebrate and to give thanks for, not least a fantastic Christmas season that saw our churches heaving with people coming to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Since then, we have seen more community events, schools work, new initiatives and a visit from the Bishop! It's exciting to see increasingly more opportunities for people to discover what the church is all about. But most importantly, increasing opportunities for people to see what Jesus is all about. Being a Rector comes with many different hats, but the most important hat of the bunch, by far, is to encourage more people come to know the light of Christ. Now this might seem like a tall order - where does one even start? But I do think it is fairly uncomplicated. In that, all we really need to do as a church community is to provide as many opportunities as possible for people to draw nearer to God, and he will ultimately do the rest. It could be a friendship lunch, a funeral visit, a collective worship in school or even a quick conversation in the street - all of these things have the potential to plant a seed that the Lord will water abundantly. This is exciting because it's not reliant on us being perfect all of the time. All that matters is that the seed is planted . God will do the rest. Sometimes the seed will be planted neatly and perfectly, sometimes it will be planted hastily and with a fair bit of mess - but God uses it all to bring forth growth. No matter how the seed is planted, the end result remains the same - people coming to know they are infinitely loved by the Creator of the universe. This document is a celebration of all those seeds that have been planted; we now trust in God for their growth.

With love and prayers,

Jonny

01 WHAT'S NEW SINCE NOVEMBER: COMMUNITY

- We welcomed five schools from the local community for carols services at St Mary's & All Saints'. During the Advent season, the church is very busy and well used to celebrate Christmas. We also had input into the Old Amersham Christmas Festival alongside St Mary's School.
- Following its success in 2024, we once again had 24 windows across the parish decorated to produce a wonderful 'Advent Calendar' for the community.
- We continue to welcome Community Connex through various parish events such as the Cafe Recitals and the new Friendship Lunch.
- Jonny continues to accompany the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, Pippa Kirkbride, on visits to different places across Bucks. This has most recently included a visit to HMP Grendon and Springhill.
- Lego club at St Mary's school continues to be oversubscribed! We have had 100 children pass through this club to learn about Bible stories through Lego! We will also be hosting this club to support a teacher/governors afternoon in the summer.
- Jonny went into Coleshill School to talk about the Christian Faith for their World Religion Day.
- We had our first Friendship Lunch take place in February with over 40 in attendance. Not only was this a great opportunity for people to gather in friendship, it was also well supported by local businesses such as Seasons, OurDough Bakery, Gershons & Sons and Tesco.

01 WHAT'S NEW SINCE NOVEMBER: COMMUNITY

- Coleshill Flower Team Coffee morning which raised £1000 for the All Saints' Flower Fund, Maggie's and Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

COMING UP IN COMMUNITY

- We are excited to be partnering with Amersham Museum to be holding some talks and events to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of Tyndale's New Testament Translation 500 years ago.
- We are also working in partnership with the new 'Bring it Back' initiative which seeks to get young people involved in the community. This group is supported by Amersham Museum and Wild Amersham. So far they have planted some bulbs in the churchyard along with re-wilding areas. Next steps include more planting in the churchyard (especially a hedge by the Rectory fence) and some new bespoke benches in the churchyard to create more seated space.

02 WHAT'S NEW SINCE NOVEMBER: WELCOME

- Christmas 2025: Our many services and events of the Christmas period were very well attended - some services were even at maximum capacity. The feedback from the services was really positive which shows that the Church continues to have relevance during the Christmas season.
- For our Christmas advertising, the website was a huge benefit. With a bespoke page for all our Christmas services and events (that was easy to locate), which saw over 3,500 visits to the website over November and December,
- Plans are already afoot for Christmas 2026 with the possibility of a second Crib service at St Mary's to accommodate the significant numbers we had at the service in 2025.
- Our lovely flower team at St Mary's hosted a wonderful Christmas door decoration workshop which sold out! It is an example of how events such as this are proving to be very popular as a way of welcoming people into the church.
- Our Cafe recitals continue to draw great numbers for chat, cake and music!
- 24 children came along to our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party with crafts, activities and of course, pancakes!



COMING UP IN WELCOME:

- Barn Dance taking in place in March as part of our programme of events to welcome people into the church community.
- Alpha Course starting in May for those wanting to explore what the Christian faith is all about.

03 WHAT'S NEW SINCE NOVEMBER: WORSHIP

- We have set up a Bible study group in Chiltern Place which takes place once a month.
- Well attended Advent course on Tuesday Mornings and Wednesday evenings. A shifting trend is that the evening course tends to be busier than the morning.
- We welcomed the Bishop of Buckingham, Dave Bull, for a special service of licensing for Jonny as Area Dean and the Revd Christoph and the Revd Lucy as Associate Area Deans. This service also included a special commissioning of all in attendance. It was a wonderful way for Parish and Deanery life to meet as this new chapter begins for the Amersham Deanery.
- Once again welcoming Coleshill School for their half termly open collective worship in the church. The church is filled with children and their parents! We continue to have close links with the primary schools in our parish.

COMING UP IN WORSHIP:

- Lent Courses on Monday evenings and Thursday Mornings: we will be exploring the Difference course which focuses on what it means to show the uniting love of Jesus in an increasingly divided world.
- Following the success of our baptism renewal service in 2025, we will be holding this service once again around the time of Pentecost.
- Confirmation Preparation for 10 candidates ahead of the Bishop coming to St Mary's for a Confirmation service on Sunday 19th July.