

**COME AND CELEBRATE
THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS
IN FOUR RIVERS BENEFICE
GROUP OF CHURCHES**



“Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

Four Rivers Benefice

Parishes of Bedfield, Brundish
Cratfield, Laxfield, Monk Soham
Tannington, Wilby
Worlingworth with Southolt



WHAT JOY?

As we approach the Christmas season it's almost inevitable that we will hear somewhere that wonderful carol, 'Joy to the World'.

But what does that mean? What is Joy?

Joy is a funny thing. We know life isn't perfect, that we can never achieve that ever-elusive state of bliss or live in a utopia – but there's something in us that really wants to. We want life to be like other people's highlight reels, rather than peppered with stubbed toes and food we've accidentally left in the fridge too long.

But strangely, that desire for a perfect life often leaves us more like the three-day-old croissant than the freshly baked cinnamon doughnut. When we try to make life all about our own joy, the joy eventually seeps away.

When we place my joy in Jesus rather than a bargain, our stomachs, or our own sense of satisfaction, by contrast, there's something wonderful to be found. *Someone* wonderful to be found. He is too good to miss. Jesus says of us that we are 'too good to go', too good to be thrown away, worth saving, even at great cost. His joy is in us and our joy is in him.

Knowing his love brings the joy described in Galatians 5:22 as a fruit of the Spirit, a joy that doesn't depend on our situation but on Jesus' love. What a wonderful gift to us and to those around us. And that's what we celebrate at Christmas.

Christmas is given to us to enjoy, enjoying Jesus and bring joy to the places we go and people we meet. That's why the angel declared, *"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."* (Luke 2: 10-12).

So we warmly invite you to share the joy of celebrating Jesus's birth at any of our Christmas services in the Four Rivers Benefice Group of Churches.

And we pray that you and those you love may experience the true joy of Christmas this year.





The Four Rivers Benefice Group of Churches will be celebrating the joy of Christmas with a Carol Service in each of our villages. You are warmly invited to any service wherever you live.

CAROL SERVICES IN FOUR RIVERS BENEFICE GROUP OF CHURCHES		
Bedfield - St Nicholas,	Saturday 13th December	3:00pm
Brundish - St Lawrence	Christmas Eve	6:30pm
Cratfield - St Mary	Sunday 21st December	6:00pm
Laxfield - All Saints	Christmas Eve	4:00pm
Monk Soham - St Peter	Sunday 14th December	2:30pm
Southolt - St Margaret	Friday 19th December	6.30pm
Tannington - St Ethelbert	Friday 12th December	7:00pm
Wilby - St Mary	Sunday 21st December	6:00pm
Worlingworth - St Mary	Sunday 21st December	3:00pm



Alongside our Carol Services the Four Rivers Benefice Group of Churches will be celebrating the joy of Christmas in a number of other Christmas Services. They will have differing styles and formats so there will be something to suit you.

You are warmly invited to all our Christmas services in any of the churches in our Four Rivers Benefice Group of Churches.

Bedfield - St Nicholas,	Midnight Mass	Midnight Mass	11:30pm
Brundish - St Lawrence	Midnight Mass	Christmas Eve	11:30pm
Cratfield - St Mary	Christmas Village Worship	Christmas Day	10:00am
Laxfield - All Saints	Christmas Family Service	Christmas Day	10:00am
Monk Soham - St Peter	Family Service followed by a short Holy Communion	Christmas Day	10:30am
Wilby - St Mary	Holy Communion	Christmas Day	11:00am
Worlingworth - St Mary	Crib service	Christmas Eve	3:00pm
	Family Holy Communion	Christmas Day	9:30am

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Sadly, Christmas isn't always joyful for everybody, so we are holding a **Blue Christmas get together at the Bedfield Community Hub on 20th December at 3pm**. It is a service of remembrance held during the Advent season for those experiencing grief, loss or sadness and is open to all in the community whether of Christian faith, different faith or no faith. It acknowledges that the season can be difficult for some and provides a space to express pain and find comfort.

Online services: If you can't make it to church this Christmas, why not watch an online worship service from the Church of England and worship with us that way this Christmas. You can find details of online services here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-church-online/weekly-online-services>

