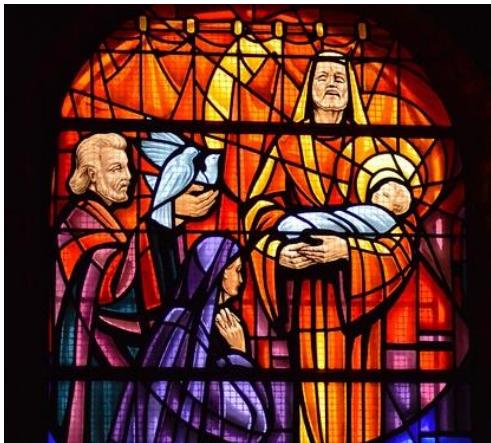


Open to God. Open to one another. Open to the community.



Sunday 1st February 2026
Presentation of Christ in the Temple
(Candlemas)

1st Reading: Malachi 3:1-5

Psalm: 24:1-end

2nd Reading: Hebrews 2:14-end

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-40

Hymns

39 Angels from the realms of glory

105 Christ whose glory

584 Of the father's love begotten

66 Be thou my vision

Homegroup wk	Bible Readings	Activities
Mon 2 Feb	Mark 5:1-20	2.30-3.30pm Tea & Tinies
Tues 3 Feb	Mark 5:21-end	10am-12pm Board Games Café
Weds 4 Feb	Mark 6:1-6	11am Communion Service 7.30pm Scriptural Reasoning 8pm Men's Curry Club
Thurs 5 Feb	Mark 6:7-13	2pm Over 50s
Fri 6 Feb	Mark 6:14-29	10am-12pm Community Coffee 10-11.30am Full Hearts Friday 2pm -4.30pm SNAC – Knit & Natter
Sat 7 Feb	Mark 6:30-34	9.30-12.30 Gardening at St Nics

To watch the live stream of our Sunday service please go to:
<https://www.youtube.com/@stnicolasearley1496/featured>

²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God. Luke 2:27-28

PRAYER

Collect: Lord Jesus Christ, light of the nations and glory of Israel: make your home among us, and present us pure and holy to your heavenly Father, your God, and our God.

A Prayer for Candlemas

God of all light,
we ask You to bless us
as we remember Your Son's
presentation in the Temple.

Just as candles push back the shadows of the night,
may Your Spirit clear away
any darkness in our hearts.

Let Your light shine through our actions today
so that others can find hope
and warmth through us.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
our light and our life.

Amen

Prayer at St Nicolas There are a group of people who love to pray for anything which is on your mind. You can contact Jenny Bryce at 07963 905663 or the office on office@stnicolas.org.uk or write a card and put it in the prayer box in church. All requests in the box are prayed for on a Sunday morning by our Prayer Ministry Team.

Please feel free to join our **6pm Prayer group every Sunday** on [Zoom](#) Meeting ID 872 7137 1558 we will be praying for the needs of the world and our community.

NOTICES:



Candlemas -Bedside lamps & Candles

As Mark mentioned in the service last week, to celebrate Candlemas this Sunday we are asking you to bring in your bedside lamp or a candle so we illuminate the dais!



First Gardening Session of the year

If you fancy a morning of gardening and good company please join us on **Saturday 7th February 9.30 -12.30** for a spot of tidying in the St Nicolas community garden. No need to bring tools they will be provided and tea and biscuits will definitely be available throughout the morning. Come for as long or as little as you like.



Rev David Webster's Funeral will be held at St Nicolas on Friday 13th February at 10.45am. The service will be led by Rev Libby Newman. **Please can you advise the Parish Office if you are planning to attend so we can advise the family of numbers for catering.** Thank you

Mothers Union meeting

The next meeting of Mothers Union will take place on **Tuesday 10 February at 2pm**. Marlene Prior will give a talk entitled 'The Newark Workhouse' Built in 1824, The Workhouse is the best-preserved example of the hundreds of workhouses built across the country. Discover more about the workhouse, the way in which the poor were treated during the 19th century, and how they prevented the spread of disease. All are welcome.



If you are shopping this week and are able to pop a few extra items in for the foodbank they are short on small bottles of cooking oil, small coffee jars and small sugar packs. Thank you!

Goodbye to Discovering prayer but hello to Living Prayer

If you have enjoyed Discovering Prayer over the last few years then I am sure you are sad to know it is now closed, and the website and app will shortly be taken offline.

If you would like to stay in touch with local girl Michelle Eyre's ongoing work – including guided prayers and reflections shared through Living Prayer – the way to do so is by signing up on Substack via the link below. Living Prayer offers a gentle midweek pause for those exploring contemplative prayer in ordinary life. Reflections and free guided prayers rooted in the Christian contemplative tradition, inviting hope, and abiding in God's presence together.

<https://livingprayertoday.substack.com/subscribe>

Jesus in Islam, Christmas and Living Faith through Dialogue

One of the questions we are asked most often is a simple one: What does Islam say about Jesus?

It is rarely asked with hostility. More often, it comes from curiosity from not knowing, rather than from disagreement. This, in itself, reveals something important. Many of the tensions between faith communities today are shaped less by opposing beliefs than by distance and unfamiliarity.

As Muslims living alongside Christians, we have seen how easily misunderstanding grows when people stop speaking to one another. It begins to ease when knowledge is shared – not through debate, but through sincere conversation rooted in sacred texts and lived experience. In this sense, Jesus is a natural place to begin.

In Islam, Jesus (Isa, peace be upon him) holds a central and deeply honoured place. He is recognised as one of the greatest Messengers of God, and belief in him is an essential part of Muslim faith. He is not a marginal or secondary figure. His story is taught, remembered, and spoken of with reverence.

The Qur'an affirms his miraculous birth: "She said, 'How can I have a son when no man has touched me?' He said, 'So it will be; God creates what He wills.'" (Qur'an 3:47)

His mother, Mary (Maryam, peace be upon her), is also honoured in a unique way. An entire chapter of the Qur'an bears her name, and she is described as one whom God has chosen and purified.

Jesus is consistently described as a messenger of God, marked by mercy and supported by divine permission. These descriptions shape how Muslims understand him and how they speak about him – with respect, not rivalry.

Islam and Christianity do differ in their theological understanding of who Jesus is. Acknowledging this difference does not weaken faith; it strengthens honesty. Respect does not require blending beliefs, but approaching one another with clarity and integrity.

This understanding also shapes how Muslims approach Christmas. Within the Dialogue Society, Christmas is not marked as a religious celebration, but as a moment of encounter. Through shared meals and gatherings, people from different backgrounds come together to listen, to reflect, and to share what this season means to them. For Muslims, participation in these spaces is an expression of neighbourliness and respect rather than theology.

Trust is rarely built through argument. More often, it grows quietly around tables, through hospitality, and through the willingness to be present with one another.

The same spirit informs practices such as Scriptural Reasoning, where people of different faiths sit together with their sacred texts. The aim is not persuasion, but understanding. Differences remain, but they no longer feel threatening.

On a personal level, Christmas is often a quiet time. While it is not observed religiously, it may be spent with family, in reflection, or visiting friends. For children, it becomes an opportunity to ask simple but important questions – not about doctrine, but about how others live their faith. These small conversations are often where respect is first learned.

Meaningful understanding between Muslims and Christians does not come from avoiding difference, nor from pretending it does not matter. It grows when people are willing to learn how the other understands what is sacred, and when they continue to meet one another with openness and good faith.

In a world where division is loud, quiet, thoughtful dialogue remains one of the most enduring paths to understanding.

ASYA AYDIN

DIALOGUE SOCIETY



Berkshire vicar delivers charge for new Archbishop

Yesterday Bishop Sarah Mullally became the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury in a ceremony at St Paul's Cathedral.

The Bishop of Oxford and the Bishop of Reading were both in attendance, while Revd Mark Nam, vicar of St John the Evangelist in Woodley, was one of the

people tasked with delivering the charge.

[Speaking to BBC Radio Berkshire ahead of the event](#), Bishop Mary said: "As a female bishop, it's so important for me that the new Archbishop is also female – especially for younger women to see that these roles are opening up to women.

"It will continue to be a matter of conversation across the Church and in the Anglican communion. But she's already leading brilliantly. She leads out of her humanity, shows vulnerability and shows a different face of the Church of England." [Read the full story](#)

Work starts on drafting statement of needs

Thank you to all those who have been praying for the work of the Vacancy-in-See Committee and its sub-groups.

The Committee has now met three times, and has four more meetings scheduled, with its final meeting at the end of March, when it will approve the statement of needs and elect six of its number to the Crown Nominations Commission.

Work has now started on drafting the statement of needs, the consultation has just under a week still to run (it closes at 5pm on 4 February) and prayer resources have been shared that will support the whole process until a new Bishop of Oxford is in post.

We are extremely grateful for the excellent response already to the diocesan consultation. We appreciate the busy-ness of life may mean you haven't yet got around to this, but we would very much like to hear from you – every voice counts.

Faith communities and AI

With NASA soon set to fly around the moon for the first time in half a century, the famous Earthrise picture is in the news again. The picture, taken from Apollo 8 in 1968, was the first ever view of Earth from the perspective of the moon.

In his latest Substack, Bishop Steven considers how the act of exploration always offers new perspectives on what it means to be human and looks at what part faith communities should play in the AI debate.

[Read Bishop Steven's Substack.](#)



Men's Curry Club



*because
we're
worth
it!*

**Usual first Wednesday of the month,
at 8pm on Weds. 04 February 2026.**

Rajmoni Restaurant, Maiden Place, Lower Earley

Come along and enjoy the welcome!

*ca. £30 for a poppadum, 2 courses, 2 drinks & tip.
Contact David Pooler for details*



0741.379.5050



dave@poolers.co.uk



DIALOGUE
SOCIETY



SCRIPTURAL

REASONING

“Scriptural Reasoning is a welcoming space where people of different faiths meet to read, reflect, and build lasting friendships through dialogue.”



“Encounter God 2”

Wednesday 4th February

7.30-21.00 pm

St.Nicolas Church, Earley



If you'd like to join, please email us
reading@dialoguesociety.org