



**Sunday 21 December 2025**  
**Morning Prayer 10.00am**  
**Revd Tony Higgins**

**A very warm welcome to our service this morning in St Nicholas Church, Studland**

And a special welcome if you are new to our church or are visiting the area!

Children are most welcome in our church. Do not worry if they are noisy or make a break for freedom: we are just delighted to have the children in Church with us. There are toys in the two green boxes at the back of the Church - and everyone is welcome to use them.

We do not pass around a collection plate at St Nicholas' Church, but we are most appreciative of donations to help maintain both the Church and its ministry. We have a traditional plate for cash donations with Gift Aid envelopes available as well as a contactless card payments station at the exit to the Church. If you would like to make regular donations, please consider setting up a Standing Order with your bank: if this is of interest, please contact the Treasurer, Eric Stobart at [eric@thestobarts.co.uk](mailto:eric@thestobarts.co.uk).

After the service, we serve coffee, tea and other refreshments in the Church Hall. Please do join us - and get to know us all a little better.

For regular updates on Church activities throughout the week, please find us on [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) You can also follow us on Facebook. (St Nicholas Church Studland) – do give us a like or two!

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For additional information about St Nicholas Church and its services, please contact:

Associate Minister: Revd Dr Tony Edmonds 01929 450097 [revtonyedmonds@outlook.com](mailto:revtonyedmonds@outlook.com)

Church Wardens: Barbara Matthews 01929 450218  
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**SWANAGE & STUDLAND TEAM MINISTRY**  
**St. Mary's – St. Mark's – All Saints' – St. Nicholas'**  
**21<sup>st</sup> December 2025 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent**

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading for this Sunday: Romans 1, 1-7**

**Gospel Reading: Matthew 1, 18- end**

**Psalm 80 v1 – 8; v18 -20**

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!  
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim  
and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us!  
Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.  
O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's  
prayers?  
You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink  
in full measure.  
You make us the scorn of our neighbours; our enemies laugh among  
themselves.  
Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.  
You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.  
Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your  
name.  
Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be  
saved.

**Collect:**

God our redeemer,  
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of your Son:  
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour,  
so we may be ready to greet him  
when he comes again as our judge;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God now and for ever.

# REFLECTION

## **Isaiah 7: 1-16, Romans 1: 1-7, Matthew 1: 18 to the end.**

The readings for the Fourth Sunday of Advent cycle through themes of prophecy, covenant, and the Virgin Birth, with Year A focusing on Isaiah's "Immanuel" prophecy and Matthew's birth narrative, Year B highlighting God's promise to David & the Annunciation in Luke, and Year C emphasising Micah's Bethlehem prophecy & Mary's visit to Elizabeth in Luke, all building towards Jesus' coming.

We are in year A and should rightly be holding Mary the Blessed Virgin close to our hearts. Nevertheless on reading through the passage I can't help but think "Let's hear it for Joseph!" The strength of our belief is measured by how much we are prepared to suffer for those beliefs. Joseph was a man of strong beliefs. He was prepared to do what is right despite the personal pain it might cause him.

He faced a dilemma, his betrothed declared that she was pregnant. Despite his love for Mary and the sincere way in which she had described her circumstance, "of the Holy Spirit," he could not put aside the fact that someone else was the child's father. Wishing to be gentle toward her he chose to "quietly" divorce her.

This was not to be the end, for in a dream, he was visited by an Angel of the Lord who reassured Joseph that it was an honourable decision to marry Mary and take the child as his own.

We know little of their family life, however it seems to me that Mary took charge of his spiritual development and Joseph his human life. We know little of Joseph, he is last mentioned when Jesus was 12 years old.

Joseph prepared him through childhood to adulthood. He educated him in the ways of a working life. He prepared him for life in society with all its strengths and weaknesses. Surely this would also prepare him for his mission and Messiahship?

On this 4th Sunday of Advent we give thanks for the commitment of two comparatively ordinary people of great faith. Each is anxious about what has been proposed for them, yet each acquiesces to God's wish. Each puts their trust in God, and each other.

Perhaps this Christmas we should do the same. We ordinary people, each serving Him as best we can, are we ready and worthy of his coming? Is the world ready to do the same?

With Advent blessings  
Revd John Cooper.

## TEAM NOTES

**Christmas Services in Studland.** We have 2 services at St Nicholas over the Christmas period. Midnight Mass will be held on Christmas Eve, starting at 11.30pm while on Christmas Day, there will be a Family Communion starting at 10am, Celebrate Christmas with us – we would be delighted to see you.

**Swanage Depression Support facilitators** - SDS is looking for more volunteers to facilitate this valuable support group. The group meets every other Wednesday evening. For more information please talk to Revd Natalie or contact Alan Dominy at [swanagedepression@outlook.com](mailto:swanagedepression@outlook.com).

**Candle Wax for Ukraine** - Ukraine still needs our support. Candle wax is being collected from local churches and communities to create cooking candles (“trench candles”) and candles for villages without electricity. Please donate candles ends, candle wax, and unwanted candles in the box in St Mary’s Church porch, from where it will be taken to a Ukraine support group.

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### *Funerals in our churches:*

<b>Peter Dyke</b>	Tues 23 Dec	11.00am	St Mark’s
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St Nicholas Church in Studland is part of the Swanage and Studland Team Ministry.  
Contact details are given below:

### **Swanage and Studland Team**

<b>Team Rector</b>	Revd Dr Ian Bird	Tel 01929 422916 (normal day off Friday)
<b>Team Vicar</b>	Revd Jo Levasier	Tel 01929 208217 (normal day off Friday)
<b>Priest at St Nicholas</b>	Revd Tony Higgins	Tel 01929 450691 (normal day off Wednesday)
<b>Parish Administrator</b>	Karon Quirey	<a href="mailto:swanage.team@btconnect.com">swanage.team@btconnect.com</a>
<b>Parish Office</b>	Tues & Weds 9am-5pm / Friday 9am – 4pm	Tel: 01929 421117

Visit our Team website [www.swanageteam.com](http://www.swanageteam.com)