

The Christian Community in Forest Row

Programme for December, 2024-March, 2025



The human heart can go the length of God.
Christopher Fry, "The Sleep of Prisoners"

Dear Congregation! Dear Friends!

At the beginning of Advent we can witness the Advent Spiral, where the children light their candle, carefully treading the path that leads through the darkness and placing the light where it is needed. Thus the light transforms the earth into a shining star.

Mary was also on her path during Advent: she left everything behind, stripped of her old life, her old pathways. Did she have anything left? Maybe just a little lantern that could illumine her way? And where would she go? Where would a new home be?

She left the past behind, exposing her soul to the darkness and emptiness which she had to find strength to bear. Did she know that her heart can go the length of God? And that it will?

Gradually she found herself opening more and more to the new, carried by a power of trust in her destiny, saying yes to her future, which was still unknown, a mystery. The light was growing within her.

Every year at Christmas we have the opportunity to let our hearts go the length of God. The journey begins with the three services of Christmas Day. At midnight the healing grace of spirit streams towards us; at dawn the creative Word approaches even more closely, touching our lips, warming our speech and strengthening our will. Then in the full light of day, we hear about Christ's incarnation on Earth, which is to free us from the twofold temptations: the vanity of illusion and the enslavement to the senses

After the dark of the Advent blue, the altar can be a place of new beginnings, from which we find our way into the world, into the new future that is been granted to us and illumined through the birth of Christ Jesus.

And what will the new beginning be? What does it require of us? Maybe a little more courage, less fear, as we leave old ways behind? Might we learn to trust into the unexplainable, the mystery, into that which my mind cannot yet grasp? Are we ready to be challenged?

May we all, wherever we are, open a little more this year towards the mystery and grace of Christmas and may those who are looking for light, warmth, and love and home find it. May we receive the power of love that is being poured in immeasurable fullness from the Heights down to the Earth.

Mary, who became wise Sophia, knew the secret of love that transforms the world, illuminating it with divine light.

Wishing you much joy for the Christmas season to you all and your families!

Nataliia Shatna

For our Holy Nights Course this year, we have decided to turn to the Prologue of John (John 1:1-18). The sessions will run from 27th December to 5th January daily at 11.15am (11.30am on Sundays). It is not necessary to attend the whole course.

We will hear and speak the Greek text, look at the themes of the Prologue and open a space for conversation about the themes. We are inviting the congregation to help to shape these days with us, by bringing short contributions. These could be contemplations on a verse or an overarching theme; poetry, music or song that connected to the Prologue; perhaps a short passage from another author that sheds light on a verse, or on the whole Prologue. It could be interesting to hear different translations.

In order that we can weave together the contributions, please let us know what you are intending to bring. The easiest way for us to receive these suggestions is via email at tccinfr@gmail.com. You could also leave a note in the church addressed to the priests.

A translation with some commentary written by Tom is available for download (see link in Update). Printed copies will be available in the church. We are also including pointers to possible areas to prepare in the Updates in the coming weeks.

There is also a wonderful resource online, where you can see all the different translations, called BibleGateway.com

We are looking forward to co-creating a rich and enlivening course together!

- Nataliia and Tom

Saturday, 30th November

- 10am Preparing the church for Advent (until 12pm)
The wreath-making workshop will not take place this year.
- 6pm Finding Peace in Troubled Times
Evening Service to prepare for Advent with sermon by Tom Ravetz

Advent

Sunday, 1st December

Reading: Luke 21:25-36

- 9.10am Children's Service – arrive 9.10am to start at 9.15am
10am The Act of Consecration of Man
4pm Advent Spiral
for children aged 4 and above

Tuesday, 3rd December

- 10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 5th December

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man
7pm Choir
8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 6th December

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man
3.45pm Confirmation Class

Saturday, 7th December

- 4.30pm Reading Group for those who have Died (Chapel of Rest)
6pm Evening Service for those who have Died

Sunday, 8th December

Reading: Luke 21:25-36

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man

Tuesday, 10th December

- 10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 12th December

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man
4.30pm Christmas Carol Concert
Given by violin students of Angela Campbell
7pm Choir
8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 13th December

9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Sunday, 15th December Reading: Luke 21:25-36

9.10am Children's Service – arrive 9.10am to start at 9.15am

10am The Act of Consecration of Man

11.30am The Human Heart
- talk by Dr Jenny Josephson

Thursday, 19th December

9am The Act of Consecration of Man

7pm Choir

Friday, 20th December

9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Saturday, 21st December

10am Preparing the Church for Christmas (until 12pm)

Sunday, 22nd December

Reading: Luke 21:25-36

10am The Act of Consecration of Man

11.30am Open congregational meeting

Tuesday, 24th December

4pm Christmas Eve play

Please bring your lantern to carry the heavenly light home!

Christmas

Wednesday, 25th December

Midnight The Act of Consecration of Man (Matthew 1:1-25)

8am The Act of Consecration of Man (Luke 2:1-20)

10am The Act of Consecration of Man (John 21:15-25)

11.30am The Children's Service for Christmas

11.45am Carol singing around the Christmas tree in the Community room

Thursday, 26th December

10am The Act of Consecration of Man

Friday, 27th December

10am The Act of Consecration of Man

11.15am Holy Nights Course on the Prologue of the Gospel of John
Introduction and Overview

Saturday, 28th December

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man (in German)
- 11.15am Holy Nights Course (John 1:1-2)

Sunday, 29th December

Reading: John 21:15-25

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 11.30am Holy Nights Course (John 1: 3-4)

Monday, 30th December

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 11.15am Holy Nights Course (John 1:5)

Tuesday, 31st December

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 11.15am Holy Nights Course (John 1:6-8)
- 6pm Evening Service for New Year with Sermon by Nataliia Shatna followed by a Gathering for New Year's Eve with bring and share supper (until 9pm)

Wednesday, 1st January

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 11.15am Holy Nights Course (John 1:9-10)

Thursday, 2nd January

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man (in Ukrainian)
- 11.15am Holy Nights Course (John 1:11-13)

Friday, 3rd January

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 11.15am Holy Nights Course (John 1:14)

Saturday, 4th January

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 11.15am Holy Nights Course (John 1:15-17)
- 4.30pm (No Reading Group for those who have Died)
- 6pm (No Evening Service for those who have Died)

Sunday, 5th January

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 11.15am Holy Nights Course (John 1:18)

Epiphany

Monday, 6th January

Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

10am The Act of Consecration of Man for Epiphany

Tuesday, 7th January

10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 9th January

9am The Act of Consecration of Man

7pm Choir

8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 10th January

9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Sunday, 12th January

Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

9.10am Children's Service

Gather by 9.10am to start at 9.15am

10am The Act of Consecration of Man

11.30am Three Kings Play

For all ages

Tuesday, 14th January

10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 16th January

9am The Act of Consecration of Man

7pm Choir

8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 17th January

9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Sunday, 19th January

Reading: Luke 2:41-52

10am The Act of Consecration of Man

11.30am And the Word became Flesh...

Talk for Epiphany by Tom Ravetz

Tuesday, 21st January

10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 23rd January

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 7pm Choir
- 8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 24th January

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Sunday, 26th January

Reading: John 2:1-11

- 9.10am Children's Service
Gather by 9.10am to start at 9.15am
- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 11.30am The Mystery of Kingly Leadership
Talk by Nataliia Shatna

Tuesday, 28th January

- 10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 30th January

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 7pm Choir
- 8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 31st January

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Saturday, 1st February

- 4.30pm Reading Group for those who have Died (Chapel of Rest)
- 6pm Evening Service for those who have Died

Sunday, 2nd February

Reading: Mark 2:1-12

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 6pm Recital with Nicholas Korth and James Gilchrist (until 8pm)

Tuesday, 4th February

- 10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 6th February

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 7pm Choir
- 8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 7th February

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Sunday, 9th February**Reading: Luke 13:10-17**

- 9.10am Children's Service
Gather by 9.10am to start at 9.15am
10am The Act of Consecration of Man
11.30am Members' Meeting

Tuesday, 11th February

- 10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 13th February

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man
7pm Choir
8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 14th February

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Sunday, 16th February**Reading: Matthew 20:1-16**

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
11.30am Virtues of the modern time
Talk by Nataliia Shatna

Tuesday, 18th February

- 10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 20th February

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man
7pm Choir
8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 21st February

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Sunday, 23rd February**Reading: Luke 8:1-18**

- 9.10am Children's Service
Gather by 9.10am to start at 9.15am
10am The Act of Consecration of Man
11.30am Annual Congregational Meeting (until 12.45pm)
With presentation of the financial situation and discussion

Tuesday, 25th February

- 10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 27th February

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 7pm Choir
- 8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 28th February

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Saturday, 1st March

- 4.30pm Reading Group for those who have Died (Chapel of Rest)
- 6pm Evening Service for those who have Died

Sunday, 2nd March

Reading: Luke 18:18-34

- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man

Tuesday, 4th March

- 10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 6th March

- No Act of Consecration of Man due to synod
- 7pm Choir
- 8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 7th March

No Act of Consecration of Man due to synod

Sunday, 9th March

Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

- 9.10am Children's Service
- Gather by 9.10am to start at 9.15am
- 10am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 11.30am Christ's Encounter with the Adversaries
- Presentation and conversation on Matthew 4 - Tom Ravetz

Tuesday, 11th March

- 10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 13th March

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man
- 7pm Choir
- 8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 14th March

- 9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Saturday, 15th March

4pm Afternoon Recital with Katharina Baiter, Soprano
The programme will be announced closer to the time

Sunday, 16th March

Reading: Matthew 17:1-13

10am The Act of Consecration of Man

Tuesday, 18th March

10.30am Conversation Group

Thursday, 20th March

9am The Act of Consecration of Man

7pm Choir

8pm Study Group on the Gospel of Mark

Friday, 21st March

9am The Act of Consecration of Man

Passiontide

Sunday, 23rd March

Reading: Luke 11:14-36

9.10am Children's Service
Gather by 9.10am to start at 9.15am

10am The Act of Consecration of Man

11.30am The Sacrament of Last Anointing - the Mystery of Death and new Life
Talk by Nataliia Shatna

Absences

Nataliia will be on leave 12-20th January

Tom will be on leave 20-27th January

Nataliia will be in Canterbury on 8th December, 26th December, 2nd February, 9th March

Tom will be in Ringwood 14th December, 18th January, 1st March

The British synod will take place in Stroud, 3-7th March

The Christian Community in Forest Row has a website which includes an online diary, where any new events will be listed. You can find this by using this shortened link: tinyurl.com/CCFR-Home

We also send out a weekly Update by email. This contains news about events and a contemplation on the gospel of the week or the festival. You can sign up for this by sending us an email at tccinfr@gmail.com.

The Christian Community exists through the generous donations of its members and friends. If you would like to make a one-off donation or a standing order, our account details are below.

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