



LIFE

Issue 1
January 2025

FROM THE ABBOT...

This is the first Abbey Newsletter of the present Millennium! It's good to be able to reach out in this way to our friends who offer so much support to Worth Abbey. By your prayers and your generous gifts of time and energy, you enable our monastic mission to touch the lives of increasing numbers of people, both those who visit the Abbey campus and those who support us online.

This year of 2025 sees the Abbey Church reach its fiftieth anniversary. You can read elsewhere in this newsletter about the programme of celebrations for this significant milestone. The 'Heart and Soul' Development campaign, launched to coincide with this anniversary, aims to advance the mission of the monastic community by augmenting the facilities of the Abbey Church. We aim to make our Church and our campus a more effective centre of Catholic Christian witness to Jesus Christ in this area. With renewed and completed physical features, such as our planned Welcome Centre and Benedictine Study Centre, the monks of Worth Abbey will be better able to offer Benedictine Hospitality to those who visit us here, sharing our worship of God and the wisdom of our monastic tradition with retreatants, parishioners, Pilgrims and visitors.

I look forward to opportunities to meet many of those who read this newsletter in the course of the year. With prayers and good wishes for the coming year.



Abbot Mark



HEART AND SOUL CAMPAIGN

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Abbey Church of Our Lady, Help of Christians, we pause to reflect on its profound significance in the life of our community. For five decades, Worth Abbey Church has been a place of worship, reflection, and sanctuary, drawing hearts closer to God.

Looking to the future, we are committed to ensuring that Worth Abbey Church continues to serve as a beacon of welcome and refuge for generations to come. To fulfil this vision, we have identified a programme of essential improvements to the Church, including work on the Narthex, the unfinished Ambulatory areas, the congregation and choir furniture, and other key spaces. By enhancing these areas and improving the wider estate and welcome experience, the monks hope to extend the gift of Worth as a Sanctuary for Heart and Soul, enabling more people to encounter the message of Christ our Lord.

To bring this vision to life, we are launching a special campaign in collaboration with Worth School. The *Heart and Soul* Campaign will be conducted personally and thoughtfully, through gatherings and conversations that reflect the spirit of our shared mission.

We look forward to keeping you updated on our progress. If you would like to learn more, please visit worthabbey.net/support-our-heart-and-soul-campaign/.



MONKS IN THE CITY

CHRISTMAS DAY IN BRIGHTON

On Christmas Day the three monks in Kemptown hosted some 35 students and young adults from around the world, for a shared festive lunch in the Fitzherbert Community Hub here at St John the Baptist Church. After a starter of soup prepared by Fr Gabriel the meal took the form of a buffet with many colourful and varied dishes from several continents prepared by those who attended. One of those who came expressed her appreciation as follows: “I felt like I celebrated this Christmas at home, we shared food from more than 8 countries. Though our cultures were diverse, we united in the name of Christ”.

In keeping with the festive spirit, after lunch Carols were sung in several languages.

Meanwhile following Mass on the university campus at Falmer (notably attended by the vice Chancellor), Fr Rod and the Anglican Chaplain together hosted an afternoon of festive refreshments for anyone on campus who found themselves on their own. This was well supported with some 40 or so students dropping in.

SEASON 5 PROGRAMME OF EVENTS IN BRIGHTON

At the time this Newsletter goes to press Season 5 of the ‘*Monks in the City*’ programme in Brighton will have begun with the celebration of Ecumenical Vespers on Sunday 19th January in St John the Baptist Church, Kemptown.

The two Tuesday evening *Monk Talks* scheduled this season will be given by the Rev Richard Carter (Associate Vicar of St Martin-in-the-fields Church and Leader of the Nazareth Community) on the topic of Humility (on 18th February), and on March 18th Abbot Mark will address the topic of the ever deepening journey of conversion. Further details of the new programme of events can be found on the Worth Abbey website (worthabbey.net) and the *Monks in the City* website (monksinthecity.uk).



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G Ló- ri- a in excélsis De- o. Et in ter-ra pax homi-
ni-bus bonae vo-luntá-tis. Laudá-mus te. Bene- di-cimus
te. Ado- rá-mus te. Glo-ri-fi-cá-mus te. Grá-ti-as á-gi-
mus ti-bi propter magnam gló-ri- am tu- am. Dómi-ne
De-us, Rex cae- léstis, De-us Pa-ter omni-pot-ens. Dómi-
ne Fi-li uni-gé-ni-te Je-su Chri- ste. Dó-mi-ne De-us,
Agnus De- i, Fi-li- us Pa-tris. Qui tol-lis peccá-ta mundi,



MUSIC

Advent and Christmas are busy times from a musical perspective, and this year was no exception for either.

The Pilgrims’ Carol Service in mid-December was a particular musical highlight with thirty-three singers tackling all the favourite carols and descants – including a new setting of the Seven Joys of Mary (‘Joys Seven’) written for the occasion. As ever, it was wonderful to welcome several old faces – as well as some new faces – to sing with the Abbey Choir over the Advent and Christmas period.

Now that we are into the new calendar year, the Abbey Choir has two main events to look forward to – in addition to the all of the other festivities and regular services promised in 2025: the first of these is the ‘Come-and-Sing’ on the 1st March when we look forward to welcoming singers to join us in preparing and performing Vivaldi’s *Gloria* alongside a professional orchestra.

Please do reach out to me at edean@worth.org.uk should you wish to sing at this event, and please contact Kelly O’Hara at kohara@worth.org.uk should you wish to attend the concluding concert!

The second of these exciting events is a choir tour to Paris, when the Abbey Choir will be offering a *Concert Spirituel* for the Assumption at Saint-Sulpice on the 15th August. Saint-Sulpice is world-renowned as the church associated with Charles-Marie Widor (the composer of the famous ‘Widor’s Toccata’), two famous organs by Aristide Cavallé-Coll, and the church’s association with the blind composer Louis Vierne – whose monumental *Messe solennelle* for two organs and choir we will be performing.

I look forward to sharing further details about the Paris trip in due course, and I send my best wishes for this new year in the meantime.

Edward Dean,
Director of Music and Monastic Organist





PILGRIMS NEWS

WORTH ABBEY PILGRIMS ADVENT CAROL SERVICE ON SUNDAY 15th DECEMBER

On Sunday, 15th December, Worth Abbey hosted its cherished Advent Carol Service, a beautiful tradition that brought together the Worth community in a celebration of the Advent season. The Abbey Church was filled with hundreds of Parishioners, Pilgrims, Worth School parents and alumni, and friends of the Abbey. The service featured a selection of traditional and contemporary carols, performed by the Abbey choir, which filled the church with harmonious melodies. Reflections on the meaning of Advent were interspersed throughout the service, providing moments of contemplation and spiritual enrichment. Following the service, we gathered in the Narthex for the usual abundance of festive refreshments.

The Carol Service collection this year was dedicated to CAFOD's Middle East Humanitarian Appeal. Generous contributions were made by those present. We are grateful to everyone who joined us for this special event, and we look forward to welcoming you to future services and events at Worth Abbey.

UPCOMING EVENT: COME AND SING! VIVALDI'S GLORIA AT WORTH ABBEY

We are delighted to invite you to an afternoon of beauty and joy as Worth Abbey Choir prepares and performs Vivaldi's *Gloria* alongside a professional orchestra and volunteer singers on Saturday, 1st March 2025, at the Abbey Church.

Event Details:

Date: Saturday, 1st March 2025

Timings:

Singers: Arrive at 1:30pm

Listeners: Arrive for refreshments at 3:15pm; concert begins at 3:45pm

How to Participate:

Singers: If you would like to sing, please register your interest as soon as possible by emailing Edward Dean (Abbey Director of Music) at edean@worth.org.uk.

Listeners: If you would like to attend the concert, please contact Kelly O'Hara (Assistant to the Abbot) at kohara@worth.org.uk.

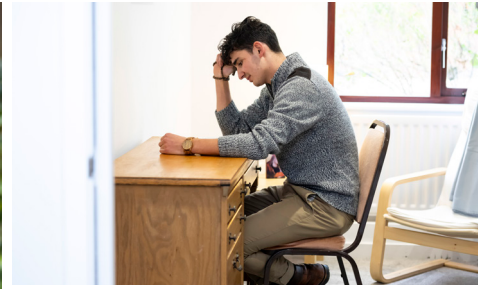
We look forward to sharing this special musical experience with you.

RETREATS

The Retreat Centre has opened up again after the Christmas Break, and the first retreat of the new year will be the every popular 'Finding Stillness' on the 27th – 30th January, followed by the also well attended 'Time Out' Retreat at the start of February. We are delighted to welcome Estelle Langridge to the team, after we said a fond farewell to Katrina at Christmas. We are excited about the year ahead and hope to welcome many people to the retreats at Worth, both new and regular guests. For more information head to the website and click on 'Come on retreat'. Happy New Year!

Pete, Debbie and Estelle
(Hospitality Team)





OUTREACH



Fr Luke, the Novice Master, has responsibility for our Postulants and also the Intern Programme.

THE PATH TO THE MONASTERY: How newcomers to Worth Abbey are formed as monks

Those who aspire to join the community as monks begin their journey by staying with us in the monastery for a period of a couple of

months; this is called an 'Aspirancy'. If this visit is fruitful, the newcomers enter what is called the 'Postulancy'. This marks the initial step in the journey towards monastic life within the Benedictine tradition.

Under the guidance of the Novice Master, Fr Luke, Postulants receive mentorship and support throughout this period. A period of postulancy can last for between six months and a year. At the end of this time, the Postulant is able to apply to join the Novitiate, as a Novice monk. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who pray for new vocations to Worth Abbey.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME AT WORTH ABBEY

In addition to welcoming new postulants, Worth Abbey runs an internship programme for small groups of men to live in proximity to the Community and share in their lives. This programme offers up to five men at a time the opportunity to live alongside the monastery for two months, following a way of life similar to that of the monks. During this time, participants will learn about the Benedictine tradition, deepen their prayer life, and engage with scripture.

Who Can Apply? Men aged between eighteen and thirty-five.

Duration? Each internship lasts around two months, with three sessions held annually. There is no cost to participate; board, lodging, teaching, and guidance are provided. In line with the monastic way of life, interns are expected to work in the monastery some of the time, contributing to the welfare of Worth.

Benefits of the Internship: It is hoped that the silence and prayerful atmosphere of the monastery and Abbey Church will help participants deepen their spiritual search and tune in to God's presence in their lives. As St Benedict writes in the Prologue to his Rule: "What, dear brothers, is more delightful than this voice of the Lord calling to us?"

We invite you to join us in prayer for the success of these programmes and for the spiritual growth of all participants.

For more information visit worthabbey.net/Interns and to read a recent article on our Internship published by *The Tablet* visit our news page worthabbey.net/latest-news/

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 1st March 2025
Friday 21st March 2025, 5.30pm
Saturday 5th April 2025, 10.30am
Sunday 20th April 2025, 10.00am
Sunday 8th June 2025, 9.30am
Saturday 12th July 2025

Come and Sing: Vivaldi's *Gloria* at Worth Abbey
Feast of St Benedict Celebration
Lent Talk
Easter Sunday Mass
Pentecost Mass
50th Anniversary Mass of the Consecration of the Abbey Church

