

## Taizé services at St Mary's



I first came across Taizé style services at university, where they took the form of night prayer, beginning at 9 pm every Friday during term time. They were held in the side chapel of the church which served the university, we would all take a lit tea-light and find a quiet spot and then we'd have around 45 minutes of silence interspersed with Taizé chants and Bible readings. The service would be followed with hot chocolate and chat. This quickly became one of my favourite parts of the week so I was delighted to hear that Taizé services were being introduced at St Mary's.

At the time I write this we have had two Taizé inspired services at St Mary's – one in January for Epiphany and one in February for Candlemas. Each has had an order of service with the chants and songs, responses, prayers, a psalm and a reading and I really like the way they have been linked to the rhythm of the church's year. During the service we are invited to come forward and light our candles, followed by a time of silence. Those new to a more contemplative style of service might find that it actually feels quite familiar because of the structure the written order of service provides. The chants and songs are based on Biblical phrases and are repeated several times so you get to pick up the tunes quite quickly but it also gives you time to reflect on the words.

Although the two ways I have encountered Taizé style services have been rather different they both have at their heart the same sense of providing a space in which all the worries, frustrations and busyness of the week can be let go in a prayerful way.

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