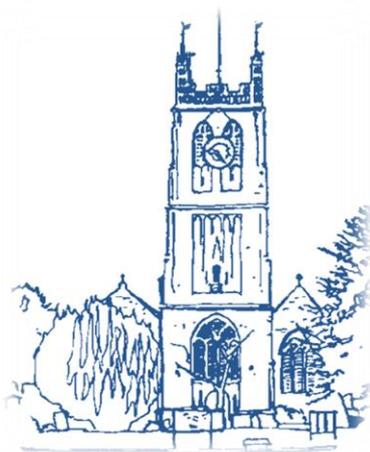


St. James's, Dursley & St. Mark's, Woodmancote



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The Ewelme Benefice

The parish of Dursley and the parish of Uley with Owlpen and Nymphsfield
Web Site – www.ewelmebenefice.co.uk

RECTOR

Revd Canon Michael Cozens

Tel: 546459

E-mail: mgcozens86@btinternet.com

Please note Michael cannot be contacted on Fridays
this is his day off – please contact Parish Office

ASSOCIATE PRIESTS

Revd Ian Gardner

E-mail: chestal@hotmail.com

Tel: 546895

Revd Jane Wood

E-mail: revjanewood@yahoo.com

Tel: 0798 362 3525

READER

Mr Tony King

E-mail: tonyking@gmx.co.uk

Tel: 298897

CHURCHWARDENS.

Mrs Caroline Marrow

Tel: 544221

E-mail: caroline.vegpatch@gmail.com

Mrs Christine Morgan

Tel: 549062

E-mail: chrismorgan194@btinternet.com

BENEFICE ADMINISTRATOR – Clare White

Address letters to: The Rectory, Broadwell, Dursley, Glos, GL11 4JE

E-mail: ewelmeeparishoffice@gmail.com

Tel: 549280

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC.

Mr Nigel Davies, M.A., B Mus., F.R.C.O,

Tel: 01454 416867

PCC: VICE CHAIRMAN

Mrs Caroline Marrow

Tel: 544221

PCC SECRETARY

Mrs Edwina Walton

Tel: 890588

E-mail: edwinawalton@hotmail.co.uk

PCC TREASURER -

Dr Sally Pearson

Tel: 542106

E-mail: v6sep@aol.com



CONTENTS

Letter from Canon Michael and message from the editors.....	2,3
Ewelme Benefice Services & dates for your diary.....	4,5,6,7,8
St Mark's	9
Music Notes.....	10,11
'Green Books' suggestions.....	12,13
Bells.....	14
Book Stall News and pictures.....	16,17
Culture and Me with Maureen Wood.....	19,20
Diocesan News.....	22,23,24
Sally's Acrostic for December.....	23
Mouse Diary.....	30
From the Parish Register, Flower rota and 100 Club.....	32

Editor: Valerie Meares Tel: 01453 544677
Advertising please contact Philip Staddon Tel: 01453 544312
e.mail address judith.staddon@gmail.com

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

Valerie Meares Tel: 01453 544677 e.mail: v.meares@btinternet.com
Judith Staddon Tel: 01453 544312 e.mail judith.staddon@gmail.com

Message from the editors:

Thank you for articles and photos sent in it is much appreciated.
Any opinions expressed in the magazine are personal views only.

Judith and Valerie

**DEADLINE FOR THE JANUARY 2022 ISSUE IS
SUNDAY 14th DECEMBER 2021**



Dear friends

'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth'.
(John 1:14)

I'm not sure how the tradition came about but it is traditional for a priest to read the opening verses of St John's gospel as the final reading in a Christmas carol service. After almost 30 years of priesthood I still feel the huge privilege of doing that and always experience a spine-tingling moment as I read those concluding words. Here is the reality of what we are celebrating this and every Christmas; that our God, in the person of Jesus Christ, actually came down to earth and lived a life - 33 years we are told - just like us. God lived among us; experienced life in all its messiness; experienced hurt and pain as well as joy and love.

I am very fortunate to have been able to make a short visit to the Holy Land some years ago and so every Christmas I can take myself back to my experience of Bethlehem. Not looking quite as it would have done when Jesus was born, but still a place of powerful significance to a pilgrim visitor. I remember the humbling experience of stooping to enter the Basilica of the Nativity in Manger Square; the low doorway was apparently designed to keep camels out! The church is said to be one of the oldest in Christendom, built in the 4th century and it certainly looks and feels very old. The walls are almost black from candle soot and the floor is filthy and worn from the millions of pilgrims. In the centre of the church is an altar and beneath the altar is a sort of cave which you descend into via a narrow staircase. In this small, cramped space, there is another altar and under that altar is a star which has words carved into it that translate as, 'here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary'. Another spine-tingling moment.

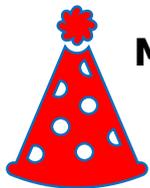
Of course we can't be sure of the exact place where Jesus was born, but the experience of actually being in Bethlehem makes it feel very real and very close. Even if we haven't had the privilege of visiting the Holy Land, pausing to

reflect on the reality of our Christmas celebrations; perhaps reading those words from John's Gospel or Luke's version of the nativity story, or the words of a favourite carol, remind us again that into a very dangerous, troubled, messy world, Jesus was born.

Our world today feels pretty messy. Covid is still very much part of our lives and all of us have been affected by it in some way, either directly or in our families, or our work or our local community. The climate and the very future of our world continue to be major news and that is inevitably unsettling and deeply concerning. We will all know people who are struggling at the moment with health issues or other challenges affecting their daily lives. We might be struggling ourselves. The amazing, wonderful news is that at Christmas we celebrate the birth of the one who came to be *the light* shining in the darkest places of our world and our lives, and 'the darkness did not overcome it'. However 'messy' things might feel at the moment, I pray that the light, the joy and the love of the Christ-child will shine brightly and bless all our celebrations.

A very happy Christmas to you all!

Canon Michael



Message from the editors.....

Your editors now are Valerie Meares and Judith Staddon.

First of all we Wish you a Very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and hope that everything will go according to plan after last year's many disappointments, forcing many people to celebrate alone. We do so need other people around us especially in the darkest days of the year.

Secondly, we thank you so much for all the interesting items and pictures submitted during, at times, a difficult year and for all your support and encouragement.

And lastly, before the celebrations, the January magazine needs to be prepared, and ready, so we appeal to you to please send us as many articles and pictures as soon as possible and any new ideas would be welcomed.

Many, many thanks once again

Judith and Valerie

Services in December across the Ewelme Benefice

Sunday 5th December - Advent 2

St James 10.00am Parish Communion
St Bartholomew's 10.00am Parish Communion
St James 1200 Baptism

Sunday 12th December - Advent 3

St James 8.00am Holy Communion
St Giles 10.00am Parish Communion
St Mark's 10.30am Service of the Word

Sunday 19th December - Advent 4

St James 10.00am Holy Communion
St Giles 10.00am Parish Communion
Holy Cross 6.00pm Carol Service
St James 6.30pm Carol Service

Wednesday 22nd December

St Bartholomew's 6.00pm Carols and Christingle



Friday 24th December - Christmas Eve

St James 3.00pm Crib & Christingle Service
5.00pm Crib & Christingle Service
St Giles 3.00pm Crib Service
5.00pm Crib Service
St James 11.00pm Midnight Mass

Saturday 25th December - Christmas Day

St Mark's 10.00am Family Communion
St Giles 10.00am Family Communion

Sunday 26th December

St James 10.00am Benefice Holy Communion



Church News from Canon Michael

What do we do about celebrating Christmas?

This is a challenging question for us as we do so want to be able to hold the traditional services of Christmas and yet we are very aware that, with the number of Covid cases rising locally at the moment, we might need to make some last-minute decisions about whether these planned services can take place. At the moment our plans are:



Sunday 19th
December

6.30pm

The traditional candlelit
service of

nine lessons and carols in St James.

Please be aware that the church could be full, that social distancing will not be possible and masks will need to be worn during the singing.

Christmas Eve

3pm and 5pm

The same simple Crib Service with Christingles in St James. We hope that by running two services, numbers at both will be kept to a manageable size.

We will need to ask adults to wear masks during the singing and again will not be able to guarantee social distancing.

11pm

Midnight Mass in candlelight. Last year this very special service was online and felt very different. This year we plan to be back in St James *but will ask for masks to be worn during the singing.*

Christmas Day

8am

Holy Communion in St James

10am

A service of Holy Communion for all the family on Christmas Morning. This service will be held in St Mark's. *Social distancing will probably not be possible depending on numbers and masks will need to be worn during the singing.*



Prayer Group...

The Prayer Group in the Omega Rooms at
St Mark's
at 2.30pm
on the first Wednesday of the month.



The next one will be 1st December 2021.

Ewelme Benefice

TAIZE SERVICE

Join us at 5 pm
Sunday 5 December



St Mark's Church
Woodmancote, Dursley

A quiet candlelit service of reflection.

Everyone very welcome



Message from Ann Orchard...."Covid restrictions permitting,
the **Christmas Carvery** will take place on **December 11th**.

So that we can space out the tables there will be 2 sittings,
first at 12.00pm and the second at 1.15pm.

Places must be pre booked.

There will be some unreserved places for
non-church people from the town.



**Veg preparation and table arranging will
take place at 2.00pm on Friday 10th. All help welcome."**

Thank you to everyone who has been busy knitting these sleepy sheep.



Depending on the number of sheep we have, we are hoping that they will be able to visit the shop windows around Dursley in December to form an Advent Sheep Trail for children to find and take part in a quiz.

The children and families will need to find each sheep and their name so that they can all be found and return safely as a flock to join our Christingle/Crib service celebration on Christmas Eve.

More information to follow!!!

Caroline and Revd Jane



SHOPPERS' CAROLS AT ST JAMES' CHURCH

SATURDAY 18th DECEMBER

In order to adhere to social distancing, there will be two sessions;

- ① Seasonal refreshments served from 10.30am
Carols and Christmas Music 11.00 – 11.30
- ② Seasonal refreshments served from 11.30am
Carols and Christmas Music 12.00 – 12.30

No charge, but donations gratefully received.

Come and join in popular Christmas favourites; a good rehearsal for our Christmas Carol Service at 6.30pm on Sunday 19th December!

LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH – THE COURSE



LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ? What does it mean to live in love and faith together as a Church?

We will be running the **Living and Love and Faith** course in January and February for 5 weeks on Zoom on Thursday evenings from 7-8.30pm.

January 13th, 20th 27th and February 3rd and 10th 2022.

Each week will be led by a different member of the Ministry Team. We will explore together, listen, and share what it means to be human and how we live in love and faith in a world of changing sexual attitudes and activity. What it means to us to be followers of Jesus today?

Each session will explore a different topic. There will be an opening reflection, some teaching, bible study, story films, podcasts and time for discussion, where we can safely share our reflections.

There are no right or wrong answers. This will be a safe place for us to grow **together** in discipleship as we discuss some of the difficult issues facing the Church of England today.

The course is intended to initiate a process of whole Church discernment, in which we are invited to offer our feedback, and so playing our part in helping **discover what God's call is to the Church of England today.**

Sign up sheets will be at the back of our churches.

Please do join us.

Revd Jane Wood

Christmas Greetings from St Mark's



Dear Friends

Well, as I write this it is November and already the shops are full of Christmas gifts and so busy. Having just been to Cribs Causeway (not for Christmas shopping) I was amazed how many people were about. Who had heard about social distancing and lockdown? Luckily I wasn't bothered by it but I know a lot of people are still being careful and being in crowds again is slightly worrying. Something I was bothered by was stepping onto the escalator at the top of John Lewis's, I just couldn't do it! Clare was half way down but as I turned round to get out of the way a very nice young man stuck out his arm and said 'can I help?' and thus as Clare came back up the other escalator to get me, there I am sailing down on the arm of my knight in shining armour!! There are still many kind people in the world but on the whole all we hear about are the bad ones.

Again our November service was well attended and for the first time, now she is a fully fledged Reader, Paula Rix took our service of Morning Prayer. Thank you Paula and thank you to Philip for putting on the electric heaters to warm the building up given that the boiler had failed and he couldn't get it fixed in time, although it was a beautiful sunny morning it was quite cold. It was good to see Canon Richard with us after his knee surgery and we wish you well.

Please note that we have three services at St Mark's in December. The first is a Taizé service on 5th December at 5pm (for details see page 6). Our service of Morning Prayer is a week earlier in the month, than usual, on 12th December at 10.30am with Tea and Coffee on offer after the service. Then the last service of the year will be Family Communion on Christmas Day Saturday 25th December at 10.00am - hope to see you and pray that we are not shut up in lockdown again.

Wishing you all A Very Happy Christmas

From

Judith



MUSIC NOTES

December 2021

There is outrage on the Organists and Choirmaster's Face Book page! Nothing new in that statement, as it happens quite often and is usually directed at the demise of traditional hymns at the expense of rather trite worship songs. No, on this occasion the outrage concerns the C of E's advertising of a raft of digital musical resources which could take the place of "live" church music. Apparently the recordings were done by the paid choir of St Martin-in-the-Fields, and while I am sure their performances are excellent, the whole idea of communal worship is rather lost. We can spend much of our days glued to screens of various sorts; phones, computers and televisions, and those occasions when we are allowed to mix with other human beings are much to be cherished, especially with Covid hovering in the background.

Hymns are to be sung and enjoyed by all; even under masks! I am no fan of the professional singers on Radio 4's "Daily Service" as hymns beautifully sung like a Palestrina motet simply sound wrong! I remember as a young child standing next to my grandfather in church, turning to my mother during the singing of a hymn and asking "why is he singing out of tune?" I was told he was making "a joyful noise unto the Lord" and that we all sang in different ways and it didn't really matter if he was in tune with everyone else!

Yes, there is no doubt that the onset of excellently produced digital church music offerings will encourage some churches to manage without their organist; indeed I know of two churches where that has already happened, and, sadly, I am sure others will follow if the C of E continues on its present rather depressing path, but nothing compares with live singing from a lusty congregation; masked or unmasked! Long may it continue at St James'.

Like all the organisations attached to St James' the choir has been most grateful for the help and support given by Clive Orchard in the Parish Office as he steps down from being the Parish Administrator. During the last fifteen years his job expanded enormously and in pre Covid times the Parish Centre was a hub of great activity used by a variety of local people with Clive directing operations, sorting out bookings, answering the phone, acting as church guide, printing heaven knows what and providing endless cups of (strong!) coffee to all and sundry from his frog-infested office with the skill of an expert circus

juggler. Oh yes! I nearly forgot the books which he and the faithful few regularly box up and offer to passers-by on the church lawn "for a donation". We are truly grateful for Clive's great contribution to the smooth running of our music, and welcome Clare to take his place. I wonder if the vast collection of frogs will still remain.....

I have just finished reading Roy Massey's recently published autobiography. He was one of the few organists who "made it" to the top without being an Oxbridge scholar and through a succession of parish church appointments, retiring from Hereford Cathedral in 2001. Unlike most cathedral organists, Roy was often at the organ console as his enjoyment of playing was equal to that of his superlative choir training. His account of working for the Royal School of Church Music courses at Rossall (near Fleetwood) makes mention of Cecil Adams. In recent years he came to St James' on several occasions and gave us some memorable "Coffee, Cake and Music" concerts.

In 1988 he gave the opening recital of the rebuilt organ when I was organist at St Mary's Thornbury. Originally we wanted Simon Preston, but, as he was unavailable, we were offered Gillian Weir; who, having played in a masterclass with her, I really didn't like! The fees were astronomical. For either Mr Preston or Ms Weir it was £1000 plus VAT for the recital, first class return rail fare from London, and a night in a 5* hotel; and that was 33 years ago! Roy played for a fraction of the cost and stayed to the bun fight afterwards, imbibing lots of red wine, before leaving for Hereford at 12.30am! It was a pleasure to have Roy and his wife Ruth to what was a special occasion in the life of the church, and needless to say his playing was immaculate; we couldn't have done better.

His autobiography's introduction contains this little gem; "It was the marvellous old Harrison of 1906 in St Martin-in-the-Bullring which sparked my early love affair with the organ. Had my introduction to Church Music been the curate playing *Shine Jesus shine* on his guitar I doubt whether my subsequent career would have gone in quite the direction it did". To me that says it all! *Nigel Davies*

Music for December

Sunday 5th	am	A Maiden Most Gentle – trad arr Carter	Missa Brevis – Lotti
Sunday 12th	am	Informal Service	
Sunday 19th	am	Mary's Magnificat – Carter	Willan in D
	pm	Christmas Carols	
Sunday 26th		TBC	

“Green” book suggestions

Have you been inspired by news from the COP 26 Conference to learn more about environmental issues and the natural world? Do you want to inspire others to do so? Here are some suggestions for books you might like to give as Christmas presents, or read yourself:

A Life on Our Planet by David Attenborough with Jonnie Hughes
(Witness Books)

The author looks back over his career in wildlife broadcasting, reflects on our current predicament, and considers possible solutions in this very readable, informative, sometimes shocking, but ultimately hopeful book, which he has subtitled ‘My witness statement and a vision for the future’, and which contains a number of black-and-white and colour photographs.

The Hidden Life of Trees by Peter Wohlleben (Greystone Books)

Having worked for the forestry commission in Germany for twenty years, Wohlleben was prompted by visitors to the forest to begin to see trees as much more than a commodity: “Suddenly, I was aware of countless wonders I could hardly explain even to myself....every day in the forest became a day of discovery”. Available both as a paperback describing “the fascinating science and as-yet unresolved mysteries of forests, and the role they play in sustaining our world” in detail, or as an illustrated, abridged hardback edition with over eighty stunning colour photographs, this book could fundamentally change the way you look at trees.

The Overstory by Richard Powers

“It changed how I thought about the Earth and our place in it”, said Barack Obama. Powers won the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for fiction for this novel which weaves together the stories of nine strangers and an unfolding natural catastrophe. I couldn’t put it down.

Braiding Sweet Grass by Robin Kimmerer

It tells of the author’s discoveries of Native American wisdom combined with scientific knowledge. These led her to a deeper understanding of the need for a closer cooperation between humanity and the plant world. Initially dismissed by the scientific elite, her understandings are now being accepted and welcomed.

Finding the Mother Tree by Suzanne Simard

An account by this scientist of how she discovered the wisdom of the forest, where trees of different species support each other with nutrients, communicating through root systems and fungi. That diversity in forests enables all trees to grow more strongly. Her researches remind us of how we need trees for our survival as human beings.

Laudato Si by Pope Francis

I quote from this remarkable document: “I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environment challenge we are undergoing and its human roots, concern and affect us all”

This is at the heart of the document, but Pope Francis also has a very striking call to conversion for those in the Church as well. He looks at the Christian imperative – recognising that we understand that we are responsible to God for the safe-keeping of the earth. Although written a few years ago the encyclical has a lot to say to us now.

These are just a few books that we have read and enjoyed recently. We are aware that there are many more, fiction and nonfiction. If you have read something that has inspired you to care for God’s creation, please tell us about it!

Jan and David Vonberg

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Bellringing

Remembrance Sunday is traditionally commemorated by ringing bells 'half-muffled'. This is achieved by tying a leather shoe or pad around one specific side of the clapper to produce a muffled sound as the clapper strikes the bell. The opposite side of the clapper strikes the bell as usual or is rung 'open' and makes the normal bell sound. Some people find this alternate muffled and open sound very evocative, giving an echo effect. Fully muffled ringing is when both sides of the clapper are muffled and is quite rare. Bells might be rung fully muffled on the death of the Sovereign (for which quite specific instructions are given), the Incumbent Vicar (Parish Priest) or the Bishop of the diocese.



Fitting muffles to the clapper is time consuming and they can, and do, turn round on one or more clappers while the bells are being rung. If this happens the muffled sound will disappear on these bells resulting in an unpleasing effect. Many churches would be hard pressed, including St James', to ring fully muffled because they don't have the enough muffles to muffle both sides of the clapper. Muffles are expensive and they do wear out as has happened to ours. We are in the process of replacing the 8 half-muffles with a new and tested design where easy-to-fit 'Velcro' straps replace the leather ones and do not, hopefully, have a tendency to slip round exposing the unmuffled part of the clapper to strike the bell.

We have mentioned that not all attempts at ringing are successful due to, usually, human or, less usual, mechanical failure. Recently we have suffered two such failed attempts. One was a quarter peal (45 minutes duration) and the other was a full peal attempt (3 hours duration). The latter was lost after 2 hours of very good ringing. Such losses are part of the exercise but still result in a bunch of gloomy ringers retiring to the pub to drown their sorrows.

Frank Byrne



Friends @ Christmas will go ahead again this Christmas Day. Thanks to Rev Fiona Crocker and her sub committee.



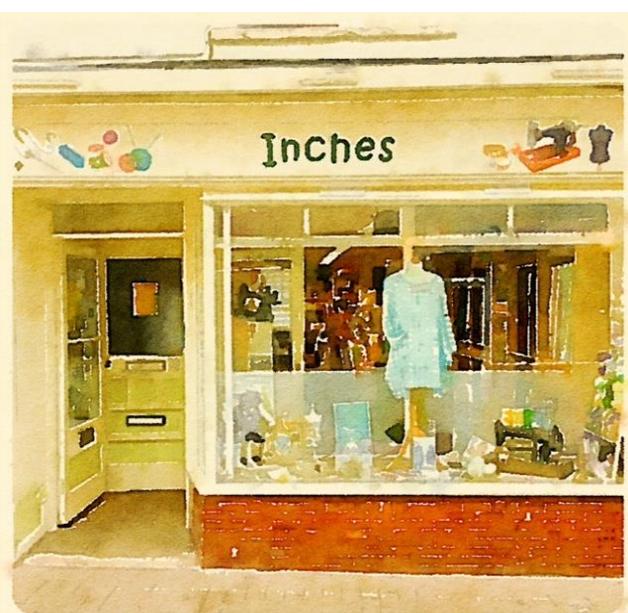
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On Saturday 13th November Clive hosted a lunch, in the Parish Centre.....



The lunch was to say thank you to the people (and their partners) who have helped him on Saturdays especially since last April, to set up and take down the book stall which although the books are 'free' he has managed to take well over £3,000. It felt good to be together again doing what we like best chatting and enjoying good food and drink.

Thanks to Ann Orchard, Sarah Hodge, Sheila Gardner and Maureen Wood for some lovely food





Clive says to his helpers.....

Thank you all for your efforts this year. We took another £167.40 on Saturday 20th November which made £3,338 since April 2021 and £14,530 since we started at the Christmas Fair in November 2009. The Book Stall will be back again in January so enjoy your lie-ins on Saturday mornings for the rest of the year.

He also says to everyone that he is still taking donations of either fiction or children's books please

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David Vonberg says.....Last month we heard from a newcomer and this month we hear from someone who has lived most of her life in Dursley. We are delighted that Maureen Wood has given some thought to her favourites.

Do you have a favourite author or book?

I love to read biographies. It's good to learn about the less well-known dimensions of lives when I know about their public work. I was given the biography of Audrey Hepburn at Christmas. I knew of her stage career, but I had no idea about her undercover work during the Second World War.

What are you reading at present?

I have just completed one of the books which are based on 'Vera', the TV detective. I love the series and there is so much more to Brenda Blethyn than simply Vera.

Is there a book which you feel you should have read?

I feel I should have read the plays of Shakespeare, but I have never been able to get into them.

Is there a song or piece of music you turn to, to cheer you up?

It must be 'High Society'. I love all these great musicals. My father was the manager of the Regal Cinema in Dursley, so I saw all the good films in those days.

Do you have a favourite piece of music?

This is a difficult one because I like so many pieces ranging from Classical music to dance music. I often have Classic FM on when I am in the kitchen.

Do you play a musical instrument? If not what you like to have learnt?

Like many people I tried to learn to play the piano when I was young. My teacher was my mum, but it did not quite work out and I gave it up. However, at the age of six or seven I began to learn ballet and tap. I loved it and caught the bug for dancing, progressing to ballroom dancing, which, as some of you will know, is how I met David.

What is your favourite film?

There are so many films I love, going back to the time when my dad was manager at the Regal. However, if I had to choose, it would be 'Oklahoma'. It is so full of life, music and dancing. By the way, I was part of the cast when there was a live production of it in Dursley.

What about a favourite television series?

As you can already guess I love watching 'Vera' on ITV. Brenda Blethyn is such an imposing figure.

If there was one painting you could own, what would it be and what is special for you about it?

In the St John's co-Catholic Cathedral in Malta, there is a painting by Caravaggio called 'The beheading of John the Baptist'. It is an enormous picture and I have seen it several times and it is most moving.

Do you have a favourite play?

'A Chorus of Disapproval' by Alan Ayckbourn. A play I found both intriguing and enjoyable. It gives a different insight on what goes on backstage and front of house, too!!

Do you have special building which means a lot to you and if so why?

St James Church, Dursley means so much to me. There are personal memories. Although I started going to the Sunday School at the Tab, soon after I started going to St James. I was confirmed there, married, and our children were baptised there. I also love the stained-glass windows and carvings. Over the years that have been many changes to the building, some of which saddened me because of what was lost, but I still love the place.

Is there a place (town, village, a county?) where you have felt happiest?

I moved to Dursley with my parents from Wales, when I was 2 years old, and I have been here ever since. When David and I married, we lived 'above the shop' where he was manager. I worked in several different place in the town. Again, I have seen many changes in the town with old shops going and streets changing, but I still love the place.

You are having a fantasy dinner party for five – who would you invite?

Can I have six? Three dancers: Fred Astaire, Doris Day and Angela Ripon (remember Morecombe and Wise sketch?). Then there would be Brenda Blethyn. I have great respect for David Drew who was Labour MP for Stroud and is deeply involved in the community, regularly attending Forest Green Rovers home matches. My last would be David Suchet, who portrays Agatha Christie's Poirot to perfection, although he has had so many other great roles.



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The Diocesan Messenger, December 2021

At the heart of Christmas

During Advent, getting some time to reflect, rest and be restored is so vital to enjoying the holiday period. Churches across the diocese will be offering a range of different services and events including:

- Christingle, a service where you decorate an orange with sweets and ribbons to think about Christian themes
- 9 Lessons and Carols (a church service made up of singing and reading from the Bible)
- Crib services with a dramatic retelling of the Christmas story
- Christmas tree and crib festivals
- Midnight mass, a late-night church service, starting around 11.30pm.

From Christmas Eve through to the Epiphany on 6 January, the national Church will be sharing *At the heart of Christmas: 12 days of stories and mediations for Christmas*. On each of the 12 days, a different person will share something that lies close to the heart of Christmas for them, bringing the theme to life through a mixture of personal story, Bible reading, reflection and questions to ponder. You can download the *At the heart of Christmas app* via the Church of England website from late November.

On each Sunday of Advent there will be an online service broadcast on the Church of England's YouTube channel
youtube.com/thechurchofengland

A time to give...

Christmas is a time for giving, so here is a roundup of some of the people that might truly appreciate your generosity in our area this Christmas.

Gloucester City Mission is opening its winter night shelter during the coldest months. Could you sponsor a bed for someone for the night? The shelter provides up to 15 beds per night for 122 nights over the winter period. Donations cover the cost of dinner, breakfast and a packed lunch, plus a bed, laundry, showers, clothes and toiletries and safety. Sponsoring a bed for the night costs £25. Visit www.gloscitymission.org.uk to donate.

Gloucestershire Bundles is a baby bank helping families in need, with toiletries, clothing, toys, books and equipment. People must be referred in order to use the service. Visit forcommongood.co.uk and find a shopping list of things that they would like to be able to provide for their clients and see what you can afford to contribute.

Christian Aid's Mums on the Frontline Christmas Appeal

Mums on the frontline of the climate crisis face impossible choices every day. Christian Aid is encouraging people to use its Christmas resources to encourage your worshipping community to donate too. Donations could help build more boreholes, provide seeds and farming tools and give mums the chance to set up small businesses.

Christmas isn't Christmas without a **Children's Society** Christingle service. The cosy glow of a candle, the smell of Christmas oranges and sweets and sound of beloved Christmas carols filling churches, all helps to spread the Christmas spirit, while raising money to help the organisation work with young people to counsel and support them through their most serious life challenges. Visit childrenssociety.org.uk for more information.



December Acrostic.



December at Christmas used to be
Exciting times of the year
COVID 19 has put
Everything on hold; many
Memories as a child
Bring back
Everlasting and many thoughts and
Remembering fond times with my Daddy
 eating the Mince Pie, drinking the Lager
 and emptying the bucket I left for Santa's
 Reindeers



By Sally Hayward

More from the Diocesan Messenger.....

Events and training

An Advent Enneagram - 4 December, 10am to 3pm, Glebe Cottages at St Peter’s Church, GL53 0QJ - A collaborative exploration of the nativity narrative with reflections on our modern-day experience of Christmas. £20 per person, limited numbers. hello@helencaldercoaching.co.uk for further details and a booking form.

Canalside Carol Service - 11 December, 6pm to 7pm at Saul Junction (GL2 7LA) - A traditional carol service with Frampton Silver Band. You are invited to come by boat, with moorings available and bridges open from 8am to 4pm or to come by car with parking available from 5pm. Mulled wine and mince pies after the service. Bring a torch.

Family Crib Service with the lighting of the Christmas Trees at Gloucester Cathedral. - 23 or 24 December, 2.30pm
All are welcome to this informal family service. You must book a free ticket – visit <https://bit.ly/3EWJzMQ>

Carol services at Gloucester Cathedral - 22 & 23 December, 6pm
All are welcome for this traditional service of readings and carols with the acclaimed Cathedral Choir. You must book a free ticket, find out more - <https://bit.ly/2YzjAeW>

Christmas Tree Festival. - 11 & 12 December - St Lawrence Church, Swindon Village, Cheltenham. The theme of this year’s Festival is Hopes and Dreams.

Visit A Church Near You to find details of Christmas services and events in your area. Your local church would be delighted to welcome you along to celebrate! Have a happy Christmas.

Have your say

Visit Facebook **f/Diocese.of.Gloucester**, email Katherine at **kclamp@glosdioc.org.uk**, follow us on Twitter **@glosdioc**, view videos on YouTube **Diocese of Gloucester** or visit our website **Gloucester.anglican.org**

URGENT NOTICE

We need all hands on deck to prepare Christingles again this year.
The Parish Centre is booked for 11am on Thursday 23rd December.
So please volunteer or just drop in.



Saul Junction at Dusk.....

Elizabeth has had this image selected for a photography exhibition (David in the picture) Studio 18, Hope Mills Business Centre, Stroud (further details from me: elizabethjoakley317@yahoo.co.uk).



Travel

Between the sand dunes and the sea,
A path of course.
And there's a wide bay.
The headland - something sharp on the map -
Might be a point on the coast road.

There is no conceit here.
No metaphors of travel - of sea, sky, time.
I know where I am going.

Elizabeth Oakley
A Dursley Poet

This is what Jan Vonberg urged us to do last Christmas and I felt it was worth repeating.....

Christmas doesn't have to be a burden on the planet. With a little effort and imagination, we can reduce the environmental impact of our festivities (and still have fun!). Here are a few ideas to help us celebrate Christ's birth while caring for the Earth.

Presents

- *Reduce the air miles of gifts by buying locally.
- *Buy fairly traded, environmentally friendly, or recycled items from charities or ethical websites.
- *Get making and baking - homemade presents are always popular.
- *Give "promises", or "experiences" to those who have too much "stuff"!
- *Consider buying "used" - "pre-loved" items.
- *Avoid battery-powered toys and gadgets where possible, or choose items that use rechargeable batteries.
- *Give presents that bring joy to wildlife as well as the recipient.
- *For the person who has everything, some charities have schemes which enable you to "adopt" an endangered animal, or have a tree planted on their behalf, in return for a donation.

Wrap

- *If buying wrapping paper, choose some made from recycled paper which is also recyclable.
- *Consider using old newspapers, magazines or scraps of fabric.
- *Reuse paper/card gift bags, or make cloth bags from remnants, which can be reused by the recipient.
- *Tie parcels with reusable string or ribbon, rather than sticky tape, which reduces the reusability of the paper.

Cards

- *When buying cards, make sure they are FSC certified.
- *Make cards and gift tags by recycling old Christmas cards, or getting creative with the paints and crayons.
- *Send e-cards this saves on paper and postage. These are very useful for sending abroad when you have missed the last posting date!

Tree

- *Live trees locally grown from a tree farm which adheres to FSC standards. Potted trees can be used several years running. If you can't keep your tree, take it to a local collection point or the recycling centre to be turned into mulch, or chop it into pieces and pile them up at the end of the garden to make a home for wildlife.
- *If you have an artificial tree, reuse it as many times as possible.

Decorations

- *Use natural materials wherever possible and reuse your old ones.
- *Make tree decorations and garlands (tinsel and plastic baubles are not recyclable) and reuse them each year. Buy locally handcrafted items.

Food

*Use your LOAF! Buy Local, Organic, Animal-friendly and Fairtrade as much as possible.

*Don't overbuy, and be creative with leftovers to minimise waste.

And finally... Attending Advent and Christmas services, singing carols, private worship and prayer all have a minimal impact on the environment and a positive impact on the soul, so indulge freely in all of these over the Advent and Christmas seasons! Have a green and blessed Christmas.

Jan Vonberg



Carols for Christmas!



There are so many great carols – though many carols are really great Christmas hymns or poems set later to music. The early carols were to dance tunes, and perhaps danced. But words change their meanings, so carols now include the great hymns. Only the most popular are generally known. But even they have often lost verses from general performance, to stop them being too long! Still some great verses have been neglected.

'Hark, the herald angels sing' was altered from a Christmas hymn by Charles Wesley, 'Hark, how all the welkin rings.' [Welkin means sky.] [It's in the English Hymnal.] The New English Hymnal has printed the last verse. Do we sing it?

Come, Desire of Nations, come!
Fix in us thy humble home.
Rise, the woman's conquering seed,
Bruise in us the serpent's head.
Now display thy saving power!
Ruined nature now restore!
Now in mystic union join
Thine to ours, and ours to thine!

The verse stresses the extent of the work of Jesus, 'the Incarnate Deity.'

♥ 'Desire of Nations:' for all peoples, and the fulfilment of all true human hopes: what we really want, even if we do not realise it: the God who is love, generosity, humility, self-giving, intimate – at home in and with us. Jesus, God taking humanity, is the fulfilment of all cultures, of what is good in all faiths and civilisations – and what some have seen as barbaric peoples too: the fulfilment of the people who built Uley tumulus and Uley Bury camp, for example, as well as of those who built our Churches.

- ♥ Jesus is the one who overcomes all evil by his life and death. Wesley refers to the Eden story, with the promise of crushing the head of the serpent, the tempter.
- ♥ But this victory is not just for humans but for all nature. We sing, earlier in the carol, 'With the angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem.' Wesley's original was, 'Universal Nature say, 'Christ the Lord is born today!'" As we realise more and more the need to care for all nature, our whole environment, we find Wesley singing God's universal care over 250 years ago! This is a song for us, to encourage and comfort us in the struggle to care for the environment.
- ♥ And Jesus is the one who unites us fully with God, in the mystical union. Many hymn tunes in general were pinched from secular songs – often rather unpleasant ones! Here's a carol to a pleasant Christmas tune, [or jingle!] that praises God for the union of God with us.

Chorus [x2]

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Praise with heart and voice.
God is born as one of us,
So let ev'ryone rejoice.

Verse 1

Praise to Christ our Lord.
Who was born in Bethlehem,
Born a human child,
Born the Son of Man,
Born as one of us,
Making spirits bright,
O what joy to praise and sing
a carol song tonight!

Verse 2

Praise our loving God,
Coming in his Son to share
All our joys and pains
With his love and care:
Born to live and love,
Die and rise again
Lifting us to share God's life,
with God in joy to reign!

Happy Christmas! From Canon Richard.

*Welcome to the knee replacement club.
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Barbara Weldon

01453 766421

email: bandbweldon1@gmail.com

website: extend.org.uk



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Mouse Diary.....



When full of the festive spirit MBFTLP came into the church she seemed to have some sort of special gadget under her arm. Now then, she said, paw out for your blood pressure test. I duly obliged. Ummm, she said, it's one thousand, nine hundred and twenty one over three thousand two hundred and seventy three. You are off the scale. I did not know Christmas could have that effect. She was right. It was something else. It's Penelope you see, I said, she had a row with the reindeer. When she said there was no room for them on her rock they took the huff. MBFTLP was not impressed. I thought you said it was a shelf not a rock. Still its only a matter of semantics I suppose. Talking of rocks, did you see that programme on the TV with the dishy professor looking meaningfully into space explaining Life, The Universe and Everything? No, I said, I was busy with my other problem. I had a bit of a bust up with the Christmas fairy about who should be on top of the tree. She won (as per last year) and I ended up tumbling upside down into the box of decorations (as per last year). Also I was wondering what to give Penelope for Christmas. MBFTLP was in satirical mood I could tell. How about a year's subscription to the Uley Flying Club so that she could find her way back to the Outer Hebrides sometime during the year? Other than that, how are you and Aimiee going to spend the festive season? Well, I thought we could start by rescuing the reindeer who ended up at the end of Sainsbury's car park after the debacle over the rock. MBFTLP was into semantics I could tell. I thought it was a shelf and not a rock, she said? Anyway to get the main plot back on track, Aimiee and I are going to the Christmas Fair to see what goodies they have suitable for small persons like us. Then we are going to sing lots of carols. And then have lots of mince pies. And then we are going to do our New Year's resolutions. And then we are going to put our paws up in front of the TV after sending Broadwell mouse a nice Christmas card to thank him for helping us with Wally. (I never did find out if he managed to deliver my letter to Father Christmas.). Never mind, said MBFTLP in parenthesis. There is always next year. (I think she has been spending too much time watching that dishy professor on the TV).

See you in the New Year.

Mouse was helped in the writing by Elizabeth Oakley

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FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS



BAPTISMS: We welcome into our church family, by Holy Baptism:

21st November Rosabella Dolbear at St James

FUNERALS: We share our thoughts and prayers with the families of those who

mourn the loss of those they love. We remember those who have died:

23rd November

Ralph Pearson at St James

Burial of ashes

22nd October

Margaret Cornock at St James

29th October

Betty Evans at Kingshill Cemetery

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Christmas flowers.

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Tanner Chapel – Anne Shipton

Lady Chapel – Clare White

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Font – Margaret Lloyd

Nave Pillar – Ann Orchard

Porch – Sheila Gardner



100 CLUB

Club draw for November as follows:-

1st 112 - Elizabeth Oakley

2nd 163 - Pam Crellin

3rd 204 - Richard Lane

Sarah wishes to remind you that subs are due before the end of January. Please pay to Phillip Staddon, David Wood, myself or direct by BACS.

Sarah

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