

Volume 23  
Issue 12

**December 2023<sup>70p</sup>  
& January 2024**



# **The Rock**

**The Church Magazine for the  
Aune Valley Benefice of  
Churchstow, Loddiswell, South Milton,  
Thurlestone with Buckland & Bantham & Woodleigh**

# Aune Valley Benefice Business

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**Wishing all  
our readers  
a very  
HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS  
and a  
PEACEFUL  
NEW YEAR**

## Benefice Services & Events

<b>Advent Sunday Dec. 3rd</b>	<b>4.30 p.m.</b>	Benefice Advent Carol Service	<i>TH</i>
<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b>	<b>9.00pm</b>	Benefice Christmas Eve Eucharist (CW)	<i>TH</i>
<b>NEW YEAR'S EVE</b>	<b>11.00am</b>	Benefice Eucharist (CW)	<i>CH</i>
<b>SATURDAY JANUARY 6TH</b>	<b>9.00am</b>	Benefice Prayer Breakfast in Meeting Room	<i>TH</i>

## The Benefice Online

**The Sunday Service on YouTube** continues, led by members of the Ministry Team with readings and intercessions recorded by Benefice members and recorded hymns to which you can sing along. This service enables those unable to come to church to have the chance of "attending" a Benefice Sunday Service. It reaches 40+ households from across the Benefice and beyond each week. The link for the service each week can be found at [www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/recorded-services.html](http://www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/recorded-services.html)

Please contact Liz Webb (see below) if you could offer to record a reading or intercessions.

**Virtual Service of Meditation** by Zoom - **Tuesday December 5th at 5.00 p.m.** Please contact Nell Stamp on [nellstamp@btinternet.com](mailto:nellstamp@btinternet.com) for the Zoom link.

## Rock Subscription

The Annual Subscription for The Rock is due with the February issue. The cost remains at £8 and should be paid either to the person who delivers your copy or to the parish contact (see below). Cheques should be made payable to PCC Thurlestone.

## Thurlestone/South Milton Carol Service Choir

We shall be delighted to invite folk to join the special choir to sing at the carol services at Thurlestone and South Milton. We shall rehearse on three Thursdays - **November 30th, December 7th and 14th** - from 5.00-6.00pm. at Thurlestone Church. Don't worry if you cannot make all three rehearsals; help will be given in learning the music at home! We hope to have a strong choir to contribute to the singing at these very special occasions. The Carol Services are on **Sunday December 17th** at South Milton, and **Friday December 22nd** at Thurlestone, both starting at 6.00pm. *Alastair Durden*

## Monthly Benefice Prayer Breakfast

**Saturday January 6th 9.00am Thurlestone Church Meeting Room**

Our Prayer Breakfasts are proving popular, with one church hosting and another leading each month. There is a light breakfast of croissant, fruit juice, and tea/coffee but the majority of the time devoted to prayer, particularly focussing on the life and operation of our churches, communities and benefice and how as Christian communities we might grow personally and spiritually during this time of vacancy and seeking God's wisdom as we discern his way forward for our Parishes and the Benefice.

For catering, please let Mike or Siân Hodges know if you hope to attend. *Mike Hodges*

The next edition of the Rock will be published on **Sunday January 28th**

Copy deadline for the November edition of The Rock is **Monday January 15th**

General items to the editor: Liz Webb. Old Mill Cottage, West Buckland, TQ7 3AG, e-mail: [mewebbsite@btinternet.com](mailto:mewebbsite@btinternet.com)

Parochial items to your Parish Magazine Contact (see Benefice Directory page 16)

It would be appreciated if copy could be e-mailed if possible.

**Annual subscription £8.50** contact: Woodleigh: *Vacancy*; Thurlestone: Liz Webb (560090); South Milton: Cherry Bell (560526); Loddiswell: *Vacancy*; Churchstow: Sally Cridland (856940)

**Annual postal subscription, £35**, contact Liz Webb (560090). (Cheques made payable to PCC Thurlestone)

**The Rock is also available on cassette for the visually impaired** - contact Jan Turner (560354)

**Advertising: Annual subscription £48** for '9cm x 8cm' or '18cm x 4cm' box. A single month advertisement may also be possible for one off events at **£8** for '18cm x 4cm'. Contact Elizabeth Webb (560090/[mewebbsite@btinternet.com](mailto:mewebbsite@btinternet.com)).



We hope you may still join us for the **Benefice online Service**, especially if you are unable to attend a service in your church  
**A SUNDAY SERVICE ON YOUTUBE** led by one of the Ministry Team  
[www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/recorded-services.html](http://www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/recorded-services.html)



## Challenging the Status Quo

It's a privilege to have been invited to write for this edition of the Rock. I hope you find my submission both interesting and thought provoking. It's a privilege for me, too, to be helping out with leading services across the benefice. But having retired from full time ministry for a while now I do find myself asking the question "why am I still doing this"? Part of the answer lies in the fact that I have always found myself to be someone who feels compelled to challenge the status quo. Status quo, that is, maintaining the same situation without changes. The bible tells us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. I believe that to be true but, paradoxically, the only thing that remains the same is Jesus constantly challenging the status quo with all those he encountered and encounters - yesterday, today and forever. Why? Because the way of Jesus is about creating outward looking loving supportive relationship through service and engagement rather than resting on our laurels in isolated comfort and familiarity. No wonder I, and many others, are followers of the greatest challenger of the status quo of all time!

Unfortunately an ingrained preference for maintaining the status quo can keep a person/organisation from considering other options. The church in particular, in resisting change, potentially missing out on exciting God-given opportunities. The Christian 'journey' is all about rebirth and renewal. It's an amazing adventure. An extraordinary God initiated wonderful healing transformation in those who believe in Jesus that should mean a constant questioning and challenging of the norms we all too easily adopt and resolutely stick to in both church and society.

With regards church Christmas can present a good example. We establish the same situation without changes year in, year out, all too easily risking rendering the extraordinary miracle of God becoming a human being (in ways that did not conform to the status quo in any way) benign, quaint, nostalgic, sentimental. So in order to avoid the above as the benefice moves into vacancy (and Advent, Christmas and New Year) I encourage you, dare to question, challenge the status quo, prayerfully seek wisdom and direction from God, give the opportunities that present a chance and, who knows, by doing so we may find ourselves meaningfully assisting in the building of God's kingdom here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Revd. Colin Snell*

Please help us to support our community by making a standing order

**kingsbridgefoodbank**



We are helping approximately 500 individual people every week in Kingsbridge and its 25 outlying parishes, spending between £10 - £15 per head on weekly deliveries.

None of this would be possible without the extraordinary generosity of our wonderfully big-hearted community and our volunteers.

We are always most grateful for all donations of food and/or money, no matter how big or small, but to help assure our monthly income please consider making a Standing Order



Bank Account Name: Kingsbridge Area Foodbank  
 Account No. 17928860 Sort Code: 77-09-24

We need your ongoing support to help those in need.

Thank you!



# Thurlestone Telegraph



**Services** at All Saints' Church, Thurlestone

<b>DEC 10TH</b> (BCP), <b>JAN 14TH*</b> (BCP) & <b>28TH*</b> (CW)	<b>8.30 a.m.</b> Holy Communion (said) (Please check)
<b>DECEMBER 3RD</b> <b>Advent Sunday</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (CW)
	<b>4.30 p.m.</b> Benefice Advent Carol Service
<b>DECEMBER 10TH</b> <b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Morning Worship
<b>DECEMBER 17TH</b> <b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (CW)
<b>DECEMBER 22ND</b> <b>Friday</b>	<b>6.00 p.m.</b> Candlelit Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols Collection for <i>Children in Distress</i>
<b>DECEMBER 24TH</b> <b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>4.30 p.m.</b> Crib Service
	<b>9.00 p.m.</b> Benefice Christmas Eve Communion (CW)
<b>DECEMBER 25TH</b> <b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Christmas day Family Service followed by shortened Holy Communion (CW)
<b>DECEMBER 31ST</b> <b>1st Sunday of Christmas</b>	<b>11.00 a.m.</b> Benefice Eucharist (CW) at Churchstow
<b>JANUARY 7TH*</b> <b>The Epiphany</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (CW)
<b>JANUARY 14TH</b> <b>2nd Sunday of Epiphany</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Morning Worship
<b>JANUARY 21ST</b> <b>3rd Sunday of Epiphany</b>	<b>11.00 a.m.</b> Benefice Covenant Service with Eucharist
<b>JANUARY 28TH</b> <b>4th Sunday of Epiphany</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Matins (BCP)

## Other Midweek Services & Activities

<b>EVERY WEDNESDAY*</b> except December 27th	<b>10.00 a.m.</b> Holy Communion (BCP) (said)
<b>THURSDAY</b> December 7th & January 4th*	<b>10.00 a.m.</b> Holy Communion (BCP) (said) at Bantham
<b>MONDAYS</b>	<b>7.15 p.m.</b> Home Group at 11 Mead Lane/Zoom
<b>SATURDAY</b> JANUARY 6TH	<b>9.00 a.m.</b> Benefice Prayer Breakfast in Meeting Room
<b>THURSDAY</b> DECEMBER 7TH & 14TH	<b>5.00 p.m.</b> Carol Service Choir Practice in Church

Please see the Church Notice Boards & [www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/church-services](http://www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/church-services) or the QR code below for variations and more information, especially check for \* dates when services are dependent on clergy availability



Please scan the QR codes:

← To make a donation to All Saints' Church, Thurlestone  
or  
to visit the website for more information about the church →



## Gillian Marshall R.I.P.

It is very sad to report the recent death of Gillian Marshall, who had been a regular member of the 8.00 a.m. congregation for many years until Covid struck. Afterwards she attended the 11.10am service on a fairly regular basis. She was famed in church as "The Lady of the Rings" for sewing the rings back on the hassocks when they came adrift!! On Remembrance Sunday, she always laid the Royal Marines Wreath. She will be sorely missed by all who knew her.

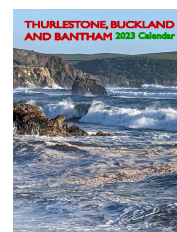
£8






in aid of  
Church Funds

## 2024 CALENDAR

featuring photos of the Thurlestone, Buckland & Bantham area  
entered in the Competition over the May Bank Holiday  
from Thurlestone Church, Meeting Room & Shop, Bantham Shop  
See also [www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/2024-calendar.html](http://www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/2024-calendar.html)

Entry forms for the 2024 Competition available on [www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/photo-comp-form](http://www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/photo-comp-form)



 <p><b>Souper Friday</b> Homemade Soup, Tea/Coffee &amp; Cake <b>FRIDAY DEC. 8TH &amp; JAN. 12TH 12.30 p.m.</b> <b>ONLY £5</b> in aid of Church Funds</p>	<p><b>Lunch Club</b> for those living on their own <b>TUES. DEC. 19TH &amp; JAN. 26TH 12.30 p.m.</b> <b>£10</b> for 2 Course Meal Book on 01548 560655</p> 	
<p><b>Films for All</b> <b>TUESDAYS 2.30 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>Foster</b> <i>Toni Collette, Maurice Cole, Hayley Mills Richard E. Grant, Ioan Gruffudd. Anne Reid</i></p>  <p><i>Leaflets with information about the films from Church, Meeting Room &amp; Thurlestone Shop Break for Tea &amp; Biscuits ~ Donations to Church Funds ~ More information Liz Webb 560090</i></p>	<p><b>JANUARY 16<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>The Cutting Edge</b> <i>D B Sweeney, Moira Kelly, Roy Dotrice, Terry O'Quin</i></p>
 <p><b>Coffee-Time</b> <b>WEDNESDAYS 10.30 - 11.30 a.m.</b> <i>Donations to Children in Distress</i></p>	<p><b>Aune Valley Toddlers</b> for children under 4 years with parents/carers <b>THURSDAYS 9.00 - 11.00 a.m.</b> (except Dec 14th-Jan 4th) Contact Siân Hodges (561124/sian2.hodges@btinternet.com)</p> 	
<p>Disabled access - Wheelchair available More information on <a href="https://www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/church-events-diary.html">https://www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/church-events-diary.html</a></p>		

**Children in Distress:** As usual our December and Christmas charity is Children in Distress, a small UK Christian charity which for 34 years has raised funds in the UK to help the most vulnerable children in Romania and provide specialist Hospice care, educational community outreach and respite care for children, their families, and carers.

Their initial focus of caring for children with HIV/AIDS has evolved into provision of respite, palliative and end-of-life care, and they have developed some of the best trained and most experienced paediatric nurses in Romania. They are now focussing on Casa Maria, their Children's Family House that provides care for twelve children living with the most severe disabilities. They also provide grants for twenty children over a six month period each year through Jansen Community Education Outreach, a community-based holistic education project

For nearly 30 years Thurlestone church has sponsored children through Children in Distress, seeing the difference the charity has made to these children's lives. The sponsorship has now changed to sponsoring all the children in Casa Maria. You can contribute to the work of Casa Maria and *Children in Distress* at **Coffee-Time** during **December and January** or at the **Carol Service on December 22nd**.

Rather than send individual cards to church members, sign one of the large **Alternative Christmas Cards** in church or the Meeting Room and put your donation in the Children in Distress box provided. If you are unable to do any of these and you would like to help *Children in Distress*, you can scan this QR code. This takes you to our online giving page for *Children in Distress* where you can make a donation.

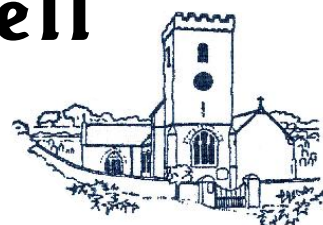


Liz

## Services at Loddiswell

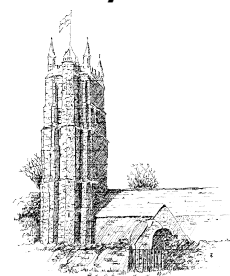
**Services** at St Michael and All Angels, Loddiswell unless shown otherwise

<b>DECEMBER 3RD</b>	<b>JANUARY 7TH</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Morning Worship
		<b>4.30 p.m.</b> Benefice Advent Carol Service
<b>DECEMBER 10TH</b>	<b>JANUARY 14TH</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (CW)
<b>DECEMBER 17TH</b>		<b>6.30 p.m.</b> Carol Service (No morning service)
<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b>		<b>9.00 p.m.</b> Benefice Christmas Eve Communion (CW) at TH
<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>		<b>10.30 a.m.</b> Christmas Family Service at the Congregational Church
<b>DECEMBER 31ST</b>		<b>11.00 a.m.</b> Benefice Eucharist (CW) at Churchstow
<b>JANUARY 21ST</b>		<b>11.00 a.m.</b> Benefice Covenant Service with Eucharist at TH
<b>JANUARY 28TH</b>		<b>9.30 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (BCP) (subject to clergy availability)



**Woodleigh:** Currently St Mary the Virgin, Woodleigh is not open for services or private prayer

# South Milton Grapevine



**Services** at All Saints' Church, South Milton unless shown otherwise

<b>DECEMBER 3RD</b>	<b>Advent Sunday</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (CW) <b>4.30 p.m.</b> Benefice Advent Carol Service
<b>DECEMBER 10TH</b>	<b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Morning Worship
<b>DECEMBER 17TH</b>	<b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>6.00 p.m.</b> Carol Service (No morning service)
<b>DECEMBER 24TH</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>9.00 p.m.</b> Benefice Christmas Eve Communion (CW) at TH
<b>DECEMBER 25TH</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Christmas day Family Service
<b>DECEMBER 31ST</b>	<b>1st Sunday of Christmas</b>	<b>11.00 a.m.</b> Benefice Eucharist (CW) at Churchstow
<b>JANUARY 7TH</b>	<b>The Epiphany</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (CW) (subject to clergy availability)
<b>JANUARY 14TH</b>	<b>2nd Sunday of Epiphany</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Morning Worship
<b>JANUARY 21ST</b>	<b>3rd Sunday of Epiphany</b>	<b>11.00 a.m.</b> Benefice Covenant Service with Eucharist at TH
<b>JANUARY 28TH</b>	<b>4th Sunday of Epiphany</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Sunday Morning Together

I hope that by the time you have received this booklet and have read my notes, we have staged a very worthwhile Pre-Christmas Bazaar. I have looked back and found that in 2019 we made £735. So here's hoping. The raffle helps of course. I hope that there will be a good selection of Raffle Prizes.

Bob and his helpers will have erected the tree. We are hoping for lots more help this Thursday when it will be decorated and all will be ready for Saturday and the Sunday for our Toy Tree Service. There are already several wrapped toys ready for the service on Sunday.

Year B is our guide for this Church Year. The lessons and prayers are all geared with the theme of the year.

Advent begins with our Advent Wreath and candles. It is already for use, having been beautifully made by a member of the congregation. We light a candle each Sunday as the weeks go by. There is a theme for each Sunday and we will hear about it each week.

Our most beautiful and valued Nativity figures (Made by nuns in a Convent in Wantage) will be placed in the Crib, again beautifully decorated by members of our congregation, thanks to Ken Luscombe for his help with the construction of the Stable.

Many thanks to all to took part in the National Remembrance Day Ceremonies, both in church and at the Memorial. Especially Pam Latimer who conducted the service and made it to the Memorial, being driven down by Gill Townsend. It was a timely reminder of the fragility of Peace among Nations and we prayed hard for peace to come to those nations who are at odds with their neighbours and the rest of the world in some cases.

As there is a shortage of clergy available at Christmas, it has only been possible to find one person for Christmas Eve. Therefore there will be a Benefice Christmas Eve Communion Service at Thurstlestone at 9.00 p.m. Christmas Day is as usual 9.30am and is a family Service taken by Pam Latimer and helpers. (You never quite know what is in store where Pam and her helpers are concerned!)

Have a safe, happy and secure Christmas and New Year.

Love Jan T

## The Great Loddiswell Christmas Concert

**The Salcombe Jazz Trio with Corinne, Salcombe Larks, Loddiswell Pop up Choir**

**THURSDAY DECEMBER 7TH 7.00 p.m. LODDISWELL PARISH CHURCH**

Proper Moorish will be serving hot drinks and snacks on the Courtledge from 6pm

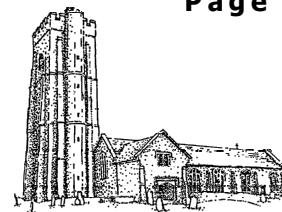
Raffle, bar, teas and cakes in the church

**Tickets available from Loddiswell Spar from Monday November 20th £10 per adult, U18s free**

All proceeds will go to ongoing maintenance of the church



# Churchstow Chimes



**Services** at St Mary's Church, Churchstow unless shown otherwise

<b>DECEMBER 3RD</b>	<b>Advent Sunday</b>	<b>11.00 a.m.</b> Morning Worship
		<b>4.30 p.m.</b> Benefice Advent Carol Service
<b>DECEMBER 10TH</b>	<b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (BCP)
<b>DECEMBER 17TH</b>	<b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>6.00 p.m.</b> Carol Service (No morning service)
<b>DECEMBER 24TH</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>11.00 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (CW) (To be confirmed)
		<b>9.00 p.m.</b> Benefice Christmas Eve Communion (CW) at TH
<b>DECEMBER 25TH</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Christmas Day Family Communion or Family Service
<b>DECEMBER 31ST</b>	<b>1st Sunday of Christmas</b>	<b>11.00 a.m.</b> Benefice Eucharist (CW) at Churchstow
<b>JANUARY 7TH</b>	<b>The Epiphany</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Morning Worship
<b>JANUARY 14TH</b>	<b>2nd Sunday of Epiphany</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (BCP) (subject to clergy availability)
<b>JANUARY 21ST</b>	<b>3rd Sunday of Epiphany</b>	<b>11.00 a.m.</b> Benefice Covenant Service with Eucharist at TH
<b>JANUARY 28TH</b>	<b>4th Sunday of Epiphany</b>	<b>11.10 a.m.</b> Parish Eucharist (CW) (subject to clergy availability)

## From the Registers

**October 29th** Interment of ashes June Edmonds R.I.P.  
**November 3rd** Funeral Shirley Oxtan aged 89 years R.I.P.

## Remembrance Sunday

We gathered in Church on November 12th to remember before God all those who gave their lives in defence of this country, during two world wars and subsequent conflicts, the service was conducted by Nell Stamp, and was timed so that we held our 2 minute silence at 11.00am. Mr George Seager Berry laid the wreath at the War Memorial on behalf of the village. The collection has been sent to Combat Stress, a charity which has been providing clinical treatment and support for veterans from the British Armed Forces for over a century.

## Church House Inn Quiz

There was a full house of 15 teams, for the Quiz held in the Church House Inn on Thursday November 16th. Malcolm Ruffell was once again an excellent Quiz Master, the Church House supplied excellent "nibbles". £541 was shared equally between Churchstow Church and Kingsbridge Food Bank. Thank you Glen and Suzi and Malcolm and Carol.

## Christmas Soup and Puds Thursday December 21st 12.00 Noon - 2.00pm

Kick off your festive celebrations with Christmas Soup and Puds, home made soup and puddings and good company.

## Christmas Prize Whist Drive Saturday January 6th at 7.00pm


As usual the Christmas Prize Whist Drive is our chance to say thank you to the Whist players who come to Churchstow Church Hall on a Saturday night to play whist and raise money for our Church Hall. Whist has taken place in the Hall on a Saturday night for well over a century! In place of the usual tea and biscuits, there will be sandwiches and cakes. If you are able to donate a prize or some refreshments please contact John Woodley on 857916.

## Mike's Christmas Lights and Parish Council Christmas Party


Mike Langman will be lighting up Churchstow with his famous Christmas lights on December 1st, whilst the official switch on will be at 5 p.m. on Sunday 3rd. The Church Hall will be open from 4 - 6pm where the Parish Council will be providing mulled wine and light refreshments free of charge, a donation towards Mike's chosen charity, Children's Hospice South West would be welcome.

## Activities & Events in the Church Hall

JRW




**Whist Drive**  
**EVERY**  
**SATURDAY**  
**7.00 P.M.**  
*£3 in aid of Church Hall*  
 Contact John Woodley on 857916



**Soup & Puds**  
**12 NOON**  
**THURSDAY**  
**DEC. 21/JAN. 18**  
*£6 in aid of Church Funds*  
 Contact Phyllis on 858836

**Coffee Break**



**THURSDAY**  
**DEC. 7/JAN 4**  
**10.30 A.M. - NOON**  
*Proceeds in aid of Church Hall*



## Daniel's Licensing at St James' Church, Woodhouse



*Daniel with Rt Revd Sophie Jelley, Bishop of Doncaster, after his licensing as Priest-in-Charge of St Mary's, Beighton and St James', Woodhouse*



*Daniel cutting his Welcome Cake, made by a member of the congregation*

## The Vacancy in the Benefice

### Information about the Vacancy in the Benefice

Churchwardens from across the Benefice, our LLMs Nell Stamp, Pam Latimer and Peter Gornall and Revd. Colin Snell had a really positive meeting with the Archdeacon of Totnes on the afternoon, Wednesday November 22nd.

A very high level summary of the meeting is as follows.

1. The Archdeacon worked through with us key things we need to have in place to ensure the smooth running within the parishes of services, weddings, funerals, burials etc. in the absence of an incumbent. Much is already in place and your Church Wardens and Ministry Team will ensure any outstanding items are quickly put in place.
  - a. One important item is that each Church will have publicly visible notices on who (name and Phone Number) should be contacted for pastoral matters in their Parish during the vacancy.
  - b. It is also vital that a safeguarding officer is appointed as soon as possible either for each parish or across the Benefice
2. The meeting had a very open discussion regarding the way forward for the Benefice, with the Archdeacon seeking an understanding of what is important to each parish.
3. Regarding the appointment of a new priest
  - a. The Archdeacon supports a new appointment, but it will not be a like-for-like replacement i.e. not full-time - either House for Duty or part time priest;
  - b. The Archdeacon is keen to move things on and we will be looking at various options for the way forward;
  - c. If we can find a suitable way forward in the near future, we may be able to appoint during the Summer.
  - d. We hope to be able to give more details after Christmas.
4. As church communities, our focus at this point should be on prayer, and seeking God's way forward for our Parishes, and Benefice. Specifically the Archdeacon asked that we focus on seeking God's vision for our parishes. What would God like to see in our Parishes in 7 Years time?
5. Mike Hodges will convene monthly Benefice prayer meetings, and meetings of the Benefice vacancy group when required.

This is really encouraging and we would ask for your prayers that a way forward may be found soon.

*Churchwardens & Ministry Team*





# Diocesan News



## Follow the Star: Join the Song Goes Live

The Church of England has released a Christmas single, as part of its campaign encouraging people to come to church and sing together this Christmas. The song is a new version of The First Nowell, written by the composer and former King's Singer, Bob Chilcott. It's hoped it will be preformed by choirs up and down the country, as part of carol services and concerts for Christmas and Advent. The First Nowell is now available to listen to on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube and iTunes. It has been performed by St Martin's Voices, featuring organ and bass.

If you would like to perform the song during your carol services, you can find everything you need at <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/hub/asset/first-nowell-resources/> (registration required) contact Liz Webb (mewebbsite@btinternet.com), who has access to A Church Near You. Watch a performance of it on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yb8JCKFI2vw> or put The First Nowell - Bob Chilcott into your search engine.

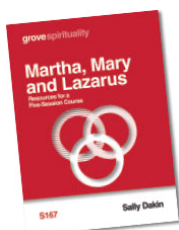
We would love to hear from you if you are planning to use it. Email [communications@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:communications@exeter.anglican.org) to let us know!

## Insights into the Gaza-Israel War Recording Available

A livestream link is now available from the Insights into Gaza-Israel War event which took place at St Andrew's Church in Plymouth on Sunday November 26th, and hosted by the Bishop of Plymouth. During the event the Very Reverend Richard Sewell, Dean of St George's College, Jerusalem, shared first-hand about the conflict in Israel and Gaza, and offered his guidance about how to pray into it. There was also space for questions, and a time of prayer. The recording may be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yt8VLLowdFA> or put An Interview with Rev Richard Sewell - Israel and Gaza into your engine.



**Richard Sewell is happy for people to view the recording but would prefer if it is not shared too widely.**



## Mary, Martha and Lazarus Resources for Five-Session Course

A five session course guide has been published which explores how Martha, Mary and Lazarus appear in several Biblical passages and looks at their relationships with one another and with Jesus. The book has been written by Sally Dakin, who is a spirituality advisor.

You can order copies of the study guide from <https://grovebooks.co.uk/>

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# The Bible Matters

## The Heart of Christmas



We're at that time of year again! But is Christmas just about the shopping, tree or presents? At its heart, Christmas is all about a God who has showed up on earth. The Creator of the universe, whose hands flung stars into space, cared enough to come to earth as a tiny baby. *'The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.'* (John 1:14)

Every year we sing carols and retell the same story of the donkey, innkeeper, stable, angels, shepherds, star, wise men, gifts and Mary and Joseph with baby! Why do we do all this? It's to remind us that God deals with the mess of our world by sending His Son to die in our place.

This makes it possible for us to have a relationship with Himself:

*When the time came, He "did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)*

Reflecting on Jesus in the manger is a great place to start understanding the heart of the Christmas message. However, it's so much more than simply a cute baby lying in the bed of straw:

*If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator;  
If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist;  
If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist;  
If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer;  
But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Saviour.*

Canon Paul Hardingham

## The Most Beautiful Story

A well-known atheist was once interviewed on Radio 4. When asked how he spent Christmas, and he said that he went to Midnight Mass at church. 'But you're an atheist', his interviewer protested. 'Yes', he replied, 'but what they celebrate at Christmas is the most beautiful story ever told'.

That 'beautiful story' tells of a Creator who sent His Son to share the life of His creation, to be born as a helpless baby, to grow up as a man of extraordinary wisdom, gentleness and love, who was executed by the authorities for contradicting the traditions of the time. His followers – who today number about two billion people all over the world – believe that He rose from the dead, and that by His death and resurrection He has made possible forgiveness and eternal life for men and women everywhere.



That is certainly quite a story, perhaps the greatest story ever told, and yes, beautiful. And that is the story that will be rehearsed again this Christmas, in children's Nativities, in hymns and carols, in Bible readings and sermons all over the country. People who stay away from church all year turn up to hear it, and who can blame them? This is a story of hope, of love and of heaven touching earth.



Most of us are familiar with probably the best-known statue in the world, Christ the Redeemer, towering over Rio de Janeiro, His arms outstretched in blessing. Christmas celebrates the birth of that great Redeemer – a tiny baby laid in a feeding trough. His birth changed history, His life transformed our understanding of what it means to be human, His death was at one and the same time a tragedy and a triumph. Yes, 'the most beautiful story ever told'. Enjoy it again this Christmas.

Canon David Winter

## Preparations

Christmas is a time for making plans. Presents to buy, cards to send, decorations to put up, food to order, travel arrangements to make... the list goes on and on. But whether our plans are ambitious or simple this Christmas, we still dread anything going wrong.

Yet plans seemed to fall apart that first Christmas. Mary and Joseph had planned to marry and set up home together in Galilee. Then Mary had become unexpectedly pregnant, and they were summoned to Bethlehem for the census. So instead of a comfortable Galilean home amongst family, they were suddenly parents, all alone in a place fit for animals!

The shepherds had expected another routine night on the hills of Bethlehem. But the angel's message and a heavenly choir changed everything, and they went to search for the Christ-child instead. Their change of plans brought them great joy!

The Eastern men had expected to find the 'King of the Jews' in a royal palace. But the star by-passed Jerusalem and took them to Bethlehem. Then their plans changed again, when they were warned in a dream to avoid Herod, and slip home another way.

The Holy Couple then had another upset of plans: Joseph was warned in a dream NOT to go home to Galilee, but to flee for safety in Egypt instead.

At first sight, all these changes display a chaotic mix of circumstances. But behind it all, God was working out His divine purposes. When Jesus was born, all the Old Testament prophecies of His coming were fulfilled. Nothing happened by chance. Into a messy world God brought to us His Son, to be our Saviour.

We worship a great and loving God who not only planned that first Christmas but is also preparing for our stay in His eternal home.

*The plans God makes are wise, and they always succeed! (Isaiah 28:29)*

*Lester Amann*

### New Year Resolutions

Last year (2023) 30 million people in the UK made New Year resolutions, with health (28%), money (27%), family (24%) and self-improvement (21%) topping the charts for the most common resolutions. However, surveys suggest that most people lasted seven weeks before giving them up and 21% only lasted for a month before giving up.


What resolutions can we make that will last beyond January? At the start of a new year, let's remember Paul's words: 'I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings' (Philippians 3:10). Like Paul, our resolution should be to know Christ deeper in this coming year.


*'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.'* (Phil 3:13,14). Paul sees following Christ like an athlete running a race in the stadium. As any good runner, we mustn't look back. We cannot live on past successes, get bogged down by past sins and failures, or be bitter over past wrongs we've done, or had done to us!

An athlete strains every muscle to win the race. Like Paul, let's be single-minded in making Jesus our focus during the coming year in everything we do. What practical steps are needed if we are to go deeper in our prayer life and Bible reading? How can we more effectively see Christ working in our workplace and career, or family and children?

In the film *Chariots of Fire*, Eric Liddell says: 'I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure.' In this New Year, let's find our pleasure in the pursuit of knowing Christ better!

*Canon Paul Hardingham*






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# St James the Least of All

## On how to run your Diary for 2024

The Rectory  
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

So, you have just attended a course on 'Diary Management', to get you prepared for another year. If you had visited me, I could have told you all you need to know in half the time. Allow me to provide you with useful information which was probably not provided in your conference hand-outs.

First, buy the smallest diary you can find. Large blank pages only encourage you to fill them with too many appointments; the smaller the page, the easier it can be made to appear that your days are fully booked.

Second, make sure that it is of a size that will conveniently fit into any pocket. When dates are being arranged for subsequent meetings, you can theatrically start going through jacket, trouser and overcoat pockets. By the time you discover it was in your briefcase all along, all the dates will have been fixed and no one will notice you never got any of them.

Third, adopt your own private code for bookings. This means that any parishioner looking over your shoulder and seeing '1.30pm PLS' or '7.30pm WTD' will assume you are attending important church meetings. The fact that they mean 'Post Lunch Sleep' and 'Walk The Dog' will be known to you alone – although do have alternative possibilities for your acronyms should you ever be challenged. My congregation know I am assiduous in attending the 'Pauline Letters Seminars' and my membership of the 'World Theology Directorate' is of many years standing.

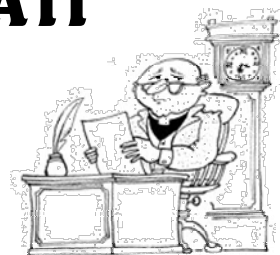
Fourth, record everything in pencil so that once you return home, you can rub most of it out and can then deny you knew anything about those meetings you were supposed to attend – and to prove it, you can show the blank page in your diary.

Fifth, put someone else's address inside your diary. Should you ever have to resort to the ultimate act and need to lose it, you do not want some Good Samaritan returning it to you from the churchyard compost heap.

So, you see, your day of flip charts and group discussions were quite wasted – and I would gladly have presented my course for half their price.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

*Eustace*



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# Crossword Puzzle

## Across

- 1 Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)  
 4 'He stretches out the heavens like a —, and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)  
 7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)  
 8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)  
 9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)  
 13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)  
 16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)  
 17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)  
 19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)  
 24 Able dock (anag.) (8)  
 25 The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)  
 26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)  
 27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

## Down

- 1 Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)  
 2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)  
 3 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)  
 4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)  
 5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)  
 6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)  
 10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)  
 11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)  
 12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)  
 13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)  
 14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)  
 15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)  
 18 Narnia's Lion (5)  
 20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5)  
 21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)  
 22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)  
 23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)

## Answers:

**ACROSS:** 1. Depend, 4. Canopy, 7. Beak, 8. Irritate, 9. Zedekiah, 13. Ate, 16. Job's comforter, 17. NAE, 19. Lang Syne, 24. Blockade, 25. Five, 26. Enigma, 27. Drench  
**DOWN:** 1. Debt, 2. Peaceable, 3. Drink, 4. Curia, 5. Nuts, 6. Put it, 10. Excel, 11. Is man, 12. Hoofs, 13. Attention, 14. Ezra, 15. Ijon, 18. Asian, 20. Abana, 21. Greed, 22. GCMG, 23. Leah

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# Parish



# Pump

## Everyday Christmas

*(Mal 4:2, Mt 1:23)*

Light a candle,  
Look into the light,  
Pray.

*Light and life to all he brings,  
Risen with healing in his wings*

As the flame rises,  
Smooth, bright,  
Know the comfort of Christ  
In the carol speaking  
Afresh.

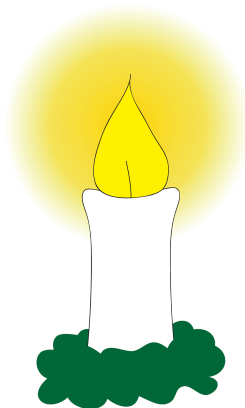
Bringing Jesus  
Into heart and prayer.

Emmanuel, God with us.  
Light of the world,  
Out of the stable  
Into our situations.

Because of Jesus  
Christmas is everyday.

The Lord is here.  
Hallelujah.

*Daphne Kitching*



## The New Year

He comes he goes, his times are set,  
The New Year now has shown his face.  
For time is here and will not wait  
For dwellers all in time and space.

We sojourn here on this fair earth,  
Just for a time so quickly gone,  
Our lives just like a vapour spent,  
As we await another dawn.

There is a day God has ordained,  
When we will reach a distant shore,  
Eternity our new address  
Where time will cease and be no more.

*Megan Carter*

## Why churchwardens love January

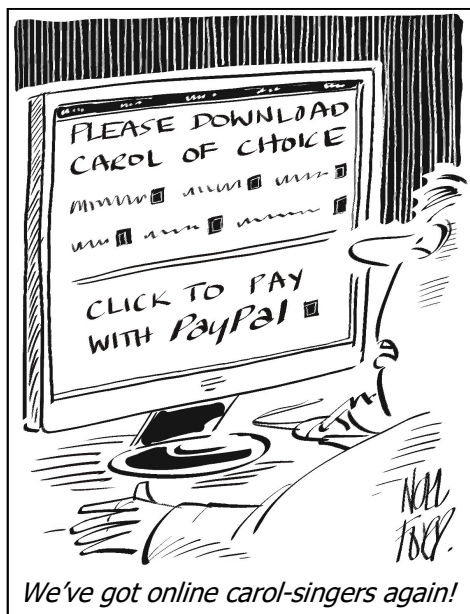
*We are aware of how hard people work at Christmas so that folk can enjoy their Carol services and special Christmas services... so January can be a time of much deserved rest for them!"*

Hail to the Lord's anointed,  
Both clergyman and lay!  
But they're seldom disappointed  
To get past Christmas Day!  
The hectic Christmas season is  
Of service constantly –  
There can't be better reason  
To welcome January!

The Curate and the Vicar  
A busy schedule keep,  
As they rush, ever quicker –  
They don't get that much sleep.  
And overworked Churchwardens  
And their sidespersons team –  
Sure don't get time for boredom,  
And only seldom scream!

So, when the season's over,  
The crib has been put by,  
The drapes to green changed over,  
They breathe a heartfelt sigh!  
They laugh and smile with pleasure,  
And sing a merry rhyme,  
But short-lived is their leisure –  
For soon comes Easter time!





*We've got online carol-singers again!*

### A New Year Promise to our readers

*Some of you have noticed a few typos in the magazine now and then. To improve this, for 2024 I am using a new set of rules for editing. They are as follows:*

1. Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
4. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
5. Avoid cliches like the plague. (They're old hat.)
6. Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.
7. Be more or less specific.
8. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
9. Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used.
10. Foreign words and phrases are not *apropos*.
11. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
12. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
13. Who needs rhetorical questions?
14. Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary.

### More Bulletin Bloopers

*The church notices that did not come out quite as they were meant to do!*

- We are delighted to announce that the youth group has raised almost £500 for drug abuse.
- Correction: The following typo appeared in our last bulletin: 'Lunch will be gin at 12:15.' Please correct to read '12 noon.'
- Remember the church jumble sale. We have a gents three-speed bicycle, and also two ladies for sale, in good running order.
- The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David Belzer; the sin of Revd. & Mrs. Julius Belzer.



*"The vicar really is taking all of January off to recuperate, then."*

*(Hopefully this won't happen in the Aune Valley!!!)*

### Christmas in my heart

Christmas is in my heart twelve months a year and, thanks to credit cards, it's also on my Visa card statement twelve months a year.

### Sums up Christmas

Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: 'Peace on Earth'; 'Goodwill to Men'; and 'Batteries not included'.

### Christmas gifts

Grandfather was talking to his granddaughter, "When I was a child all we got for Christmas was an apple and an orange."

The little girl clapped her hands in joy. "Brilliant! I'd love a new computer and a mobile!"

### Keeping warm?

A member of our PCC floated the idea of opening the church during the Warm Spaces hours, for anyone wishing to sit in church and light a candle.

### Sign outside a Church

Come in and pray today. Beat the Christmas rush!



# Aune Valley Benefice Directory

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**ADMINISTRATOR:** During the vacancy please contact Elizabeth Webb 560090 thurlallsaints@btinternet.com for general enquires, including weddings, baptisms and funerals

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<b>ELECTORAL ROLL:</b>	<i>Vacancy</i>	Elizabeth Webb 560090	Janet Turner 560354	Pauline Carter 550617	Contact: Churchwardens
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		June Martin 714434			
		Joan Booth 561537			
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