

THE LINK

DECEMBER 2021



THE BENEFICE OF
OFFWELL, FARWAY & WIDWORTHY

DECEMBER SERVICES

	OFFWELL	FARWAY	WIDWORTHY
5th Dec. 2nd in Advent	9:30am HC		9:30am Family Service
12th Dec 3rd in Advent			4pm CHRISTINGLE
19th Dec 4th in Advent	4pm CAROL/CHRISTINGLE	11:15am CAROL SERVICE	4pm CAROL SERVICE
24th Dec Christmas Eve		11pm MIDNIGHT MASS	
25th Dec Christmas Day	9:30am HC		11:15am HC
26th Dec			10:30am Morning Prayer
2nd Jan. 2022	9:30am HC		9:30am Family Service

BIBLE READINGS

5th Dec. 2nd in Advent	Malachi 3:1-4	<i>Canticle:</i> Benedictus (Luke 1:68-79)	Philippians 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6
12th Dec 3rd in Advent	Zephaniah 3:14-20	Isaiah 12:2-6	Philippians 4:4-7	Luke 3:7-18
19th Dec 4th in Advent	Micah 5:2-5a	<i>Canticle:</i> Magnificat (Luke 1:46b-55)	Hebrews 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)
25th Dec Christmas Day	Isaiah 52:7-10	Psalms 98	Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-10)	John 1:1-14
26th Dec	1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26	Psalms 148	Colossians 3:12-17	Luke 2:41-52
2nd Jan. 2022	Jeremiah 31:7-14	Psalms 17:12-20	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1(1-9) 10-18

FARWAY METHODIST CHURCH

December

- 4th 11am Conducted by Mrs Monika Noronha
 12th 3pm Conducted by Revd. Ben Haslam
 19th 3pm CAROL SERVICE Conducted by Dr Alan Mcilveen
 26th No Service



OPENING THOUGHTS

Dear Readers

It's a privilege to be asked to write what is expected to be the last message in the last issue of 'The Link' (at least for the time being). I'd like to say first how grateful we are to Melanie and those in whose steps she stands for their wonderful work in editing and publishing this means of communication. We're all aware how technology opens up new ways of communicating but for many of us something which is beautifully produced which we can hold in our hands is something we treasure – and will miss.

I've recently taken part in a conference (online) of Anglican mission agencies. The theme came from Psalm 30. 'Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.' Weeping, lament, is something which the pandemic has highlighted. But we wept before Covid – and we'll weep afterwards. Lament is way we share together a sense of helplessness, frustration, rage. Speakers at the conference reflected on this passage from Psalm 30 in the light of their own contexts, on small Pacific islands threatened by rising sea levels, countries where only a small percentage have received vaccination, regions experiencing drought; abuse: we can add to the litany of disasters – Afghanistan . . .

But the Psalmist exclaims 'weeping may linger . . . but joy comes with the morning'. This is a message of hope, hope, not wishful thinking. It's something the Psalmist is confident about, and so should we. December sees us looking to Christmas. It's the season of waiting we call Advent. Christmas is festival when Christians celebrate God's coming among us in flesh –'incarnate'. 'Joy to the world, the Saviour comes' is one of the carols we may well sing. God's coming changes things; lament is assuaged, our hurting is consoled.

Some of us may feel quite indifferent to the world's pain. We may have survived the pandemic relatively unscathed in our beautiful part of the country. Former Archbishop Rowan Williams said to us attending the conference, 'Good theology is the kind of talk about God that helps us see ourselves, our world with greater clarity . . . Good theology is what opens our eyes and our hearts.' He added, God has given us so many opportunities for learning and growing'. Behold and see.

As we read / hear the familiar stories of Jesus's incarnation notice how that invitation plays out. Shepherds, Magi . . . they come and see. Come and see the child lying in the manger' worship and adore. Come and see! May this season and this festival be a time of blessing for us all.



Bishop Oliver

BENEFICE NEWS & INFO

Benefice Coffee Morning

for all our Parishes

16th December

3rd Thursday of every month

From 10:30am to 12 noon

At Offwell, Social Club Room

This is for everyone.

*Whether you go to church
or not you will be made very
welcome. You just have to
enjoy coffee, home made
cake and a chat!*



Date for your diary:

The **Bishop of Crediton, The Rt Rev. Jackie Searle** will be taking the joint **Benefice Service** with Holy Communion at **St. Michael & All Angels, FARWAY** on **January 30th 2022 at 11:15am**

BENEFICE CHURCHWARDENS

FARWAY

Tara Huffman 01404 871372

Robin Banks 01404 871355

OFFWELL

Jonathan Paveley 01404 831450

Marion Hutchinson 01404 830055

WIDWORTHY

Mim Prins 01404 831688

Mary Wakeley 01404 831345

Websites:

Farway:

www.farwaydevon.org.uk

Offwell:

www.offwell.org

Widworthy:

www.widworthyparishcouncil.co.uk

www.explorechurches.org

www.achurchnearyou.com

The LINK is the magazine of the three Parishes of OFFWELL, FARWAY and WIDWORTHY. Views expressed here are not necessarily the opinion of the Editor or the community.

As 2021 draws to a close and we reflect on the past year/eighteen months, there have been huge changes to our lives due to the covid pandemic; affecting our personal lives, businesses, work and society in ways we could not have imagined. 2020 also brought changes to our Benefice. The magazine [linked](#) together the five churches of the Benefice but in January 2020, it was reduced to three when Cotleigh joined with St. Paul's in Honiton and Northleigh joined with Colyton. Our readership was suddenly reduced by a third. Another impact on The Link has been the reduction in advertising, which funded the printing; some businesses have ceased trading and others have retired.

There have been positive changes too; a lot more of us have become adept with technology and are even more connected. Offwell formed a Facebook group for villagers, as has the Offwell Social Club. Offwell has a new website and a database email group. Not only can we contact each other quickly and easily, we can share photos, calendars and information about events past and future.

I have enjoyed my time as Editor of The Link, particularly getting to know all you lovely contributors. Communication remains important, so from January 2022 there will be a printable monthly news sheet available with the church services, Bible readings and other church news and information. The parisheslink@gmail.com email address will remain active, so please continue to send photos and info about events that take place so we can put together something to go on the websites from time to time.

Farewell to The Link

This morning Frank and I received a letter from Sheila Green, wife of Rev. Brian Green, who sadly passed away in February of this year. Brian and Sheila lived in the village for many years and although retired Brian became almost a full-time priest in Widworthy during one of our long Interregnums. In the April/May Link of this year I published a section of Brian's story from our 2006 'Offwell Village Tales'. Someone from the village forwarded Sheila the Link and she was writing to thank us, if rather belatedly, due to the great number of cards of condolence she had received.

As we look to publish our final Link Sheila's letter is a reminder to me of how important a part The Link has played over the years in keeping both past and present residents of the Parish informed and connected, whether it was the Covid Reflections by Bishop Oliver and Mrs. Legg, photos of the Benefice Coffee Mornings, or Marion and Barbara dressed in their finery for 'Open the Book'. Then there are memories of bell ringing on Devon Historic Churches Day, posies presented on Mothering Sunday, the school childrens' paintings for Harvest Festival, Remembrance and Christmas services; not forgetting Offwell Flower Show.

When St. Mary's doors were closed in 2020 we commemorated VE Day75 outdoors, while the glorious summer weather enabled St. Cuthbert's to hold their Sunday services (including the Remembrance Day service) in the church grounds. In Widworthy the White Ensign flew on VE Day in memory of the Naval Officers who contributed so much to the life of St. Cuthbert's Church.

During lockdown, when everyone was spending more time at home and the natural world became more important than ever, villagers sent their garden photos to The Link to brighten up the lives of those who were unable to get out for their daily exercise. It was also a way in which we could remember so many past residents, including Rev. Green and Terry Staunton.

At the start of 2020 Matthew Schofield, son of Tim Schofield, vicar of Offwell Parish from 1986 to 1994, contacted the Link about his father's impending retirement. He was asking for any villagers who remembered his father to contribute memories and photos for a book he was hoping to produce to mark his parents' work across the various churches they had been connected to. Tim was a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and he and his family would provide spectacular musical entertainment at Harvest Supper each year.

The Link has provided all of us with many happy memories of Parish life over the years and we must thank past editors, Jim Hudson and Nick Hill, as well as the present editor, Melanie Jolly, for all their time, hard work and commitment. We will try to continue to tell these stories over the coming years via the Offwell website.

Carol Hayes
15th November 2021



OFFWELL



St. Mary's

On **Sunday 19th December** there will be a **Carol service with Christingle at 4.00pm**. Hopefully, depending on the covid situation, mince pies and refreshments will be served afterwards.

Holy Communion will be at 9.30 on Christmas morning.

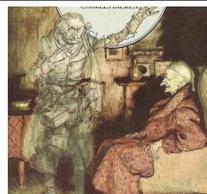
Both these services will be taken by Bishop Oliver.

The **Coffee Morning on Thursday 16th December** will have a Christmas theme.

Delicious scones were much enjoyed at the the Harvest cream tea back at the beginning of October.

St. Mary's Christmas Display

Christmas extracts from eight well-known authors will be on display in St. Mary's during the month of December. They include '**A Child's Christmas in Wales**' by Dylan Thomas; '**Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix**' by J.K. Rowling; '**A Christmas Carol**' by Charles Dickens; '**A Christmas Memory**' by Truman Capote; '**Little Women**' by Louisa May Alcott; '**A Prayer for Owen Meany**' by John Irving; '**Wind in the Willows**' by Kenneth Graham and T.S. Eliot's poem '**Journey of the Magi**'.



Eliot's poem was written shortly after his conversion to the Anglican faith. It explores the journey the wise men took when following the star to Bethlehem. The magus in the poem share Eliot's view that spiritual transformation is not a comfort, but an ongoing process - an arduous journey seemingly without end."

On **4th December** (1st Saturday in the month) **Fish and Chips** will be frying in the hall car park **from 6pm to 7:30pm**.

There will be **NO Thai Street Stall** in December, but they'll be back in **January 2022**.

For the menu or further info please check out the Sports & Social Club Facebook page. On all these occasions the bar will be open and you can eat inside or outside.

The Queens Platinum Jubilee in 2022

A small group of volunteers have begun to share ideas of how to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee next year. The date is confirmed as **Sunday 5th June** which will coincide with the nationwide "Big Lunch". The most popular theme currently is for an old fashioned street party to be held at the village hall complex - hopefully outside, but inside if wet.

Arrangements are in the very early stages and will be progressed in the New Year.

Further information will appear on the Offwell website but any questions can be put to Marian on 01404 831066 or Lynn on 01404 831924.

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It has been a wonderful return to school and the staff have been delighted by the positivity of the children and their families. We have been busy assessing where children are in their learning and filling any gaps and always making sure we stretch and challenge our learners.

As you read this, we will be preparing for Christmas. This year we are planning to hold two carol concerts in the church towards the end of term. There will be a mix of carols interspersed with readings by the children. We can't wait to be in church, feeling that special atmosphere and listening to the children raising their voices together in song once again.



Oak and Beech classes (ages 7 to 11) were fortunate enough to have a visit from Space Odyssey, which is a mobile planetarium offering 360°3D digital images of space travel, the moon and the solar system. The audible gasps of wonder from the children make you realise how worthwhile immersive experiences such as this can be for young people.

Willow Class (ages 5 to 7) have been learning the recorder. Mrs Reeve is bravely teaching Jingle Bells and, if all goes to plan, we hope to hear their inaugural performance at our concert in December – fingers crossed (but not while playing the recorder).



Oak Class were thrilled when one of our parents came in to coach a Tag Rugby lesson. Sam Hidalgo-Cline, who plays for Exeter Chiefs and is a rugby international, took them through a warm-up passing the ball on the run. They then played a few games which they all really enjoyed and showed great commitment – and some fierce tag rugby tackling (tag rugby is a non-contact sport)!

Classes have visited HCC to undertake science workshops in their labs; we are hoping for a visit from the School Library Service to look at reading and Miss Kirkland is in the process of arranging an exciting art and writing opportunity with an author for the spring term.

There is so much going on all the time, as we continue to strive to make learning relevant, exciting, fun and inspirational.



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NEW PLAYPARK FOR OFFWELL

After five years of planning and fund raising, Offwell's new Play Park has been officially opened by Damien Richards, Secretary of the Offwell Recreation Ground & Village Hall Committee (ORG&VHC).



It was back in 2016 that the committee decided to replace the old play park with its well-used contents. In March 2017 a sub-committee was formed and the long arduous business of fund raising began. Two village families, along with villagers from outside Offwell, started hosting Big breakfasts, cream teas, gardeners' question times, school competitions, quiz nights, pie, mash and pint – the ideas and

events just kept coming in. The sum of £4,500 had to be raised before match funding could be applied for; a long, slow process but we made it to the finals with Avia, receiving £1,000, followed by £2,000 from Tesco's Community Grants. Towards the end of 2017 carol singing was held in the Sports & Social Club and this attracted around 70 villagers - a great event to finish the year off.

With Covid arriving in 2020 we had to seriously rethink our initial aim to raise £66,000. With so many fund raising ventures closing their doors, and even the monthly donations from Offwell Fish n' Chips ending, it was decided to approach a local company, Design Create Play Ltd., who could design bespoke play structures at a more affordable price.

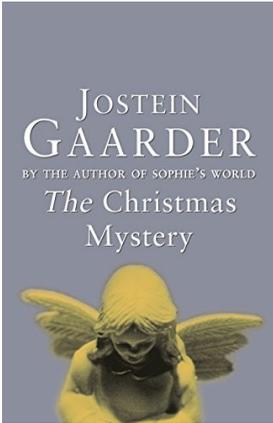
At the end of 2020 local businessman, Rich Dare, delivered 60 tons of top soil and CSW Groundworks very kindly completed all the ground works for free. By April the soil was seeded and the area was hand rolled by young men from the village. We were nearing the end - but then came the wood shortage and increase in costs.

There were some great challenges along the way but we finally made it and couldn't have asked for better weather at the Grand Opening in September, a day we shared with Offwell PTFA's Summer Treasure Hunt. By Bonfire Night the final piece, the Pirate Ship, was in place and the Play Park is now complete; something to be proud of and loved by all the children that visit.



A massive thank-you to everyone who helped and supported us over the last five years, no matter how big or small, because without you there would be no play park for our children to enjoy.

BOOK REVIEW



The Christmas Mystery by Jostein Gaarder

One day Elisabet, while Christmas shopping with her mother, vanishes into thin air. Accompanied by angels, shepherds, kings and even a Roman governor, she is rushing back through time and space to Bethlehem, to be present at the birth of Christ. Fifty years later a boy called Joachim pieces together her story from a magic advent calendar and brings it to a conclusion.

I read this (for the second time) last December as a 'Lockdown Lift' during a difficult Christmas period. It's an intriguing and inspiring story for adults and children. Each chapter opens a window on the advent calendar so could be read daily throughout December in the lead up to Christmas day.

As well as telling the Christmas story and a modern day mystery, the author takes us on a journey of discovery about the history of Christianity in different parts of the world.

If you're interested in philosophy and want it easily explained, as to a fourteen year old girl, then I also highly recommend 'Sophie's World' by the same author.

Get in touch if you'd like to borrow either book.

Melanie

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FARWAY



St. Michael and All Angels church beautifully decorated for Harvest Festival in October.



The **Farway Skittles League** is now in full swing with matches every Friday night during the winter months.

The bar opens at 7.30pm in the Village Hall – you are most welcome to join us.



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Little Tree

By *E.E. Cummings*

*Little tree
little silent Christmas tree
you are so little
you are more like a flower*

*Who found you in the green forest
and were you very sorry to come away?
see I will comfort you
because you smell so sweetly*

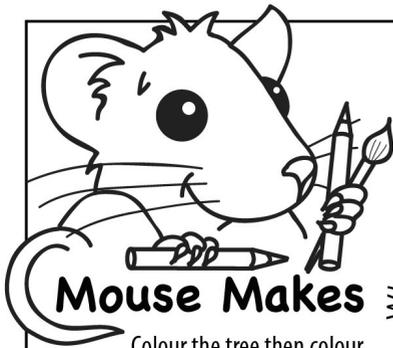
*I will kiss your cool bark
and hug you safe and tight
just as your mother would,
only don't be afraid*

*Look the spangles
that sleep all the year in a dark box
dreaming of being taken out and allowed to shine,
the balls the chains red and gold the fluffy
threads,*

*Put up your little arms
and I'll give them all to you to hold
every finger shall have its ring
and there won't be a single place dark or unhappy*

*Then when you're quite dressed
you'll stand in the window for everyone to see
and how they'll stare!
Oh, but you'll be very proud*

*and my little sister and I will take hands
and looking up at our beautiful tree
we'll dance and sing
"Noel Noel"*



Mouse Makes

Colour the tree then colour in one star each day until Christmas. Leave the large star at the top of the tree to colour in on Christmas day!

What's on the Christmas Tree?



A STAR
shows the way
to Jesus
Read
Matthew 2:1-12



ANGELS
bring messages from God

Read about
Gabriel's message in
Luke 1:26-38

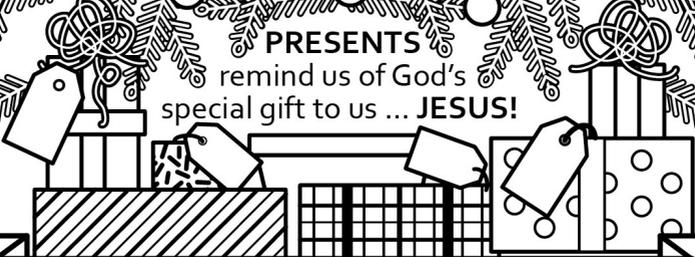
Read the
shepherd's story in
Luke 1:26-38

**LIGHTS
AND CANDLES**
remind us that Jesus
lights our way to God

Read *Luke 2:29-32*



PRESENTS
remind us of God's
special gift to us ... **JESUS!**



"For God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life." *John 3:16*

Presents at Christmas
under the tree,
A red Christmas stocking
waiting for me,
But what really is Christmas,
What is it about?
Just look and the Bible
and you will find out!
It's about **JESUS**
- the best present of all,
JESUS our **Saviour**,
God's gift to us all!

NOTES FROM WIDWORTHY PARISH COUNCIL



It has been nice being able to have our meetings back at the Village Hall in person recently rather than over the hated Zoom. It's good to speak without being short of bandwidth, freezing, losing the connection completely or having to unmute, all of which happened over the last year.

A few years ago, the Parish Council funded the purchase of a defibrillator which is situated in the old telephone box adjacent to the White Hart. We have previously funded two courses to instruct people in the use of CPR and to familiarise them with the defib. It is very easy to use and actually tells you what to do! The Council are thinking of funding another course in the coming months, if you would be interested, please let me know at clerk@widworthy.eastdevon.gov.uk

I asked previously about what everyone wanted to do for the Platinum Jubilee next year. The Diamond Jubilee in Victoria's time was marked by getting the Jubilee Fountain, something that many towns in Devon did. I doubt we could do anything as grand as that but we are open to all ideas – a tree, seat? It would be lovely to mark the day properly with a whole village event so it could be remembered by all. Please let us at the Council know how, you the residents, would like to mark the occasion.

We know that the recent planning decision by EDDC for the Sand Quarry was not necessarily what some of you wanted. Be assured that the members of the Parish Council and one of our District Councillors, Helen Parr, will be monitoring the situation as it goes on through the building to operational phase.

As a final note I thought I would put in my Christmas request - all I want for Christmas is a new Parish Councillor!

Sadly, due to work commitments Sam Coombs, who has done sterling work for us, had to stand down. So we now need someone to fill the empty chair at our meetings. We meet at the Village Hall on a Tuesday evening, every couple of months and meetings last about 1½ hours. What do you have to do to apply? It's simple – be interested in what is happening in Wilmington and Widworthy just contact me at:

clerk@widworthy.eastdevon.gov.uk or

see the details on our website: www.widworthyparishcouncil.org.uk

The Parish Council would like to wish everyone an especially peaceful and happy Christmas and a very prosperous New Year

Carol Miltenburg, your Parish Clerk

Smile line - CHRISTMAS CAROLS

One night Freda went carol singing. She knocked on the door of a house and began to sing. A man with a violin in his hand came to the door. Within half a minute, tears were streaming down his face. Touched, Freda sang every carol she knew - and some she didn't. The man continued to weep gently throughout her performance. "I understand," she said softly at last. "You are remembering your happy childhood Christmas days."

"No, not exactly," he replied in a choked sort of voice. "I'm a musician!"



ST. CUTHBERT'S, WIDWORTHY



Sunday, December 5th at 9:30am is the second Sunday in Advent, which is a time of prayer and preparation for the coming of the Christ Child at Christmas and as in Lent, the altar cloth is purple and flowers are removed from the church. Marc Kastner will take this Family Service. Please plan to join us for the delightful **Christingle Service on Sunday December 12th at 4pm** when **The Revd Nigel Freathy** will lead the children in making Christingles to take home and to help bring light to their Advent reflections on the meaning of Christmas and why we celebrate it. We continue our preparations for Christmas with a **Service of Nine Lessons and Carols at 4pm December 19th** which will be taken by the **Rt Revd Oliver Simon**. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served after the service. Christmas morning, **December 25th**, our **Holy Communion for Christmas** will be celebrated at **11:15am** by the **Rt Revd Oliver Simon**.

As this is the last Link to be printed, all of us in Widworthy want to extend a huge thank you to Melanie Jolly who took over the arduous job of producing the Link in 2018 and has developed and expanded it into a real work of art. The Link has been such a unifying part of all of our lives in the Offwell Benefice and we all will miss it. We hope that Melanie now has a well-earned rest in her “retirement” and can at last enjoy breaks and holidays without worrying about Link deadlines.

With all good wishes that the Blessings of Christmas will be with us throughout the New Year.



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