

The Offwell Mission Community

St Mary's, Offwell - St Cuthbert's, Widworthy - St Michael and All Angels, Farway



THE LINK



January & February 2026

It's the most wonderful time of the year

For some reason today, I have the song 'It's the most wonderful time of the year' going through my brain! I probably heard it in a shop, or maybe as I was driving along it was on the radio. These songs get into our heads and for many they represent why we love Christmas.

My sister-in-law works in a garden centre and they have been interspersing Christmas songs since September. Some people put their decorations up outside their houses straight after Halloween and many have been eating mince pies since they appeared in the shops on the first day of term. Will we be bored with Christmas by the time its finally here?

If I were still teaching, by now I would be exhausted after the long weeks, and I'd be counting down the days until Christmas and the end of term. The primary school teachers have been doing nativity, after nativity, after nativity, and might secretly be fed up with it all by now! That would be a pity because Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year...



Why is it the most wonderful time of the year?

The Church of England have a Christmas campaign with a story about a grumpy owl. The grumpy owl lives in a barn and gets upset when Mary and Joseph turn up and start disturbing its peace, but of course, as soon as it sees the baby Jesus, it's happy. Who's not going to be happy when they see a baby?

If we just think, though, that Christmas is only about this cute little baby in a manger, then we're missing the most wonderful part of the story. Because Christmas isn't just about a baby being born to a poor couple in difficult circumstances. It isn't just about a young mum and a baby child. Christmas is about God becoming man and dwelling with us. This is about Emmanuel, the name given to Jesus by the angels. This is about Jesus being born so that we all can know God. He is always present and always has been.

At the National Gallery, there's an altar piece from an Italian church with a glorious renaissance picture of the Madonna and child. The description says that when it was used, the picture of the child Jesus, the cross on the altar and the priest behind lifting up the bread and wine during the mass would all be in alignment.

Jesus - his birth, his death, and his living with us - this is the wonder of Christmas. Of God who came down to earth, to dwell among us, to live and tell us about His love. To die for all our sins, to be risen again, and ascend to heaven. To pour out his Holy Spirit and send his disciples out into the world with the command to go and share the wonderful news of Christ - of Christmas and Easter - not just a day, not just a party, not just a meal, but of God's real presence with us now and forever.

Reverend Stuart Huntley.

FIND US - CONTACT

Rev'd. Stuart Huntley

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Working part time, but contactable anytime, offering pastoral support to the three parishes and support to the church schools. In due course I hope to move into the Rectory, however if you'd like to see me before then please email, or call, and you can find me on Friday mornings at Offwell church between 9:30-11 and Widworthy between 11:15 and 1pm .

The Rev'd Tracey Voysey is now the interim Vicar for Honiton.

The Rev'd Tracey will continue to help out in Farway, but her involvement with Offwell and Widworthy has now ended



Benefice Churchwardens

WIDWORTHY

Mim Prins - 01404 831688

Vacancy

OFFWELL

Jonathan Paveley - 01404 831450

Viki Whitehead - 01404 831050

FARWAY

Tara Huffman - 01404 871372

Stefanie Kastner

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchOffwell>

Instagram:

[instagram.com/stmaryschurchoffwell](https://www.instagram.com/stmaryschurchoffwell)

The Rev'd Stuart is recreating the **St. Mary's Church, Offwell** Facebook page. It is full of new content —give it a look.

Facebook Pages

[Offwell Together](#)

[The Offwell Sports And Social Club](#)

[Farway village hall East Devon](#)

[Spotted Wilmington, Devon, UK](#)

Websites:



www.achurchnearyou.com

www.explorechurches.org

www.widworthy.parish.uk

www.farwaydevon.org.uk

www.farway.devon.sch.uk

www.offwell.org

www.offwell-primary.devon.sch.uk

Email Addresses:

Offwell Website (for updates) :

offwell.org@gmail.com

linkparishes@gmail.com (to contact the editor)

The Rt. Revd. Sarah Mullally, DBE, the first female Archbishop of Canterbury.

The confirmation of election of the **Rt. Revd. Sarah Mullally, DBE**, as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury, will take place on 28th January 2026 at St. Paul's Cathedral. Her installation (enthronement) will take place at Canterbury Cathedral on 25th March, one day short of her 64th birthday. It will mark, almost to the day, 32 years since the ordination of women priests into the Church of England. Sarah Mullally will be the first woman to be installed as Archbishop of Canterbury and the first female to sit in St. Augustine's Chair and hold the oldest office in Britain.

Almost every Archbishop of Canterbury since the Second World War has been appointed in his fifties and served more than a decade. With mandatory retirement at 70 years of age Archbishop Mullally will be allowed less than half that time so no dramatic new initiatives are expected, no earth-shattering announcements, no exhausting global tours.

Bishop Sarah was born on 26th March 1962, the daughter of a hairdresser. She went to a comprehensive school and became a Christian at the age of 16. She trained as a nurse at St. Thomas's Hospital and completed a degree at the South Bank Polytechnic, something few nurses undertook at the time. Having worked as a cancer nurse she rose quickly through the ranks of NHS management, becoming the youngest ever Chief Nursing Officer in 1999, aged 37.

Bishop Sarah was ordained in 2001 and in 2012 she was installed as Canon Treasurer at Salisbury Cathedral. Three years later she took the role as Suffragan Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter. In 2018 Bishop Sarah was installed as Bishop of London at St. Paul's Cathedral; the first woman to hold the role. In 2005 she was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire in recognition of her outstanding contribution to nursing.

As the most senior Bishop in the Church of England her ministry will cover around 85 million people across 165 countries. On the announcement of her nomination in Canterbury Bishop Sarah said the following:

"As I respond to the call of Christ to this new ministry, I do so in the same spirit of service to God and to others that has motivated me since I first came to faith as a teenager....I will not always get things right but I am encouraged by the psalmist who tells us that, 'Though you stumble you shall not fall headlong, for the Lord holds you fast by the hand.'"

Carol Hayes



Prayer Corner, St. Mary's.

For those of you who have been able to experience the prayer corner, I hope you have found stillness. There is now a book available for prayer requests.



Reflections on St Mary's Advent Quiet Day

Putting into a few words what the day was about, and how those who came found it, is quite a challenge. It was not just another space for prayer and reflection, although, of course, those are still important. It seemed to provide an opportunity to sink deeper into silence and peace. Some of the comments included:

"Moments of calm and peace"

"The words that kept coming into my heart, trust, prayer and praise"

"A chance to sit and feel welcome in God's house"

"Space to be quiet and experience in silence, rare personal peace"

I believe there is something special in being intentional, carving out time to sit in a building, where, for more than 1000 years, Christians have prayed to a God who is described in Isaiah as 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace and Everlasting Father.'

If the thought of sitting in stillness and silence seems a bit daunting, there were prompts around the church, in three areas with words that could help focus your thoughts, if needed, whilst sitting in soft chairs!

Perhaps these lines from a Celtic prayer, made famous by the composer John Rutter, describe that peace;

Deep peace of the running wave to you.

Deep peace of the flowing air to you.

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.

Deep peace of the shining stars to you.

Deep peace of the gentle night to you.

Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.

Deep peace of Christ, the light of the world to you

The plan is for another Quiet Day for Lent in March.

Jan Burditt.

Phyllis Dickinson writes ...

I would like to thank all my Church and Village friends who joined me to celebrate my 90th birthday in November. It was such a happy, joyous occasion and I am very blessed to be surrounded by so many wonderful, supportive people in this beautiful village, which has been my and my family's home for many years, far from my home country of New Zealand.

Also, my thanks to all those who sent their prayers and get well wishes when I ended up in hospital just a few days later. I am hoping to join you all for Christmas Services. But in case I don't see you, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Jonathan Paveley writes ...

Many thanks for all those who bought Christmas trees and cards this year to raise money for St Marys. At the time of writing, Christmas tree sales and donations from those who didn't want a tree but made a donation instead, has raised circa £2000 with another £200 on order. All funds will be invested in the ongoing refurbishment of St Marys. Thank you from St. Mary's Church PCC.

Offwell – 200 years ago.

In 1826 Edward Copleston of Offwell was appointed Dean of Chester by the then Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, who *'held a just apprehension of his merits'*.

The following year Copleston was offered the bishopric of Llandaff although George IV initially hesitated in making the appointment due to Copleston's *'perceived leanings towards Catholic emancipation'*.

The appointment went ahead after assurances were provided and Copleston was consecrated in 1828.

Do you fancy bellringing?

There is a friendly, and welcoming, group of bellringers at St. Mary's Church in Offwell.

When the Widworthy bells are available, the group there will resume too.

It is under the guidance of John Tristram, and he is looking for new recruits. If you would like to try your hand, please contact him on **01404 831404**. or by email on **bjtristram@gmail.com**.

BENEFICE CHURCH SERVICES

DATES	ST. MARY'S OFFWELL	ST. CUTHBERT'S WIDWORTHY
Sun 4th January 2nd Sunday of Christmas	9:30 am Benefice Holy Communion	
Sun. 11th January Baptism of Christ / 1st Sunday of Epiphany	5:00 pm BCP Evensong	9:30 am Holy Communion
Sun. 18th January 2nd Sunday of Epiphany	10.30am Family Service	9:30 am Morning Prayer
Sun. 25th January 3rd Sunday of Epiphany	10:30am New Beginnings Service	9:30am Family Service
Sun. 1st February Candlemass / 4th Sunday of Epiphany	9:30 am Holy Communion	9:30 am Family Service
Sun. 8th February 2nd Sunday before Lent	5:00 pm BCP Evensong	9:30 am Holy Communion
Sun. 15th February Sunday next before Lent	10.30am Family Service	9:30 am Morning Prayer
Sun. 22nd February 1st Sunday before Lent	10:30am New Beginnings Service	9:30am Family Service



Refreshments will be served after all our services in St. Mary's.



COFFEE MORNING

Thursday 15th January, and Thursday 19th February
10:30—12:00

3rd Thursday of every month, in Offwell Sports and Social Club, for all three of our Benefice Parishes. This event is for everyone, whether you go to the church or not. You will be made very welcome.

£ Donations for the Link £

If you would like to give a donation towards the printing of The Link, please place your donation in an envelope marked 'The Link' and either give it to the person who delivers your Link, bring it to a service, or post it in the wall safe at St. Mary's just inside the Church door.

The churchwardens say, "Many thanks ".



BIBLE READINGS



DATES	FIRST READING	NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLE	THE GOSPEL
Sun 4th January 2nd Sunday of Christmas	Isaiah 60:1-6	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
Sun. 11th January Baptism of Christ / 1st Sunday of Epiphany	Isaiah 42:1-9	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-end
Sun. 18th January 2nd Sunday of Epiphany	Isaiah 49:1-7	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
Sun. 25th January 3rd Sunday of Epiphany	Isaiah 9:1-4	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Matthew 4:12-23
Sun. 1st February Candlemass / 4th Sunday of Epiphany	Malachi 3:1-5	Hebrews 2:14-end	Luke 2:22-40
Sun. 8th February 2nd Sunday before Lent	Genesis 1:1-2:3	Romans 8:18-25	Matthew 6:25-end
Sun. 15th February Sunday next before Lent	Exodus 24:12—end	2 Peter 1.16—end	Matthew 17: 1-9
Sun. 22nd February 1st Sunday before Lent	Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7	Romans 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11

*Well, Christmas has passed and all the good cheer
We're done with the pudding and Happy New Year.*

*January is long, will the wages last?
February is short, we'll be glad when it's passed.*

*Will there be more rain or possibly snow?
Will the temperatures drop to -10 below?*

*But worry not, Spring's not far away
With a few more hours in every day .*

*Then Easter's upon us (although in a while)
Let' face '26 with good heart and a smile.*

With the Editor's thanks to: ANON.

OFFWELL CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The new year is often a time of reflection, when we pause to make resolutions and consider our hopes and expectations for the months ahead. It gives us the chance for a fresh start, to look forward and put the past behind us. In collective worship at school, we talk about life's 'wows' and its 'ows' – the ups and downs that shape us. A new year will always bring both moments of praise and times of challenge, and prayer can be a helpful way of travelling through these experiences.

At school, prayer is always invitational. There is never any compulsion, but the opportunity to join in is offered. Mr. Thomas was reminded of a song from his childhood which described how 'prayer is like a telephone, for us to talk to God'. This term, as we talk to God in prayer, we will be exploring the Lord's Prayer line by line. As the most repeated prayer in Christian tradition, it has inspired music and art, helping people to engage with its meaning in many different ways. It also holds a central place in Church schools and in acts of collective worship.

Our Ethos Group – made up of both children and adults – helps the school to continue developing its Christian distinctiveness. Recently, the group shared some thoughtful and heartfelt ideas for a new school prayer.



You are warmly invited to join in with our new school prayer:

Father, help us to *be well* – to feel safe, cared for, and to flourish in our relationships.

Jesus, help us to *learn well* – to be brave, patient and always willing to try our best.

Spirit, help us to *live well* – to be kind, fair, and full of love in all we do.

May *Offwell* school be a place where we grow each day.

Offwell Village Hall Charity.

Since our last article, we have been busy with behind-the-scenes work as well as organising events, including the Bonfire and Fireworks. The results from the survey undertaken earlier in the year supported our successful application for a grant towards a new heating system in the village hall. The new system will be installed in January, just in time for the colder weather, and we are hoping this makes the hall a more welcoming place for all.

We will look at further improvements at the hall next year as funds become available and will use the results from the survey to continue to guide our priorities.

I would like to personally thank the whole community for bearing with us this year and for supporting the Village Hall throughout 2025. Without your support, we would not be able to stage such a range of activities or to make significant improvements.

As we look forward to 2026, we are looking to undertake, as well as host, some great events and community activities through the year. In January, a Tai-Chi class is starting up in the Hall; more details will be posted on Offwell Together.

From all of us on the committee, we wish you a Happy New Year, and a successful 2026.

Mark - Chair of Trustees

Offwell Parish Council

This is the first of regular updates from Offwell Parish Council.

Adrian Jenkins, our Parish Clerk, has announced he is retiring. We thank Adrian for all his dedicated hard work and support over the last 9 years. We wish him a healthy and enjoyable retirement. We have advertised the vacancy and have recruited a new clerk, Caroline Holland, who will take up the position in mid January. Adrian will continue to support the Parish Council and the new clerk for the next couple of months during a handover.

In the last few months we have made donations to the Offwell Village Hall and Recreation Ground Committee towards the Bonfire Event, to St Mary's Church towards the maintenance of the Churchyard and a donation to Hospiscare as they have supported 8 residents of Offwell over the last 5 years, to Devon Air Ambulance and to the South West Ambulance Charity to assist with the purchase of an additional community response vehicle for East Devon.

Windmill Garage is starting a Post Office Payzone Service. You will be able to pay bills, top up your mobile and collect and return pre-paid parcels. This facility should be open from early December 2025.

Devon Highways have announced the **following temporary road closures and restrictions.** Diversions will be signposted.

The road from Offwell Cross to New Road Cross, Offwell, from 16th to 18th Feb 2026.

The road from Axminster Road to Offwell Cross, Offwell, on 30th Jan 2026.

The road from Cleave Cross to Greystones, Wilmington, from 22nd to 23rd January 2026.

The Parish Council is looking for new members. We are currently 3 councilors short. If you are interested in supporting and helping the community, please contact clerk@offwellparishcouncil.gov.uk

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If you, or anyone you know, would like to advertise in the magazine, could they please send an email to the Editor at linkparishes@gmail.com.

DIARY DATES

Thur. 15th January	Honiton Golf Club	MEN'S BREAKFAST 9:30am for 10am Contact 01404 831924 for more details
Thur. 15th January	Offwell SSC	BENEFICE COFFEE MORNING 10:30am - 12 noon
Sat. 17th January	Offwell Village Hall	OFFWELL VILLAGE MARKET. 10 a.m. to 12 Noon
Thur. 19th February	Offwell SSC	BENEFICE COFFEE MORNING 10:30am - 12 noon
Thur. 19th February	Honiton Golf Club	MEN'S BREAKFAST 9:30am for 10am Contact 01404 831924 for more details
Sat. 21st February	Offwell Village Hall	OFFWELL VILLAGE MARKET 10 a.m. to 12 Noon
Sat. 21st February	Offwell Village Hall	Quiz night, with food. Posters will give more details. To book, call Viki on 01404 831050 or at viki.whitehead@gmail.com.
Sun. 22nd March	Offwell Village Hall Field	Far Western Area Tug of War matches.

Offwell Village Market, 10:00—12:00 3rd Saturday of the Month

Exhibitors and stalls include, on a regular basis:

Cleave Farm Pork, selling fresh Pork

Triffords Farm, Widworthy, selling responsibly-raised Beef, Lamb and Chicken.

Maggies' Bees; Honey and bees wax soaps,

Mrs. K's Creations; decorative craft gifts and home wares in a variety of mediums

Jean Brazier; Knitted greeting cards and gifts

Little Bread Company; breads and pastries

Lin; made-for-you Devon soap

Rory MacLeod; plants

Jo Edwards; cards, journals, resin work, paper craft

Nora; knitted articles, especially Children's Jumpers

Alison Moore; Jewellery

Helen; cakes

Tracey Moody; Crafts



KEEP THE DATE! Offwell Village Fete is on Sat. 27th June 2026.

If you would like to have your Group's dates added in to this Diary Dates section in the March / April 2026 edition, please send details to the editor at linkparishes@gmail.com, before 14th February.