

The Offwell Mission Community

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

THE LINK

DECEMBER 2023 & JANUARY 2024





A CHOIR FOR CHRISTMAS

The parishes of Offwell, Widworthy and Farway have formed a choir to sing at Benefice Carol Services leading up to Christmas. Rehearsals at St. Mary's have been taking place throughout October and November, with the final rehearsal taking



place on Sunday 3rd December. The choir, numbering 30 in all, range in age from 8 to 83; the majority never having sung in a choir before. The choir were helped with breathing and voice exercises by an international music coach who happens to live in Offwell.

Revd. Jeremy has chosen 'The Coventry Carol' for the choir to sing at the Carol Services. It has a haunting melody and the lyrics detail King Herod's harrowing orders, at the news of the birth of Jesus Christ, to slay all children, known as the 'Massacre of the Innocents'. Together with the congregation the choir will give full voice to the more uplifting Carols including 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing'.

The children at **Farway C of E Primary School** have been busy learning lines and songs for their **Nativity** which takes place at St. Michael & All Angels on **Thursday 7th December at 5pm**.

Everyone is invited to join us and refreshments will be served in school afterwards, with a special visitor making an appearance!



We also have our **Christingle Service** on **Friday 15th December at 1.15pm in the Church**. It would be wonderful to see as many people there as possible.

If you would like further information about our school please call 01404 871239 or go to our Facebook Page; 'Farway C of E Primary School' .

Ashleigh Tubbs, Head of Learning, Branscombe and Farway CofE Primary Schools

May White

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of May White who died on 5th November, at the age of 92. It is perhaps apposite that May should die on Bonfire Night as, in February 1943, a German bomber destroyed part of her school in Newbury, less than 30 minutes after the end of the school day. If the bombs had hit twenty minutes earlier all the pupils and teaching staff would have been killed. As a teenager May remembers singing in the church choir and helping the Joint War Organisation (JWO) by becoming a Red Cross cadet.



May and her husband Les moved to Offwell from Farway over 45 years ago when, together with Ann Richards and Derek Blackmore, she became a founder member of the Village Hall Committee. May loved Old Time dancing and she ran the Whist Club for many years. In Ann's tribute to May she remembers a lot of happy years, many laughs and many wonderful memories: *"Had it not been for May White Offwell would not have had a village hall. She worked long and tirelessly to see the Hall built and kept it in running order for over 40 years."*



MARY'S SONG



Do you have a favourite Christmas song?

I have to confess, I used to dislike Christmas music intensely. For about 16 years I worked in large out of town retail stores where Christmas music was played nonstop on the instore *muzac* system from about October onwards. By the time Christmas Day had arrived I really didn't want to hear Mariah Carey ever again. I am better now, by the way.

Music, is of course, one of the reasons people enjoy Christmas so much, along with gifts, trees, mince pies, family, friends and community. Music has a powerful way of connecting with us, moving us, speaking for us, and even challenging us.

So you won't be surprised to hear that we see music and song frequently in the Bible. In fact the first Christmas story starts with a song. Luke's Gospel chapter 1 verses 46-55. Mary's Song, otherwise known as 'The Magnificat'.

It is so easy to think of Mary the mother of Jesus as timid, young and naïve. Illustrated on Christmas cards as just 'another' character in the great story of salvation. But that's not true. Mary's role is front and centre in the Gospel accounts of the Incarnation. She is her own person with agency and vision, a key player in the unfolding story of salvation.

The Magnificat is evidence of her mindset and passion. It is a beautiful and yet powerful vision of the future. A revolutionary canticle of the heart, unfurling a prophetic image of a different world for all to hear.

Through her song Mary recognised the ugliness of inequality and had found hope in God that things would change. She was incensed by the brutality of oppression and yet heard God's plan to transform hearts and minds through love and grace. Mary longed for a better world. She could see that life was not right, and all that she sang out expressed an outpouring of both joy and justice.

Mary could see that she lived in the misshapen and unjust world, and on news of her bearing the Son of God she captured the vision that God had in song. She sang because she knew that the child she was to bear would change the world for ever. When and how it would change, she did not know. But heart by heart, life by life, community by community, the change comes.

Now let me ask you again. What would be your favourite song? I pray that your trust in God and your hope in Jesus Christ will turn your faith into a song like Mary's. And I hope that your love of God and your trust in Jesus' coming will turn your discontent with the world into a song of hope in the name of Christ. May you find hope and peace in the Christ child this Advent and Christmas..

Reverend Jeremy Putnam



BIBLE READINGS



DATES	HEBREW BIBLE	NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLE	THE GOSPEL
SUN. 3 rd DEC. Advent Sunday	Isaiah 64.1–9	1 Corinthians 1.3–9	Mark 13.24–37
SUN. 10 th DEC. Advent 2	Isaiah 40.1–11	2 Peter 3.8–15a	Mark 1.1–8
SUN. 17 th DEC. Advent 3	Isaiah 61.1–4,8–11	1 Thessalonians 5.16–24	John 1.6–8,19–28
SUN. 24 th DEC. Christmas Eve	2 Samuel 7.1–11,16	Romans 16.25–27	Luke 1.26–38
MON. 25 th DEC. Christmas Day	Isaiah 9.2–7	Titus 2.11–14	Luke 2.1–14[15–20]
SUN. 31 st DEC. Christmas 1	Isaiah 61.10 – 62.3	Galatians 4.4–7	Luke 2.15–21
SUN. 7 th JAN. Epiphany	Isaiah 60.1–6	Ephesians 3.1–12	Matthew 2.1–12
SUN. 14 th JAN. Epiphany 2	1 Samuel 3.1–10[11–20]	Revelation 5.1–10	John 1.43–end
SUN. 21 st JAN. Epiphany 3	Genesis 14.17–20	Revelation 19.6–10	John 2.1–11
SUN. 28 th JAN. Candlemas	Malachi 3.1–5	Hebrews 2.14–18	Luke 2.22–40

Mary's Song from The Gospel of Luke, chapter 1. 51-55 (NLT)

- ⁵¹ His mighty arm has done tremendous things!
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.
- ⁵² He has brought down princes from their thrones
and exalted the humble.
- ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away with empty hands.
- ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel
and remembered to be merciful.
- ⁵⁵ For he made this promise to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children forever.”

CHURCH SERVICES

DATES	ST MARY'S OFFWELL	ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS FARWAY	ST CUTHBERT'S WIDWORTHY
SUN. 3 rd DEC. Advent Sunday	9:30am Parish Communion		4pm Advent Carols
SUN. 10 th DEC. Advent 2	4pm Christingle Service	7pm Carols by Candlelight	4pm Christingle Service
FRI. 15 th DEC.		1.15pm Farway CofE School Christingle	
SUN. 17 th DEC. Advent 3	6pm Carols by Candlelight		9:30am Holy Communion
SUN. 24 th DEC. Christmas Eve	2pm Crib & Toy Service	11.15pm Midnight Mass	4pm Nine Lessons & Carols
MON. 25 th DEC. Christmas Day	9.30am All Age Family Service		10.30am Benefice Communion
SUN. 31 st DEC. Christmas 1	9.30am Benefice Service at St. Cuthberts - All are welcome		
SUN. 7 th JAN. Epiphany	9.30am Holy Communion		9.30am Morning Prayer
SUN. 14 th JAN. Epiphany 2	4pm BCP Evensong	11.15am Parish Communion	9.30am Family Service
SUN. 21 st JAN. Epiphany 3	10.30am Family Service		9.30am Parish Communion
SUN. 28 th JAN. Candlemas	10.30am Family Communion		9.30am Morning Prayer

FARWAY METHODIST CHURCH SERVICES

DECEMBER

- 3rd 11am Conducted by Mr D Moll.
 10th 3pm Conducted by Revd.S Santry
 17th 3pm Conducted by Prof.Stephen Lea
 24th 11am Conducted by Dr Alan Mcilveen
 31st 11am Conducted by Revd. Dr Stephen Mosedale

JANUARY

- 7th 11am Conducted by Mr Paul Violet
 14th 3pm Conducted by Mr Gordon Howe
 21st 11am Conducted by Revd. Julian Albrow
 29th 3pm Conducted by Revd. Ben Haslam. Covenant Service



DIARY DATES

FRI. 1st DEC.	ST. MARY'S & OFFWELL SSC	CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON 4.30pm followed by CAROL SINGING in the Social Club
FRI. 1st DEC.	WIDWORTHY BARTON	2024 WIDWORTHY FETE MEETING 7.30pm Contact Billy Leach on 07740 121294 or email billy@renewablepower.co.uk
SUN. 3rd DEC.	ST. MARY'S	BENEFICE CHOIR REHEARSAL 5-6pm
FRI. 8th DEC.	OFFWELL	SCHOOL PTFA - CHRISTMAS FAYRE 3.30pm
SAT. 9th DEC.	OFFWELL VH	SCHOOL PTFA - WREATH MAKING Booking is essential; afternoon spaces as we go to print
WED. 13th DEC.	OFFWELL	OFFWELL LADIES LUNCH CLUB - Christmas lunch at Hare & Hounds - partners & friends welcome. Booking essential so contact Marian on 01404 831066 or tuckers@offwell.com
THURS. 14th DEC.	OFFWELL	BIBLE EXPLORATION GROUP 7—8.30pm
THURS. 21st DEC.	AT OFFWELL GOLF CLUB	MEN'S BREAKFAST is LUNCH this month. 12:30 for 1pm Spouses, partners & friends are invited RSVP by 10 th Dec to 01404 831924 or lindawhithear570@btinternet.com
THURS. 21st DEC.	OFFWELL SSC	BENEFICE COFFEE MORNING 10:30am - 12 noon
WED. 10th JAN.	OFFWELL	OFFWELL LADIES LUNCH CLUB Contact Marian for details on 01404 831066 or tuckers@offwell.com
THURS. 11th JAN.	OFFWELL	BIBLE EXPLORATION GROUP 7—8.30pm
THURS. 18th JAN.	OFFWELL SSC	BENEFICE COFFEE MORNING 10:30am - 12 noon
THURS. 18th JAN.	AT OFFWELL GOLF CLUB	MEN'S BREAKFAST 9:30am for 10am Contact 01404 831924 for more details

Offwell Sports & Social Club. Events will be advertised nearer the time with more detail.

Bar open at 7pm every Friday. Fri. Dec. 1st - Carols at the club (non-members can be signed in)

Sat. Dec. 9th-Bingo, Fri. Dec. 15th-visit from Father Christmas for club members and their families, and

Sun. 17th Dec-football and also Scott Phillips from Sweet Black Angels will be performing with well-known songs and Christmas Songs, with the Pizza Man in attendance.

Apart from the Father Christmas event and the Carol Singing night, all events have a special license and are for members of the public to attend and to use the bar and to come along and enjoy. We look forward to seeing you all.

Farway Village Hall

Coffee Morning every Wednesday 10am-12. Bar open every Friday at 7.30pm

Sat. 2nd Dec.—Christmas wreath making 10am-2pm & Children's Christmas Disco 5.30-8pm,

Sat. 9th Dec.—Christmas Quiz 7-10.30pm, Sat. 16th Dec.—Family Christmas Bingo 5.30 for 6pm,

Fri. 22nd Dec.—Skittles Christmas Celebration, Sun. 31st Dec, New Year's Eve 7.30pm till late.

THE JESSE TREE

Jesse Trees are a very old Christmas tradition dating back to medieval times. They are used to help tell the story of the Bible from creation through to the Christmas story. They are named after Jesse, the father of King David who, according to Chapter One of Matthew, was Jesus' great x 14 grandfather. This is because there is a prophecy in the book of Isaiah (chapter 11: 1-4) which is believed to describe Jesus: *"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."*

The Jesse Tree is now often used as an Advent Calendar, and this year Offwell school children will be making advent cards for the Jesse Tree in St. Mary's. These will be hung each day throughout December.

We are very grateful to Clive Whithear for making the Jesse Tree for us.



CRIB & TOY SERVICE, ST. MARY'S, OFFWELL



www.christmasstockimages.com

"Last Christmas Eve at St. Mary's Crib & Toy Service the congregation brought a selection of presents for both adults and children who were spending Christmas away from home in a North Devon Refuge. NDADA (North Devon Against Domestic Abuse) provides temporary refuge to women and children who often arrive having fled their homes in crisis, without personal belongings, children's clothes and favourite

toys. The Christmas gifts from strangers, whether toiletries for the adults or a cuddly toy for the children, makes Christmas just that little bit more bearable than it would otherwise have been. We will again be bringing gifts to the Crib & Toy Service at St. Mary's on Christmas Eve at 2pm. Please make sure your gifts are wrapped and labelled (adult or child). The service will be for 45 minutes and we hope you will be able to stay for refreshments that are being served afterwards.

An up-to-date list of Community Services in Honiton can now be found on www.offwell.org. This includes **Operation Rudolph**, a community led project that will provide a meal on Christmas Day for anyone who may find the Christmas season hard, be it for financial or social reasons. Find them on www.inspiring-connections.org and Facebook..

FIND US - CONTACT



Revd. Jeremy Putnam

Phone: 01404 831911

Email: jeremyputnam@parish-church.com

Typical Working Pattern is Mon - Thurs (Exeter)

Fri & Sun (Offwell, Widworthy & Farway)

Revd. Tracey Voysey

Phone: 07968 658 638

Email: revdtracey@gmail.com

Working for the parish 1 day a week & 1 Sunday a month



Benefice Churchwardens

FARWAY

Tara Huffman - 01404 871372

Stefanie Kastner

OFFWELL

Jonathan Paveley - 01404 831450

David Pavey - 01404 43029

WIDWORTHY

Mim Prins - 01404 831688

Vacancy

Email Addresses:

The Link magazine/newsheet:

parisheslink@gmail.com

Offwell Website (for updates)

offwell.org@gmail.com

farwayvillagehall@gmail.com

Websites:



www.achurchnearyou.com

www.explorechurches.org

www.farwaydevon.org.uk

www.farway.devon.sch.uk

www.offwell.org

www.offwell-primary.devon.sch.uk



OFFWELL MISSION WEBSITE

www.parish-church.com

www.offwell.church

www.farway.church

www.widworthy.church

FACEBOOK:

[The Offwell Mission Community](#)

Do visit our website where there will be new articles to read (and more)

Sign up to the monthly newsletter to receive copies of 'The Link' by email.

COFFEE MORNING

Thursday 21st December

Thursday 18th January

10:30am to 12 midday

Every 3rd Thursday of the month we hold a coffee morning in the Offwell Sports & Social Club room for all three of our Benefice Parishes



This event is for everyone;
whether you go to church or not,
you will be made very welcome

Facebook Pages



[Offwell Together](#)

[The Offwell Sports And Social Club](#)

[Farway village hall East Devon](#)

[Spotted Wilmington, Devon, UK](#)

A colour copy of The Link is available on the 'Offwell Mission' & 'Ofwell.org' websites