

The Offwell Mission Community

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



THE LINK



March & April 2026

Family

Rev'd. Stuart Huntley



I was born in a narrow Victorian mid terrace house, with two modest rooms on each of three floors. It had ridiculously steep staircases which we would delight in flying down using pillowcases as sledges. It had a freezing outside toilet and a miniscule garden out the back. It was at the top of three short rows of terraces, a mile from the sea. My uncle lived in the third terrace down, and so I grew up close to my cousins, who were about the same ages as my brother and me. We had other cousins who lived about a quarter of a mile away, and together, every Boxing Day, we'd go to our Nan's for cold meats, food, board games and chatter. This was our shared experience for many years.

The week after Christmas we all gathered for a celebration of my uncle's 80th birthday and it was the first time I had seen all my cousins in over 30 years. Before we went out, I was worried I wouldn't be able to recognise them. But even with the passage of three decades, I had no problem at all in knowing those I grew up with despite the wrinkles, lack of hair or middle-aged spread! It was wonderful to see them again after so long. It was lovely to chat about our lives and experiences we have had since, both the good and bad. Some of them had spent time in far flung countries, but most are still living in that corner of Kent quite close to each other. Most had been married, separated and remarried and several had grandchildren too. My uncle has eight children, and several greatgrandchildren, so as you can imagine there were lots of people there at this party and a large number of children I had never met across the generations.

Families are important. Obviously, I recognise that not all get on – I know that too well especially as I had been kept apart from my family for many years. They have their ups and downs. Families aren't perfect. There's often a brother, an uncle, a cousin, an aunt, who no one speaks to anymore, or is separated through relationships, split off from the rest – or a sibling that is inappropriate at the party and unreliable to say the least...

Families matter to God, and they should matter to us. For in God's understanding, we are all brothers and sisters. We might not always stay in touch, but we are connected by deep bonds of love.

One of my cousins remarked to me that we have to make each and every day count, especially the time we have with our close relatives. We never know what a new year will bring – will there be joys or sorrows, laughter or sadness, hardships, trials, or moments of joy and delight?

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus said 'Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.' I've always thought this a bit negative. However, I've since reflected that in this teaching Jesus is reminding us that the cycle of life and death is inevitable. Don't spend precious time worrying, since there's plenty to look forward to each day.

Make each and every day count.

You can read a full version here: <https://stuarthuntley.com/2026/01/05/make-everyday-count/>

FIND US - CONTACT

Rev'd. Stuart Huntley

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Email: revshuntley@gmail.com



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

Kirsteen Hall.

OFFWELL

Jonathan Paveley - 01404 831450

Viki Whitehead - 01404 831050

FARWAY

Tara Huffman - 01404 871372

Stefanie Kastner

Facebook:

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

St. Cuthbert's, Widworthy now has their own Facebook page

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)

ST. AUGUSTINE – The 1st Archbishop of Canterbury

Carol Hayes

The enthronement of Sarah Mullally as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury will take place on 25th March 2026. During the enthronement ceremony the Archbishop will be seated on three thrones in different locations within the cathedral, to denote her role as diocesan bishop, titular abbot of St. Augustine's Abbey and Primate of All England. She may be the first female to sit in St. Augustine's Chair but she is not the first female to be influential in Britain's conversion to Christianity.

With the end of Roman rule in 410, and the invasion of Anglo-Saxons in the mid-5th century, so ended not only Roman control but Christian worship in many communities in Britain. Those who held onto their beliefs were forced westwards, and this became an age of seclusion and monastic life. The Anglo-Saxons embedded themselves in the east of the country, bringing with them new ways of life, culture and religion.

In 597, St. Augustine, a Roman monk, was sent by Pope Gregory the First to the Kent coast, along with 40 religious figures, to convert King Ethelbert and his kingdom to Christianity. With the Anglo-Saxons firmly rooted in Britain it was up to Augustine to change their spiritual path towards Christianity.

It is believed that the decision to approach the Kingdom of Kent, ruled at the time by Ethelbert, was motivated by the fact that the Saxon King's wife was a Frankish princess called Bertha, who happened to be a practising Christian herself. Having already been exposed to the faith via his wife Pope Gregory believed that Ethelbert would be more susceptible to the spiritual persuasions of Augustine and his accompanying missionaries.

Despite some expected setbacks the mission would prove highly successful. Augustine arrived in Kent on the Isle of Thanet and proceeded to Canterbury. The King welcomed him with great hospitality, giving the missionaries the freedom to preach as well as the privilege of using Queen Bertha's church, St. Martin, for their services. St. Martin's probably started out as a Romano British church and upon his arrival Augustine used the church as his mission headquarters, enlarging it around 597.

Queen Bertha's place in the introduction of Christianity to Britain is often overlooked. Ethelbert married Bertha to build an alliance with her father, the powerful King of the Franks and a part of that deal was for Bertha to be allowed to practice her Christian faith. It is, therefore, no coincidence that when Augustine came to England he decided to settle in Canterbury rather than anywhere else.

Queen Bertha is remembered as pious and devout, but a woman who brought her faith unflinchingly to a new home in a foreign land must have been in possession of no small amount of determination and will.

Postscript by Rev. Stuart

When I decided to walk the new pilgrimage route at Canterbury, in memory of a friend who had recently died, my first service on the route was held at St. Martin's. The service that day happened to be in the little chapel where a list of archbishops are carved above the altar. I remember being struck, not only by the importance of the role played by **Bertha** in the Archbishopric of Canterbury but also the role played by Bertha's daughter, **Ethelburga**, in the Archbishopric of York. Ethelburga married King Edwin of Northumbria and under the influence of his wife's faith, Edwin converted to Christianity; Ethelburga's Roman Bishop, Paulinus, later becoming the first Bishop of York. We would have neither without them both.



Statue of Queen Bertha

Prayer Corner, St. Mary's.

Psychologists recommend it, the National Trust do it, and St Mary's give you a chance to practice it. Stillness



"Take a slow breath in through your nose. As you breathe out, gently, slowly, allow your shoulders to drop." This is the message you will hear on your headphones at Kingston Lacy, in Dorset, when experiencing 'slow looking'.

Apparently, on average, we spend just 8 seconds in a museum or gallery looking at a piece of art. 'Slow looking' is about stillness and attention, opposed to the constant hurry in many of our lives. It encourages us to be more present and intentional or connected.

Churches are often the perfect place to experience stillness. J. John, an Anglican evangelist, recently posted a 1 minute sermon on stillness and he said this:

"Stillness is not about doing nothing it's about doing something".

The Bible says, 'Be still and know that I am God' (Psalm 46:10). But stillness is rare today. We panic if the WiFi drops off for more than 30 seconds. We drown silence with noise, yet stillness is where God whispers and we remember that he is God and we are not.

The philosopher, Blaise Pascal, once observed, 'All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone'. Stillness isn't wasted time, it's sacred time where we trade worry for worship.

St Mary's church is open daily from 10am to 4pm. The prayer corner, by the font, has a comfy chair to sit and be. There are also suggestions on the notice board about prayer.

Another Quiet Day will be available for all in April.

Jan Burditt.

On Monday evenings during Lent, there will be a study group looking at the 'Draw Near' Lent course. The Church of England page is here:

www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/len-holy-week-and-easter/draw-near-life-giving-habits-lent

Contact The Rev'd Stuart Huntley (details on page 2) for further details

St. Mary's Church Flower Workshop (Take Two!)

Choose a Windowsill or Pedestal arrangement.

Saturday 28th March, 11 am to 3 pm, in the Church.

Cost £10 per head including bread and homemade soup lunch—and lots of fun! To book, please email oakes@querci.co.uk or janburditt@gmail.com.

God, and a positive mental attitude, will help you.

Pam Staunton

I sometimes think non believers have a lot to support their arguments. I'm sure most Christians at some time question God when bad things happen. I know I'm guilty of that.

Over 50 years ago when I got struck down with Arthritis and could not walk I did find it hard to accept and went through the 'why me?' stage. It took a long time but eventually I felt I knew what God wanted me to do. My experience was deemed very useful for research studies and I was also trained as a lay leader to run pain management courses. Suddenly I felt like a useful, worthwhile person again.

When I had my fall last year I again felt life had been a bit unfair. Home from hospital, with no family and no support from the NHS, it immediately hit me how difficult it was going to be to cope for a while. But I'm blessed with wonderful friends and neighbours who all rallied round and I will be forever grateful to them.

I was having coffee with a very dear friend recently who had been extremely kind and helpful, and she just happened to say how much she had enjoyed helping me. She said it in a way that was almost thanking me for enabling her to do something important and useful. I think most people probably get a glow when they are able to really help someone, I know I do. It made me look at my misfortune in a totally different way.

I was often thanked for all the time and effort I put into running the pain courses but I always assured everyone that I got a lot more out of them than I put in. So if you need help in any way, whether it be to do something, get some shopping, run a problem by, or if you're feeling lonely and would love a visit or a chat, just reach out to someone. You might actually be doing something good for them as well.

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 1st March 2nd Lent	9:30 am Benefice Holy Communion at St. Mary's, Offwell	
Sun. 8th March 3rd Lent	5:00 pm BCP Evensong	9:30 am Holy Communion
Sun. 15th March Mothering Sunday	10.30am Family Service	9:30 am Morning Prayer
Sun 22nd. March 5th Lent	10:30am New Beginnings Service	9:30am Family Service
Sun 29th March Palm Sunday	9:30 am Palm Sunday Benefice service at St. Cuthberts, Widworthy	
Mon. 30th March Holy Monday	Final Lent Course in the evening	
Tue 31st March Holy Tuesday	10:00 am Morning Prayer in St. Mary's 6:00 pm Compline in St Mary's	
Wed 1st April Holy Wednesday	6:00 pm Compline in St. Mary's	
Thur. 2nd April Maundy Thursday	6:00 pm Maundy Thursday Communion and Foot-washing, in St. Mary's.	
Fri. 3rd April Good Friday	11:00 am Good Friday Reflective Service	
Sat. 4th April Holy Saturday	10:00 am Easter Gardens in Widworthy	
Sun. 5th April Easter Sunday	9:30 am Holy Communion, followed by Easter Egg Hunt	10:30 am Holy Communion, followed by Easter Egg Hunt
Sun. 12th April 2nd Sunday of Easter	5:00 pm BCP Evensong	9:30 am Holy Communion
Sun. 19th April 3rd Sunday of Easter	10.30am Family Service	9:30 am Morning Prayer
Sun. 26th April 4th Sunday of Easter	10:30am New Beginnings Service	9:30am Family Service



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



BIBLE READINGS



DATES	FIRST READING	NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLE	THE GOSPEL
Sun 1st March 2nd Lent	Genesis 12:1-4a	Romans 4:1-5,13-17	John 3:1-17
Sun. 8th March 3rd Lent	Exodus 17:1-7	Romans 5:1-11	John 4:5-42
Sun. 15th March Mothering Sunday	1 Samuel 16:1-13	Ephesians 5:8-14	John 9
Sun 22nd. March 5th Lent	Ezekiel 37:1-014	Romans 8:6-11	John 11:1-45
Sun 29th March Palm Sunday	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Philippians 2:5-11	Mathew 26:14-27
Sun. 5th April Easter Sunday	Acts 10:34-43	Colossians 3:1-4	John 20:1-18
Sun. 12th April 2nd Sunday of Easter	Acts 2:14, 22-32	1 Peter 1:3-9	John 20:19-end
Sun. 19th April 3rd Sunday of Easter	Acts 2:14, 36-41	1 Peter 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
Sun. 26th April 4th Sunday of Easter	Acts 2:42-end	1 Peter 2:19-end	John 10:1-10



COFFEE MORNING

Thursday 19th March, and Thursday 16th April
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 ".

OFFWELL CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

As this is being written, the sun is streaming through the window - a rare and welcome sight this winter. The rain has felt relentless, and so the thought of spring, or even Easter, can seem a long way off. Yet this is a good reminder of one of the songs the children sing during collective worship at Offwell C of E Primary School:

*And the sun comes up and the sun goes down
We are living in a world spinning round and round
And the seasons come and the seasons go
It's a beautiful world, never let it go.*

Despite the weather, the school community can still say with confidence, *"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."*

As Easter approaches, the school Ethos Group will be working with St Mary's to create a **Prayer Spaces** event. During Holy Week, a number of prayer and reflection stations will be set up in the church. These will offer children, families, and members of the wider community the chance to explore prayer in a creative and thoughtful way.

Prayer in school is always invitational and never compulsory, but this experience will give children the opportunity to reflect on the Easter story in a personal and meaningful way. Not all prayer will be spoken or written - some of it may even take the form of pipe-cleaner people - but all of it will be about making space to pause, reflect, and connect.

Offwell Village Hall Charity.

I'm glad to report that the new heating system has been installed. As it is very new, we are working on the configuration to make it most effective & efficient - please bear with us. We also took the opportunity to streamline part of the electrics to make it easier to manage. The window in the kitchen will be replaced shortly, as well as the front door handles & locks.

Whilst there is much improvement work going on in the background, we are also applying for a grant to refurbish the floor and to have badminton & pickle ball court layouts included. This is in response to comments in the parish survey – hopefully, we will be successful in our application.

Two new exercise classes started in January: Tai Chi on a Monday 11am – 12am and ladies Pilates on a Tuesday 9:30am – 10:30am. In March there will be a Yoga class starting on March 11. Check out the calendar on the back page for other exciting events.

Don't forget, the Village Hall market takes place on the 3rd Saturday in the month from 10am – 12am. There are lots of great crafts, meats, vegetables etc. Come along to buy and spend some time chatting over a tea, coffee, cake or bacon roll.

We always welcome volunteers to support with events and with work at the hall. If you wish to help or want to find out what being a Trustee entails, please contact Mark on 07879666954.

Mark Norfolk—Chair of Trustees.

Offwell Parish Council

The Parish Council meeting on 14 January was Adrian Jenkins' last as Parish Clerk. The council thanked Adrian for his dedicated service and support and presented him with a gift from all the parish councillors. The new clerk, Caroline Holland, was present and took the minutes of the meeting. Caroline will now take over as parish clerk. Caroline lives in Lyme Regis and can be contacted via the new clerk's email address, clerk@offwellparishcouncil.gov.uk

We heard from the owners of Windmill Garage about their plans to upgrade the existing shop and fuel forecourt, Planning Application 24/2059/FUL, which the council agreed to support. To obtain planning permission will no doubt be a relatively long process, but the owners hope to complete within 3 months of receiving permission.

The budget and precept for the forthcoming new tax year was discussed and an increase of 2.7% was agreed which was in line with the current CPI but lower than the headline rate of inflation.

There is a major re-organisation of local government taking place, and it is likely that in the next year or two, East Devon District Council will cease to exist and be replaced by a Unitary Authority. 5 different proposals have been given to Central Government from local government across Devon. You can view all of these at <https://www.devonlgr.co.uk/>. There is a consultation organised by the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government until 26 March 2026. We would urge you to go and view the different proposals and express your views. Central Government plans to make its decision by July 2026 with elections to take place for the new unitary authorities in May 2027, followed by the new authorities taking over in April 2028.

We hope that no-one has been adversely affected by the awful weather we have had since Christmas. Please let any of the parish councillors or the parish clerk know if you have suffered any flooding in your home so we can see if there is anything we can do to help or prevent it happening in the future. Let's hope that this terrible weather will end soon.

The Parish Council is still looking for new members. We are currently 3 councillors 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. 19th March	Honiton Golf Club	MEN'S BREAKFAST 9:30am for 10am Contact 01404 831924 for more details
Thur. 19th March	Offwell SSC	BENEFICE COFFEE MORNING 10:30am - 12 noon
Sat. 21st March	Offwell Village Hall	OFFWELL VILLAGE MARKET. 10 a.m. to 12 Noon
Sun. 22nd March	Offwell Village Hall Field	Far Western Area Tug of War matches.
Sat. 28th March	St. Mary's church, Offwell	St. Mary's Flower Workshop , 11 am to 3 pm. See details on page 4 of this booklet.
Thur. 16th April	Offwell SSC	BENEFICE COFFEE MORNING 10:30am - 12 noon
Thur. 16th April	Honiton Golf Club	MEN'S BREAKFAST 9:30am for 10am Contact 01404 831924 for more details
Sat. 18th April	Offwell Village Hall	OFFWELL VILLAGE MARKET 10 a.m. to 12 Noon
Sat. 13th June	Widworthy Barton	WIDWORTHY FETE
Sat 27th June	Offwell Village Hall and Field	OFFWELL VILLAGE FETE
Sat 18th July	Offwell Village Hall Field	PARTY ON THE PITCH
Sun. 16th August	Offwell Village Hall Field	Tug of War—Far Western Area National League
Wed. 28th October	Offwell Village Hall Field	Offwell Bonfire and Fireworks

Offwell Village Hall—regular events

Every **Monday**, 11 am to 12 noon—**Tai Chi**

Every **Tuesday**, 11 am to 12 noon—**Pilates**

Every **Wednesday**, 9:15 am to 10:30 am—**Yoga** (starts Wed 11th March)

KEEP THE DATE! Widworthy Fete is on Sat. 13th June 2026.

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.