

# NewsLink

6 December—20 December 2020



Churches of North  
Bradford on Avon  
& Villages

Dear friends

Advent, the beginning of the church's year. A time of preparation, looking toward the coming of the light of the world. After a year that has brought its fair share of confusion, despair and pain, the church begins a new cycle of faith, hope and love.

Each year, the season for me has always begun early in December with the Christingle Service in St Nicholas Church, Winsley. Hearing the school children sing *The Candle Song* and watching their little faces concentrating and mesmerized by the candle flame of their Christingle is spine tingling and very moving. *God is with us Alleluia, Come to save us, Alleluia.* If you don't know the song, do search for it on YouTube. It's sung by children to Graham Kendrick's lyrics. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teZaQUKjx24>



After the year we have had, I think we really need Christingle. And while we know Christingle won't look or feel the same this year, our churches are certainly making sure it is going to be brighter than ever.

But how can oranges wrapped in red tape, decorated with sweets, with a candle on the top, really make a difference?

Well, when those candles are all lit they create a warm, magical glow that symbolises the light of Christ that brings hope to people living in darkness. And it doesn't matter where you light a candle - as long as you do.

Although traditionally Christingles have always been held in large gatherings in churches and schools, it's become clear this year that, although that simply won't be possible, there is actually no one way to hold a Christingle celebration.

So this year, Christingle will be about Zoom services both national and local, it will be about intimate family-led events online and of course bigger socially-distanced ones outdoors.



And what won't change is the message those oranges bring.

Christingle has always been about sharing the light of Christ, bringing people together, reaching out to children and renewing the hope and joy that we discover afresh each year in the Christmas story. And doing that we are renewing hope and offering comfort and joy in equal measure. This has never felt more crucial for everyone, but it is especially important for vulnerable children and young people who have been severely affected during the pandemic.



Hope is hanging by a thread for too many young people whose lives are overshadowed by abuse, exploitation and neglect. This year has turned children's lives upside down, so this Christmas, their hope is under threat more than ever before. We need to shine those lights for them. The Children's Society has created a whole range of Covid-19 adapted resources to help organise your Christingle service, whether it is traditional, innovative, offline, online, church, at home or school. And across this Diocese, our churches and schools have taken these up and are determined to do Christingle. As Bishop Nicholas said in his Children's Society video message:

"After the year we have had it has never been more important to try and spread hope in this world and I am pleased we can do this through Christingle". So a big thank you to all across the Salisbury Diocese who will be holding a Christingle service and helping the Children's Society bring hope to the lives of thousands of young people. As the children of Winsley School can't gather in church this year Tessa and Zoe are leading a Christingle Service with each class bubble so they will be learning about sharing the light of Christ and hopefully experiencing the light of Christ for themselves.

## *The Presence of God*

*Dear Jesus, we come to you today longing for your presence. We desire to love you as you love us. May nothing ever separate us from you. We pray for all the children experiencing Christingle this Advent and Christmas, that they may come close to your light and be blessed by your presence. Gill Ford. The Children's Society.*

**Amen. Ann, Rector**

What do you do when for the first time in your adult life there are no deadlines and no external demands on your time, other than those you choose to impose on yourself? I woke up to this state of being on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2019. My 70<sup>th</sup> birthday approaching, and, according to the Church of England's rules my license as a priest about to expire, I had led my last service in the benefice the day before. I sat down in my study and opened the exercise book in which I intended to record a diary of my spiritual journey in the months to come. This is what I wrote:

"My sabbatical has started. I decided to look at UCB's "Word for Today", which I got from Church on my way out yesterday. It is the first time for a number of years that I have obtained a copy. The verse for today is "Called according to his purpose" (Romans 8: 28 NLT). The reflection that followed included the words "...So instead of asking God to bless what you're doing ask him to reveal his purpose for your life..". I prayed "well Lord, what is your purpose for my life now? Please help me to discern it in the months ahead".

My sabbatical has not worked out the way I thought it would at the start. Yes, I did spend pre Covid months worshipping at St James Church in Trowbridge. Yes, Chris and I had a wonderful holiday travelling by train through Portugal and Spain. Yes, I had a spiritually rewarding retreat at Buckfast Abbey. What I had not anticipated were the rich and rewarding months I was to spend researching and writing a book – "The Life and Times of the Charnleys in NE Lancashire". What a wonderful enterprise this turned out to be. Our benevolent God gave me this as a gift, just for me. Along the way I had the help of a number of generous and kind people; the archivist of Blackburn library, the staff of Lancashire County Archives, a historian who can translate 17<sup>th</sup> century court Latin, three farmers in a hamlet on the borders of Lancashire and Yorkshire who let me have copies of the deeds of their farms. Oh and I mustn't forget my second cousin once removed who kept finding 19<sup>th</sup> century newspaper articles about members of the family! I started out my sabbatical as a scientist by inclination, interest and temperament and somewhere along the line I have morphed into a historian.

As my 6 month sabbatical was coming to an end I came to the realization that I was not ready to go back to being a priest. When on occasion I read Newslink I felt like I was looking in through the window of a house and seeing people I knew well engaged in .

the stuff of life and that I didn't belong and was not required. What was I to do? Help me Lord. Then Chris gave me a paper on Christian Discernment; a wise and helpful document it turned out to be.

I confronted myself with the question "What would I do with my life if I no longer worked publically as a priest"? What the process of discernment required of me was to imagine sitting on a fence. On one side of the fence life would entail my working as a Priest in the Church of England, while on the other side of the fence new horizons dawned, new opportunities to serve God in an as yet unknown way. I never considered that life would continue in my current engagement with family and personal interests alone. I realized that it had taken me some 6 months to get to a point when I could sit on the fence. Indeed I was naturally now parked on the fence. My job was to "jump down" and spend some days or weeks inhabiting each side of the fence in turn. What were the positive things about being a priest and what were the negative things. What did God have to say as I prayed and reflected? Then I had to get back onto the fence before going down and inhabiting the other side of the fence. Lord what would I do if your will for my life is that I should no longer be a Priest? I reflected and prayed on what the positive things would be about such a move and what would be the negative aspects.

To cut a long story short it became clear to me over time that overwhelmingly I was being called back to being a Priest. It has taken me some time to fulfill the requirements for a new license as a retired priest (known as "Permission to Officiate"). There were forms to fill in, references to be taken up and an on-line delivered ("ZOOM" platform) Safe Guarding Course to be completed; not forgetting acquisition of a new DBS certificate.

Covid 19 of course has turned the world upside down and my story is of little consequence in the scheme of things. Our rector and her team have done a marvelous job in providing online services and finding other ways to reach out to people. The take home message of my diary piece is simply that Keith Charnley has offered his services alongside the other retired priests in our benefice, Bernard Hughes, Jim Hill and Paul Batson, and in due course his name will appear on Benefice rotas in one role or another

**Revd Keith Charnley**

## **Advent to Christmas: Comfort and Joy for everyone.**

Ann has ordered some *Comfort and Joy* booklets and book marks for each church. *Comfort and Joy*, is the national message and the national church has produced resources for us to share with others. The booklets are called *Comfort and Joy, nine lessons and carols for Christmas*. There is a reflection by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and others on a Carol for each day from Christmas Day to 2<sup>nd</sup> January, along with a Bible reading, an action to carry out and a prayer.



Winter sunshine -Walking near Great Chalfield last week. **Stephen Pike**

We have long found comfort in the words of Chapter 13 of I Corinthians. The thirteen verses re-interpreted here for our currently trying times might, I hope add a new dimension to an un-changing message...*With acknowledgement to an unidentified member of a church community in Glastonbury, Somerset.* **Bob Williams**

*We can have all the best technology, fantastic preachers and music that doesn't lag or jump but if we don't love we're nothing but electronic feedback or an un-muted attempt at singing on zoom. We can talk all the good sense in the world, know all the risks and have faith enough that God will stop this virus in its tracks and he does, but if we don't love, we've got nothing. We can spend our days shopping for others, and our nights on the phone to the lonely and isolated until we're run ragged and exhausted. But if we don't love, we've got nowhere. Love waits patiently 2m away in the supermarket, love is kind to those who feel forgotten, it does not envy the furloughed or take pride in its status as a 'key worker', it doesn't blame others for the virus's spread or seek to make money from other people's misfortune. It doesn't get angry at its rights being taken away nor does it keep records of*

*Love does not delight in our leader's failings but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

*Love never fails. This virus will mutate or die. Church will change – as it has before and will do again. Scientific knowledge will move on leaving what we have now in the dust. For now we may only see in part but that doesn't mean we have a partial gospel and one day we shall see the full picture. Before this pandemic we knew nothing of R-rates, social distancing and lock-down, now we know better and have put our past understandings behind us. For now we see but through a screen darkly, then we will see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13*

Tickets for **St Peter's** Raffle of Christmas Hampers full of tasty goodies are now on sale. Rev. Ann Keating will be drawing the winning tickets at St Peter's on Sunday 20th December. To buy tickets call 858412

### **Christmas at Christ Church**

Come and share Christmas with us:

Walk through the Churchyard decorated with Christmas lights

Pause at our Nativity stable with figures made by the children of Christ Church school and listen to carols. Hang decorations on our outdoor Christmas tree. Spend a while in the peace of the quiet Church, open daily from 10am until 4p.m.

There will be packs to make your own decorations available at the church **Hilary Pike**

### **St Peter's Church Christmas plans**

St Peter's Church are holding our first Christmas Tree Festival in the church during the two weeks prior to Christmas. Village groups and the four churches in the Benefice are each decorating a tree. We warmly invite you all to come and enjoy this colourful and festive display. We will also be encouraging local households to join in by **decorating a tree** outside their houses.

There will be a **Christmas Eve Lantern procession** to the church with children encouraged to dress up as angels, shepherds or wisemen. There will also be a **Nativity Trail** in the churchyard for the children to explore.

Tickets for our **Raffle** of Christmas Hampers full of tasty goodies will be on sale soon. Rev. Ann Keating will be drawing the winning tickets in the church on **Sunday 20th December.**

### **St James Church - Celebrating Christmas 2020**

Sadly, we are unable this year to celebrate Christmas together in our Crib and Carol Services in our village church of St James. Instead, we would like the whole village to celebrate the run up to Christmas with us in a new and visual way.

**Step 1** Christmas is all about giving and St James is supporting the **Salvation Army Christmas Present Appeal\*** - to help make Christmas special to those who may have little or nothing under the tree on Christmas morning. If you would like to help with this appeal they are asking for new and unwrapped items for children aged 0 – 18 (soft and educational toys for the very young, games, toys, books, toiletries and accessories for older children).

**The Christmas Crib** will be set up in the church porch on Saturday 28 November with a box beside it to receive gifts (which will be securely placed in the church daily). Donations please by **Saturday 5 December 1pm** when they will be taken to Trowbridge, time being short owing to Covid requirements before Social Workers take them to families.

\*For financial donations please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tsa-community-support-000382> or a cheque may be made payable to The Salvation Army and posted to Michala Lancefield, Trowbridge Corps, Castle Street, Trowbridge BA14 8AR

### Greetings to all our Neem Tree supporters.

Like all charities, and indeed so many businesses, The Neem Tree Trust has suffered a considerable loss of income this year. We have had to cancel all our fundraising events which has meant we haven't met up with our supporters and enjoyed our usual get togethers.

I have therefore set up a pop-up Neem Tree Trust shop in my conservatory at The Old Stables, Avoncliff which will open from 2<sup>nd</sup> December until the run up to Christmas.

Amongst items for sale will be:

- Fabric items made by the trainee tailors in India
- Cards and wrapping paper
- Freda's delicious jams and chutneys
- Small soaps made by Simone in Bradford on Avon sold in an Indian drawstring bag
- Kimono style wraps made from Indian saris
- Neem Tree Trust Go Green Bags
- Woven bags made by the patients at St Luke's Leprosy Hospital
- Beautiful glass friendship globes
- Wooden items handcrafted by Bill Hazelwood, Wiltshire Timbercrafts
- Plants

To maintain social distancing please call or text me if you would like to visit the shop. Hand sanitiser and masks will be available! Thank you to all the wonderful folk of Winsley who, through Mike and Alison Wells, have supported us so loyally for so many years. Keep safe and well. **Kathy Miller**

**A date for your diary.** In the Diocesan Prayer Cycle our churches and schools are being prayed for on 9th January.

Our Archbishops of Canterbury and York have asked us to pray for our nation (you may remember Thy Kingdom Come earlier in the year), this is a continuation with a special feel whilst we are in this second wave of the pandemic. <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/PftN%20Booklet%20spreads.pdf>

The above link takes you to a single page (2sides) of Prayers for each day. Preferably we all pray at 6pm. Churches up and down the land are joining in. Be part of the bigger picture. **Daphne Cox**

### Fundraising for Christ Church. Our community project

Please ring 862834 if you would like to buy any of the following: Marmalades/Chutneys/Jam and Jellies and Christmas cards. Details at the end of NewsLink.

Help, where are they? The jam jars I mean. In the garage? In the garden shed? On a shelf in the cupboard? Surely not in the recycling box? Dorna's jam jar stock has run out, in order for me to continue to make marmalade for the project please sonate your jars. Do call 862834 to arrange collection. Thanks, **Dorna Daw**

### We miss you

Covid 19 has generated a new kind of card, a *we miss you* card. A dear niece who lives in London we have not seen each other this year. In that time she has had a baby girl and her toddler brother top look after.

I would love to see them all. I miss being able to go by train to Waterloo and cross to Waterloo East to catch another train to spend the day with them. The returning train from Waterloo arrives at Boa promptly at 9.38pm, not too late in the day, a lovely outing. I received a *we miss you* card, including a little bottle of rather nice hand sanitiser, a very pretty face mask patterned with birds, (we both love birds), a book on Greece, because I would be missing travelling to the Dodecanese islands this year, and biscuits, 'owls and pussycats' with Edward Lear's poem printed on the box. How loving and thoughtful those all were, such a heart warming joy to receive, and all chosen between amusing a twenty month old child and feeding a baby. (Sorry not to share the biscuits with you) There are so many people we miss, but hope to see next year. **Dorna Daw**

**St Nicholas** - opening times for private prayer on Sundays 13.00 to 16.00hrs and Thursdays 10.00-13.00hrs.

**Benefice office** open on: 16th November and 23rd December

This Sunday's service will be available on the our website [www.nboachurches.co.uk](http://www.nboachurches.co.uk) Each fortnight we will also publish your photos, bible verses that have spoken to you, reflections and poems in News Link or on the website. Next News Link due on **20 December**. Please submit all content by **Tues 15 December**. If you know someone who can not access News Link online and who would prefer a hard copy, please send their name and postal address to Ann Keating. We will post a copy to them by Royal Mail in keeping with the C of E guidelines for safe distribution.

### Ministry Team

Rector Rev Ann Keating. E: [rev.ann.keating@btinternet.com](mailto:rev.ann.keating@btinternet.com) (722230), Rev Tessa Mann (309374), LLM: Rachel Pound (862223)

### Church Wardens

#### **Winsley:**

Roy Ludlow (868779)  
Linds Batson (720069)

#### **South Wraxall:**

Dave Wyper (865384)  
Valentine Thornhill (862552)

#### **Christ Church contact:**

Denise Leigh (863916)

#### **Monkton Farleigh contact:**

Rachel Exley (851485)

### Lay Pastoral Assistants

Denise Leigh (863916)  
Stephen Pike (782537)  
Denise Davies (863678)  
Gill Fairhurst (867560)  
Daphne Cox (868224)  
Elizabeth Bush (866624)  
James Middleton (920564)

### Children's & Youth Worker

Zoe Yeomans  
[zyeomans3@gmail.com](mailto:zyeomans3@gmail.com)

### Benefice Office

Tessa Stacey (865046)  
[nboabenefice@gmail.com](mailto:nboabenefice@gmail.com)



**Please ring Dorna on 862834 if you would like any of the following:**

### Marmalade £3

Three fruit, Grapefruit/Lemon and Orange  
Grapefruit, lemon and lime. (Really citrusy)  
Clementine (Sweeter, very fruity)

### Chutney £3 (*recipes from Cordon Bleu book of preserving*)

Fig and Apple (Good with cheese)

Apple and Red tomato with onion. (Sharper flavour)

Apple and Apricot with onion and ginger.

Apple and Rasin with walnuts and a little orange.



### Jam and Jelly £3

Quince Jam

Japonica Quince jelly

Mint and Apple jelly in small jars, varying prices.

### Cards 50p each. Five for £2

Bird kneeler

Banner.