

Editorial notes.

For those of you who are reading this on paper I apologise for its lateness, but due to the second lockdown, delivering was an issue. These next few weeks including the Christmas period will probably be the worst period of this pandemic as we will most likely be unable to celebrate it with all our families and our church services will not be the same either, with no coffee and mince pies after the service. Most of us will cope whatever the restrictions are, but many lonely, poor, with ill health, or suffering mentally, will not be so lucky. So if you know anyone in those categories please give them a call on the phone and let them know you are thinking about them and praying for them.

The front cover main picture was taken from Walton Hill in 2010 and shows snow and mist looking towards Compton Dundon with Christmas benefice pictures from the past completing the scene. The Remembrance pictures on the back are all 2020 benefice ones, and the Parish Church displays were set up for the 'hour of silent personal prayer' which was appreciated by a number of masked, socially distanced, and hand sanitised folk. Thanks to those involved in the display, especially Brenda and Mike Bergner for their display of the knitted poppies which were made by many. Brenda has redone the Roll of Honour board with the names of those in our parish who lost their lives in the 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 wars. I was 'super impressed' by her talent of Calligraphy, thank you Brenda.

I would like to thank those who have given encouraging words regarding the magazine during these difficult last few months, and to our team who get them out. You will be pleased to hear that the price for 2021 will remain the same, £5 for the year or 50p a copy.

**WISHING YOU ALL PEACE AND GOODWILL FOR
CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR.**

Roger and Bernard

Bishop's Letter.

Bringing comfort and joy

One of our oldest (16th century) English carols tells us that the story of Jesus' birth as a baby into our world, is good news, bringing "tidings of comfort and joy". And don't we just need comfort and joy at this moment!

We know that Christmas will not be the same this year. The usual gatherings of family and friends will not have the same shape this year. Traditional carol services and Midnight Mass may not be possible either but that doesn't mean that Christmas is cancelled!

This year more than ever we need to carol the words, 'comfort and joy'. We need to find new and novel ways of telling the Christmas story. The Church of England and our own diocesan team have provided plenty of ideas by which we can bring Christmas to our communities. I'm going to be both a tax collector and a donkey in some of our diocesan video re-telling of the story!

Perhaps even more important is how we can personally be messengers of comfort and joy. Who do you know who might need you to bring them some comfort this Christmas? Maybe someone who is alone, especially anxious, grieving a loved one? How could you offer comfort and support?

And as for joy...? Perhaps we ourselves need to rediscover the joy of the Christmas story. What could be more wonderful than knowing that God loves us so much that even though it was costly, He chose to come and join us in a world, dark with fear and suffering, and bring the light of His presence!

Bishop Ruth

Rectors Letter

Comfort and Joy

Dear Friends,

As I write, we are just a few days into the month-long lockdown and I am conscious that for some this may be a very tough time coming towards the end of a particularly difficult year. Writing from this perspective, it might seem hard to be expectant and joyful about Christmas when we don't know what the season might look like this year and even whether we will be able to see family and friends and worship together in the same way as in previous years.

Preparing for Advent and Christmas seems particularly hard when this would normally be such a blessed time with lots to look forward to and familiar traditions to anticipate. Whilst much, even which services we can hold, still remains uncertain as we await new government announcements; we plan to offer a number of ways of celebrating the coming of Jesus into the world this year including services in church and online, together with Christingles 'to go' in lieu of our traditional Crib and Christingle services.

We will base all that we do around this year's Church of England Christmas campaign "Comfort and Joy" which reminds us that whilst Christmas may well be different and indeed difficult this year, the Christmas story and the meaning of Jesus' birth has not changed. "Comfort and Joy" booklets, based on the 9 lessons and carols and telling the Christmas story will be on offer around the benefice. The campaign reminds us of the need both to offer comfort to those struggling in these uncertain times and to remember the joy that we can share as we celebrate the coming of the Saviour into the world.

More details of all that will be on offer will be posted on our website and Facebook page as well as the weekly Lifeline.

Wishing a Christmas season full of Comfort and Joy, Ana.

Walton Matters

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord - and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

Isaiah 11 vs 1-3. NIV.

Operation Christmas Child.

Well, things have changed again in a year of constant change. Due to Churches having to close it meant that our shoe box drop off point was closing too. Liz and I managed to beat the lockdown by taking 46 boxes already dropped off to Bagley Chapel.

After consultation with Bagley and Samaritans Purse, they have arranged a second pick up after the December 2nd opening up and all the other shoe boxes will be dropped off and taken to the depot for shipping.

Thank you everyone who has filled a shoebox whether in person, donating money or on line. You have been brilliant even with shopping difficulties. Thank you all so much for bringing joy to children around the world.

We hope and pray that we will be able to join together to celebrate the birth of our Lord when lockdown is ended. We cannot yet confirm how these will look but information will be published in different ways. Meanwhile please keep safe and if anybody needs help, we are available. You can contact us using any of the phone numbers in the magazine and it will be passed on to the relevant person.

Again we have to share with sadness the death of Margaret Browning. Michael and Margaret have been much loved members of our congregation for so many years and it has only been in the last few years they have not been able to attend. Whilst we missed them in worship, we still kept in touch and visited.

We value their friendship and send Michael, Anne, Gillie, Sue and families our love and prayers as they struggle with their loss.

Sandra

Compton Dundon Remembers

Poignantly our final service before the second lockdown was All Souls. Ana and David, joined by Jill Perryman, led us in a moving service remembering all those dear to us who had sadly passed away. Since the service took place at 6 pm candles lit the chancel end of the church, and together with beautiful music, helped us to be still and focus on remembering our loved ones. On Remembrance Sunday this year we were unable to come together in church to remember and honour our village servicemen as in previous years. Yet the day did not pass unmarked, Zoom church, so important during lockdown, resumed this morning with a Benefice Remembrance Service in which people from all four churches played a part. At St Andrew's Steve King, Chair of the Parish Council, laid a wreath in the porch (see back cover) and read out the names of Compton Dundon servicemen who had given their lives in the two World Wars. There is a plaque honouring these same men that today was put on the bench by the cricket pitch, without ceremony but nevertheless with love. Anyone passing through the village can see the poppies lining the main road as a visual tribute to the fallen from across our nation. (See back cover). Last year 13 'trees of the fallen' were planted in the churchyard, each tree representing one of the Compton Dundon servicemen who died in active service. 'The Last Post' was sounded at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, November 11th as a tribute from the whole village. Now, more than ever, we remember those who may need our support during this month, when physical contact is limited. Perhaps to collect a prescription, do some shopping, or receive a friendly message or telephone call. St Andrew's Church has been open on Thursday mornings from 11-12 o'clock during lockdown for private prayer and reflection as we remember those who like to come and share its beauty and peace. November is a month for remembering.

Pat.

An update from Uganda.

I just wanted to provide you with an update on the situation in Uganda, and to give you some details about what is happening specifically with child sponsorship monies. As most of you will be aware, schools in Uganda remain closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. They are likely to remain closed at least until the start of the new school year at the beginning of Feb 2021. Pupils required to complete their examinations have however temporarily come back into our school in Kalagi to prepare for, and sit their exams. Thankfully some of the lockdown measures are now easing which has meant that family earnings have started to improve slightly. In reality these earnings are extremely low, but it does mean that some foods can be purchased again in the marketplaces. Whilst children remain out of school and unable to receive their school meals, this certainly helps with food provision for those families who are fortunate enough have a working guardian.

Thanks to our supporters' generosity, the emergency covid-19 food appeal that we launched back in April was a huge success. Without your support a food crisis would have occurred and many families would have suffered greatly. Although our funds for providing extra food distributions have now been depleted, we managed to target the families most in need and cover as many families as possible with this extra aid. For those on Facebook, you will have seen the joy and gratitude of TFCM families receiving their distributions throughout lockdown. We provided emergency food distributions for around 4 months to both Kawempe and Kalagi- feeding up to 85 families each month at the peak of our distributions. The impact this has had within the community cannot be underestimated. So we again thank you greatly that despite hard times here in the UK, you have not only continued to support your child or granny throughout this difficult time, but for many of you have contributed extra funds to this appeal as well.

For those of you who sponsor a child through TFCM, we appreciate that some of you will have had a reduced amount of information about your child this year. Hopefully you will appreciate that we haven't had school reports to send out and as many photo opportunities as normal this year. Your continued financial giving has however ensured your child has remained fed, their school place kept open and they have remained under the care of our Ugandan partners. However now as of November, thanks to the efforts of our TFCM teams and your continued financial giving, we have been able to ensure that all TFCM sponsored children will receive home learning materials, and tutorial support until the time schools open once again. We hope to start sharing some pictures with supporters with regards to this soon. This is such positive news and we wanted to share this news with you, as together we will continue to make a difference throughout these circumstances...One life at a time.

These life changing stories are now being told on our new website in our "Stories of hope" section. Why not have a look at the many ways TFCM is continuing to make a difference today. <https://aiduganda.org/new-blog>

Best wishes

Matt

Matt ADAMS
Communications & Publicity Co-ordinator, TFCM UK
Registered Charity 1184344

"Together we can make a difference...One life at a time"

Congratulations.

To Lucy Woodward on the birth of baby Noah Reece Woodward
Also to grandparents Sarah and Carl and Great Grandparents John and Phyl Greed.

Also.

Jean Munro who celebrated her 90th Birthday in November.

Tearfund Big Quiz Result.

Suzie would like to thank everyone who took part in the virtual quiz recently, which raised £345. A great result, well done to all involved.

Advent Windows.

Street Baptist Church is running a window art activity during Advent, for which they have been asking people to contact them with an interest in taking part. The aim is to have 24 house windows around Street each illuminated on a specific day, with a Bible verse and a particular letter, which when you have spotted all 24 will spell out a hidden phrase, a good way of sharing the Christmas message. It will be fun walking around Street seeing the different displays during Advent; they will be lit from 4pm until 8pm from the 1st to the 24th December.

If you have any questions please contact Hanna Hindle on 07890189938.

Church Christmas Lights.

Floodlights will have been shining out from Compton Dundon Church since St Andrews Day Nov 30th to cheer us all in our winter gloom, and to send the message that Jesus was born to be the light of the World.

Also the Mission church stars will be lit throughout the December evenings, as will the stars on the Parish Church Tower. Also providing restrictions allow a limited people number 'Midnight Service' the tower will be floodlit.

For everything there is a season

... Ecclesiastes 3.1

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, ... Matthew 6.28

We began the first lockdown in spring; for those able to go outside there was birdsong, emerging flowers and greening trees to enjoy. The second semi-lockdown is at the end of autumn. Leaves have turned brilliant colours of yellow and red and, at the time of writing, some remain on the trees as a spectacle to be enjoyed. The starlings that migrate to our area are beginning to arrive, in small flocks at first; pied wagtails are appearing on rooftops, and robins continue to sing. Autumn flowers adorn gardens; berries and wild clematis seed heads adorn some hedgerows. We are fortunate to have these things on our doorstep.

Spring, summer and autumn have the advantage of colour. In winter there are fewer flowers but it is a time to enjoy shape. This is when trees and other plants reveal their basic structure in all its glory. If you look carefully you can also see the buds from which the new leaves will emerge in the spring. This is a reminder that the seasons follow an unending cycle whatever may be happening in the human world. We should not forget that as human beings we are part of creation. We depend upon the natural world for food, energy and other raw materials. The virus is a reminder, if we needed one, that whilst we have learnt to control many things, there is much that we cannot control. The Bible reminds us of this but also reminds us that for those things that we can control we need to take care how we behave, how we use natural resources and to remember that we are part of creation not separate from it. Through Eco Church we are asked to think about these things. We are all doing some things right but we all need to do some things better both at an individual and a group level.

Sue Ripley

WATCH – *God's Pop*

It was way back in the mid 1950's when I bought my first pop record. It was an old '78' and I got it at a shop in north London, as far as I remember. It was by a chap called Don Lang - although I don't remember the title. From there I progressed to the Ponytails an American all-girl group – ponytail hairstyles were fashionable at the time. Then I went on to Connie Francis and had most of her records: I still remember the words of most of them to this day - Stupid Cupid, Lipstick on Your Collar, etc. Through subsequent decades of my life I kept up with the pop scene. The tunes and sometimes the words were the default music in my brain. In 1976 we went to New Zealand. Jill's cousin Chris was marrying a New Zealander in Wellington and we were Chris's only UK relatives to go. Chris had recently-from nowhere-become a Christian and went to a church in Wellington which met in a suite in an office block. We joined them on a Sunday morning. It was an eye-opener. I shall never forget it These people were singing and as they sang they closed their eyes and put their hands in the air! I remember they sang "Thou art worthy! Thou art worthy!" Something was different to any other church I'd been to. these guys really meant what they were singing! I was knocked for six – this was what real worship looked like and for all my 33 years I had never met it before – anywhere! How many times I had gone through the motions of worship in church but never experienced the real thing?

How much of my life has been wasted on worthless counterfeits, both sacred and secular? Gradually – far too slowly, if I'm honest – light has dawned. I'm now well past twice the age I was in 1976 and it has taken the current pandemic to shake me out of my complacency.

You see, the words of secular pop are just so much froth, catchy as the tunes may be. The Bible tells us that we should be singing to ourselves in 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs'*. Real help to do that comes with Christian radio stations like UCB and

Premier. Each offers several channels, like Radio 1 or 2 and Radio 4. If you are on your own at home or in your car, or with headphones, why not check it out? At the present time when we are cut off from each other physically and our churches are closed, I find Christian radio a real lifeline. *Bernard*

Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16

U.C.B. This Christmas Look For Jesus

'THEY SAW THE CHILD ... AND WORSHIPPED HIM.'

Matthew 2:11 NIV

The Wise Men couldn't have imagined humbler circumstances than those surrounding the birth of Jesus. Max Lucado paints the picture: 'The ground is hard, the hay scarce. Cobwebs cling to the ceiling ... Mary looks into the face of her Son. Her Lord, His Majesty. At this point the human being who best understands who God is and what He's doing is a teenage girl ... She remembers the angel's words, "His kingdom will never end." Majesty in the midst of the mundane. Holiness in the filth of sheep manure and sweat. Divinity entering the world on the floor of a stable. This baby had once overlooked the universe. His robes of eternity were exchanged for the rags keeping Him warm. His golden throne room abandoned in favour of a dirty sheep pen. Worshipping angels replaced with shepherds. Meanwhile the city hums, unaware that God has visited their planet. The innkeeper would never believe he'd just sent God out into the cold. And people would scoff at anyone who told them the Messiah lay in the arms of a teenager on the outskirts of their village. They were all too busy to consider the possibility. But those who missed His Majesty's arrival that night missed it not because of acts of evil or malice. No, they missed it because they weren't looking for Him!' This Christmas, in the midst of the toys, the tinsel, and tumult, stop and look for Jesus. If you know Him as your Lord and Saviour, take time to worship Him. And, if you don't, make Him your Lord and Saviour. If you do, it'll be the best Christmas you've ever had.

Manna

News in brief

Bringing joy this Advent

The Quantock Foodbank, in partnership with Churches Together, are giving a nativity advent calendar and booklet to all their local first school pupils. Marlene Mason, who helps run the foodbank said, "Donations from our churches have been so generous. With Christmas coming many families won't be able to buy the usual treats so, in order to bring a little joy and light into the children's lives, we have purchased the calendars. It also means we are helping others too. The proceeds from the Real Chocolate Company calendars go to fund clinics in Africa."

Dreaming of a green Christmas

If you don't want to forget your care for creation this Christmas, you may like to download the Environment team's handy Tips for a Green Christmas. It contains ideas about present buying, cards, decorations as well as tips on tree buying and food options. Download a copy at www.bathandwells.org.uk/environment/

Christingle on the move

Covid restrictions has set the Christingle service at Hayward Village, near Weston super Mare, on the move. Family groups, individuals or friends, properly spaced, will set off at different times from a starting point in the village with a map showing the different locations for each part of the service.

They are on the move in Hayward Village, near Weston super Mare. Around 150 people are expected to take part in a 'moving' Christingle

service. Taking into account Covid restrictions, family groups, individuals or friends, properly spaced, will set off at different times from a starting point in the village. Using a specially designed map they will visit different locations for different parts of the service.

Starting the new year with prayer

For the last couple of years, Somerset's clergy and parishioners have had the chance to meet together at Everyday Faith events (Archdeaconry Days), to think about how they live out their faith. 2021's gatherings will be online from 10 to 16 January and all are invited. The theme is 'Prayer – Everyone, Everywhere!'

The Archdeacon of Wells, Anne Gell, says, "As is so often the case with these events, the theme is simple, but key to how we live out our faith. Prayer is the foundation of our relationship with God and yet so many people lack confidence in praying if they don't have a written prayer in front of them. We will be sharing examples of people from across Somerset who pray whilst singing, drawing, walking, skateboarding or just listening to the breeze in the grass."

On Sunday, 10 January a 30-minute recorded service from Wells Cathedral will be available to join on-line. Focused on prayer, it will include a reflection from Ruth, Bishop of Taunton.

On Monday to Friday of that week, a short video will be released each day, featuring people talking about the ways they like to pray, with each day will focus on a different theme, such as 'prayer and nature' and 'prayer and the digital world'. The videos will be accompanied by a few suggestions of things for people to try in their own time.

On Saturday, 16 January there will be an opportunity to join others on Zoom to hear more about prayer and discuss what people have tried during the week. Find out more about 'Prayer – Everyone, Everywhere!' and register to receive the materials in January at

www.bathwells.org.uk/archdeaconry-days-2021

.Alternatives will also be available to those who are not able to access materials online. Call Julia Hill on 01749 685114.