

THE PARISH POST

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF SANDFORD, NEW BUILDINGS AND UPTON HELLIONS CHURCHES

6TH DECEMBER 2020

Welcome to the 2nd Sunday in ADVENT service and we're back in St Swithun's Church at 9.45am, but wear your warmest clothes! It's 10am if you're watching on Facebook or you can catch it any time later on the parish website. A big thank you to Suzie and Linda who manage our Facebook page and website respectively, they have helped ensure so many more people have been able to access our services during the pandemic.

WEDNESDAY PRAYERS – 9.30AM ONLINE

This reflective prayer time continues from the vicarage kitchen. If you have items for prayer do let Paul know, when there isn't time to mention them during the intercessions, he and Tracey together pray for them all when the online service ends. Yours is not forgotten.

CREDITON FOOD BANK – OUR RESPONSE

The needs this week are **cat food, men's toiletries, apple and orange juice**. If you wish to leave donations any time the box will be in the church porch, the gates there are never locked. Thank you for your support.

RONALD'S CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS

Ronald will be bringing his puddings to church on Sunday for those who have ordered one. He made well over 40 puddings this year and with the amount raised and the gift aid added he will be handing a cheque to Crediton Food Bank of £560. Thank you and very well done Ronald.

SOGGY SPROUTS APPEAL!

Two weeks ago we invited anyone who wished to, to make a contribution towards school families in our parish who might be struggling financially this Christmas. On Sunday we handed over £695 to Jenny Scott the chair of governors for Sandford School. It is an awesome and generous amount, so thank you so much if you responded in any way. And it's great to know that so many children will now be able to have soggy sprouts with their Christmas dinners! Seriously - well done everyone.

OPEN THE BOOK

Of course since March the Open the Book team have not been able to go into Sandford School and dramatise a bible story for assemblies. But this term we have produced mini assemblies by different members of the team reading the story to camera and Richard Johnson our tech-whizz-kid adding graphics to produce a 5 minute version. Linda has put the Christmas story read by Karen Stephens on to the parish website. She will be adding some of the others to give you a flavour of what Open the Book is all about, so do have a look.

DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS

We cannot hold our usual raft of Christmas services but that is all the more reason to make sure that when we do go the church, and this year the churchyard, are more colourful and joyful than ever. We are decorating the churchyard on Monday 14th and the church on Tuesday 15th. If you have any spare baubles, ribbons and colourful decorations that will withstand the outdoor elements for us to use in the churchyard to hang on trees, around the gateways etc please let Elaine know or put them in the porch by Monday. If you can spare any greenery and foliage for inside the church on Tuesday please bring that along too. If you wish to come along and help decorate there will be plenty to do, and there is plenty of space to socially distance and yet enjoy some Christmas cheer together.

SERVICES IN THE CHURCHES OVER CHRISTMAS

Apart from Sunday mornings at St Swithun's, the only services with congregations inside the churches will be the Christmas Eve Communion service and Christmas Day Family Communion service at St Swithun's and a Christmas Day communion service at St Mary's, Upton Hellions.

WELL DONE MARGARET!

It takes more than the coronavirus to stop Margaret raising funds for and supporting a number of charities close to her heart. This year's used postage stamps, collected in the village and through other points such as the Crediton Courier have amounted to 7.25kg (that's over a stone!) for Hospiscare. Then although we couldn't collect for and pack Christmas shoe boxes here in Sandford, Margaret had a friend in Plymouth who was still involved and sent enough items to fill over 30

boxes. Finally you may have noticed some tree decorations of little knitted angels in the shop? Margaret knitted 24 for the Exeter Cathedral tree and has knitted extra for us to take and make a donation to breast cancer. Well done indeed.

IN YOUR PRAYERS

- As I read through this week's Parish Post I am awed by the generous hearted community I am part of, who willingly (and often sacrificially) give of their skills, time and money for others. Every single item is testament to that. So let's thank God for each other this week and ask God to bless us and bless others through us.
- Many of us felt immensely saddened at last week's news that Paul and Tracey were moving to the Somerset Levels, whilst at the same time being delighted for them with all that the new post has to offer them. As we pray that God will bless them both here over the next few weeks and in their future in Martock, we must trust that God has a future for our parish and pray with hope into that. Pray for Matthew the Rector in Crediton, for ourselves in the interim and for whoever will become the next incumbent here in Sandford.
- As you follow the news at the moment there is no shortage of items of concern, the coronavirus, the rolling out of the vaccines, Brexit, our NHS, students, children and those in education, those who have or will be losing their jobs as well as those on furlough or with an uncertain future. Then as we look across the world there are other countries and situations which seem beyond grim. We pray in faith and hope to a God who walks beside, who is not indifferent or impotent. If your prayer touches your heart, it touches his.

SUNDAY'S READINGS: ISAIAH 40:1-11; PSALM 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 PETER 3:8-15; MARK 1:1-8

Paul's challenge to each of us from last Sunday was to take ten minutes a day and be still, to do what Advent is all about – that is, to be still and wait. Wait on God, wait for Jesus to be real. He finished his sermon with a cheery 'Happy Advent Waiting'. Well I cannot believe how hard such a simple non-activity is! Paul encouraged us by saying it is the most transformative thing he has learned to do as a Christian. So far I have to admit my morning 'quiet time' feels like a battleground with my thoughts racing all over the place. But that's just week one, it's bound to get easier - how are you managing?