

# THE PARISH POST

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF SANDFORD, NEW BUILDINGS AND UPTON HELLIONS CHURCHES

13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2020

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**Welcome to the 3rd Sunday in ADVENT service 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.**

## **CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE – WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> AT 7.30PM (ONLINE)**

Join Paul for our candlelight carol service, not in church but on facebook. The carol sheet will be emailed to you by then so you can join in with some lusty singing at home. Christmas is not 'cancelled' just because of Covid restrictions, we can still celebrate Jesus' coming two thousand years ago. And we can still look onward to his coming again with all the promises and fulfilled prophecies that will bring with it.

## **Look Up!**

This year we have a star at the top of the church tower, lit up at night, as a daily reminder of Jesus' coming as the Light of the World. Thank you Graham for constructing it and Colin and Adrian for helping hoist it up. So remember to look up when you walk past the church.

## **'FOLLOW THE STAR' COMPETITION**

Since Sandford School have not been able to hold their traditional Nativity Service in the church, and we can't have our usual Crib Service either, we are giving every family at school a copy of the Christmas story called 'It begins in Bethlehem' and included a leaflet with a Follow the Star trail. The trail takes the children around the village looking for stars and noting the letters within them which will make up a word. They can post their entries in the porch and three lucky winners will receive a voucher to spend in Sandford Stores. There will be spare copies in the church and in the stores.

## **DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS – MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> AND TUESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup>**

We cannot hold our usual raft of Christmas services but that is all the more reason to make sure that when we do go to the church, and this year the churchyard, are more colourful and joyful than ever. We are decorating the churchyard on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> and the church on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>. 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 please bring that along too. If you wish to come along and help decorate there will be plenty to do, and there is lots of space to socially distance and yet enjoy some Christmas cheer together. We will meet at 10am but if there is any doubt weather-wise or you have any queries please liaise with Elaine. 775080

## **CREDITON FOOD BANK – OUR RESPONSE**

The needs this week are **toilet rolls, and blue and green UHT milk**. 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.

## **IN YOUR PRAYERS**

- Continue to pray for those who have Covid, particularly those in our own parish. Pray for all those caring for the poorly and confused both in hospitals and in the community.
- Remember to pray for friends and family who have heard of Jesus, are indeed making preparations for Christmas, but have not understood who He is and what He offers. Pray that a light would begin to glow in their hearts as they begin to understand how much he loves them.
- As Brexit negotiations continue right up to the wire, pray both for our leaders and the EU leaders that they have the will, wisdom and integrity to come up with a working solution.

## **SUNDAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 and John 1:6-8,19-28**

Isaiah's checklist to recognise the coming Messiah is just what we need in these uncertain times.

- ✓ bring good news to the poor
- ✓ comfort the broken hearted
- ✓ set free those feeling imprisoned
- ✓ announce the time when God would show his merciful judgement
- ✓ give people clothes of praise and joy to replace their sadness
- ✓ be fair to everyone

✓ put wrong things right

✓ make what is right grow strong

In Jesus' life in the gospels we saw him talk about and do all these things. And he has passed the baton on to us, his church, to carry on doing these things until he returns for the final time. This cuts right through the negativity, gloom and cynicism which is so much part of our news today!