

THE PARISH POST

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF SANDFORD, NEW BUILDINGS AND UPTON HELLIONS CHURCHES

20TH /27TH DECEMBER 2020

Welcome to the 4th Sunday in ADVENT service in St Swithun's Church at 9.45am but still wear your warm clothes. It's 10am if you're watching on Facebook or you can catch it any time later on the parish website.

SERVICES OVER CHRISTMAS AT ST SWITHUN'S

Christmas Eve Communion service – Thursday 24th at 9.30pm. A candlelit communion service with pre recorded carols.

Christmas Day Family Communion service – a joint service with members of Beacon Church. Live organ music but sadly no singing. Live streamed on Facebook.

Sunday 27th – Communion service at 9.45am in the church and 10am livestreamed.

CHRISTMAS DAY AT ST MARY'S

Christmas Day service at Upton Hellions – 11.15am BCP Holy Communion service. Live music on the harmonium (all being well) but again sadly no singing.

'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

Thank you to the team led by Elaine and Gill who helped decorate the churchyard on Monday morning and then on Tuesday morning turned their attention inside to the church. It all looks very festive and we caught a glimpse of that during the Candlelit Carol service on Wednesday evening. In fact I don't think the whole village has ever looked so colourful and lit up as this year, everyone seems to have made a special effort. The Living Advent Calendar in different windows has been a wonderful idea and the church will provide the final one on Christmas Eve.

IN YOUR PRAYERS

- Much has been uncertain and downright awful this year and many of us are facing huge disappointments with Christmas approaching. But there are things you can say 'thank you' for. Paul's faithful work amongst us and the growing of the online services. The wonderful sunny weather in spring and early summer. Those are just two that stand out for me. Remember to say thank you to God.
- One of the most precious gifts God gave us is free will, the ability to make choices. And a great deal of the mess we are in is because of the choices we make as individuals and as nations. Ask God for his help that you make wise choices in your life and ask him for wisdom for our leaders.
- Pray for those who will be working through the season - medical staff and our wonderful community carers, those who work in Care and Residential Homes. Farmers and those working with animals. Food producers and those working in food retail. All the emergency services. Be thankful for them all and where you can do so, say so to their faces.
- Finally remember all those who can't be with family or friends because of Covid restrictions. Pray that they will somehow be and feel connected and know the wonderful peace and joy of Jesus.

CREDITON FOOD BANK – OUR RESPONSE

The needs this week are **anything you would like to offer (not pasta)**. 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.

WORDS OF HOPE FROM A FARMER

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-methodist-blog/faith-and-farming/>

This is well worth a read from Ian Pinhey who farms at Upcott and goes to Copplestone Methodist

Church. Thank you Brian Warren for forwarding this.

Instead of the Sunday readings, why not read the Christmas Nativity story for yourself? It is found in the gospels of **Matthew** and **Luke**. In roughly chronological order it is Luke 1 v 26-38; Matthew 1 v 18-25 and Luke 2 v 1-18. You will notice there is no mention of a donkey or a stable! And the wise men don't arrive for nearly two years although we tend to make them part of the nativity. That part of the story is in Matthew 2:1-18. There is much that is timeless and wonderful in reading this story from its source.

