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THE PARISH POST

NEWSLETTER OF SANDFORD, NEW BUILDINGS AND UPTON HELLIONS CHURCHES

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December 24th/31st 2023

Welcome to our fortnightly newsletter.

Christmas Eve

Sunday 24th December at 4pm - Crib Service at St Swithun's Church

Sunday 24th December at 9pm - Christmas Eucharist at St Swithun's

Christmas Day

Christmas Day Communion services at Beacon Church at 8.30am and at St Swithun's at 9.30am

Sunday 31st December at 9.30am - Joint North Creedy East Mission
Community communion service at St Swithun's

Should you want different styles or times of services, the full rota for the North Creedy East Mission Community is always pinned up in the church porch or can be found at the end of the monthly Hub Post.

--- Diary Dates ---

Wednesdays from 10.30am to midday - Coffee and Company (and yummy homemade cake)

Friday 29th at 12pm - Memorial service at St Swithun's for Keith

Stanlake after a private cremation. Donations if desired for Hospiscare and St Swithun's.

Home groups restarting - evening group on Wednesdays at Jean's from 3rd January, and daytime group at Linda's on Tuesday afternoons from 9th January.

--- Community news ---

St Swithun's Christmas Card - During December there is a large Christmas card at the back of church made by Zara. (Big thank you Zara!). Rather than giving cards to each other please sign the card and make a donation to FCN

(Farm Community Network).

Tree Decorations - Margaret's knitted Christmas puds and angels are available for a minimum donation of £2. Moneys to go to the Churchyard Community Path Fund. Thank you Margaret.

Churchyard - Wandering through the churchyard I noticed how many beautiful Christmas wreaths were on graves and memorials. Nearly all were simply and cleverly made of natural foliage and it is pleasing to see how people are following the guidance to keep items natural. A **big thanks** to Steve McCulloch who manages the grass cutting of the churchyard all year and to the rest of the team like Stephen, Colin C, Roy and Elizabeth, Anne and others who respond to special appeals on churchyard workdays.

Thank you - At this time of year, vicars and ministers are especially busy. But they do work all year round and every single Sunday someone takes at least one service somewhere in Sandford parish. A huge thank you to Janet but also to Michael, Antonia and Laura for their special care for us.

Ukraine collection - Elizabeth is collecting medicines and baby items for Ukraine. Baby's dummies, nappy creams, teething gel, Calpol - any items for children (not clothes). Unwanted medicines for adults, even past their 'best before' date are acceptable. The need, as you can imagine is very great.

--- In Your Prayers ---

* Pray for those who have lost loved ones recently as they negotiate this first Christmas and all the memories it will bring. Remember too those who find the Christmas season difficult for so many reasons.

* Pray for those who don't have homes or jobs or the support of family and friends. Thank God for all those organisations and volunteers who work hard to put wrong things right. Crediton Foodbank, CHAT, The Salvation Army, Crisis at Christmas and many, many more.

* As you thank God for all you have in the here and now, pray for all those in the world who ache with pain or sorrow, loneliness or fear, that God will bring help and healing.

--- And finally ---

Here is a prayer from the Celtic Daily Prayer Book. First look at a crib scene or a picture of one, settle yourself, take a moment to imagine yourself there and then say these words aloud.

I open the stable door,

I kneel before the infant,

I worship with the shepherds,

*I adore the Christ child.
I give my love with Mary and Joseph,
I wonder at the 'word made flesh'.
I am aware of the love of God.
I sing glory with the angels,
I offer my gifts with the wise men.
I receive the living Lord,
I hold him in my hands,
I go on my way rejoicing,
glorifying and praising God.*
(by David Adam)



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