

THE LINK

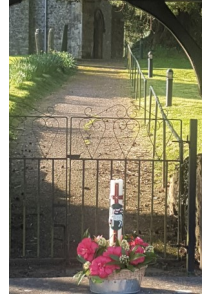
NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2020



THE BENEFICE OF
FARWAY, OFFWELL & WIDWORTHY

OPENING THOUGHTS

Looking back over this past year, in the words of the Chinese saying, we indeed live in “interesting times”. The Chinese version is a curse, “may you live in interesting times,” but in many ways, we have been able to turn the strange new ways and horrors of the COVID 19 global pandemic into large and small blessings. Even when we were unable to open the churches to celebrate Easter, in Widworthy, we lit the Paschal Candle in the lych-gate early on Easter Morning so that all who passed would be blessed by the Light of Christ’s resurrection. On the 75th Anniversary of V-E Day, we flew the White Ensign from the lych-gate in memory of all the Naval personnel who had worshiped in St Cuthbert’s and fought for our freedom along with their colleagues on land and in the air and will remember them all again on November 8th in our Remembrance Sunday Services.



On July 5th we joyfully returned to having services in Widworthy, first in the churchyard and as the weather became less favourable, in the church. On September 19th, we had our first COVID wedding in the church. David Herd and a team who form a COVID bubble from Exeter came to ring the bride and groom out and the bells have never sounded so beautiful, and seemed to break the silence and open an era of

“new normal” in which many things can be done if we find a creative way to do them safely. When I was a little girl and would complain to my mother about some perceived injustice, she would remind me of Paul’s advice to the church of the Thessalonians, (1Th 5:16-18) “Be joyful always; pray continually; **give thanks in all circumstances**, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” This can be tough advice but as we approach the end of this strange and stressful calendar year and the beginning of the church year on Advent Sunday and begin our preparations for the coming of the Saviour of the World at Christmas, let us truly give thanks for all we have endured and overcome and also for those no longer with us here on earth, knowing that Christ is with us all forever.

A happy and peaceful New Year to you all, no matter what it may bring. *Mim Prins Widworthy*

BENEFACTORY CHURCHWARDENS

FARWAY

Tara Huffman 01404 871372
Robin Banks 01404 871355

OFFWELL

Jonathan Paveley 01404 831450
Marion Hutchinson 01404 830055

WIDWORTHY

Mim Prins 01404 831688
Mary Wakeley 01404 831345

Websites:

Farway: www.farwaydevon.org.uk

Offwell: www.offwell.org

Widworthy: www.widworthyparishcouncil.co.uk

www.achurchnearyou.com

www.explorechurches.org

My sincere thanks to you all for your cards, flowers and kind thoughts during this sad and painful time for me. Your lovely memories of Terry and your support and care are a great source of comfort to me. Bless you, **Pam Staunton**, Offwell

NOVEMBER SERVICES

	OFFWELL	FARWAY	WIDWORTHY
Nov 1st All Saints Day	9:30am HC		9:30am Family Service
Nov 8th		10:55am Remembrance	9:30am Remembrance
Nov 11th	10:55am Remembrance		
Nov 15th	11am Family Service		9:30am HC
Nov 22nd			9:30am Family Service
Nov 29th 1st in Advent	United Benefice Service at Farway 11:15am		4pm Advent Carol Service

BIBLE READINGS

Nov 1st All Saints Day	Revelation 7:9-17	Psalm 34:1-10, 22	1 John 3:1-3	Matthew 5:1-12
Nov 8th	Joshua 24: 1-3a, 14-25	Psalm 78: 1-7	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	Matthew 25:1-13
Nov 15th	Judges 4:1-7	Psalm 123	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	Matthew 25:14-30
Nov 22nd	Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24	Psalm 95:1-7a	Ephesians 1:15-23	Matthew 25:31-46
Nov 29th 1st in Advent	Isaiah 64:1-9	Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	Mark 13:24-37

Lord, prop us up!

There is a story of an old farmer who always prayed the same prayer at his church meeting. 'Lord, prop us up on our leanin' side'. After hearing this many times, his minister asked him one day quite what he meant.

The farmer replied: "Well, it's like this... I've got an old barn out in one of my fields. It's been there a long time, and gone through a lot of storms. One day a few years ago I noticed that it was leaning to one side a bit. So, I went and got some poles and propped it up on its leaning side, so it wouldn't fall. Then I got to thinking about how much I was like that old barn. I've been around a long time, and seen plenty of storms in life. I was still standing, but I was also leaning a bit. So, I decided to ask the Lord to prop me up, too, on my leaning side.

'leaning side' is where we are weakest in ourselves. Sometimes we get to leaning toward anger, bitterness, bleakness in life. Then we too need to pray for God to prop us up, especially on that leaning side. He wants us to stand tall and free, in Him.

DECEMBER SERVICES

	OFFWELL	FARWAY	WIDWORTHY
Dec 6th 2nd in Advent	9:30am HC		9:30am Family Service
Dec 13th 3rd in Advent		11:15am HC	4pm Christingle
Dec 20th 4th in Advent	4pm Christmas Service with Christingle	11:15am Carol Service	4pm Nine Lessons & Carols
Dec 24th Christmas Eve		11PM Midnight Mass	
Dec 25th Christmas Day	9:30am HC		11am HC
Dec 27th			9:30am

BIBLE READINGS

Dec 6th 2nd in Advent	Isaiah 40:1-11	Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Mark 1:1-8
Dec 13th 3rd in Advent	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Psalm 126	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
Dec 20th 4th in Advent	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Psalm 89: 1-4, 19-26	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
Dec 24th/25th	Isaiah 52:7-10	Psalm 98	Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12)	John 1:1-14
Dec 27th	Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3	Psalm 148	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:22-40

FARWAY METHODIST CHURCH



Nov	1 st	11am	Conducted by Mr Gordon Howe
	8 th	3pm	Conducted by Revd. Julian Albrow
	15 th	11am	Conducted by Dr. Alan Mcilveen
	22 nd	3pm	Conducted by Dcn. Geoff Tamblin
	29 th	3pm	Conducted by Revd. Ben Haslam H.C.
Dec.	6 th	11am	
	13 th	3pm	
	20 th	3pm	CAROL SERVICE Conducted by Revd. Ben Haslam
	27 th	??	

The Church Online

Church of England

Year in Numbers: 2020 Digital Report

According to this recent Church of England report, published in October, more than 17,000 online services and events are currently being provided by C of E churches, following the introduction of lockdown and restrictions on public worship earlier this year. These include Sunday Communion services, Bible studies and morning or night prayer.

There have been nearly three million views of the national on-line services, and posts about these weekly broadcasts have been seen 23.6 million times. Contributors have included the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Duke of Cambridge and Pope Francis.

The national on-line services are being watched by a wide range of ages and around one in five people viewing go to church infrequently or not at all.

Other figures in the report show that official Church of England apps from Church House Publishing – the most popular being Daily Prayer, or the Daily Office of morning, evening and night prayer – have been used more than seven million times so far this year, up from five million in 2019. Church of England social media posts have been seen 86 million times so far, almost double the total for last year.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, has spoken about the reasons for this increase:

“At a time when many have felt isolated and fearful, Church of England parishes and clergy have broadcast thousands of online church services and events, seeking to bring comfort and hope to their communities. We know that tens of thousands of those tuning in will never have had contact with their local Church of England parish before and may never have heard the Christian message. Their welcome presence is a sign of the great hunger we all have for spiritual meaning in our lives.”



While congregations attending church services were already in decline, pre the pandemic, there is a steady growth in the number of parishes running or supporting social action projects, serving communities across the country from lunch clubs for older people to parent and toddler groups and food banks. St. Mary’s does not have the capacity, nor the facilities, to provide such community projects on any scale but it is a ‘treasure house’ of history and heritage. Visiting churches, both old and new, is one of the most popular pastimes for visitors from across the world.

In order to capitalise on St. Mary’s unique legacy the PCC wish to extend the church profile by joining the National Churches Trust ‘Explore Churches’ website where visitors to the site can access information on the church building and read a number of church history downloads including ‘St. Mary’s Through the Ages’, ‘The Life & Times of Bishop Copleston’ and ‘St. Mary’s Churchyard’.

FARWAY



We held our harvest celebration service on September 27th outside in our church yard; our first service since March. Thanks to all who contributed to this very special service led by Roger Tucker. Bishop Oliver will lead our Remembrance service at 11:55am on 8th November and our United Benefice Service on 29th November.



For support during these difficult times Pat Beard is co-ordinating help within the village.

Contact Pat on: Email: patriciabeard@tiscali.co.uk

Tel: 01404 871445

Farway Village Hall will remain closed until further notice


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REMEMBRANCE in 2020

Remembrance Sunday, 8th November 2020

Services in the Benefice:

Sunday November 8th, 9:30am at Widworthy, 10:55am at Farway

Wednesday November 11th, 11:55am at Offwell church gates

This year we remember then and reflect on now. We remember the service and sacrifice made by so many people, communities and nations 75 years ago, and we reflect on the service and sacrifice of so many today.

The world so many knew had been turned upside down by the Second World War, and the end of the war did not mean the end of the service or sacrifice for so many – 3.8 million British men and 400,000 women were demobilised, returning to their homes and families, some for the first time in many years.

Many of the feelings, emotions and challenges faced by the Second World War generation, while different in their causes and extent, still have echoes for many today; shortage of goods, feeling socially isolated, familial dislocation, a sense of the unknown, a feeling of being forgotten, and the collaboration of nations and communities to face a common foe. And as the entire nation relied on our service personnel and public servants then, so we do again today.



To learn more about the challenges faced and overcome by the Second World War generation, and the similarities they share with the world today, go to the British Legion website: www.britishlegion.org.uk/remembrance/what-were-remembering-this-year/

Here you will find links to:

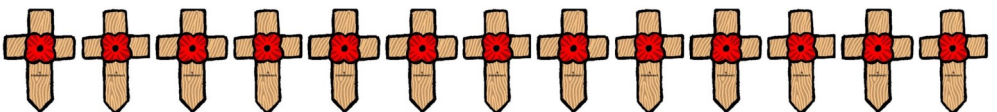
Rebuilding – rebuilding of nations and communities

Reuniting – reuniting families, friends and communities

Reimagining – the new world created by the Second World War generation

The Veterans Perspective – watch the British Legion's collection of WWII veterans' stories about their war and the challenges they faced at its end.

There will be no door-to-door poppy collection in Offwell Village this year. There will, however, be collection boxes at Offwell School and in St. Mary's.



REMEMBRANCE

War and Peace

War is not a new thing
It's been here from the start,
When Cain slew brother Abel
And their lives were torn apart.

Brother still fights brother
And nations go to war,
It seems these things will never end
Perhaps we need to ask 'what for?'

Man has chosen his own path
Where might and power tell,
But God desires a better way
Where harmony and peace can dwell.

And so a time will come at last
When all man's rule will cease,
Emmanuel will come to reign,
Our Lord and Saviour, Prince of Peace.

By Megan Carter

War creates no absolutely new situation: it simply aggravates the permanent human situation so that we can no longer ignore it. – *C S Lewis*

War does not determine who is right - only who is left. – *(probably) Bertrand Russell*

The tragedy of war is that it uses man's best to do man's worst.
– *Harry Emerson Fosdick*

The Church knows nothing of a sacredness of war. The Church which prays the 'Our Father' asks God only for peace. – *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

OFFWELL



It was good to be able to celebrate Harvest as usual this year; despite being unable to sing "We plough the fields and scatter." I would like to thank all the ladies who worked so hard to provide the beautiful flower arrangements and also to the children from the school that made us the colourful decorations.

We are planning to hold a **short** Remembrance Day service on Wednesday 11th November at 10.55am at the church gates, if the weather allows. Unfortunately, only one class from the school will be able to attend this year and they will be leading our prayers. We hope you will be able to come and join us.

Although we can't sing in church and therefore it would be difficult to hold a Carol Service, on December 20th at 4pm we are having a Christmas service with Christingle. This is a service for everyone with the traditional Christmas readings and a small choir will be able to sing some carols. There will be Christingles for the children and the blessing of the crib. On Christmas day there will be a Communion service at 9.30am led by Bishop Oliver.

The Nativity Scene will once again be erected for the Christmas season and a commemorative plaque to Maurice Annison will be added as a memorial for his gift of the figures.

We are very grateful for his generous gift and we also thank Lyn and Ken Perritt for their gift of the donkey to complete the scene. Also many thanks go to Lynn and Clive Whithear and Dawn and Mike Mulrain for all their hard work in erecting the Nativity scene and lights in the churchyard.



Offwell news updates

Would you like to be kept up-to-date with Offwell news?

The website team send out regular emails signposting new updates on the website and reminding villagers of upcoming activities and events. If you would like your name added to the secure Offwell email database please contact editor@offwell.org

Parish Council Vacancies

Offwell Parish Council are looking for people to step forward to become Parish Councillors. If you would like further information on this rewarding role please go to the Offwell website www.offwell.org or telephone/email the Parish Clerk, Adrian Jenkins, on 01404 43220, offwellparishclerk@aol.co.uk



Terry Staunton 1937-2020

It was a great sadness to learn that Terry had passed away on October 14th, having been ill for some time. Terry and Pam moved to Offwell in 2014. Terry became a parish councillor and attended St Mary's regularly where he was the sacristan for some time. He was a life-long mason and joined the Honiton lodge. He continued his links with his Mother Lodge in Basingstoke and was the chaplain in both lodges. He was held in such high regard, when he could no longer travel to Basingstoke, they made him an honorary member. He attended village events, the men's breakfast and was a regular at the monthly coffee mornings. His cheerful face and friendly manner will be greatly missed in the village.

Offwell C of E Primary School



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Tel: 01404 831417

We have been back at school since 7th September 2020 and are delighted to report that all is going well! The children are happy, learning is purposeful and it is wonderful to have a sense of normality return to all our lives.

School is not just about core academic subjects – albeit learning in those is crucial to preparing children for the wider world of secondary school and life. School encompasses the growth of a child mentally, physically and emotionally. Our daily lessons incorporate a mix of National Curriculum subjects but are balanced by work in other areas.



Each class tries to go on regular welly walks (down to the woods or for younger children perhaps the playing field). These walks remind us how beautiful the world can be and how lucky the school is to be situated within reach of such a rich learning environment.

The exercise relaxes the children, expands their

horizons and helps them stay fit – it is quite a climb back to school!

You may have seen some of our children out on the village roads a few weeks ago on bicycles. The oldest children in Oak Class have the opportunity to undertake learning on riding a bicycle safely. Bikeability is a cycle training



programme (under the umbrella of the Dept. of Transport). It's about gaining practical skills and understanding how to cycle on today's roads. The training gives everyone the skills and confidence for all kinds of cycling. As well as learning about road

safety and how to ride safely the children were also given guidance on checking their clothing (keep those laces tucked out of the way) and the ABC check for bikes (Air, Brakes, Chain). We were also able to help some children who were struggling with their confidence and they went from being non bicycle riders to doing circuits – amazing!



Art and Design & Technology allows us to introduce different skills where the children employ their hands and imagination. We use the topics as inspiration for our creations so, for example, one class has made Roman shields and another are beginning to learn to sew by making bunting – one or two of the children

were already really good sewers.



By the time you read this article the school will have had half-term break and will be back - looking forward to Christmas!!

HONITON FOOD BANK

As we approach Christmas this year there are indications that people are experiencing more poverty than in the previous ten years and this has been evident in the Food Bank with increasing demand and a reduction in supply that was rescued by the groceries collected through various Harvest Festivals.

Leading up to Christmas we are partnering with various organisations and charities to provide special gift hampers of toys etc. for families and vulnerable people. If you would like to donate, there is a list below of all the items that are normally in short supply. Please bear in mind that we will be closed over the Christmas period and therefore will require additional supplies to make deliveries that cover ten days.

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OFFWELL DURING CORONAVIRUS – 2020

Carol and Frank Hayes have set up an exhibition in St. Mary's with reflections and photographs from Offwell villagers. The exhibition will be in situ until Christmas. Do try and visit to see it all in glorious colour, but if you can't get there, we've included a selection in this issue of The Link.



It seems a lifetime ago that we were suddenly into lockdown but within days an Offwell Neighbourhood Support Group had been set up and kind neighbours were checking that the older and more vulnerable villagers were having food and grocery deliveries organised. The Grazing Cow opened the Farm Shop on the same day

their coffee shop closed and Rosie is still delivering dairy and groceries to homes within a ten mile radius. The Windmill Garage also began delivering groceries, as well as newspapers and journals, to shielding households in Offwell.



With all churches closing their doors, and only the children of key workers still attending school, life



for all became centred around home learning, new hair styling skills, a keep-fit regime, flower and vegetable growing and a one hour walk in the East Devon countryside.

A great deal of DIY and garden projects were completed during the fine and sunny days of spring and summer and 'zooming' with family, friends and work colleagues became the norm. For some it was quiz nights, others tea and chat, yet others G&T evenings with a take-away. More adults started watching church services and virtual choirs on-line; many more than attended church before the pandemic.



As lockdown eased picnics in the countryside and walks by the sea became blissful interludes from a claustrophobic norm. The church was opened for private prayer and quiet reflection and outdoor services were held at St. Cuthbert's and on Devon beaches. Easter, VE Day and VJ Day were commemorated on-line but the bunting was out with a tea party in Four Acres Close on VE Day itself.

A new grandson was born in lockdown and a socially distant 50th wedding anniversary celebrated. In May the PONSEE machine returned to harvest timber in Offwell woods and in August Ramsden Lane was planed and paved; we could finally wave goodbye to our extended family of potholes.



Covid Reflections

Rev. Preb. John Lees

Associate Priest, Holyford Mission Community, August 2020

Jesus was asked when the kingdom of God was coming. His answer was that the kingdom



isn't something to be observed, nor is it somewhere far off in the future. He said something which turned his listeners' world upside down: *the kingdom of God is among you*. We know it's here by the way we live together, and because we see God in all things.

Don't always feel you have to match the world's speed, its hunger for activity. Hang on to peace and quiet if it's been good for you. Enjoy what you have and who you are with.

Mrs. Lorna Legg

Headteacher, Offwell Church of England Primary School

In the May school newsletter I reminded the children about all the things they had learnt in Lockdown:

"How to find out things for ourselves; how to be patient when things are tough; how to say sorry when we get cross; giving things up for other people; being surprised by how much we can do for ourselves; realising how kind we can be; realising how kind other people can be; being creative; being active; learning new skills; finding out you/your mum/dad/ sister/brother have hidden talents; being in our pyjamas at lunchtime... all of these (apart from the last one!) are going to be useful when we start to return to our new normal, because learning is learning, wherever and however it happens."

As we finally come back together for a new school year our 'recovery curriculum' will be based on our school vision:

Be Well – understand and support mental well-being; build better relationships. **Learn Well** – provide the appropriate support for each child's barriers to learning, focussing on learning to read so all our children can read to learn for life. **Live Well** – enable our children to express themselves creatively and become courageous advocates for diversity, equality and our environment; to build a better future.

This has been an historic time, and it is important to reflect upon the huge events we have experienced and, hopefully, learn from them for the future. The loss of so many lives should be remembered with empathy and respect. The way in which we all stood together should be cherished and held onto. The future should be carefully and co-operatively constructed anew, so that our children do not suffer for our mistakes.



Covid Reflections

Bishop Oliver Simon

Deputy Chair of Governors
Offwell Church of England Primary School

BC, AC and “the new normal”

The distinguished Professor of contemporary History, Peter Hennessey, spoke early on about the coronavirus pandemic being an epoch-changing phenomenon about which people would come to speak, in terms of ‘BC’ Before Covid-19 and ‘AC’ After Covid-19.



I’m sure we are able to speak about what things were like *before* Covid-19. But afterwards? I’m not sure. We don’t know – yet – what the ‘new normal’ will be like. Certain things we can say. We’re using much less cash and that’s likely to continue: we are not shaking hands or hugging or kissing outside what is being called our ‘bubbles’. Is that likely to continue, is it something we’d like to continue? I believe that this new virus will have, is already having, long term consequences but it’s too soon to spell them all out. I take my hat off to people who are being so creative in the face of the social restraint which we are being asked to observe so carefully. Their creativity gives me hope because it is the key ingredient of what the new normal will look like. People using this wonderful gift and doing so hopefully. That creativity existed before Covid-19 and thankfully hasn’t been extinguished by it. And, of course, related to it is generosity, the willingness to help, to go the extra mile. We’ve seen many examples of generosity. May we continue to do so.

More difficult is something which the pandemic challenges head on. A tendency which has grown, cancer-like, and which Harold Macmillan encapsulated in the phrase of the 1960s, “You’ve never had it so good.” That’s my generation, and it’s been true – we have had it good. But Covid-19 highlights a certain hidden rottenness in our society, suddenly exposes the weaknesses and limitations of our economy and social fear and anxiety and brings decades of prosperity and stability to a sudden, abrupt hiatus.

So Covid-19 is holding up a mirror to us in which we see things that are good and things that are unlovely. We have some learning to do, some relearning is probably a better way of saying it. And this will take time and patience and probably a good deal of struggle, for some of us – not least those elected to oversee our public affairs, before anything which can be described as ‘normal’ returns.



September—groundworks commence to prepare for the new Ofwell PLAY PARK



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WIDWORTHY



November

Our **Remembrance Sunday Service** will be on **Sunday, November 8th at 9:30am**. It is always a moving service with a bugler playing the Last Post after the names of the fallen from Widworthy Parish are read. This year to comply with COVID-19 regulations, he will stand outside the church in the porch. As the generations that remember and fought in the two world wars are dying out, it becomes even more important that we teach our children to remember what happened in this country and across the continent of Europe and the world and make certain that the personal links to those who fought and died are kept alive down through successive generations. This year the service will be taken by the Revd Nigel Freathy. **November 1st is All Saints Day**, when we will have a **Family Service at 9:30am** will be taken by Mim Prins. The third Sunday **Holy Communion November 15th at 9:30am** will be celebrated by the Rt Revd Dr Oliver Simon and the fourth **Sunday Family Service at 9:30am November 22nd** will be taken by the Revd Nigel Freathy. **November 29th is the First Sunday in Advent** when we will have a candle lit **Advent Carol Service at 4pm** which will begin our time of prayerful preparation for the coming of Christ at Christmas.

December

On **Sunday, December 6th, the Second Sunday in Advent** we will have a **Family Service at 9:30am**. On **Sunday, December 13th at 4pm** please join us for the delightful **Christingle Service** during which the children will be given Christingles. This service will be taken by the Rt Revd Oliver Simon. We continue our preparations for Christmas with a **Service of Nine Lessons and Carols at 4pm December 20th** which will be taken by the Revd Nigel Freathy. We hope to find a COVID safe way to serve mulled wine and mince pies will be served after the service. Christmas morning, **December 25th, our Holy Communion for Christmas** will be celebrated at **11am** by the Rt Revd Oliver Simon. On **December 27th** the Revd Nigel Freathy will take our service at **9:30am**.



PLEASE NOTE: Because of the need to observe social distancing, alternate pews in the church cannot be used so numbers are limited. If you would like to attend one of the popular services, Remembrance Sunday, Christingle and the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, please would you contact either Mary Wakeley on 01404 831345 or Mim Prins by email on mjbprins@yahoo.co.uk with the number of people in your party. We will make every attempt to accommodate everyone safely who wants to come.

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Over the past ten years colouring books for adults have surged in popularity. Some believe its nostalgia for the free colouring we experienced as children and psychologists have come up with three reasons why it can be calming:

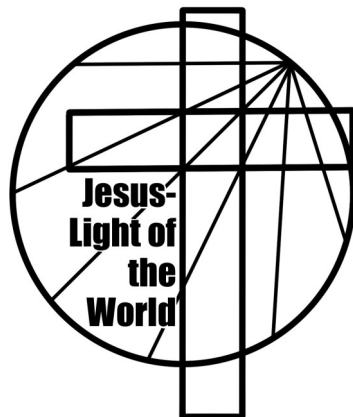
1. Attention flows away from yourself and those things that are stressing you.
2. It relaxes the brain. The difficulties of life evaporate from your awareness.
3. Low stakes make it pleasurable - it can be as neat or as messy as you choose.

Whatever the reason colouring has been found to significantly lower levels of anxiety and depression.

Having hobbies to de-stress is nothing new, whether it's gardening, golf or building model airplanes. But with the current state of daily life with Covid-19, and so many uncertainties looming in the distance, colouring might just be the answer to help you unwind and restore feelings of well-being.



They went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. *Matthew 2: 9-11*



We can't print all The Link in colour, so here is an opportunity to do some colouring. There's another picture, of a wreath with Advent candles, on page 21.

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OFFWELL WOODLAND

After six long months our volunteer team are now back in the woods for our regular Tuesday work-days. Things are a bit different; sadly, our usual bacon rolls are off the menu and we now bring our own drinks, but it's good to catch up and be busy again.

There is a lot to catch up with as woodlands need to be managed to maintain habitats. This is particularly true of the ponds. Whilst we were away, the leak in the top pond that has been there for many years has, at last, been repaired thanks to



Forestry England.

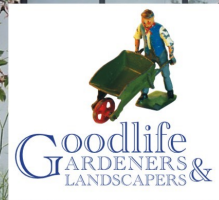


We are now busy removing Bur-Reed and Willow to maintain the open unshaded water so vital for frogs, toads, dragonflies and the other invertebrates that call our ponds their home. We are hoping to cut back the woodland paths this month and are looking to repair the lakeside picnic tables.

Don't forget to look out for fungi when you next visit as there are still some good specimens left to see.

Vernon Whitlock

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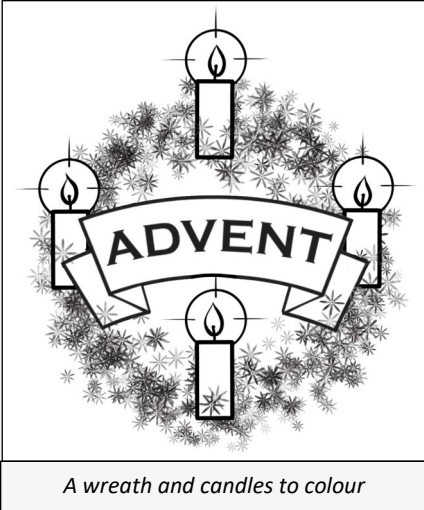
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ADVENT

Advent wreaths and candles

Advent means arrival, or coming, and most people know Advent as a time of anticipation and expectation of the birth of Christ. Advent began as early as the 4th and 5th centuries as a time of fasting and prayer for new Christians; it gradually developed into the Advent season that stretches across the month of December. In the Catholic Church the Advent season not only symbolises the waiting for Christ's birth but also for his final return.



A wreath and candles to colour

The Advent wreath first appeared in Germany in 1839. A Lutheran minister working at a mission for children created a wreath out of the wheel of a cart. He placed twenty small red candles and four large white candles inside the ring. The red candles were lit on weekdays and the four white candles were lit on Sundays. Eventually the Advent wreath was created out of evergreens, symbolizing everlasting life in the midst of winter as the evergreen is continuously green. The circle reminds us of God's unending love and the eternal life He makes possible.

The most common Advent candle tradition involves four candles around the wreath. A new candle is lit on each of the four Sundays before Christmas. Each candle represents something

different. The first candle symbolizes hope and is called the 'Prophet's Candle'. The second candle represents faith or love and is called 'Bethlehem's Candle'. The third candle symbolizes joy and is called the 'Shepherd's Candle'. The fourth candle represents peace and is called the 'Angel's Candle'. The fifth, white, candle represents light and purity and is called 'Christ's Candle'. Placed in the centre it is lit on Christmas Day to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Often the first, second and fourth candles are purple and the third candle is rose coloured. The colour violet is a liturgical colour that signifies a time of prayer, penance and sacrifice. Rose is a liturgical colour for joy.

The world's largest Advent wreath was made in St. Gall, Switzerland, in 2017. Located in a field in the town of Mosnang it had a circumference of 1312 feet, a diameter of 393 feet, and held four electric red candles, each 19 feet high.

When York Minster's four metre wide wreath was raised in 2016 it was thought to be the largest Advent wreath suspended in any church or cathedral in the UK and possibly the world.





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LOVE YOUR GARDEN

Apple and Pear Tree Winter Pruning

Now is a good time to start planning your pruning of Apple and Pear trees. Pruning enables the thinning out of congested wood and ensures the trees are healthy and productive.

Winter is the best time to do this, when the trees are dormant; once all the leaves have fallen and before new spring buds are formed. If your tree is particularly robust and sends out a lot of new growth each year, a second prune in the summer will also help; this reduces the trees resources and thus slows the expanse of new growth.

If the trees have not been maintained for some time, some of the main branches may need to be reduced and this can be done over several winters, pruning too hard at once can produce too much vigorous growth.

The aim is to create an open goblet shape with just 4 or 5 main branches. You will need a good pair of sharp secateurs and begin by removing any branches that are crossed over or rubbing on each other. Continue ensuring you remove any dead or diseased branches also. Any young growth can be left to produce fruit next year unless there are signs of overcrowding and the light is not able to get through, in which case thin these areas out carefully. Last year's growth needs to be reduced by about a third, to a bud which is facing the right direction.



Some fruit trees have a tendency to 'Biennial Bearing'. This is where a tree can produce a tremendous crop one year and barely anything the following year. Some varieties have more tendencies towards this than others, although climate and soil fertility also have an effect. Preventative measures include good watering in the spring alongside a generous feed with a good multi-purpose fertiliser. Ensure the ground around the base of the trees is clear of weeds to ensure there

is no competing for water and nutrients.

This year has produced a bumper crop for one and all, so happy harvesting, baking and enjoying those wonderful fruits. *Shelley, Goodlife Gardeners & Landscapers*

The next edition of The Link will be **FEBRUARY/MARCH 2021**. Submissions to be received by **15th JANUARY 2021 at the latest**. Email: **parisheslink@gmail.com**

The LINK is the magazine of the three Parishes of FARWAY, OFFWELL and WIDWORTHY. Views expressed here are not necessarily the opinion of the Editor or the community. Submissions, should be sent, preferably by email in text, Word, JPG, PDF or PNG format. The editor reserves the right to delay or refuse publication of articles for reasons of decorum, space or practicality. Please note - Late submissions may not be included.

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