

OAK HILL GROUP OF PARISHES

(Alderton, Gt. Washbourne,
Dumbleton & Wormington)

Vicar: Revd Julia Hook, The Rectory,
Alderton, Tewkesbury Glos. GL20 8NR
Tel: 01242 620636 [mobile 07715953076]
email: julia.hook@btinternet.com

JANUARY 2024



Dear Friends

Oh – how we pray for peace on earth!

Happy New Year and welcome to 2024. I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all who took part or attended our wonderful Carol Services, Carols in the Churchyard, our Midnight Services and Christmas Day Services – a God-filled journey! Likewise, a grateful thanks for your generous donations to the various charities we support. I'm praying that you've had a wonderful Christmas, surrounded by family, friends, and the **supernatural joy** that comes from reflecting on the birth of Christ.

I loved watching the children perform the nativity story in some shape or form – I managed to get to two Nativities and to the Oak Hill School Carol Service – well done to the children and to all involved in the preparation of them. Reflecting on the coming of God to Earth through His Son means a tired world gets to celebrate with eternal joy... a sentiment that transcends far beyond just the holiday season!

As a new year dawns, there are lots of challenges to face. We think of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the huge implications of that in terms of loss of life in both Ukraine and Russia; likewise, we think of the conflict in Israel and Gaza; we think of the trauma experienced as people see homes and businesses flattened and the documented impact of this conflict all over the globe in terms of rising energy and food prices; alongside these we have other conflicts and global challenges like climate change and its impact around the world.

People long for peace, stability and familiar rhythms. Likewise, the church seen by many as a place of sanctuary from the storms and changes that tend to sweep into our lives without warning, but the message of Salvation, that is Eternal Life, remains the same. It's found in Jesus Christ and in His redeeming love. It's a hope that is made possible by his sacrificial death on the Cross at Calvary and His rising from the dead. Let's make no mistake about it – people the world over still need to find peace with God and will find meaning and purpose through a relationship with Him through Jesus Christ, I believe there is nothing more spiritual and transforming!!!

I realise too that at the start of a new year, some people can feel a bit 'hopeless.' Perhaps circumstances seem bleak, or it feels like you are in a downward spiral. Let me say this - if you feel you've lost hope, know this fact - there is always hope, even when it seems your life or your circumstances are hopeless; I speak from personal experience, having almost lost hope myself due to family bereavements. God can make a way where there seems to be no way - he really can! He, who could bring Jesus into the messiness of the manger; He who could raise Jesus to life after what seemed like carnage at the cross, can bring hope into whatever you are facing at this time.

As we then move from 2023 into 2024, Jesus remains our hope. We do not know what a New Year will bring but we do know that He will go with us, walk with us and help us, when we invite Him in. Romans 15:13 says this 'May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him'. This is my prayer for us all as we journey into and through the New Year. We need to trust in Jesus as we step into the unknown because it is not unknown to him. Hope and trust are twins and God wants us to embrace them both.

A prayer for hope: Lord, your word says, you are the hope for the hopeless so I'm running to you with both hands stretched out and grabbing on to you. Fill me up with hope and give me a tangible reminder today that hope is an unbreakable spiritual lifeline. In Jesus' name. Amen

As we pray continually for world peace - may I take this opportunity to wish you all a wonderfully blessed New Year and may you experience the hope and warmth of God's love as you journey through 2024. Julia x

ALDERTON

CHRISTMAS FAIR: it was great to see this so well attended and there was a lovely atmosphere in the Village Hall so **THANK YOU** to all who came to support it and who provided items for the stalls. The Fair made a fantastic amount - £2,734.90 and this will be so helpful for the work we need to do following the 5-year Church building survey.

CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE AND CHRISTINGLE: this was held as the daylight was going at 4pm and the Church looked beautiful with all the flower decorations and candlelight. Again, we had a really good attendance and people enjoyed singing the Christmas carols. We raised an excellent £306 on behalf of the Children's Society - so once again **THANK YOU** for your generosity in supporting the work of this charity.

CHURCHYARD CAROL SINGING: it didn't rain so we were able to enjoy singing carols outside lit by lamps and candles. People chose the carols they wanted to sing and afterwards we went inside to enjoy the refreshments. Hot dogs, mince pies, mulled wine, and hot chocolate! Donations were asked for two charities - the Alzheimer's Society and Unicef. The collection raised £231.15 which has been divided between the two - again - many thanks indeed.

GREAT WASHBOURNE

It was lovely to welcome so many people to the Carol Singing and Crib Service last Monday. Everyone was in good voice, and we were able to make a substantial donation to Sue Ryder as a result of everyone's generosity. A huge 'THANK YOU' goes to Karen for playing for us, and to the team who helped put the evening together.

We wish everyone a **HAPPY and HEALTHY 2024** and look forward to seeing you at our January services.

DUMBLETON

A HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2024 TO EVERYONE! It was heartwarming to see so many of you in church for the Carol Service on 17th December and we wish to **THANK** all the Readers who helped to tell the Christmas Story through lovely poems and readings.

Please join us for a **SPECIAL CANDLELIGHT SERVICE** to Celebrate
"CANDLEMASS together with CHRISTINGLES"

AT 4pm. 21ST JANUARY This will be a lovely Family Service open to all ages, when we give out the **CHRISTINGLES** to mark the invaluable work done by **THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY** in helping vulnerable and needy young people in our country. The money collected at the service will be given to The Society. Mulled Wine and other Refreshments will be served, so do come along and help to make this a truly wonderful occasion.

WORMINGTON

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL. A big **THANK YOU** to everyone for supporting St. Catherine's Church over the last year. It was lovely that so many people were able to make the Carol singing and the Christmas Day Services. Thanks also to Chris Haslam for leading the Christmas Day service.

SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2024

Lectionary Year B

31st Dec 2023 5 th Sun Christmas 1 Naming of Christ White	A very relaxed and informal Service to welcome in 2024! 10.30 am - Dumbleton		
7th Jan 1 st Sunday Epiphany White	9.00am GT WASHBOURNE Epiphany HC	10.30am DUMBLETON Epiphany HC	Isaiah 60.1-6 Ephesians 3.1-12 Matthew 2.1-12
14th Jan 2 nd Sunday Eph 2 White	9.00am WORMINGTON Epiphany HC	10.30am ALDERTON Epiphany HC	1 Sam 3.1-10 [11-20] Rev 5.1-10 John 1.43-end
21st Jan 3 rd Sunday Eph 3 White	9.00am GT WASHBOURNE Epiphany HC Genesis 14.17-20 Revelation 19.6-10 John 2.1-11	4.00pm DUMBLETON Candlemas/Christingle Service Malachi 3.1-5 Hebrews 2.14-end Luke 2.22-40	
28th Jan 4 th Sunday Eph 4 - Candlemass White	6.00PM WORMINGTON Choral Evensong	10.30am ALDERTON Candlemass	Malachi 3.1-5 Hebrews 2.14-end Luke 2.22-40
4th Feb 1 st Sun 2 Lent Green	9.00am GT WASHBOURNE HC CW	10.30am DUMBLETON HC CW	Proverbs 8.1,22-31 Colossians 1.15-20 John 1.1-14

CHURCHWARDENS

ALDERTON

Mr. M. Newman, 18 Courtiers Drive, Bishops Cleeve 01242 675028
 Mrs S Reid, 4 Culls Meadow, Toddington 01242 621265

GREAT WASHBOURNE

Mrs J. Kent, Washbourne House, Gt. Washbourne 01242 620291
 Mrs Jane Harrington, Orchard View, Great Washbourne 07766 483130

DUMBLETON (PCC Secretary and Wedding Secretary)

Mrs T. Steggles, Bracklin, Main St. Dumbleton 01386 882049

WORMINGTON

Mr J. Evetts, Middle Hill Farm, Saintbury, Worcs. 07799035873
 Mrs A. Piercy, Dairymead, Wormington 01386 584416