

OAK HILL PARISHES

(Alderton, Gt. Washbourne, Dumbleton & Wormington)

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DECEMBER 2021



Dear Friends

As I prepare this month's News Letter I do so on a typically November morning. Grey mist and murk enveloping the villages, but through our window the trees still have leaves and they are shining particularly brightly in all the gloom as they lose their green-ness and sport the bright golds and reds for a few more days. So often we only notice the brightness/ goodness/ encouragements when the gloom appears to predominate. Over these last few months there has been much to be thankful about, for example we **give thanks for the unstinting work of those ministering in our hospitals**, for their skills, patience and dedication; we **give thanks and pray for all carers**, in retirement homes, in individual's homes and those who are carers, but not recognised as such; for adequate support and finances; we **give thanks for those who keep the 'planters' looking so good around the Winchcombe area**- thanking God for the way these small but important things lift the spirits and point to the Creator.

In the words of a seasonal jingle "so, here it is, Merry Christmas, everybody's having fun...look to the future, it's only just begun..." After the year we've had, there is a sense in which Christmas cannot come soon enough; decorations are being put up even earlier than usual, shops are full of seasonal chintz, and the Government want us to have as 'normal' a Christmas as we can with the circumstances.

This Christmas we have much to reflect upon; not least the sobering reality of how many people have died, and the disruption, bereavement, loneliness and isolation which have characterised most of 2020/21, and we shall undoubtedly have a renewed appreciation of everything traditionally associated with the season of good will; family, food, friendship and warmth. There is a determination, indeed a desperation this year that Christmas is 'normal', and yet the further we reflect, the more we realise sadly that loneliness, isolation, poverty and sickness is, and always has been, 'normal' for far too many people, at this or any other time of year. If the pandemic has taught us anything at all, it has taught us the need to be together, to care for, and to love one another – and so it shines a bright searchlight of judgement on our past failures to do so, as a nation and as individuals.

We long for Christmas, we long for the familiar; we seek reassurance and comfort in family, friends, and in social rituals. We want it to be normal, and nice for the children, we want a break from the bleak grey misery of disease and social distance. But there is, I submit, more to it than this. At the root of our longing for a 'normal' Christmas this year there is a deeper and more universal longing – simply to know love. Many adults like to pretend that Christmas is just for children, and they go to great and extraordinary lengths to make it special for them. The truth of the matter is that Christmas is for all of us, and in fact the older and more jaded we are, the more we need to hear the true message of Christmas, the Angel-song above the seasonal noise.

The Christmas story proclaims **the birth of a love stronger than death**, not as an idea, but as a human child. Born in poverty, raised in obscurity, recognised for what he was only by other outsiders, and after a brief flourishing executed in his prime by the State. In this birth, in this life, in this death, and what happened afterwards, is to be found in the true meaning of Christmas, and indeed of life itself. "Look to the future, its only just begun"...

The truth of Christmas and the truth of Easter are one and the same. Love conquers, love wins. Love is at the heart of reality. The light of Jesus the Christ shines from the manger, from the Cross, and from the Empty Tomb. This transcendent light shines in the deepest darkness of our world, and the darkness cannot overcome it. So however normal, or abnormal your Christmas is this year, please know that you are not alone, know that you are loved; after all, the first Christmas was hardly 'normal' for Mary and Joseph, and baby Jesus!

Needless to say, as a church we send you our love through our News Letter. My Prayers for you all are a constant and my blessing for each of you personally at this time as we think of beginnings and ends, of birth and death; hope for the future and hope in the midst of much that seems to be changing all around us. May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Holy Advent, a wonderfully blessed Christmas, and a New Year of experiencing the wonders of God's love. Stay well and please do keep in touch. Love Julia x

ALDERTON

Saturday December 4th: Christmas Fair in the Village Hall **2 – 4pm** . Do come and enjoy a variety of craft and food stalls, together with children's games and a visit from Father Christmas. There will be no entry fee this year. We would encourage everyone to wear a mask for your own and everyone's health. All the stall holders will be wearing masks.

Christmas Services: Sunday December 12th at **4pm** will be the combined Candlelit Carol Service and Christingle in Church. Please do join us to sing some carols in our lovely church where the collection will be for the Children's Society.

Wednesday December 22nd at 4pm – please come and enjoy some outdoor carol singing in the Churchyard. We would love the children to set up the Nativity scene for the blessing of the crib so do bring them along.

CHRISTMAS DAY Saturday 25th: 10.30am Family Communion in Church

Church Bells: there will be a special peal rung on bells of our Church Tower on Monday December 27th in the afternoon from 2.30pm by a band of visiting ringers from Worcestershire – a lovely celebration of the Christmas season.

GREAT WASHBOURNE

Thank you to all who turned in their Little Loose Change Boxes at the coffee morning at the beginning of November, your continued support is much appreciated. If you don't have a box and would like one, please speak to Jane Kent.

We will be holding a **Carol Singing and Blessing of the Crib Service** at the church at 6-30pm on **Monday 20th December**. Closer to the date we will look at the weather and make a decision as to whether we will gather inside or out. Please do join us for singing, mulled wine and mince pies, everyone is very welcome.

DUMBLETON

Everyone will be most welcome to join us, in our festively decorated church, for a **CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS AND CHRISTINGLE on SUNDAY 19th DECEMBER at 4pm**. We will be retelling the wonderful Nativity story through Carols, Poems and Readings. Christingles will be distributed after the last Carol and the service will end, in Candlelight, with Away in a Manger. Following a rousing chorus or two of We Wish You a Merry Christmas, you are all invited to stay and enjoy Mulled Wine, Hot Chocolate and Mince Pies. The collection, in the big orange bucket will be for The Children's Society. If any children (or adults) would like to bring along a homemade character or creature to go in our fabulous stable, you can place them in before the service starts. You can, if you wish, let us know you are coming to this service by emailing: info@stpetersdumbleton.org.uk or phoning 01386 882049.

Sadly the "Elf and Safety Sisters" (the FUNdraising Team) have taken the decision to cancel the "Singalong" on the 11th December at the Village Club. Watch this space for Christmas 2022! However we will be singing and supporting the Christmas Tree Light Up at the Village Hall on December 4th.

The FUNdraisers Fabulous Christmas Hamper Raffle is still going ahead and will hopefully raise funds for church. Tickets are £2 each or 3 for £5 and you can have as many as you like! Contact Jenny M (01386 881474) who will be happy to let you have some. The draw for the lucky winner will take place after the end of the Carol Service on Dec 19th. Take note that tickets will not be on sale in church, they need to be purchased beforehand.

CHRISTMAS EVE - Friday 24th: 11.15pm Midnight Communion in Church

On **SUNDAY 2nd JANUARY** we will be holding a Relaxed New Year Service at 10.30am starting with Bacon Baps, Tea, Coffee and Conversation. Please join us as we look forward to 2022 in words, song and perhaps a few resolutions.

As yet another challenging year draws to a close the P.C.C. wish to send you greetings for the upcoming festive season. We wish you peace and joy for Christmas and hope that the New Year will bring yet more normality back into our lives. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who has helped in any way this year to keep our church operating, we are truly grateful.

From the Registers:

Holy Matrimony: 20th November Christopher James THOMPSON and Helen Marie STIRLING
Internment of Ashes; 26th November. Martin Alan FERRIGE. R.I.P.

WORMINGTON

Service of 6 lessons and 6 carols – Sunday 19th December 6pm. Mulled wine and mince pies served after the service. Do come along and enjoy some festive music and conviviality. Please let me know if you are coming to ensure we have enough mince pies! Angela Piercy 01386 584416

Christmas Day Communion Service – Saturday 25th December 9am. Please let me know if you would like to come along. Angela Piercy angela.piercy@hotmail.co.uk

Decorating the church for Christmas – All are welcome to help decorate the church for our service of 6 lessons and carols, so, Saturday 18th December or morning of the 19th. With many thanks.

A very Merry Christmas from Wormington PCC

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 2021

Lectionary Year C

5 Dec 1st Sun Advent 2 Purple	9.00am GT WASHBOURNE Advent HC	10.30am DUMBLETON Advent HC	Malachi 3.1-4 Philippians 1.3-11 Luke 3.1-6
12 Dec 2nd Sun Advent 3 Purple	9.00am WORMINGTON BCP HC	4.00pm ALDERTON Lessons & Carols by 'Christingle' candlelight	Philippians 4.4-7 Luke 3.7-18
19 Dec 3rd Sun Advent 4 Purple	9.00am GT WASHBOURNE PC Trad Micah 5.2-5a; Hebrews 10.5-10; Luke 1.39-45 [46-55]	4.00pm DUMBLETON Lessons & Carols by 'Christingle' candlelight	6.00pm WORMINGTON Service of 6 lesson and 6 Carols
20th Dec Monday			6.30pm GT WASHBOURNE Carol Service
22nd Dec Wednesday		4.00pm ALDERTON Carols in the churchyard and Blessing of the Crib	
Christmas Eve Friday 24th Dec Purple		11.15 pm start Midnight Communion DUMBLETON	Isaiah 9.2-7 Titus 2.11-14 Luke 2.1-14 [15-20]
Christmas Day Saturday 25th Dec White	9.00am in GT WASHBOURNE AND WORMINGTON HC	10.30am ALDERTON Christmas FC	Isaiah 52.7-10 Hebrews 1.1-4 [5-12] John 1.1-14
26 Dec 4th Sun Christmas 1 White	Said Communion @ 9.00am ALDERTON - <i>St Stephen, first Martr</i> Acts 7.51-60; Matthew 10.17-22		
2 Jan 2022 1st Sun Christmas 2/ Epiphany White	9.00am GT WASHBOURNE HC CW	10.30am DUMBLETON 'Relaxed New Year Service'	Isaiah 60.1-6 Ephesians 3.1-12 Matthew 2.1-12
9 Jan 2022 2nd Sun Baptism of Christ/ Epiphany 1 White	9.00am WORMINGTON BCP HC	10.30am ALDERTON HC CW	Isaiah 43.1-7 Acts 8.14-17 Luke 3.15-17, 21-22

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