

# *CHRISTMAS and NEW YEAR 2021*

Becky our Vicar writes:

Dear Friends

My goodness isn't the year flying by. It barely seems two minutes since I was writing to you for the November magazine, and it certainly doesn't seem like a year since we moved to Malvern! I keep thinking "what were we doing this time last year?" Decorating the house, packing, and sorting out new schools. We certainly weren't thinking

about Christmas much, but we did get a Christmas tree into the empty vicarage ready for when we moved in on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December!

At this point in time, it is almost impossible to say what life will be like by this Christmas and into January. Of course, we are all hoping that the sort of normality we have begun to enjoy will last so that we can enjoy Christmas with our families, in our churches and enjoying all the festivities as we normally would and that we missed last year. We are going to do our best though, whatever circumstances throw at us. There are so many dates outlined in this magazine for all sorts of different ways for us to enjoy Christmas together and so I am sure I will see many of you in the coming weeks.

The Church of England's Advent and Christmas theme this year is entitled 'At the heart of Christmas' and if you come to any of our churches over the Christmas period you will probably hear me mention this. I wonder what lies 'at the heart of Christmas' for you?

I know you will expect me to say that Jesus is at the heart of Christmas and of course from the moment Mary says yes to the Angel Gabriel this

## **At the heart of Christmas**



is true. If we dig a little deeper it is about God reaching out to the world he loves, through the incarnation of his son. At the heart of Christmas is the heart of God's compassion and love for each one of us.

Whatever you have been through in the past 19 months since the start of the Pandemic, this hasn't changed and every expression of love we share in the coming weeks from the smallest gesture to the most lavish gift represents the gift of divine love poured out for the world in the person of Jesus Christ.

Our beautiful church stands as witness to this love, and we hope you will be able to join us in at some point over the coming weeks.

Whatever you place at the heart of Christmas this year, I pray that you may know the light of Christ and the love of God expressed through him.

With every blessing for Christmas and the New Year,

Becky

## *Events this Christmas*

**'Carols by Candlelight' at St James's Church.**

**Sunday December 19th & Tuesday 21st December at 6.30pm**

Reserved seating: see Facebook or leaflets in the Sugarloaf Café, etc.

With the pandemic still with us, there will be no refreshments this year.

***Crib Service: 5.00 Xmas Eve***

***Midnight Communion, from 11pm: conducted by Revd Nicholas Menon***

***Christmas Day Communion: 10.30 with family service.***

***Our Epiphany service will be at 10.30 on January 2nd, with a short talk by the Hills Echo Editor, who is delighted to be up and about again after two stays in hospital.***

***And on January 9th there will be a special afternoon service with the Archdeacon of Worcester, to celebrate Vicar Becky's arrival here just one year ago.***

***Vital Spark: The annual Christmas concert is back! It will be on Wednesday, 22nd December at 8pm. in the Village Hall.***

***Also, Jolanda, the Head of our Primary School is planning a Christingle Service, to take place at Candlemas in February.***

**St James's Church**

**Revd Becky Elliott**

**Deacon:** Rev. Rosemary Herbert, 572497

**Warden:** David Matthews, 236 West Malvern Rd. 567328

**For enquiries on Baptisms, Weddings, Banns of Marriage, or any church or pastoral matter, please contact Becky, David or Rosemary.**

*Lights of Love - look out for the various events in our area.*

*And look out for West Malvern Voices, performing at various locations over the Christmas period.*

### *Local Amenities*

**In previous years year we would send round a little note encouraging donations to help with the costs of the magazine. Still being online, with email back-up, we have had few expenses so far, but of course no advertising revenue either! We are hoping to return to a paper Echo as soon as possible in the new year we have so any support anyone feels they can give would be most welcome! Please contact me, as editor, if you would like to contribute. (567328 or [matthews.greenbank@virgin.net](mailto:matthews.greenbank@virgin.net)).**

**A plea to all those who care for the graves of family and loved ones at St James's.**

**It is wonderful that so many people do tend graves in the churchyard, but PLEASE read the printed instructions by the bins as to what belongs in each bin! There are three at the South side of church, and three round the back near the boiler room door; they are all numbered , with a card of the instructions nearby. Thanks!**

## SUGARLOAF CAFE AND SHOP

We should like to thank all our lovely customers and wish them a very happy Christmas, and we hope to see them again soon! Over the Christmas period we shall be closed from 24th to 30th December inclusive, then open for New Year's Eve, but close for new Year's Day. The following week we should hopefully be back to normal!

Opening times remain Monday to Saturday 10:30 - 3:30.

### **The Brewers Arms (Tel: Malvern 302761)**

**The Malvern Gazette has reported in detail on local moves to buy the Brewers from Admiral Taverns, who do wish to sell. The packed meeting in the Village Hall endorsed this plan 100%! If you are interested in backing the scheme, or have not yet had your say, do contact Brian O'Connell.**

**Meanwhile it's business as usual at the pub: open Monday 5pm til close Tuesday-Thursday 2pm till close & Friday, Saturday, Sunday 12noon-close.**

**Thursday night is Curry Club. Beer Battered Fish served all the weekend.**

**New Year's Eve Party: Free to Enter; Bar till 1am.**

### **THE LYTTTELTON WELL Café and Bookshop(Tel: 573702):**

The Lyttelton Well has opened a new area within their bookshop especially for Advent and Christmas, with a wide range of Advent calendars, candles, and Christmas cards in stock. As well as a large selection of lovely Hannah Dunnett items, there are some beautiful Christmas gifts for everyone. The bookshop has a variety of Christmas and Advent books, also books and stocking fillers for children as well. And there are plenty of 2022 calendars, diaries, and lectionaries, journals, and notebooks to choose from. The bookshop can be

found along the Priory driveway where dedicated volunteers will be happy to welcome and assist you. It is open Monday – Saturday, 10 am – 4 pm, and enquiries and orders can be made by phoning 01684 573702, or emailing [bookshop@lytteltonwell.co.uk](mailto:bookshop@lytteltonwell.co.uk)

## **Lyttelton Well**

Online and telephone counselling service - 563456.

**Café H2O** at the Wyche Cutting - opening over Christmas - last day Tuesday 21st, reopening 4th January.  
Lovely food - thoroughly recommended ! (Ed.)

REPAIR CAFE Contacts: 01684 438539/07751 818088

**Malvern Independent Bookshop**  
on Red Lion Bank off Belle Vue Terrace.

**Open, Tuesday to Saturday. 10-4pm.**  
**There's a wonderful range of books, and you can also order by phone. This is our bookshop, so do support it! Tel. 564788**

**The West Malvern Club (previously the Royal British Legion Club)**  
**– The club is up and running, hosting some fitness classes, and looking forward to being able to do much more soon!**

**Look out for what will be on offer over the festive season at the Social Club on West Malvern Road, too!**

Malvern Foodbank welcomes donations of provisions and money and new volunteers.- The Lyttelton Well continues to operate as a collection point for the Foodbank.

## *Local Groups*

Festive greetings to you all from West Malvern WI

Our lovely WI has not only survived but flourished throughout 2021. We have been very busy and gained six new members, swelling our ranks to over 30! Since the last issue of the Hills Echo we have gradually been getting together, first for spring and summer walks. In May we enjoyed our last Zoom talk, with a fascinating wildlife talk (with beautiful slides) from local resident and environmentalist Matt Williams entitled 'Adventure on Puffin island'.

Also in May, Harriet Baldwin visited us at the Sugarloaf, when she came to view our Climate Coalition #Sharethelove green heart bunting and we presented her with a card expressing our concern for the future of the planet. We met outside in a beautiful Croft Bank garden in June and in July we enjoyed a very special 10th year anniversary party with fizz, cake, and a lovely speech from our founder Vicki Walker. In August we had a fabulous tour of the exceptional Elim grounds and trees with Estates Manager Phil Hilderley.

October was a big milestone, because we were finally able to meet up indoors (with suitable precautions) at our new venue in the Regents Theological College. We were treated to a wonderful talk (with dancing!) on the history, culture, and differing styles of belly dancing, with Liz Smith of Bellyssimo. We have really enjoyed getting back together again and having our meetings in person. The cake helps too!

For our November meeting, Dr Mike Jones brought some early Christmas spirit with an illustrated talk entitled 'Mistletoe: fact, myth and legend'. We learned so much about this parasitic plant with 1400 species - not only botanical information related to its distribution, pollination, and propagation, but also its place in mythology, religion and literature (from Norse Myths to Virgil's Aeneid). It has also been a popular design motif found in church carvings, Tudor pattern books and even Ikea! It has been associated with Christmas since the Roman Saturnalia festival. Kissing under the mistletoe is an English tradition which began in the 18th Century.

We learned that Mistletoe contains a poison called viscin which

is controlled under the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism act but also be used for its medicinal properties. Rudolph Steiner's anthroposophical clinic used mistletoe extract to treat cancer and you can now get it on the NHS. Druids revere it and think of it as a cure-all. They cut it on 'All Heals Day' which Christians have taken as All Hallows Day. Even today when the Mistletoe is sold in the Mistletoe capital of Tenbury Wells, it is put on sacks rather than on the ground, lest the mystical and magical properties seep away.

At our December (9th December, 7.30) we will be making a Christmas table decoration with foliage, candles, and ribbons, and celebrating with Christmas nibbles and drinks.

If you are visiting the Christmas Tree Festival (1st December - 2nd January) in the Cathedral Cloisters, please look out for the Worcester Federation of WI's tree. This year it will be decorated with white macramé feathers which have been crafted by West Malvern WI in loving memory of Pat Richards, a founder member of our WI, dear friend and brilliant craftswoman.

For picture and reports of all our activities, please go to our website: <https://westmalvernwi.wordpress.com/> and our Facebook page @WestMalvernWI We wish you all a very Happy Christmas from West Malvern WI.

New members are as welcome as ever at our WI. You can contact us via our email [westmalvernwi@gmail.com](mailto:westmalvernwi@gmail.com), or via our Facebook page @WestMalvernWI where you will also find the website address and lots of photos of us enjoying our High Teas!

#### West Malvern Garden and Nature Club:

We are back with regular meetings in the Village Hall!and look out for annual events in 2022.



## **West Malvern Village Hall**

### **Welcome back!!**

The Village Hall has now reopened and bookings are being accepted. Risk Assessments have been carried out and measures put in place so that the Hall can be classed as “Covid 19 Secure Premises”. Additional documentation setting out the procedures and regulations are available from the booking clerk.

**The next Coffee Morning** is in church on 2nd December, 10.15-12noon, with cake, mince pies and coffee!

For any enquiries our website is: [www.westmalvernvillagehall.net](http://www.westmalvernvillagehall.net)

There is now a Facebook page, and our 100club is contacted at: [wmvh@gmail.com](mailto:wmvh@gmail.com)

Worcestershire County Council Let's Waste Less Scheme. This is designed to encourage people to recycle where possible, not to waste food and to compost.

[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/letswasteless/homepage/1/the\\_homepage](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/letswasteless/homepage/1/the_homepage)

<https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

## *Six: Regents College and Malvern Hills Elim Church*

**Sunday 5th Dec @ 11am                      West Malvern Community  
Carols led by the Chase Brass Band. Sugar Loaf Café will be  
open for hot drinks.**

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Dec @ 10:30am              Elim Chapel, West Malvern  
- Christmas Carol Service. Join us as we reflect on the  
Christmas story, and sing carols. Refreshments served.

*NB Please email in copy AT ANY TIME, then I can try to judge when a next "Covid issue" is viable. Stay well!*

*We would hope to return to a paper Hills Echo sometime in 2022 - so I should be grateful if potential deliverers and advertisers could contact me.*

*David Matthews Tel; 567328 email: matthews.greenbank@virgin.net (Ed.)*

*And finally more treats from Sue Dakin!*

#### HOPE

In the midst of it all find hope  
Hope against hope  
Look for it in the sunrise  
In the spaces between the rain  
And in the evening shadows

Believe in the possibilities  
Of dreams and desires  
Wishes of a child's expectations  
In the mornings when they wake

Carry hope like a candle  
Search for future goodness  
For what is life without hope  
And what is hope without faith

Two Poems from Sue Dakin

The first is from back in lockdown

#### SLEEPING

We have been sleeping  
In acquiescence  
Acceptance in silence  
Partial suspension  
In slumberland  
Dreaming  
We fall into a deep torpor  
Hibernation  
Aestivation  
Creating a new world  
In mellow song  
And thoughtful verse  
We stitch  
We sew  
And walk in the woods  
Waiting  
Waiting  
And wondering  
Is it safe  
To wake up

And this new poem has our latest concerns on climate change in the background:

### Camino to COP26

Gathering in the early mist of Autumn  
The candle lit and the circle blessed  
We begin our journey  
We will share our stories along the way  
And gather strength in togetherness  
Walk the paths unseen  
And trees of old will bow and whisper  
Whilst our feet tramp the ancient ways  
Through fields of wispy asparagus  
And willowy billowy maize

In silence we find strength and comfort  
Reaching the village inn for sustenance  
And friendships continue to grow  
Prayer and tea awaits us in Powick  
The peace of the wild  
Affronted by the madness of traffic

As we cross into fields of old battles  
The warm sun shines on us all  
The cathedral in seen in the distance  
Nearly there, nearly there!

The water flows quietly past  
And sits in stillness in the basin  
We smile to passers by  
And call 'We are on our way to Glasgow'  
They look bemused and unsure  
Of flags, banners and bags  
The swans in their elegance  
Glide on regardless  
And we walk on and on  
To our destination and rest

Another day of pilgrimage  
Completed with dignity and defiance  
COP26 awaits.....

SHOES