

# CHURCH NEWS



*'I am the Lord's servant',  
said Mary to the Angel Gabriel*

*Luke 1.38*

Newsletter no: 36

15th December 2020

## Times they are a'changin...\*

As I write this I am very conscious that on 20th December I celebrate my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is very much a cliché for me to say that I have seen a lot of changes during my life.

Perhaps none more so than during this year. This has been particularly true for church life in the benefice. There have been few services in the church buildings. We have had to be content with online services which, until recently, Anthony has put together with great skill. But now that has come to an end, and those engaged in ministry in the benefice need to think again about how it processes its ministry and its mission in these difficult times. There is, of course, an additional factor to consider and that is the departure of Tracey, the Benefice Administrator. I am sure, as a benefice you would all like the opportunity to thank Tracey for her hard work and ministry over the years and I take this opportunity to pay my personal tribute to the invaluable work she has done. Thank you Tracey.

I learned many years ago that "the one thing in life that is constant is change". This reminds me that we need to embrace and celebrate change, not for change's sake, but because God calls us to look at His world and be realistic about how we need to adapt in ministry to ensure that the Light of Christ continues to burn brightly.

On the third Sunday of Advent we traditionally remember Mary, the Mother of Jesus. We are reminded of her faithfulness and her courage as God changed her life for ever. We are reminded too of her humility as she came to terms with the awesome event that God had decreed for her. *"I am the Lord's servant" said Mary to the Angel Gabriel, " May it be to you as you have said ( Luke 1:38)* Humility is something that, on occasions, even Jesus'

disciples struggled with. In Matthew 18 they ask Jesus, *'who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?'*. Jesus calls a child forward to stand among them and says, *'unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven'*.

For me this is a salutary reminder that, in times of change, we must humble ourselves and work together for the common good rather than aspire to be "the greatest".

Christmas is a time to celebrate the most wonderful of events, the birth of Jesus. The Christ who changed the world for ever.

The New Year will bring new challenges to the benefice, but more importantly new opportunities.

For myself, I will not be involved in the leadership through those challenges and opportunities. I am reminded that as a retired priest I hold permission to officiate, not a bishop's ministry license in the Benefice and therefore have no role in the development of any changes. I am not, however, retiring from ministry at this time and so will continue to conduct services when invited to do so by the benefice leadership team.

It remains for me to wish all of you a very Happy Christmas and to look to the New Year with hope and expectancy.

*May God bless you all  
Michael Taylor*

\* *Bob Dylan, 1964*

## Advent & Christmas services

### Sunday, 20th December

9.00a.m Holy Communion at St. Swithun's,  
Woodborough (maximum numbers: 26)

Please follow all the social distancing guidance when in church, including wearing a face covering and using hand sanitiser. Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis with the exception of Christmas Day services (see below). Please use your own parish church rather than visiting others.

**Please do not visit church if you have  
any symptoms of Covid-19**

### Online Carol Service

20th December: 6.00p.m. Live streamed on the St. Wilfrid's Facebook page, with carol singing performed by Christmas carol singers from the Benefice.

### Christmas Day Services

9.00a.m Holy Communion at Holy Cross,  
Epperstone (maximum numbers:24)

9.00a.m Holy Communion at St. Swithun's,  
Woodborough (maximum numbers: 26)

***If you wish to come to church at either  
Epperstone or Woodborough on Christmas  
Day you must reserve your place in advance  
(before 20th December) with Tracey***

## Christmas

The bells of waiting Advent ring,  
the Tortoise stove is lit again  
and lamp-oil light across the night  
has caught the streaks of winter rain  
in many a stained-glass window sheen  
from Crimson Lake to Hookers Green.

The holly in the windy hedge  
and round the Manor House the yew  
will soon be stripped to deck the ledge,  
the altar, font and arch and pew,  
so that the villagers can say  
'the church looks nice' on Christmas Day.

Provincial Public Houses blaze,  
corporation tramcars clang,  
on lighted tenements I gaze,  
where paper decorations hang,  
and bunting in the red Town Hall  
says 'Merry Christmas to you all'.

And London shops on Christmas Eve  
are strung with silver bells and flowers  
as hurrying clerks the City leave  
to pigeon-haunted classic towers,  
and marbled clouds go scudding by  
The many-steepled London sky.

And girls in slacks remember Dad,  
and oafish louts remember Mum,  
and sleepless children's hearts are glad.  
And Christmas-morning bells say 'Come!'  
even to shining ones who dwell  
safe in the Dorchester Hotel.

And is it true? And is it true?  
This most tremendous tale of all,  
seen in a stained-glass window's hue,  
a Baby in an ox's stall?  
the Maker of the stars and sea  
become a Child on earth for me?

And is it true? For if it is,  
no loving fingers tying strings  
around those tissue'd fripperies,  
the sweet and silly Christmas things,  
bath salts and inexpensive scent  
and hideous tie so kindly meant,

No love that in a family dwells,  
no carolling in frosty air,  
nor all the steeple-shaking bells  
can with this single Truth compare -  
that God was man in Palestine  
and lives today in Bread and Wine.

*Sir John Betjeman (1906-1984)*

# WORSHIP & PRAYER

## Worship online

The Benefice online worship is not currently available. However you are very welcome to worship online with St. Wilfrid's, Calverton

10.30a.m. Sunday worship on Facebook live

20th December: 6.00p.m. Carol Service online

24th December: 4.00p.m Crib Service online

11.30p.m Holy Communion live ( Facebook)

Each worship session is also uploaded onto the St. Wilfrid's You Tube channel. The links remain the same each week.

[St. Wilfrid's Church Facebook](#)

[St. Wilfrid's Church, Calverton You Tube](#)

## Private prayer in church

When there is no Sunday service, the churches in Epperstone, Oxton & Woodborough will be open on Sundays from 10.00a.m -3.00p.m for private prayer. Oxton will also be open from 10.00a.m –3.00p.m on Wednesdays )

This is unsupervised so please do follow the guidelines carefully when visiting.

## Join us on Facebook

[Benefice Churches of Epperstone,  
Gonalston, Oxton and Woodborough](#)



STAY SAFE  
PRAY &  
LOVE EACH  
OTHER

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

*Luke 2.14*

## Contact us...

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