

A silhouette of a shepherd in a long coat and hood, holding a crook, stands in the center. To the left, a dog sits. To the right, two sheep stand. The background is a bright sunset or sunrise over a horizon line.

Wykeham Benefice News

December 2020, January 2021

This Christmas may well not have the feel of a traditional Christmas. Depending on what Covid-related restrictions are still imposed upon us, we may be restricted as to how many can join together in our homes to celebrate Christmas Day, we may be unable to sing out loud in our churches, and the parties which normally precede and follow Christmas Day may be confined to Zoom or social media. Some people may be told by their NHS-app to isolate completely, and others may themselves be suffering from the virus. You would be forgiven for thinking that these are dark and uncertain times.

Perhaps these frustrations will help us to focus on the real meaning of Christmas, the joy and hope which the birth of Jesus Christ brought 2,000 years ago and can still bring today. The words of the introduction to St John's gospel, which we always read at some stage over the Christmas period, seem to me to be particularly apt: *What has come into being in him was life and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.*

They remind us that God loved us enough to send his son to us to rescue us from gloom and darkness, to give us hope that there is a better life to which we should aspire beyond this one, to give us a light to which we should raise our sights. The promise of a vaccine gives us hope that these restrictions will end, that life will return to something like normal. But Jesus Christ brought us a hope that will endure beyond anything that the world can throw at us. As we celebrate Christmas in whatever way we can, let us always remember that; let us never give up hope.

Do please come and join us in church over Christmas if you are permitted to do so. And in due course, have a very Happy New Year. *The Reverend John Tattersall*



Village News

I would like to apologise to Swalcliffe for my error of including their October news in the November edition last month.

Carolyn Koch de Gooreynd, Editor

Epwell

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY: Thank you to all who helped with the Act of Remembrance ceremony at the War Memorial in the Square following the Zoom service online. The 'River of Poppies', the readings, music, the laying of the wreaths and prayers, with Tommy overlooking all of it was a fitting way to commemorate those who have died in the service of their country.

TRAVELLING NATIVITY: The Travelling Nativity will hopefully make its way around the village again during Advent. The Nativity scene will move from house to house throughout the village for everyone to enjoy and remember the story of the Nativity. If anyone would like to host the travellers, then please contact Alasdair Lowe on 788866.



CHRISTINGLE SERVICE: SUNDAY, 13TH DECEMBER AT 5.15PM. This year there will not be a St. Nicolas Service but a **Christingle service** instead (Covid 19 restrictions permitting). For hygiene requirements please make your own Christingle to bring it to the service. The service is outside, weather permitting.

Our Crib will be placed in the porch and our Christmas Tree will be just outside the porch doors this year for all to see. A porch door will be left open for you to visit the crib.

CAROLS IN 'THE SQUARE': THURSDAY, 24TH DECEMBER AT 6PM. For young and old. There will be some readings, hopefully from the younger generation. This will replace the Nativity Play. Bring musical instruments, hearty voices and Christmas cheer.

We greatly look forward to welcoming Reverend Cannon Neil Bowler on 5th January 2021 and would like to thank Reverend John Tattersall for all he has done for us through this interregnum. He has been an inspiration. Julie Bruggenwirth

Swalcliffe

WREATHS FOR CHRISTMAS: TUESDAY, 22ND DECEMBER AT 6PM. Sadly there is no Christmas Market this year but we still hope to raise some funds for the Church

and Katharine House Hospice by selling Christmas decorations for your door and table. Please go to the village website www.Swalcliffe.org to place your order before Tuesday 8th December and your finished decoration will be ready for **collection on Saturday 12th Dec. 11-3pm** outside the Stags Head. Mulled wine and mince pies also available to add to the festive atmosphere!

CAROL SINGING ON THE GREEN: TUESDAY, 22ND DECEMBER AT 6PM. Despite not being able to hold our hugely successful Nativity Play this year we still hope to have some form of **Carol Singing on the Green** on the evening of **Tuesday, 22nd December starting at 6pm.** Please put this date in your diary and we will send more details round on the village email once we know what Covid restrictions are in place at that time.

WELCOME TO REVEREND NEIL BOWLER: SUNDAY, 31ST JANUARY 2021 AT 6PM. We would like to give our new vicar, Neil Bowler, a special Swalcliffe welcome to the village on **Sunday, 31st January** when he will be taking an Evening Service at **6pm.** We hope as many people as possible will come along to the service and then enjoy a chat and a glass of wine with Neil afterwards.

Many congratulations to Ronald and Liz on the birth of their first grandchild, Aurelia! Gay Harris



Shutford

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY: The churchwarden held a Short Service of Remembrance alone in St Martin`s Church at 9.30am followed by an online benefice service at 10am. A socially distanced Act of Remembrance was held at 11.00am at the village war memorial and again on Armistice Day, 11th November, which is also St Martin, our patron saint`s day. The church tower was illuminated on both occasions.

We hope to hold services in church during Advent with social distancing in place. There will be the usual hymns and carols but recorded ones by St Martin`s singers (in the Fields not Shutford).

CAROL SERVICE: 20th DECEMBER AT 4.30PM. A carol service is planned for 20th December at 4.30pm with **Family Communion on Christmas Day.**

It has been a difficult year for everyone with less social contact and outreach exacerbating financial and health concerns.

We look forward to welcoming Neil Bowler as our new rector in January and thank John Tattersall for keeping us on the straight and narrow during the interregnum. Keep safe and well and have a happy, healthy Christmas and 2021.

“When two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with them...” Ken Jeffs

Sibford

CHURCH OPENING: for the month of November we opened the church for Private Prayer on Wednesdays and Fridays 9 a.m. – 3.30 p.m. and we reverted to Zoom Communion Services at 10.a.m. During this time, we held a short outdoor Act of Remembrance when wreaths were laid, the Roll of Honour called and the Last Post sounded which was very moving and gave time for reflection.

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE ON 13TH DECEMBER AT 4.30PM. We will have to wait until December 2nd to find out how and what will be happening December but we are living in hope and planning a Christingle Service on 13th December at 4.30 p.m. but numbers will be limited. The collection will be in aid of the Children's Society.

FAMILY CAROL SERVICE ON FRIDAY, 18TH DECEMBER AT 6.30PM.

In place of the usual traditional carol service, we are planning a family carol service, and as the congregation are unable to sing we will have a small choir of six; videos, readings and music. Once again numbers will be limited.

We are looking forward to welcoming Revd. Neil Bowler to Wykeham Benefice and Holy Trinity at the end of the year and his installation on 5th January 2021. New year and new beginnings. Barbara Foster

Tadmarton

The Parochial Church Council has now, with guidance from The Rev'd John Tattersall has suspended services in our church. St Nicholas church will remain open for private prayer. We are very hopeful that we shall be able to have our Festive season services back in the church. However, this will depend on the government regulations for this period. For updated information please check the Benefice website. Our church members continue to join the Zoom services every Sunday.

The Church Council will be pleased to welcome our new Rector Reverend Canon Neil Bowler, in January 2021, to St. Nicholas Church and the Parish of Tadmarton. We are very hopeful that the service scheduled on Sunday 17th January 2021 in Tadmarton, will be a welcome service to our Rector.

The Church Council and our church members in Tadmarton wish for everyone a hopeful and healthier 2021 and trust that we can all have a Christmas to remember, somehow!

With Very Best Wishes, we offer our prayers for a safe, healthy Christmas and a better New Year for us all. J.H.W.

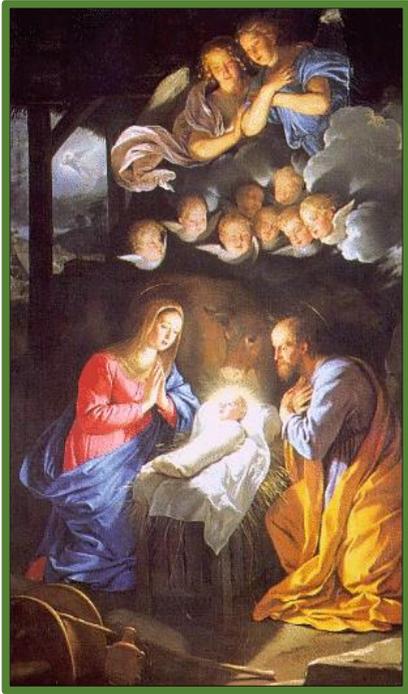
Broughton

Here we go again into another lock down, missing our fellowship with one another. At least we can share with each other on our Sunday Zoom service. We are also very appreciative of the community in which we live, with people looking out for one another!



As this is a double issue, I felt that we should think about Advent and of course Christmas, so here is a poem by Ruth Russell called,

'The Forgotten Bridegroom'



It's Advent time and I don't need to tell you
That Christmas will be here soon.
Who could forget? For card and gift catalogues
Have been out since the beginning of June!

We're all geared up for the doing and buying,
But do our souls know where they're heading?
It's a bit like forgetting to prepare for marriage
Whilst we're planning the perfect wedding.

As Jesus watches us prepare the Great Feast
For his birthday, does he feel a little left out?
Like the forgotten bridegroom watching from the
wings

Whilst the women all bustle about?

What will HE feel and be thinking just now
As we hurtle towards Christmas Day?
Will He be closely involved in our plans,
Or would we prefer him out of the way?
Watch over me, Lord, and be my Guest,
Share with me in all that I do;
For the saddest thing this Christmas would be
To ignore or lose sight of you.

May we wish everyone a very Happy Christmas
and a Peaceful virus free New Year. Regards Neil

News from Ronald and Liz - Due to Lockdown...

"We have not yet met Aurelia though I have seen lots of photos and even a little video of her yawning!" Ronald.

Good News is all around us.



Services for December 2020 - Subject to Covid 19 restrictions

December

Sunday 6th Advent 2	Swalcliffe ZOOM	10.00am 5.00PM	Benefice Eucharist Holy Communion	JT JT
Tuesday 8th The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Tadmarton	10.00am	Holy Communion BCP	DP
Sunday 13th Advent 3	Sibford Shutford Swalcliffe Broughton Tadmarton Sibford Epwell	8.00am 9.30am 9.30am 11.00am 4.00pm 4.30pm 5.15pm	Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion Holy Communion St Nicholas Service Christingle Christingle	JT DP JT GE JT GE JT
Tuesday 15th	Tadmarton	7.00pm	Traditional Carol Service	JT
Friday 18th	Sibford	6.30pm	Carol Service	JT
Sunday 20th Advent 4	Broughton Sibford Swalcliffe Epwell Tadmarton Shutford Broughton	8.00am 9.30am 9.30am 9.45am 11.00am 4.30pm 6.00pm	Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion Morning Worship Holy Communion Holy Communion Carol Service Traditional Carol Service	JT JT Lay led GE JT JT JT
Tuesday 22nd	Tadmarton Swalcliffe	10.00am 6.00pm	Holy Communion BCP Carols on the Green	DP JT
Thursday 24th Christmas Eve	Broughton Epwell Sibford	4.00pm 6.00pm 11.30pm	Crib Service Carols in The Square Midnight Communion	JT Lay led JT
Friday 25th Christmas Day	Epwell Shutford Sibford Tadmarton Swalcliffe Broughton	9.30am 9.30am 10.00am 10.00am 11.00am 11.00am	Family Communion Family Communion Family Communion Family Communion Family Communion Family Communion	JT GE CS HS JT GE
Sunday 27th St John the Evangelist	Broughton	10.00am	Benefice Eucharist	JT
Tuesday 29th St Thomas Becket	Tadmarton	10.00am	Holy Communion BCP	JT



Services for January 2021 - Subject to Covid 19 restrictions

January

Friday 1st Naming and Circumcision of Christ	Broughton Castle Chapel	10.30am	Holy Communion BCP	JT
Sunday 3rd The Epiphany	Sibford	10.00am	Benefice Eucharist	GE (JT Away)
Tuesday 5th	Tadmarton Broughton	10.00am 7.30pm	BCP Holy Communion Installation of the Reverend Neil Bowler as Rector	JT Bishop Steven
Sunday 10th Epiphany 1 Baptism of Christ	Sibford Shutford Sibford Swalcliffe Epswell Broughton Tadmarton	8.00am 9.30am 9.30am 9.30am 9.45am 11.00am 11.00am	BCP Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion Morning Praise Holy Communion Morning Praise Holy Communion Holy Communion	NB NB JT GE Lay led NB JT
Tuesday 12th	Tadmarton	10.00am	BCP Holy Communion	NB
Sunday 17th Epiphany 2	Broughton Sibford Swalcliffe Epswell Broughton Shutford Tadmarton	8.00am 9.30am 9.30am 9.45am 11.00am 11.00am 11.00am	BCP Holy Communion Holy Communion Morning Praise Holy Communion Morning Praise Morning Praise Holy Communion	NB NB Lay led JT JT Lay led NB
Tuesday 19th	Tadmarton	10.00am	BCP Holy Communion	NB
Sunday 24th Epiphany 3	Shutford Sibford Swalcliffe Epswell Broughton Tadmarton	9.30am 9.30am 9.30am 9.45am 11.00am 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion Holy Communion Holy Communion Holy Communion Village Service	JT GE NB JW NB JT
Tuesday 26th SS Timothy & Titus	Tadmarton	10.00am	BCP Holy Communion	NB
Sunday 31st Candlemas	Sibford Epswell Broughton Tadmarton Shutford Swalcliffe	9.30am 9.45am 11.00am 11.00am 4.00pm 6.00pm	Holy Communion Holy Communion Holy Communion Holy Communion BCP Evensong Evening Worship	JT NB JT NB NB NB



HAPPY NEW YEAR



"I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us, and we change things."



This was kindly sent in by Barbara Foster

St Mother Teresa

Please Pray for our prayers are really needed at Christmas for the Homeless, the lonely, for those who are out of work, the sick and the world financial situation.

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus in health and finance

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer for the Homeless in the Cold.

God, my Fortress, I pray that You will provide warmth to those who are cold and lonely. If it is in Your will, provide a place of shelter for them this cold season. Comfort them and supply a peaceful and warm area for them to rest. Give them hope where there is none and wisdom through their trials. Lord, let them know they are loved, prayed for and they are your precious child who will never be forgotten. **Amen**

Prayer for the Lonely and Isolated this Christmas and Every Day.

Father, you have told us many times that you are the God who is with us. You say you will never abandon or forsake us. Today, please help those who are depending on your Word to be true in their life. We ask that they have the knowledge of your presence today which may help them not to choose you over worry about tomorrow. Your Love is our daily bread which comes from your hand of mercy. Please come to all those who are alone and cry to you. Please give them a drink from your cup of lovingkindness.

Amen

A Prayer for those in Financial Difficulties

Lord, You have always been my Provider for which I praise and thank You, but now I am facing some severe debt that is building up. I ask that You replace my anxious thought with Your precious peace – for You have said that you hear our prayers and bring us perfect peace. Lord, You have told us to cast all our burdens upon You, for Your care for us. So today Lord, I come and give You all my financial problems and ask that you show me what to do. For I don't know what to do – but my help is in YOU alone, in Jesus name I pray. Amen

God is Love: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matthew 1:23 King James Version

"In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great Love"

Mother Teresa

Love came down at Christmas

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love Incarnate, love divine;
Worship we our Jesus,
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token
Love shall be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

This beautiful poem by Christina Rossetti (who is one of my favourite 19th century female poets) has been described by some, in the way that it's written, as being 'simple, direct and yet also sincere.' But this, however, is no criticism, because I'm going to suggest that within its simplicity, within its directness and within its sincerity, it has great strength, in the way it focuses us upon the embodiment of God's love in the birth of a child, the birth of Jesus.

Some of us might well have celebrated many Christmas mornings over the years, whilst for others this might be their first, but there has been no time in our generation that it has ever been so important, given what we have all been and continue to live through individually and together, to remind ourselves and others of the special place that the birth of God's love upon earth should have in our lives.

Over the past year I've seen and read about many acts of unconditional love being done to help a friend, to help a neighbour and to help a stranger. When I see or hear of such acts of love I'm always reminded of the passage from 1 John 4 v16 where it says; '*God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.*' In those unconditional acts of love people have made visible the presence of God's love itself.

In and through the birth of Jesus we have the human birth of God's love and with it comes our hope. Because even in the darkest of moments God's love can and does shine. As one year draws to its close and we look towards a future that will be hopefully free from 'lockdowns' and social distancing, we do so as Christians with the hope that was given to us in the birth of God's son, in the birth of God's love.

May I take this opportunity to wish all who live, study and work in all of the parishes of the Wykeham benefice a very happy and joy filled Christmas. I look forward very much to being with you all in the New year.



Insert, A portrait of Christina Rossetti

Love & prayers Revd Neil

Reflections of 2020 from our Wykeham Benefice News

One might imagine that after all the sadness and disruption of the Corona Virus, that this year has been a 'write off'. Some may feel it has but looking back over this year it is a real joy to see what has been achieved, despite all!

There is no doubt in my mind that Reverend John Tattersall has been a stalwart figure in our community. Ronald and Liz left us in January with words of encouragement like, "I am sure you can manage..." Ronald cleverly delegated the many jobs, he and Liz had carried for us. (While always reminding us that the countdown to his departure for retirement was 'for real'!) John has led us through a time of endless uncertainties with apparent ease.

Our new venture for most of us this year was to be introduced to 'Zoom,' allowing church services to be held online. How adept we have all become to popping in links and testing our cameras and mikes. Now we have even learnt to wait for each other to talk! With help from Tim Huckvale's savvy skills in technology, we can even enjoy John's sermons without background noise from 30 different households. And the joy of seeing everyone each Sunday, take communion, giving virtual signs of 'the peace' and sharing good wishes has been fulfilling.

Apart from the major achievement of finding a new Rector during this interregnum, we have been sustained by Assisting Clergy, Church Wardens, members of PCCs and giving members of our benefice. Charity fund raising continued. Weddings and funerals have happened. Churches and churchyards have been cared for and repaired while Treasurers have worked to gain faculties.

Wonderful expressions of giving took place to support Polly's homeless in Banbury. We have new church doors at St. Anne's, Epwell, the bell tolled again at Sibford, V.E. Day celebrations continued. Christian Aid and RBL collections have been gathered and you have kept news, views, humour and poems pouring in to fill the WBN for which I would like to thank you all. It would not happen without your input.

I would like to leave you with words from the Queen's speech given at Easter this year because I think her words still resonate with John's introduction and the new life of the Son of God who came to be our light through His love in the world. Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year to you all.

Carolyn Koch de Gooreynd, Editor

"We know that Coronavirus will not overcome us. As dark as death can be, particularly for those suffering from grief, light and life are greater. May the living flame of the Easter hope be a steady guide as we face the future."

Her Majesty The Queen



Reading Rota for December 2020

December	Old Testament	New Testament	Gospel
Sunday 6th Advent 2	Isaiah 40: 1 - 11	2 Peter 3: 8 – 15a	Mark 1: 1 - 8
Sunday 13th Advent 3	Isaiah 61: 1- 4 & 8 - end	1 Thessalonians: 5 16 - 24	John 1: 6 – 8 & 19 - 28
Sunday 20th Advent 4	2 Samuel 7: 1 – 11 & 16	Romans 16: 25 - end	Luke 1: 26 - 38
Thursday 24 th Christmas Eve	Isaiah 52: 7 - 10	Hebrews 1: 1 - 4	John 1: 1 - 14
Friday 25 th Christmas Day	Isaiah 9: 2 - 7	Titus 2: 11 - 14	Luke 2: 1 - 20
Sunday 27th St John, Apostle and Evangelist	Exodus 33: 7 – 11a	1 John chapter 1	John 21: 19b - end



Reading Rota for January 2021

January	Old Testament	New Testament	Gospel
Sunday 3rd The Epiphany	Isaiah 60: 1 - 6	Ephesians 3: 1 - 13	Matthew 2: 1 - 12
Sunday 10th The Baptism of Christ	Genesis 1: 1 - 5	Acts 19: 1 - 7	Mark 1: 4 - 11
Sunday 17th Epiphany 2	1 Samuel 3: 1 - 10	Revelation 5: 1 - 10	John 1: 43 - end
Sunday 24th Epiphany 3	Genesis 14: 17 - 20	Revelation 19: 6 - 10	John 2: 1 - 11
Sunday 31st Candlemas	Malachi 3: 1 - 5	Hebrews 2: 14 - end	Luke 2: 22 - 40



Rector (from 4th January 2021): The Rev'd Neil Bowler (NB)

Associate Minister: The Rev'd John Tattersall (JT)

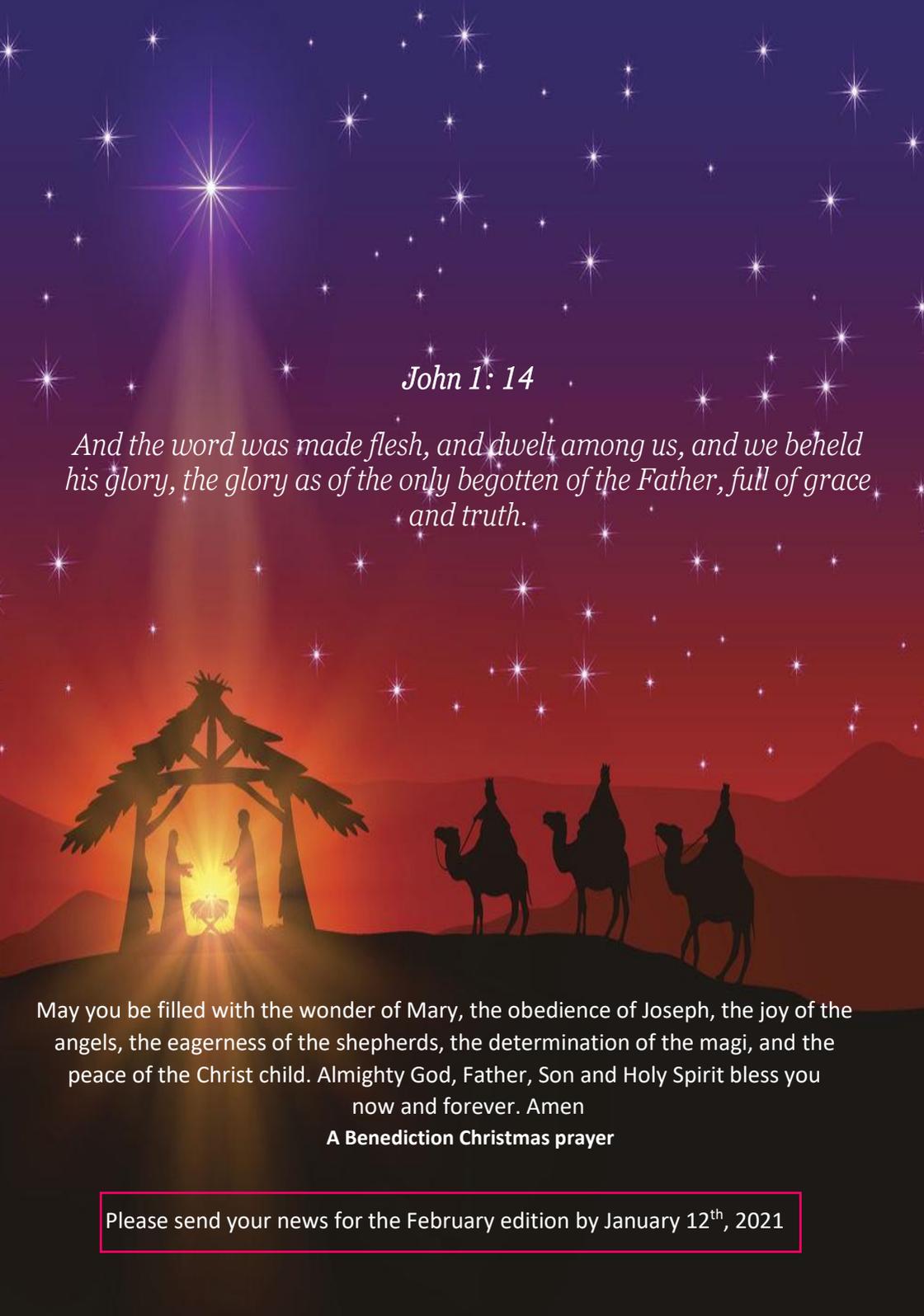
Assisting Priests:

The Rev'd Colin Smith (CS), The Rev'd Dr David Pym (DP), The Rev'd Canon Glyn Evans (GE),
The Rev'd Hazel Scarr (HS), The Rev'd Canon John Whitwell (JW),
The Rev'd Michael Campling (MC),

Other Christmas services can be found online;

The Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/>

The Oxford Diocese: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19-2/livestream/>



John 1: 14

And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. Amen

A Benediction Christmas prayer

Please send your news for the February edition by January 12th, 2021