

Wykeham Benefice News

February 2021

Dear friends,

It's with great joy that I write this my first letter as your Rector. I've received such a warm and friendly welcome from everyone across the Wykeham benefice, for which I'd like to say a BIG thank you, not only to you personally, but also to God. My licensing service, which as many of you will know, had to be done online, felt at times very surreal. Sitting in the church in Swalcliffe, with a camera pointed towards me, with John Tattersall socially distanced at my side, looking out to well over a hundred people, who were all looking at me and yet I couldn't see them.

The beginning of this new chapter in my life and ministry is at a time when individually and together as communities, but also as a country and as a World, we continue to live through a period, which in itself seems at times surreal. The announcement of a new national lockdown at the start of January certainly caused I know widespread and understandable concern and worry.

A couple of days after my licensing, whilst out walking in one of our villages (you'll get used to seeing me out and about a lot) I was asked two questions by someone who was also out for their daily constitution: when will these surreal times of not being able to see and hug people we love and care for in person, ever come to an end? and, When will we return to some sort of normality? The person asking me might well have been surprised by my very short answer (well I am from South Yorkshire and used to be a lawyer), I simply said "I don't know." Sensing that he was expecting me to be able to say bit more than just three words, I went on to say seven more: "But I hope in God we will."

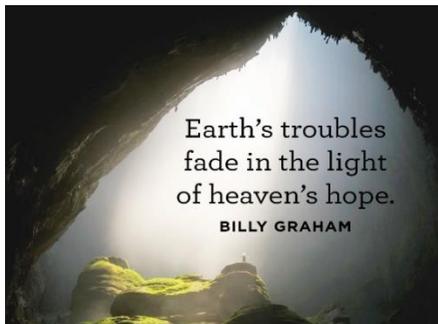
When it was announced that a new national lockdown was being introduced the Bishop of London responded by saying; "*There is hope. The vaccination programme is underway and, as Christians, we have a deeper Hope in God that comforts us beyond fear itself...even in the midst of our darkest fears, that hope brings light.*"

The times we've lived through and continue to live through, have not only shown to us individually and together our interconnectedness, but also have got many of us to ask ourselves fundamental questions about our own lives, including maybe what is really important to us or where does our true hope lay in reality? The answer for me to the latter, is that as Christians we've a deeper hope that isn't

transitory, but is eternal, we have a hope in God. On Wednesday 17th February it will be Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, a time when we might explore ways individually and together in growing not only in our relationship with God but also the foundation of our hope that is based upon His son, Jesus.

As your new Rector be assured that you have someone in me who will with grace; love, pray and care for you as your Priest, but also someone who will be a very visible presence in all aspects of the life of the benefice. I just hope and pray that I can be to you in your life, who God has called me to be.

Love & prayers Rev Neil



Village News

Broughton

CAROL SERVICE: Services over the Christmas season were somewhat curtailed as we expected the very popular Crib service had to be cancelled however the carol service held in the Castle Quadrangle was well attended with some 80 hardy souls turning up.

WELCOME: We had to welcome our new Rector Neil Bowler via a Zoom service, I know that many people tried to tune in but the maximum of 100 was reached in very quick time. We all look forward to meet Rev. Neil in person keeping the required distance of course we pray that this dreadful virus that is changing our lives so much is soon controlled so that we all get back to some kind of normality.

THANK YOU: On behalf of Broughton Church I would like to give a great big thanks to John Tattersall for the work he has done over the Interregnum, we are so lucky to have him.

Epwell

ADVENT: A very different Christmas for all of us this year but we were able to celebrate on Christmas morning in St Anne's even though we couldn't sing. Thank you to Anna Flemming for enhancing the carols with her violin and to the Wingfield-Digby family who kindly donated the Christmas tree.

On Christmas Eve a hardy bunch of socially distanced villagers gathered around the Christmas tree outside the village hall to sing carols accompanied by Caroline Long and Andrew McHugh.

THANK YOU: The PCC would like to thank the households that hosted 'The Travelling Nativity' and wish everyone in the village a Happy New Year.

WELCOME REVEREND NEIL BOWLER TO EPWELL: SUNDAY 31ST JANUARY AT 9.45 AM. for Holy Communion. This will be Neil's first 'Sunday' morning service at St. Anne's Church in Epwell so we sincerely hope that members of the village will be able to attend, if Covid 19 restrictions still allow.

Swalcliffe

WREATH MAKING: An enthusiastic volunteer team got together before Christmas for a (socially distanced) workshop in the church and created over 50 beautiful wreaths, door swags and table decorations which had been pre-ordered and pre-paid by Swalcliffe villagers. Not only did our front doors look amazing, but it was a fun community activity and we raised an incredible total of £750! We donated £375 to the Christmas appeal for the Katharine House Hospice, for which we have received grateful thanks, and the remainder has been donated to the church maintenance fund. Thanks to everyone who contributed and supported this great fund-raising effort.

CAROLS ON THE GREEN: Thanks also goes to Stephen and Catherine Warrington, and The Stag's Head for organising a wonderful communal carolling event on the village green on 22nd December. Everyone stayed in their household bubbles but it felt good to be singing together outside, enjoying mulled wine and mince pies and creating a festive atmosphere as far as we could within the Covid-safe restrictions.

CHRISTMAS DAY : Twenty-one people attended Christmas Day Family Communion and the church looked its usual festive self but we all look forward to better times later in the year when we can be together again and also fully welcome Neil to our village community.

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 support Neil.

Shutford

ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH re-opened on 5th December for Morning Prayer and for private prayer on Sundays the following day, although it is not obvious that anyone uses the church for the latter. Communal worship is held each Sunday in church but Online services will continue during the present coronavirus crisis as many of our

parishioners are staying at home.



BOTH EVENTS JOYOUS OCCASIONS: Attendance in church for our Carol Service and Christmas Day Communion was the lowest ever recorded, however, both events were joyous occasions with readings and recorded music. The church was beautifully decorated by our team of flower arrangers.

Carol singing took place in the churchyard on Christmas Eve at 7.00pm with a few hardy villager braving the cold weather, others stopped and listened on their way into the pub!

OUR GRATITUDE TO THOSE WHO SPONSORED THE ILLUMINATIONS AND MADE OTHER DONATIONS: This year our Christmas Tree was located in the churchyard so that everyone could see it, with solar lights twinkling after dark. The church tower was illuminated for Advent and Christmas until Epiphany in line with the light up Shutford and Advent Window Initiatives. We are grateful to everyone who sponsored the illuminations and made other donations ensuring that a predicted financial deficit in 2020 was avoided.

WELCOME REVEREND NEIL BOWLER: We were pleased to formally welcome the Reverend Neil to our benefice following his installation on 5th January and particularly to his first live service in Shutford to celebrate The Baptism of Christ. Taking over as rector in a new location is challenging at any time so we must ensure Neil receives all the support he deserves during the present crisis and in the years to come.

Sibford

DELIGHTED TO HAVE REVD. NEIL: We are delighted to have Revd. Neil with us in the Wykeham Benefice and making a home in Sibford.

ADVENT: We managed a Christingle Service in December; villagers were invited to make their own Christingles and bring them to the Service which was led by Revd Glyn Evans. The response was excellent with over 50 parents and children joining us.

A week later we held a carol service, obviously no singing by congregation but a small mini choir of 7, a boy soloist and Caroline Long at the organ and led by John Tattersall. Thank you to all who made these events happen within the safe distancing and sanitising guidelines.

A LOVELY LARGE CHRISTMAS TREE: A tree was once again kindly donated by Bruce Woodall, a much larger one than previous years. This took four men a while to man

handle it into the church but it was much admired at the various services, as were the decorations by the flower team. Thank you to all for making the church so attractive at this difficult time. Stay home and stay safe. Barbara

Tadmarton

GREETINGS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR: We wish all members of the Benefice greetings and a Happy New Year from Tadmarton Parish and trust that we shall all be able to meet again soon.

THE CURIOUS ROBIN: The rector met our Church Wardens on Saturday 9th January, at noon to help Neil familiarise himself with Tadmarton and our church. The three were joined by a little robin which sat on the organ top to observe the meeting. The robin then left through the open door after making its presence felt, a sign? *

Those members of our congregation who have not yet had the opportunity to meet Neil, due to self-isolating and other reasons, look forward to the day when it will be possible.

The Christmas day service was attended by few parishioners and the church was beautifully decorated thanks to our ladies. We joined in the zoom induction service for our Rector and it was a great opportunity to join with members of our Benefice in this lovely service.

The Tuesday morning services at 10pm in Tadmarton have been cancelled for the time being. There will be a BCP service at 9.45am on Wednesday at Epwell.

I hope next month to be able to provide more positive news of services and events in our church. John



****The significance of seeing a robin. All good news!***

For the most part, the significance of seeing a robin is associated with good luck. In fact, all birds represent an inner spirit and symbolize the soul's ascent to God above material things.

The robin also indicates your place in the world as a source of wisdom and indicates that you do not hold on to the past. It is a symbol of spring song and good fortune. Additionally, it also symbolises passion, a new beginning and re-birth. Therefore, if the bird flies into your life you will be blessed with happiness and joy.

Services for February - Subject to Covid 19 restrictions

Zoom Services: Sundays, H.C. at 5pm and Wednesdays, Evening Prayer at 6 pm

Wednesday 3rd	Epwell	10.00 am	Holy Communion BCP	NB
Sunday 7th Second before Lent	Swalcliffe	10.00 am	Holy Communion BCP	NB
Wednesday 10th	Epwell	10.00 am	Holy Communion BCP	NB
Wednesday 17 th Ash Wednesday	Epwell Sibford	10.00 am 7.00 pm	H.C. & Imposition of Ashes	NB NB
Sunday 21 st Lent 1	Broughton Sibford Swalcliffe Epwell Broughton Shutford Tadmarton	8.00am 9.30am 9.30am 9.45am 11.00 am 11,00 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion Morning Worship Holy Communion Morning Praise Morning Praise Holy Communion	JT NB Lay led JT JT Lay led NB
Wednesday 24th	Epwell	10.00 am	Holy Communion	NB
Sunday 28th Lent 2	Shutford Sibford Swalcliffe Epwell Broughton Tadmarton	9.30 am 9.30 am 9.30 am 9.45 am 11.00 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion Holy Communion CBP Holy Communion Holy Communion Holy Communion Village Service	NB JT GE DP NB JT

“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you”, declares the Lord...

Jeremiah 29: verse 10

Please Pray for...

- the sick, the dying and those who have lost loved ones.
- those needing operations and medical assistance both mentally and physically.
- protection to jobs and the country’s finances after leaving the EU.
- President Joe Biden and that peace may be regained in USA.
- war Zones, especially for the people of Somalia since the withdrawal of USA troops.
- our Lenten pledges will bring us closer to God and we will put our trust in the Holy Trinity to give us the ‘will’ to carry them through throughout Lent.
- that the ‘Come and See’ mission throughout the Diocese will bring new hope to many and strengthen faith.
- for all who lead groups this Lent will remember, “Contemplation, Courage and Compassion and that God’s love will shine bringing ‘hope’, conquering sadness, loneliness and despair. *“For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?” — Romans 8:24*

COME AND SEE

Who is it for?

Come and See is an invitation to everyone, for everyone. It's for anyone who feels adrift in this pandemic, whether or not they know anything about the Christian faith.



If you or someone who you know is wondering, in these very uncertain times in our lives that we are all living through, whether or how, to explore possibly being a Christian, you are invited to 'come & see'. Please do be in touch with Revd Neil (Tel: 788005) revneil@wykehambenefice.org.uk or watch out in the coming weeks for ways of exploring the Christian faith on our website.

www.wykehambenefice.org.uk

Lent



Discussions

GROWING TOGETHER IN OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH

Whether you are a regular church goer, be it in person or via the internet, or someone who is just starting to explore the Christian faith, we all at times need to have opportunities to talk with others about how we might grow in being a Christian. During Lent, which is a time of preparation for Easter, that begins on the 17th February, we shall be holding some online Zoom discussions exploring an aspect of how we might grow in our faith. These sessions will be for everyone, no matter what age you are or where you might live. If you think you might be interested then please let Revd Neil know. Once he has an idea of numbers he will put together some dates and times. In growing together our faith, we have nothing to lose but everything to gain!

Contact, revneil@wykehambenefice.org.uk or Tel: 788005

Readings for February 2021

February	Old Testament	New Testament	Gospel	Liturgical colour
Sunday 7th Second Sunday before Lent	Proverbs 8: 1, and 22 – 31	Colossians 1: 15 - 20	John 1: 1 - 14	
Sunday 14th Sunday Next before Lent	2 Kings 2: 1 - 12	2 Corinthians 4: 3 - 6	Mark 9: 2 - 9	
Sunday 17th Ash Wednesday	Joel 2: 1 – 2, 12 – 17 or Isaiah 58: 1 - 12	2 Corinthians 5: 20b – 6: 10	Matthew 6: 1- 6, 16 – 21 or John 8: 1 - 11	
Sunday 21 st First Sunday of Lent	Genesis 9: 8 - 17	1 Peter 3: 18 - 22	Mark 1: 9 - 15	
Sunday 28 th Second Sunday in Lent	Genesis 17: 1 – 7, 15 - 16	Romans 4: 13 - end	Mark 8: 31 - end	

St. Valentine

By some accounts, St. Valentine was a Roman priest and physician who suffered martyrdom during the persecution of Christians by the emperor Claudius II - Marcus Aurelius Claudius Gothicus about 270. He was buried on the Via Flaminia, and Pope Julius I reportedly built a basilica over his grave. Other narratives identify him as the bishop of Terni, Italy, who was martyred, apparently also in Rome, and whose relics were later taken to Terni. It is possible these are different versions of the same original account and refer to only one person.

According to legend, St. Valentine signed a letter “from your Valentine” to his jailer’s daughter, whom he had befriended and healed from blindness. Another common legend states that he defied the emperor’s orders and secretly married couples to spare the husbands from war.

Although the Roman Catholic Church continues to recognize St. Valentine as a saint of the church, he was removed from the General Roman Calendar in 1969 because of the lack of reliable information about him. He is the patron saint of lovers, epileptics, and beekeepers.

Valentine’s Day as a lovers’ festival dates at least from the 14th century.



Please send your news for the March edition by February 14th, 2021

Editor, Carolyn Koch de Gooreynd: carolynkdeg@zen.co.uk