



# TODAY

The Parish  
Magazine  
for the  
Exe Valley  
Mission  
Community

**FEBRUARY 2021**

**Price 50p**

## I TAKE MY OWN SERMONS VERY SERIOUSLY !

You'll be pleased to know that I take my own sermons very seriously! In fact half the time it could be said that I am preaching to myself, with me in mind!

You see, I know that deep down inside, despite everything I say, in or out of church, I am a hypocrite. I say one thing and do another. And what is more, I can justify it! I can explain and argue away my double standards and duplicity. After all there are mitigating circumstances.

There are always mitigating circumstances! So, something I said in a sermon one Sunday niggled away at me and I (well to be truthful it was 'we') decided to do something about it. We decided to clean out a kitchen cupboard!

It's one of those kitchen cupboards that goes back a long way and is quite difficult to get to, unless you are on your hands and knees.

It's amazing how many jars you can cram into an ordinary sized kitchen cupboard. And it's also amazing how many jars of

horseradish and tartare sauce, marmite and cherries in kirsch you can acquire. It was rather like doing an archaeological dig, sifting through the layers, looking up the dates! 2019. 2018. 2015. (I hadn't even moved up to Withleigh then!) Tescos. Morrisons. Normans. Normans!! Who can remember Normans? And the chutney! How many jars of chutney can you eat in a lifetime? And the overwhelming temptation was to bung it all back in the cupboard, close the door and forget all about it.



Actually, the state of my kitchen cupboard is symptomatic of other things in my life. If I rummage back far enough I am confronted not only by my hypocrisy but by my deep seated prejudices, unconscious bias and less than loving attitudes. And I don't have to rummage very far to find my

pride and selfishness. And if I am honest, some of the things I have stashed away are rather painful to confront and so it's much easier to shove them away and shut the door.

And along comes Lent. A time of reflection, meditation and confession and forgiveness. It's a wonderfully liberating thing. It's like opening the cupboard door and having a jolly good sort out and allowing God to give us a change of heart and a new start. As God has promised, 'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.' (Ezekiel 36: 26)

So, let's use the 40 days of Lent to let God have a bit of a sort out in our lives. Come and join us on our Lent course on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm beginning on 17 February 2021.

*With my love and prayers that you and your families might know the love, safety and protection of our Heavenly Father,*

*Steph*

Copy Deadline for March / April 2021 issue

Monday 8 February 2021

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**EXE VALLEY  
WEBSITE**

[www.exevalleychurches.org](http://www.exevalleychurches.org)

It's the best place to go for updates about what's on and what we do.

A recent addition to the website is a monthly **Prayer Diary** with a topic to pray for, each day of the month.

**EDITORIAL**

As I put the final touches to this copy of the magazine the number of lives lost to COVID-19 has reached 100,000.

A staggering number, but not simply a number but 100,000 individuals each of infinite value in the sight of God. 100,000

Families and friends touched by this unprecedented pandemic.

I listened to Archbishop Justin Welby this morning and he reminded us that death lies to us, it says this is the end - but it is not the end.

John 3:16

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**FROM STEPH ... ..**

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The ID and password can be found on our website

Join us for our weekly **Coffee Morning via Zoom**

This takes place every Wednesday morning at 10.30am

Join us when you can and leave when you have to!

The ID and password can be found on the website.



**THE SEASON OF LENT**

Come and join us for our Lent Course.

Beginning on Wednesday 17 February with a Service of Holy Communion at St Catherine's Church Withleigh at 12.30pm.

Booking essential.

Followed by Lent Reflections Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm via Zoom or Conference Call.

ID and Password can be found on the website or by calling the church office.



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**FROM STEPH ... ..**



*Sadly, our buildings are closed at the moment, but the Church in the Exe Valley Mission Community is still very much open!*

*Please join us for Morning Prayer on Sunday morning at 10.00am to worship via Conference Call or Zoom. See the Exe Valley Mission Community website for details.*

*If you wish to receive Holy Communion, there is a service available at St Catherine's Withleigh at 11.15am. Booking is essential by Friday 12.00 noon. Please contact the Church office by email or phone.*

*If you need help, or prayer please contact me.*

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**FROM STEPH ... ..****Weekly Services Online**

Our Zoom/Conference call services are proving very popular. Many people join us from across Tiverton and our Mission Community – and beyond. Details how to access them are on our website. In addition, we will record each Sunday service, which should be available to listen to on the website on the following Monday. Click 'Resources' and a drop down box should appear which says 'past services'. That's where it will be!

**FRESH BEGINNINGS 2021**

With the limited Christmas festivities now behind us and 2021 now upon us, I felt that during January we needed a pick me up. As for the past 3 videos the call went out and the kind people of the Exe Valley and Tiverton so enthusiastically delved into their photographic archives. The photographs you have sent are stunning, members of the post production team have been holding back a tear or two and felt quite emotional having watched it.

So to each and every one who contributed, those who read a lesson and led the prayers  
**THANK YOU.**

This was to be last in the series of four experimental video productions, before our current license expires. I feel so privileged and blessed that I have brought a smile to so many of you in these challenging times. Thank you for your kind comments.

In the coming weeks, the future content of video projects will be up for discussion. From producing Powerpoint at group services to producing videos has been a ginormous leap for me. If you have any ideas or suggestions for future projects please send me an email : [stephen\\_roche187@hotmail.com](mailto:stephen_roche187@hotmail.com)

God Bless  
Stephen Roche

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### 'TODAY' 50 years ago

February / March, 1971

The official forming of the Exe Valley Group was being delayed by two trusts which hold the Right of Patronage, and who, having seemingly showed no interest in their respective parishes, were now seeking to impose their own style of churchmanship on the Group. Our Rector was staying put until this matter had been resolved!

The March lead article focussed on 'reward and punishment', criticising the unions who demanded bonuses or rewards when production was above par, but refusing to consider penalties when the reverse happened.

M.H.A. predicted that, "in 50 years or less, the Post Office as we know it will have disappeared"! It was envisaged that communication would generally be by telephone and the like.

On the 15th February, life changed forever, with D-Day – Decimalisation!

'Criss-cross-quiz' matches were about to begin.

A concert given by members of the Oakford W.I. had been greatly appreciated. Over the course of three nights of carol singing, the Girl Guides had raised £13.14.5d for Save the Children Fund.

The parents of a child recently baptised at Rackenford had made a donation for the purchase of two new prayer books. It was suggested that others might be encouraged to follow suit.

Rackenford's first church register, covering births, deaths and marriages from 1561 to about 1700, had been temporarily returned to the parish. It was hoped that, one day, a permanent transcript could be held in the parish.

'Galloping inflation' had resulted in the Stoodleigh PCC deciding to proceed immediately with the installation of a new heating system, at a cost of £1,500.

Templeton's notes for the January magazine had gone AWOL. The Christmas Fayre had raised about £60, and the carol singers had raised £10. Plans for the new village hall were awaiting approval by the Council.

Two Withleigh families had had their photos in the Gazette, the Yekas through the making of a roomful of paper flowers, and the Britton brothers for reviving the old skill of the wheelwright. The collection of old newspapers and magazines to raise money for the church was being organised.

*Paul Iliff*

## NATURE NOTES

It seems to be a very quiet time of year for everything. The deer and pheasants are not making much of an appearance and the nightly comforting calls of owls are a reminder of nature in hiding for the present.

The trees keep silent watch and their lack of leaves further deaden the landscape of movement unless they choose to fall over.

The land has been so soaked and heavy underfoot it is not surprising that there have been some close calls near sloping woodland.

It has been a sobering winter when we have rejoined the animal kingdom and shared a life reduced to keeping safe and hunting for food. We have always been one step of any advice, so that for some time now we have departed in starlight to forage the supermarket shelves. I am afraid this has disturbed the birds of the hedgerow and they accompany us home along the lane like the outriders in a police escort. Their numbers are both surprising and welcome and they should be grateful for the early call as worms don't sleep.

Thanks to the mild weather and soft ground the wrens and blackbirds have been active around the house all winter and as they don't venture far this bodes well for the future.

However we cannot rival a recent sight at Knightshayes. About 20 blackbirds were looking for food and tossing leaves under trees in a manner so typical of them. The strange thing was that they were not only split equally between male and female but had also segregated appropriate to their sex during their work. In this age of political correctness I hesitate to find any suitable comment but no doubt readers may be able to stir trouble. I would also controversially say that blackbirds don't sing in the dead of night. (Even if their song is in every episode of Midsomer Murders)

*Thomas More*

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John 8:12 (NIV)



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We live in a fast changing situation and things are changing so quickly at the moment. As you will be aware, following last night's announcement by the Prime Minister, we have had to close Lighthouse for the duration of the current lock-down.

We hoped to run a "click and collect" type service during any future lock-down, but after due consideration have decided not to do so. At present there are no Bible Reading Notes due till March, and so if we are able to reopen by mid-February we will be able to supply them then. However, if it looks like the lock-down may go beyond mid-February, we will reconsider the situation.

If anyone has still not collected their January Bible Reading Notes, we can still send them out to you. Please either email the shop or leave a message on the answerphone and we'll try to get them to you. I'm afraid that it may take a few days as I will only be going into the shop a couple of times a week.

Thank you for your continued support. May God bless each and every one of you.

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## PARISH ROUND-UP

### CALVERLEIGH

Happy New Year to you all. Hopefully it is turning out to be a good one for you so far, despite our latest lockdown and that it will continue to be so once vaccinations have been completed. Looking forward, we await a time when we can start to arrange church and social events once again.

The Nativity Trail was supported by residents of Calverleigh (the shepherds in their field) and Lurley (Mary and Joseph journey to Bethlehem), with the Wise Men following the star residing in the Church porch. Our thanks go to all who helped to design and display them through December until Epiphany. We hope that those of you who followed the trail around the Mission Community villages enjoyed doing so, finding the hidden animals at the same time.

Thankfully our carol services were able to go ahead at Calverleigh. We had two, on 13 and 20 December, which were well attended (with all the necessary safety rules in place, of course!). Although the congregation were unable to sing the carols, suitable musical arrangements were chosen with voices included which added to the enjoyment of the services. Favourable comments were made about the choices. What we really missed was the social interaction afterwards where there would normally be refreshments. We look forward to being able to enjoy singing and fellowship next Christmas. Christmas Day saw 13 people make an early morning journey for an 8am Holy Communion service to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, arriving

*continued overleaf* →

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## PARISH ROUND-UP

as daylight was breaking. It was a lovely service led by Rev'd Steph Gordon-Jeffs. Our thanks go to Steph and also to all those who had decorated the Church prior to the carol services, giving the church a warm Christmassy look.

We would like to send a very warm welcome to the Robinsons who moved into Lurley before Christmas. The previous residents, Annette and family, have moved to Tiverton. We hope that you are all happy in your new homes.

It was with sadness that we learnt of the passing of David Froom who lived at Lower Farleigh. Born in Hastings in 1930, David was evacuated at the age of 10 to the farm to live with his Uncle and Aunt, where he remained for the rest of his life. He married a local girl, Stella Elston, at Calverleigh Church in 1956. Apart from farming he enjoyed many pastimes over the years which included hunting, point to point, playing cards and watching football. The funeral service took place at Calverleigh Church on 17 December. David will be sadly missed by all his family and many friends locally. Our condolences, thoughts and prayers go to all the family at this time and to all who are mourning the loss of a loved one.

If you have been suffering from ill health over the past few weeks/months we hope and pray that you will be feeling much better soon.

A big thank you to everyone who took part in the Nativity competition before Christmas. A slide-show showing the entries can be found on our website. We hope that the winners enjoyed their prizes. All proceeds from the competition will be donated to the Church general funds.

If you haven't got one of the church calendars yet – why not? We have a few left if anyone wants another one, in return for a small donation. Thanks to everyone who has already purchased one.

Please see the website ([www.exevalleychurches.org/calverleigh](http://www.exevalleychurches.org/calverleigh)) for any update information on services or activities.

Is there anything you want us to put in the next magazine? Or have we missed something? Please send them to Dave Burton by calling 01884 561499 or by email: [calverleigh@exevalleychurches.org](mailto:calverleigh@exevalleychurches.org).

## CRUWYS MORCHARD

Our Churches are still locked, this magazine in hard copy, will not get to you. It will come to you via the web site, presuming that you are on line, your children are not using it for their school work, or you for your work.

Today is 10th January, Plough Sunday.

UPDATES. Sadly, very sadly, in light of the increased risk of Covid-19 in this area, the catastrophic strain on the NHS, and the age of most of our congregation we have decided that, for the moment, holding services in multiple locations is not a risk worth taking. This is a temporary measure, due to the current, unprecedented crisis, and it will be reviewed in a few weeks.

The Conference Call/Zoom service will continue as usual at 10.00am on Sunday mornings.

A shortened form of Holy Communion (no sermon, one reading) will take place each week at St Catherine's Withleigh at 11.15am. If you wish to receive Holy Communion please book your seat via the church office (01884 250417) and wrap up warm!

Please join us on Sunday Mornings, on Zoom or Conference Call at the usual time of 10.00am.

Conference Call: 0330 336 0036 Pin: 586191

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Meeting ID: 824 3724 7250

Passcode: 639048

Coffee Mornings. Our next coffee morning will be on Wednesdays 13 at 10.30am. In times when we have restricted social contact, it is good to get together and have a chat. It's not the same as meeting face to face, but we always have a laugh, I nearly always find out something interesting and new, genuine friendships have been made – and I can have my coffee just the way I like it! Come and join us – even if you haven't been before.

You will have seen in the update, that we are not holding self services or group services for the next few weeks.

It is a great shame that we cannot meet at church but I believe the decision is right, in these days of the virus spreading more quickly.

*continued overleaf* ➔



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## PARISH ROUND-UP

I do hope that you will be understanding of a difficult decision that has been made. Until we can meet again, please stay safe and well.

**BIBLE STUDY** starts again on Wednesday 20 January at 7.30pm, for more details visit the web site.

### CAROLS by TORCHLIGHT

It was lovely to be joined by so many to sing Carols in our churchyard on Wednesday 16th December 2020 to celebrate Christmas, all enjoyed the evening, thank you to Steph and Robert for organising this and for their continued support us in these troubled times.

Our usual Christmas services were unable to go ahead but we were able to hold two services in December, a Communion Service led by Steph in Rackenford, and our own simplified Christmas Service, which was much appreciated by those who were able to attend.

Thank you, to those of you, who have contributed to CHAT for which they are particularly grateful in these uncertain times. Donations can be put in the supermarket collecting boxes at any time.

Message from Cindy- Thank you to all who have helped keep the church clean and arrange flowers. As the lockdown continues. I have not yet prepared the cleaning/flower rota for this year but as soon as things settle I will send it out to all the volunteers.

### CRUWYS ARMS GARDENERS

Despite our inability to hold our monthly meeting, we are all pruning trees and shrubs, weeding our gardens and

preparing ourselves for next years pests. Bulbs are now planted and spring will be as bright as ever. Best wishes to all our gardeners for 2021.

**YOGA** is continuing on Zoom, with Hilary, for all those already on the course

### CRUWYS ARMS PUBLIC HOUSE

Tel: 07369 207036

We have taken over the pub from Rod & Val, giving them a well deserved rest after so many years as landlords. We opened, very briefly, at the beginning of November (4 days) and again in December (20 days). Both of us would like to thank all of those who came and supported us during that short time. It was greatly appreciated.

When lockdown finally ends we will be able to stay open permanently; once again giving the village a lively social meeting place and look forward to welcoming many more of you through our doors. We will have a basic menu, with "homemade specials" on offer each week, all posted on our Facebook page : Cruwys Arms - 2020 & beyond (not to be confused with any other Cruwys Arms Page!). Please also note the pub's new 'phone number 07369 207036.

We would both like to thank Rod & Val for all the support, advice and encouragement they have given us, from the idea forming, through Paul giving up work, to getting the pub ready for opening again, until the present day (and beyond!) with this new venture in our lives.

Paul & Carol McIlwrath

Cruwys Morchard Young Farmers Club has been keeping busy with members being chosen to represent our area at

the County Rounds with Jess Parkhouse coming third in the Intermediate Brainstrust and Jessica Kingdom, Gracie and George Rice coming third in Junior Public Speaking and George being awarded the best male speaker.

The club has still been active with charity work raising £112.80 for CHAT at the Halloween pumpkin fun evening and also with donating numerous advent food bundles to CHAT for Christmas.

We have had fun with a couple of club quizzes via ZOOM, thanks to Sam Edworthy as quiz master.

The club has also been learning new skills via ZOOM. We have done cookery, learning to cook cheesecake, brownies and more and did wreath making as well.

We are looking forward to what 2021 has in store, as the club can't wait for the fun and success to continue.

We would like to welcome all those who have moved to Cruwys Morchard during "lock down", since March 2020. We look forward to meeting you properly at our various parish events when the restrictions are over.

It is with very great sadness that we announce the passing of Jean Ellicot on Tuesday 5 January. Our sympathy and prayers go to Tony, Heather, Sharron, her five grandchildren and one great grandson. Jean and Tony have lived in Pennymoor since 1983.

continued on page 12 

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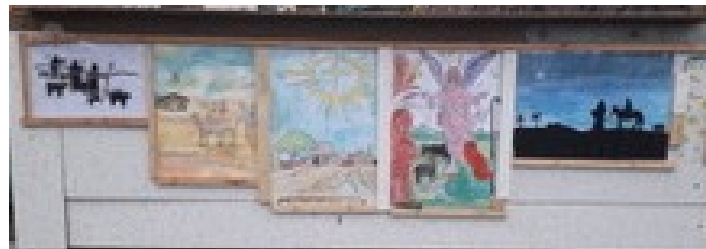


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# The Christmas Trail





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Kate Stegman  
Rackerford, Gloucestershire



- The Hidden Animals**
- |             |                   |              |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. Cat      | 11. Rabbit        | 21. Dove     |
| 2. Hare     | 12. Grey Squirrel | 22. Llama    |
| 3. Snail    | 13. Grasshopper   | 23. Ladybird |
| 4. Bear     | 14. Snake & Fox   | 24. Blue Tit |
| 5. Owl      | 15. Mouse         | 25. Nativity |
| 6. Bat      | 16. Red Squirrel  |              |
| 7. Hedgehog | 17. Robin         |              |
| 8. Badger   | 18. Woodpecker    |              |
| 9. Deer     | 19. Frog          |              |
| 10. Spider  | 20. Shetland pony |              |



## PARISH ROUND-UP

### LOXBEARE

It is good in these cold, wintery uncertain and anxious times to see the first signs of Spring with snowdrops and primroses beginning to flower. Soon lots of lambs will hopefully be playing in the fields in the sunshine! To hear and see the birds and other wildlife we are so thankful.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all who have lost loved ones, those who are unwell with the Covid virus, self-isolating or shielding. Many will be feeling anxious and lonely as we live through another lockdown. We also pray for all the children and young people who yet again have their education disrupted, for teachers and parents as they do their best with home schooling.

Also, we remember all the medical staff and care workers, many who put their own lives at risk. We would like to thank all those who are again helping those in our communities with shopping, errands etc. May the vaccines be successful in providing much needed protection.

We thank Steph for all her prayers and hard work within the parishes and for organising the Nativity trail which has produced much interest. We pray God will continue to keep her and Robert safe and give guidance for the future.

We thank those who produced some lovely pictures for the Nativity trail. At Loxbeare they were Evie, Ellie and Bobby Heywood, Freya and Jezimae Partridge, and adults - Margaret Tidball,

Steven Perry, Wendy Crook and Richard Vickery. Well done!!

Our Carol Service on the 20 December was cancelled, but Steph led the group Communion Service on 3 January.

As carol singing could not take place many people gave donations anyway. Steven Berry and Richard Heywood helped people with various jobs and kindly donated the money to the two charities - Cancer Research and Childrens' Hospice S.W. Thank you so much to them and to all who donated. Altogether Jackie has received a great total of £410. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Jackie for all her work in administering the monies and sending off to the various charities for many years. Thank you so much Jackie.

In the last magazine we thanked all who had helped in any way in keeping the Church & Churchyard clean and tidy and we would also like to thank Bob and Steve Berry for doing an excellent job in cutting the grass and keeping it looking so good throughout the year and to Steve and Richard Heywood for removing the moss on the paths and cleaning the guttering.

We pray for Steven Radford awaiting hospital appointments and anyone else who is feeling unwell or receiving treatment.

Happy Birthday to all with birthdays in February/March and congratulations to all celebrating, albeit very restricted, special occasions.

Keep safe and well and may we all look after and encourage each other, if only with a few telephone calls! Let's hope

and pray that the situation will soon begin to improve.

### OAKFORD

Dare we wish you a Happy New Year amidst the havoc that Covid-19 is wreaking? Yes, we dare because there are many things to be grateful for and happy about. Not least is that we are lucky to live in a beautiful county and the countryside is accessible to all. Spring is just around the corner and already snowdrops, early daffodils and primroses are popping up.

Some parishioners have received their first vaccination and it's on the way for the rest of us.

Connection to the community is possible via the Oakford Village Massive Facebook page. A great source of humour(!) from Richard Brain and others, cookery demonstrations from Julia Mayer and the re-launched Friday night quiz hosted by Sean Mayer.

There are lots of Zoom opportunities from Steph too - the regular Sunday morning service at 10am, the coffee morning chat on Wednesdays at 10.30am and a Bible study group that started up again on 20th January.

And there is always the option to turn off the radio and TV when the News programmes persist in wallowing in negativity and gloom. So let's 'always look on the bright side of life' and get through this pandemic.

On that positive note, a warm welcome is extended to Giles and Sally Goschen

*continued overleaf* →

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## PARISH ROUND-UP

and family who have moved into Nethercott Farm. We hope you will be very happy living here.

We were fortunate to be able to hold a Christmas service in St Peter's on Christmas Eve afternoon led by Steph. The church was festively decorated with holly, ivy, flowers and candles and of course all rules of social distancing applied. No singing of carols, mulled wine or mince pies this year but even so it was an uplifting start to the Christmas weekend.

It is with sadness that we report the death of Roy Collins whose funeral took place in St Peter's on 21 December. Roy was amazing! He reached the grand old age of 96 years and was out walking on Haddon Hill just two weeks before he died. He grew up in the White House at Spurway Mill, the youngest of ten children. He attended Oakford Village School and St Peter's Sunday School. In 1939, when just 15, he started an apprenticeship with Lewis Lees of Tiverton and in 1944 was called up to join the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. After being demobbed in 1947 he joined Medland, Saunders and Twose in Tiverton. Roy retired when he was 65. He was a member of Oakford Parish Council and was a volunteer driver for the community bus.

He didn't slow down as he got older and at 90 he could still be found on the caravan roof in his shorts, on his knees applying Bitumen with a sticky brush! The trouble was the ladder slipped and he was stuck up there until someone realised he hadn't been seen for a while. Throughout his life Roy was fit and enjoyed good health, however on 3 separate occasions it was necessary to

call for the Devon Air Ambulance. On the third trip they gave him his own woolly hat and Roy joked it was because he was becoming a regular customer!

Roy's family would like to thank all the many friends and members of the extended family for being so generous with their time and support over the years, in particular Trina Stevens and Shirley Hutter. We send our deepest condolences to the family.

Regrettably St Peter's has to remain closed until further notice. Keep in touch with the Exe Valley Community Mission via its website.

Lockdown has shut down the social life of our community too at the moment but much is being planned for later in the year so we can look forward to that. In the meantime if you are aware of anyone in the parish who is struggling to go food shopping or to collect medicines or who may be feeling lonely and isolated do contact the church warden Dawn 324035 and we'll try to help.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all those who are unwell or mourning the loss of family or friends.

Finally, saying 'take care' and 'keep safe' is becoming a bit tedious so - chins up, face the foe (not too close and always masked) and keep positive!

hope however you celebrated you kept safe and had a nice day.

On Friday November 20, a limited funeral service (due to covid ) took place for Brian Peace. Rev Steph Gordon-Jeffs took this service, where tributes, poems and readings were given by the family.

The Church would have been full to overflowing had restrictions not been in place, as Brian was well known in many areas. Brian was laid to rest with his dear wife Jen.

Our prayers continue for the family.

Many thanks to Fred and his team who do such a neat and tidy job of cutting our church hedges year after year. What a difference it makes to the appearance of the village. Job well done.

It is so encouraging now that vaccines are being administered throughout. We will all get notified, so we patiently wait, although I expect we all know of someone who has already received it. We are so grateful to the scientists and all involved in this mammoth task.

Although not many attended our Communion Service on December 22, the Christmas tree (kindly donated by Liz and Tim) sparkled brightly and was visible from the church path, so anyone passing through could see and enjoy. Holly and ivy displays and the Nativity scene on the font as always), enhanced our service which was taken by Steph. Graham gave us a warm welcome on the organ with carols (but no singing), however I think we probably sung in our heads!

## RACKENFORD

**A**t the end of our last issue we were Approaching Christmas , so we

*continued overleaf* ➔

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## PARISH ROUND-UP

We received Communion in our seats and remembered each other, all our family and friends in quiet prayer.

Graham played 'We wish you a Merry Christmas' as we left for home, giving us a lovely ending to our service. Thank you to him and all involved in keeping us all safe.

The Christmas period has been odd and we have all missed the usual Nativity, Christmas Service and Carols but would like to thank the people who organised Rackenford's contribution to the Reverend Steph's 'Christmas Trail' which were three displays in the church window, the notice board on the Common and Trinity Well on the theme of 'Angels singing in the night sky'

Many thanks to Helen Hyland, Ellie Denno, Cecile Jones, and the PTFA, Ruth Fennell and Liz Paxton who organised the displays and collected, made and placed the 'angels'.

A particular thanks to Nicola Welsh for the wonderful array of paperchain angels produced by her own 'Little Angels' and for the wooden models which were added by Sharon Saupe. The biggest thanks of all, however, goes to the children of Rackenford who have taken such care making the pictures, models and decorations which have so brightened up a difficult Christmas.

As the church needed to be closed the Christmas tree could not be in its usual place, and so many thanks to Graham Fennell and Liz and Tim Paxton for mounting it in the church window so it could be viewed from outside.

We certainly hope you all had great fun in following the trail.

How lovely to see the Christmas tree beside the tennis court glowing with lights, many many thanks to Cecile.

We have several people to mention who have been in hospital or not well for a variety of reasons, Vera, Mike, Joan B, Mary, The Mills family, Jane Issacs, Richard and of course our friend Jacques (these are the people we know of as we go to print), if you have not been mentioned we have not heard, but wish you all the very best of health for the future in our prayers. We also pray that our community stays safe.

On a much happier and positive note belated congratulations to Mary and Jacques on their 55 Wedding Anniversary on Jan 1, our love and God's Blessings for the future.

Indeed, our congratulations to all celebrating birthdays and anniversaries, we all need something to celebrate.

Amidst these difficult times it is hard to know how education will progress for our children, if it's Primary, High Schools, Colleges or Universities that our children attend we hope and pray for their future and trust they will receive all the help and support they so deserve and need from their teachers, tutors and families. We remember all our local children at school and nursery and all who look after them and keep them happy and try to protect them.

A warm welcome to anyone who has moved into our village, thinking of the new occupants of Acres Wild. We hope you will be happy here.

How lucky are we to have our Community shop with all the kind volunteers helping us in anyway they can and with restrictions in place.

Posting our Christmas cards in your lovely inside Christmas post box is such a great asset to us all with weary legs!!

We are lucky to have so many willing hands amongst us, so another thank you to Glen for keeping our clock ticking, its very much appreciated.

Although we are unable to have our usual church services, many enjoy services on Zoom, by phone call and other activities you can be a part of including Bible Studies and Coffee Mornings. Look for all these and more in your magazine.

For all the ladies on the flower rota for the altar, we are not having regular services, so when we do have a service I will provide the flowers. it will make it a lot easier as our church remains locked.

Stay safe everyone and we will get through this together. Healthy New Year.

## STOODLEIGH

At the beginning of the New Year, it may be helpful to remind ourselves of Stoodleigh's communications.

We have the Stoodleigh Parish Website: <https://www.middevonparish.co.uk/stoodleigh/>

You may wish to join the Stoodleigh Community Email group where news and information is shared via email. Please contact Jean and Geraldine at [stoodleighweb@gmail.com](mailto:stoodleighweb@gmail.com).

*continued overleaf* ➔

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## PARISH ROUND-UP

And there is the Today magazine. If you have any reports or news items concerning Stoodleigh village life, please forward them to me for inclusion in the magazine.  
[rolandchant@gmail.com](mailto:rolandchant@gmail.com)

News from St Margaret's Church

*'Today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday'*

What a start to 2021...it can only get better!

As hinted in the last entry, the truth hit us; John and Sheila left Barns Cottage on 13 November after eight years having a base in Stoodleigh and returned to Marlow. Right from the start they threw themselves into the life of the village. John on his daily three mile tramp introduced many of us to new walks and being a social chap, kept us up to date with the happenings around us. Sheila gave her all as a member of the PCC, Parish Hall Committee and organiser of so much. They were both generous contributors and they are sadly missed.

At the beginning of December, Gaynor lost her battle with illness; she will be sorely missed and we send our condolences to Brian, Mandy and Kim. It is hoped that once life settles back to relative normality, there can be a service in church to remember those who have died during 2020 so that we can all celebrate their long lives.

Gaynor Grimston

Sadly Gaynor of Valley View Farm passed away on Nov 29. Gaynor and her husband Brian moved to Stoodleigh in 1990 having purchased land from Steart Farm, where they set up a free

range egg farm helped by their son-in-law John Widdowson and daughter Mandy. Gaynor was very much a homebird and loved nothing more than being at home on the farm where she enjoyed many years with her family. Both Gaynor and Brian were delighted when their oldest daughter Kim moved to Stoodleigh recently. Gaynor joined in with village events and looked forward to catching up with her local friends at Village Hall events and enjoyed flower arranging in the church. Her most favourite event was the Stoodleigh Dog Show where her beloved little Pug even won rosettes! Gaynor had suffered with her health during 2020 but bore her illness with enormous courage, faith and a smile. She passed away peacefully in hospital and will always be hugely missed.

Remembrance Day was very subdued with the churchwardens and a few members of the PCC standing outside the west door while Jennifer tolled the bell for those departed and those who served in the world wars.

Christmas also came and went in a subdued way but we were able to have a service on Christmas Eve and are grateful to Ian Johnson for negotiating the muddy lanes to take it. Phyllis and her merry band of decorators had done the church proud with arrangements on window sills and around the church. Although there was no Christmas tree this year, the crib was displayed prominently by the pulpit. Sadly, because the church still has to remain locked, only those attending services have been able to appreciate all the hard work.

We welcome Julian and Dionne to Barns Cottage and we send best wishes to

David, Alyson, Finn and Archie who have recently moved from Wheatland Barn. Welcome to John, Amanda, Caroline and John – the new residents at Wheatland Barn and to the new residents at Ford Cottages. We wish you well in the start of your new lives here and hope to get to know you properly before too long.

Congratulations to James and Niki on the birth of their daughter on Christmas Eve – Annie Blossom. A sister for Rupert.

The Garden Club is active online; there was a garland making demonstration before Christmas and anyone interested in joining should look at the Garden Club page on the Stoodleigh website.

The Parish Hall remains closed but we will welcome you back as soon as it's safe to do so. A member of the committee visits once a week to check that all is well and you'll be pleased to know, all is good! The AGM has been postponed; it can be delayed for a few months. The committee looks forward to sharing reports and news with you and perhaps welcoming you to join the happy band of volunteers who manage the Parish Hall.

Finally, Exercise Classes via Zoom! Classes are unable to take place at the Hall for obvious reasons but our instructors are providing inspiring and uplifting classes via Zoom!

Pilates. Karen Sharp is a qualified APPI instructor and has been running successful classes for several years. If you are interested, please ring Karen on 01392 439660

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## PARISH ROUND-UP

Wednesday 10 am and Thursday 6.30pm Contact Kim on 07773019564 or email [kgrimston@gmail.com](mailto:kgrimston@gmail.com)

Yoga. Claire Weeks runs two zoom yoga classes on Tuesday 6pm and on Friday 10am Each session lasts 40 minutes. When the rules and weather allow, we will recommend outdoor classes at Down Farm. To book, please call Claire 07793289461

The year ahead may be difficult at times; if you need help, the Stoodleigh village community is here for you. Call a friend, call a neighbour and they will contact someone who can support you. Don't delay. Call today!  
Best wishes for 2021

## TEMPLETON

**T**he year ahead 2021.

A year full of hope and promise, may not have got off to the most auspicious start but, although there is uncertainty, there is still much to look forward to.

The Anglo-Saxons called February 'Sol-Monath' (cake month), because, as recorded by none other than the Venerable Bede, cakes were offered to their gods during this month. And March 14 is Pi Day! The event falls on this specific date in March because the first three significant digits of  $\pi$  are 3, 1 and 4. So these two reasons alone; cake and pie, are a reminder that small things do make a difference, and sharing even a terrible joke brings us together as we move forward into the year ahead.

Village life here in Templeton as elsewhere, goes on, as neighbours continue to look out for each other, help with shopping, phone and use video conferencing as well as socially distanced communication over the hedge to keep in touch.

Despite the restrictions, the spirit of Christmas prevailed as volunteers took part in activities such as church cleaning, church flowers, organising services, and preparing for Christmas and the New Year. Our Church, St Margaret's Church, is locked between services, but should you wish to spend some time in the church for private prayer, please contact Reg (860246) or William (251513), who will unlock the church and make sure that it is completely sanitised before and after your visit.

### Church Services

Several lay-led services have been held at St Margaret's Church, Templeton over recent months which were greatly enjoyed, and the Carol Service on 20th December, although very different to the usual carol service, was no less magical or moving – thanks to the organ music superbly played by Martin, the solo carol beautifully sung by Helen, and the recorded carols painstakingly arranged by Reg.

Many thanks go Steph, Steve and Dawn for all their hard work in keeping everyone in touch with the various activities going on within the Exe Valley Group of Churches.

The weekly conference call and Zoom Sunday services, coffee mornings and Bible study evenings are advertised weekly by email, and are also available

in the Today Parish Magazine's online website [www.exevalleychurches.org](http://www.exevalleychurches.org).

As soon as it is safe to do so, St Margaret's Church, Templeton will be holding regular lay-led services, and a Holy Communion Service led by Steph on a rotating basis within the Exe Valley Mission Community.

### Christmas Trail in Templeton

The Exe Valley Mission Community Christmas Trail, which took place throughout the Christmas and New Year period, was a great success in Templeton, as elsewhere. Each village decided which scenes from the Christmas story to paint or create, and in each scene, one of 28 animals was 'hidden'. A trail chart was circulated showing where the pictures were on display, so that parishioners could follow the trail around the parishes. At the end of the trail, at the Rectory at Witleigh, a Christmas gift awaited children by the front door! Thank you so much to everyone who took part in creating the displays and following the trail.

### Templeton's public rights of way

The countryside around Templeton is beautiful. The footpaths, bridleways and byways in our parish have been so important, particularly over the last year. It is vital that we maintain and create walking routes so that the countryside and our towns and cities may be explored on foot.

Over 49,000 miles of historic paths – enough to stretch around the world nearly twice – are missing from the official maps in England and Wales. More than a fifth of the lost paths are in the South West of England (over 9,000 miles) with Devon topping the list of

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# PARISH ROUND-UP

counties with the most rights of way missing. These paths are a vital part of our heritage, yet if they are not reclaimed for inclusion on the definitive map (the legal record of rights of way) by January 2026, we risk losing them forever, as after this time, it will no longer be possible to add paths to the definitive map based on historic evidence.

Devon County Council has been carrying out a definitive map review of the public rights of way in the parishes across the whole of Devon, and Templeton parish is now their main focus. You will soon see posters and information on our notice boards, and circulated through email, about ways that we can have our say about our local footpaths, and who to contact.

For more information go to:  
<https://www.devon.gov.uk/prow/the-definitive-map/definitive-map-review/>

**Village Hall and Social Club Events.**  
 At the time of writing, the Village Hall has closed again, in line with the government COVID-19 guidelines. As soon as the guidelines allow village halls to open up again, the committee will endeavour to find ways in which the local community can safely gather and socialise. For more information about future bookings, please contact Bindy Linden at 860655.

Our sympathies, thoughts and good wishes.  
 The funeral of Sibell Wren (83 years) was held on 23rd December at St Margaret's Church, Templeton. Sadly, Sibell died on 7th December 2020, following a long illness. She will be greatly missed by all those who knew her. Derek, Sibell and the family have lived within the Templeton community

for over 30 years. Our deepest sympathies to Derek, Grant, Adrian, Corin, Selena, and Alex at their sad loss.

Jilly and Chris Boumphrey have now moved from Village Cottage, Templeton, to Bickleigh Village – not too far away, and so we hope to still see them at our village functions in the future. We all wish them well in their new home but we will miss them.

We also wish a warm welcome to Liv, Susan, and family who have moved into Village Cottage. We hope that you will be very happy here in Templeton.

Our thoughts, prayers and all good wishes also go to the people in the parish, and beyond, who are unwell, in hospital, receiving or awaiting treatment, or going through a tough time.

Lynda is very happy for people to get in touch with her (tel: 881318) if there is anything concerning them, or just to have a chat (all completely confidential, of course).

There is no Flower Rota currently but Gloria will phone the volunteers on the rota, as soon as the next service is allowed.

Meanwhile, here are 12 recent additions to Templeton; some Middle White piglets.



# WASHFIELD



*"Worry is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do but never gets you anywhere. Remember: dawn always comes after darkness"*

**G**reetings to you all at this very strange beginning to the New Year. Now that vaccinations are taking place apace, light IS at the end of the tunnel and a few more months of patience will bring about a gradual return to happier days.

Our community spirit is still strong and well with shopping being done for the vulnerable and offers of help being offered.

We hope your Christmas was as good as it could be with families being apart, but no doubt in touch in other ways. It is particularly hard for the bereaved not being able to visit, or be visited by, family and friends and we send our kind thoughts and prayers to Malcolm who has lost Caroline after her long illness, bravely borne and whose Funeral and Thanksgiving Service was in the Church in December. We look forward soon to be able to support Malcolm in a more practical way when restrictions are lifted.

At present we need to pray for all NHS workers undergoing severe stress and to be thankful for the clever scientists

*continued overleaf* ➔

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## PARISH ROUND-UP

who have worked so hard to produce vaccines.

After a consultation with all the Churchwardens Steph has decided that she is not happy to ask them and their helpers to put themselves at risk by continuing to carry on with a Holy Communion Service in each church, which has been happening for some months, but to offer this Service each Sunday at 11.15 am at Withleigh, when she herself will deal with the arrangements for safeguarding etc.. This will fulfill the Church's duty to provide Holy Communion for those who depend on it. The service of Morning Prayer from The Liturgy, shared with Robert, will continue at 10 am by telephone or 'Zoom', or by listening to a recording at any time, or by reading the text on the website.

The Bible studies start again on Jan 20 and Coffee Mornings continue on Wednesdays at 10.30 am if you feel like a chat. Thank goodness for technology and who knew we would ever say that! Primroses are flowering in Washfield and the days are getting longer. Spring WILL come and Steph is on hand if you need her.



We definitely need some happy, positive news in these difficult times and the next two good news items will hopefully bring cheer.

We wish many happy wishes to David and Marion Elston on becoming first time grandparents to baby Ada, the first

child for daughter Diane and her husband Alex.

Congratulations to you all.

And so many congratulations go to Samantha Bolt (daughter of Morley and Carol) as she and Samuel celebrate their recent engagement. What happy news!

We send all those experiencing ill health our best wishes and those awaiting treatments and operations at the moment, we hope that you don't have to wait too long for these.

Look out for more updates, positive news and villagers sharing useful information on the village Facebook page 'Humans of Washfield and Lower Washfield'.

## WITHLEIGH

**A**nother year, another Lockdown. *Ac'est la vie!* All our hopes of an early return to normality have, so far, been frustrated, but we hope and pray that the vaccines coming on stream will succeed in helping in the defeat of Covid-19. Some may well ask where God is in all the suffering, but that is precisely where he is – in it with us, suffering alongside us.

Christmas was certainly a very strange affair, with just one day on which we could meet up with a limited number of other family members. Feedback received suggests that members of our community were keen to abide by the rules, unlike some in other parts of the country.

Our Christmas Service here in Withleigh was extra special this year, as it was the day we reopened our Church

after such a long time with the door locked. Our first attempt to reopen would have been for our Remembrance Day Service, but of course the second lockdown put paid to that. We still have the church door locked during the week, and are sorry that we are closed for private prayer, but that is so that we can have a service on Sunday. Please see service times in the magazine or on the Mission Community website if you wish to attend.

Going back to our Christmas Service on Christmas Eve, it was so lovely to be back in Church, We were few in number, but the simplicity of the Communion Service without any Carols gave us all a real feeling of that first Christmas so long ago. Cattle moving about in the background would have just set it off!

Instead, thanks to Sara who put up the tree, and with candles in the windows, we were given the feeling of a Holy Christmas without the fuss. Thank you Steph for taking the service, which was really appreciated by all who attended.

Despite not being able to hold our usual Christingle service, a donation was sent to the Children's Society.

It had been noticed, back in October, that some of the mortar flashing had fallen from the church roof. Clearly the replacement of this was urgent, with winter almost upon us. The failed lime mortar has now been replaced with cement mortar.

Our grateful thanks go to Margaret who, prevented from selling her preserves and chutneys at both the Summer Fête and the Craft Fayre, has been selling

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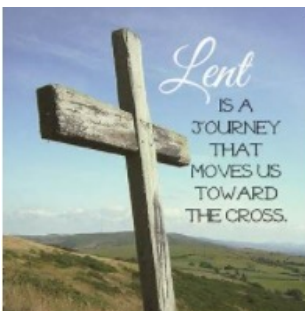
them, along with hand-sewn items, from her doorstep, raising a magnificent £500 for church funds. Thanks also to Christine for her help in the production of the preserves and chutneys.

As we look forward to a return to something like normal as the year progresses, it is reassuring to see the snowdrops and primroses peeping through in the churchyard with, no doubt, the crocuses soon to follow. The sight of our churchyard's renewed floral display may be just a small encouragement in these difficult times, but it demonstrates that the pattern of the seasons is changeless.

Our children and young people are having to again face up to assessed results for their GCSEs and A-levels, and no doubt we can all sympathise with all who are struggling with the broad-band speed (or lack of it) that we experience in our area.

Celebrations, as such, may be off limits, but congratulations to any who have special birthdays or anniversaries.

Get well wishes go to all those known to us who are receiving treatment, recovering from operations, or who are not well at the moment. And, to everyone, once again, stay safe and take care.



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