

NewsLink

8 November - 22 November 2020



Churches of North
Bradford on Avon
& Villages

Dear friends

John O'Donohue is one of my favourite poets and philosophers. I think his poem *This is the time to be slow*, is so apt for this time of lockdown. Usually in mid November we are so conscious of time passing by quickly and all that needs to be planned and prepared for Christmas. And yet this year, lockdown offers the possibility of a somewhat slower pace. From Advent Sunday on 29th November, perhaps this year we can really immerse ourselves in the season of Advent, watching and waiting, as we move from darkness to the light of the Christchild, whose coming we celebrate on Christmas Day.



This is the time to be slow,
Lie low to the wall
Until the bitter weather passes.

Try, as best you can, not to let
The wire brush of doubt
Scrape from your heart
All sense of yourself
And your hesitant light.

If you remain generous,
Time will come good;
And you will find your feet
Again on fresh pastures of promise,
Where the air will be kind
And blushed with beginning.

John O'Donohue, Irish poet and philosopher

Excerpt from his books, *To Bless the Space Between Us (US) / Benedictus (Europe)* <https://johnodonohue.com/> Photo: Fanore, Co. Clare / Ireland – 2019
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Plans for the period from Advent Sunday until Christmas Eve are taking form in each of our four churches. You can see their ideas below. The Benefice Christmas card this year has been designed by Ann Chapman from Christ Church. Thank you so much Ann!

The information inside will be general, describing some ideas but pointing people to websites, notice boards etc. We hope to deliver them the first week of December so do please see your church contact below and deliver some whilst out on your walks. There are three things we are encouraging our communities to do:

make gardens, or windows festive, draw or make a star and put it in your window, offer anonymous little acts of kindness God Bless you during this special time. **Ann, Rector**

Many of the plans below are provisional and subject to change, depending on Government restrictions.

St Peter's Church Christmas plans

St Peter's Church are holding our first Christmas Tree Festival in the church during the two weeks prior to Christmas. Village groups and the four churches in the Benefice are each decorating a tree. We warmly invite you all to come and enjoy this colourful and festive display. We will also be encouraging local households to join in by **decorating a tree** outside their houses.



There will be a **Christmas Eve Lantern procession** to the church with children encouraged to dress up as angels, shepherds or wisemen. There will also be a **Nativity Trail** in the churchyard for the children to explore.

Tickets for our **Raffle** of Christmas Hampers full of tasty goodies will be on sale soon. Rev. Ann Keating will be drawing the winning tickets in the church on **Sunday 20th December**.

St. James's Advent

★ We are planning to put up our usual tree in the church. This will be able to be seen from the Longs Chapel and should give the feeling that the church is still alive.

★ We plan to put up another tree in the churchyard by the flagstaff. We hope to decorate this with the theme 'Bells'. Zoe plans to make up packs of decorations for the children in the village to make at home on this idea and, additionally, we thought we might ask people in the village to bring some more decorations of their own. The tree will be lit.

★ As the theme for the village is 'bells and light' the greenery round the notice board will also be lit and we hope to encourage villagers in general to put lights inside and out to emphasise the idea. Also, we hope to get people to put pictures of bells in their windows (to replace rainbows and teddies) for the children to see when going round the village.

★ We plan to put the crib in the porch which will, as ever, have seasonal flowers put there by our lovely flower ladies.

It's a busy time at St Nicholas as we prepare for Advent.

★ We are planning a display of various nativity scenes. Both Penny and Mary Anne have offered a 'nativity scene' and Paul and I will also bring our African nativity. If you have a nativity scene you would be happy to lend us, we would really appreciate all offers. We ask that it be nothing precious or valuable as the church will be unattended. There are some lovely Latin American, Russian etc nativities available. All are welcomed. The window sills are a bit high, so we plan to use table tops and low level displays of the nativities so all can see easily.

★ **Wednesday 25 November**, we plan to set up and display the crib and on **Saturday 28 November**, Mary Anne is going to the church and will decorate the windowsills with candles, pine cones etc. Roy is on the case with Christmas trees (one inside and one outside) with lighting and Francis and John are looking forward to decorating both trees.

★ We are trying to source some stones to be taken away, painted, and then brought back to create a cairn.

★ We are aiming to have the church looking beautiful and welcoming from Advent Sunday. We will then be open daily from 10 till 4.00, offering a warm and cosy space. For now, we intend to be the welcoming church in our community and a light in the darkness.
Linds Batson

Christ Church plans for Advent and Christmas.

★ An illuminated cross by the notice board at the top of Mason's Lane

★ Twinkling coloured lights in the trees along the paths

★ A Christmas tree outside the church which children can be encouraged to decorate.

★ Turn the south porch into a stable with nativity tableau with large figures (possibly made by the school) with a star and carols playing. (If the church has to be closed) This would have to be manned so could only be open on specific days.

★ Christmas tree inside the church - If the south porch is a stable access this would have to be via the west door.

★ Nativity scene under the altar (as usual)

★ Large Christmas poster in the noticeboard opposite Mason's Lane

We hope to open the church from 10-4 from Advent Sunday until Christmas Eve.



We wanted to assure you that the **Hub** continues to operate in Bradford on Avon, Although, during the national lockdowns predominantly only as a foodbank, The debt advice and general enquiries have substantially been continued via email and by phone, but hopefully will resume in the new year with face to face appointments. The number of food parcels provided has increased and the take up of e-referral continues to grow, - it is expected that over 200 food parcels will go out this Christmas which is a significant increase on last year, so as you will be aware we are busy packing up boxes and bags and would be delighted for any additional Christmas items for this.

A huge thank you to volunteers and supporters.
Best wishes, **Avril**

Advent to Christmas: Comfort and Joy for everyone.

Ann has ordered some *Comfort and Joy* booklets and book marks for each church. *Comfort and Joy*, is the national message and the national church has produced resources for us to share with others. The booklets are called *Comfort and Joy, nine lessons and carols for Christmas*. There is a reflection by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and others on a Carol for each day from Christmas Day to 2nd January, along with a Bible reading, an action to carry out and a prayer.

Thought for the week.

Personally, November is a month of mixed emotions; joyful ones with the thrill of fireworks and the beauty of frosty mornings, fallen leaves and autumn sunshine, and also a time of reflection and sadness as I remember those in the life of my family who are no longer alive.



I usually find comfort in the 'All Souls Day Service' we traditionally have where we join together to light a candle and read out names of those we are remembering. This year we have had to be more creative and, instead of a service our parish has come up with a lovely idea. The church has given out a pinch of For-get-me-not seeds which I am looking forward to planting and enjoying in the year to come. As we sow our seeds, we have been encouraged to think not only about remembering our loved ones but also to remind ourselves of what we are going through this year.

Every one of us has lost something – the touch of a friend, the longed-for holiday, a job, a relationship, savings, and for some, their homes. But we must also not forget the things we have gained in this time: new friendships, a feeling of community, time in the outdoors.

So, during this season of 'remembering' I wonder what precious memories you will make for yourself or for others in this new 'lockdown'? What will you choose from this season of change not to forget?

The Lord has been mindful of us; He will bless us; Psalm 115:12

"Life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one. In the depths of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond; and like seeds dreaming beneath the snow, your heart dreams of spring. Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity." Kahlil Gibran

Nicola Coupe – Salisbury Diocesan Board of

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Interested in the future of the Church? 'The new Imaginary.'

As our parishes and schools adjust again in changing times, returning to lockdown patterns and seeking to involve those with and without technology, new forms of church gathering, worship and working are emerging. Where do we go from here?

In this Diocese, we have fostered traditional church while recognising the need for forms of church that respond to the people, communities and cultures around us that are less 'churched'. We are now seeing churches with magazine-style services streamed on social media, phone networks, person-to-person messaging, and international reach, alongside traditional prayers and liturgy, playing of pre-recorded hymns, and lighting of candles. Can these new forms be 'Church'? The Revd Paul Bradbury, a Pioneer Minister since 2008, examines this in his recent blog, 'The future of church is not a new form but a new 'imaginary'.' He addresses 2 key questions: 'What is church?' and 'What is the future of church?' Paul says: "As church buildings have been closed and people have debated the importance of gathering physically in an ecclesiastical space for worship, the conversation, whether about the Eucharist, or about sacred space, is really a variation of the one question – what is the church?"

"Likewise as we have begun to see new forms of church form online, hybrid forms of church evolve as people find ways of gathering in gardens or public space whilst also connecting via Zoom.

"However, the church has never been about form – in the sense that you cannot define church by its form. The church has had as many forms as time and cultural context have fostered.

"So for example, the early church form, based around communities meeting in people's homes was shaped around the collegia, the voluntary associations that were a feature of Greco-Roman life, particularly in urban areas. Early Christians took that form and adapted it for their expression of church.

"Likewise the congregational model of church that is normative for the church in the west has deep roots in the social and political contexts of the Reformation, with varied levels of rejection of the political control of the church by the state and an emphasis on individual choice.

"The church has no form that exists outside of its cultural context."

Paul goes on to argue that we are seeing an opportunity to reach out to society and see where God is already at work in homes, in schools, in workplaces, outdoors, everywhere. He mentions the concept of 'Missio Dei' - that God is missional, as Jesus was, inviting people to repent and follow Him - and that we can invite others to join us as Church, in ways that work for the whole dispersed gathering. He adds: "What I genuinely believe is that we are being invited to explore a new ecclesial imaginary for a new cultural era in the west. And we are being invited, by the Holy Spirit, to lay down our assumptions and prejudices about church forms in order to allow space for new forms to emerge from this imaginary." You can find a link to Paul Bradbury's *blog* on the **Diocesan website**.

At St Peter's Church, Monkton Farleigh, Staff Sgt. J. Burton REME read out the names of the fallen and laid the wreath on behalf of the Armed Forces.



A tall, cylindrical stone monument stands in front of a rustic stone wall. The monument is inscribed with the names of fallen soldiers. At its base, a large wreath of red poppies is laid out on the grass. The background shows a line of trees and foliage.



Winsley memorials.

Creating the Church of Tomorrow By Oscar Romero
It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view. The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our own lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No programme accomplishes the Church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything. This is what we are about. We plant seeds that will one day grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are the workers, not master builders; ministers not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own. Amen. **Paul Batson**

Preserves for Christ Church

Calling all jam, marmalade and chutney makers!

We are hoping to raise money for the Future for Christ Church project by making and selling preserves in time for Christmas. We will have Christ Church labels available to use if you would like.

If you can help with this in any way please contact **Dorna Daw (862834)**

Please watch this space for further details on how/where to buy!



A date for your diary. In the Diocesan Prayer Cycle our churches and schools are being prayed for on 9th January.

We are selling a rather good Christmas card for the South Wraxall Bells Restoration. It is a particularly good nativity scene from the east window of St James's Church. We are selling them for £5 for a pack of 10.



Contact: Valentine/Christopher Thornhill
862552 / christopher@saisee.com

Our Archbishops of Canterbury and York have asked us to pray for our nation (you may remember Thy Kingdom Come earlier in the year), this is a continuation with a special feel whilst we are in this second wave of the pandemic. <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/PftN%20Booklet%20spreads.pdf>

The above link takes you to a single page (2sides) of Prayers for each day. Preferably we all pray at 6pm. Churches up and down the land are joining in. Be part of the bigger picture. **Daphne Cox**

St Nicholas - opening times for private prayer on Sundays 13.00 to 16.00hrs and Thursdays 10.00-13.00hrs.

All Sunday services for November are cancelled due to Lockdown restrictions. This Sunday service will be available on our website.

The Benefice service planned for Advent Sunday on the 29th November service will be online and Bishop Andrew will be speaking.

Benefice office open on: 25th November and 2nd December

This Sunday's service will be available on the our website www.nboachurches.co.uk Each fortnight we will also publish your photos, bible verses that have spoken to you, reflections and poems in News Link or on the website. Next News Link due on **6 December**. Please submit all content by **Tues 1 December**. If you know someone who can not access News Link online and who would prefer a hard copy, please

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