

The United Benefice
of Tintinhull with Chilthorne Domer, Yeovil Marsh
and Thorne Coffin

✠ *NEWSLETTER* ✠
DECEMBER 2014

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Dear Friends,

We've reached that time of year when people say to me, "It's your busy time of year." Well, it is – and it isn't. It is a busy time of year, of that there's no doubt, and it's a time of year that I enjoy enormously, not least because of the mince pies! Christmas is nearly upon us and we all look forward to it – some with excitement and anticipation, and some with dread and foreboding. For some of us Christmas is a family time, for others it's party season, for some it's a chance to eat and drink too much and crash out in front of the TV. But for some Christmas can be a lonely and difficult time. There will be those for whom this Christmas will be their first without a recently departed loved one, those who still mourn the loss of a child or grandchild. For some it is a time of anxiety about debt and their inability to buy their children the gifts they would like to or to put a Christmas dinner on the table, for some it will be a time when a relationship is put under intolerable strain. Mostly we hide our anxieties (if we have them) about Christmas – but that doesn't mean that they're not there.

For those of us who profess a Christian faith Christmas can be a time of deep spiritual renewal and satisfaction. But that doesn't mean that we are unaffected by many of

other feelings that are to be had about Christmas. In ourselves or in others the "secular" festival has its impact. It is very easy for us to get wrapped up in the religious celebrations, with all their warm feelings and the positive message of a God who loves his human creation so much that he sends his only Son as a human baby into the world, that we forget that our neighbour might be going through a very difficult time, and so we are not there for them. Christmas, with its family closeness can be a time when we become inward looking and neglect those around us. And that is a great shame. In sending Jesus into his world God shows his great love and concern for us. Therefore, Christmas should challenge us to be outward looking and to be concerned for the well-being of our neighbour – whether that's the person who lives next door, or the person who has lost their whole family to Ebola in West Africa.

I encourage you then to spend a little time this Christmas thinking about what God might be wanting you to do for your neighbour at this festive season. Could you invite someone to share your Christmas dinner who would otherwise be alone? Can you donate some food to the Lord's Larder food bank (there are collection boxes in St Margaret's and St Mary's but you can leave it any of our churches)? Can you give a gift to

those who are suffering through charity? Perhaps when someone asks what you would like for Christmas you might suggest a gift to Christian Aid (search Google for Christian Aid Present Aid for ideas) or some other charity. Don't let Christmas, when God gave us his greatest gift, be a time for looking inwards, but a time for reaching out with God's love.

As always there are a full range of Christmas services at our churches, details of which can be found elsewhere in this newsletter, on the website and on posters soon to appear in the villages. You will be made most welcome at any of them. I hope that we might see you over this Christmas.

I wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas, in Christ,
Fr Peter

From the Bishop of Bath and Wells: ***"The adventure of Christmas"***

I passed a shop this summer which had Christmas goods and Christmas cards on offer - and it was still only August! Every year shops seem to start their Christmas displays a week earlier. But in the annual rush to Christmas (which we all have a sinking feeling about) we risk losing a great deal. In particular we lose the distinctive emphases of Advent which is a season of preparation and expectation.

In Advent we are invited to be still, to be watchful and to be prayerful and to prepare ourselves to celebrate once again the birth of Christ. The word Advent suggests both 'Event' and 'Adventure' and Christmas is both of those things. Christmas is when we remember the birth of a baby in a stable in Bethlehem: a baby who was God himself. This was God taking our nature upon himself and putting into effect his great plan of love, whereby we might be reunited with our Creator. That stable in Bethlehem may seem a long way away from us, but God's love is the same. This is an event for us and our families today - an event to be celebrated.

But Christmas is also an adventure. It was an adventure for the shepherds who 'returned glorifying and

praising God for all that they had heard and seen' (Luke 2:20). It is an adventure for us as we open our lives and our homes to God. It is an adventure as we look forward to 2015 and all that may mean for us. It is an adventure as we trust ourselves and those we love to Christ as Saviour and Lord.

So let me challenge you to take time this Advent to make a space in the rush to pause, to be still, to reflect and to prepare for the wonder and joy that is Christmas. Let us pray that all our church services and activities will help us draw nearer to God and help us to concentrate on the great 'event' and great 'adventure' which is at the heart of all we are celebrating. Furthermore, let us ensure that this Christmas is centred more around the coming of Christ and the needs of others, and less around ourselves.

May God grant you a peace-filled Advent and a joy-filled Christmas.

+Peter Bath and Wells

THE UNITED BENEFICE

Two Magnificent Efforts...

Judy Allaway, local organizer of the 2014 Royal British Legion Poppy collection wishes to say: ***"Thank you to all the loyal helpers who helped collect the overall amount of £1,940.66p."***

And Jill Coe would also like to thank every one who took part in the Shoe Box appeal 2014. Jill says ***"we sent 321 - a record so far (256 last year). The boxes will leave at the end of November to arrive in eastern Europe in time for Christmas"***

News that may be of interest to all of the four parishes: the congregation of St Peter and St Paul, Lufton invited all who wished to, that they come along to join them in a special service in November. The sermon, given by Rev. David Keen was deemed worthy of his fee of one guinea! We were warmly welcomed and served with some tasty refreshments afterwards. I think it safe to say that Lufton is possibly leaning towards joining with our United Benefice so hence

my mention of the service. Many thanks to Marvin Collins for the invitation to such a pretty and well kept church. On the subject of lovely looking churches. Our four churches are seeing a flurry of activity as people prepare for Christmas tide. Do come and visit one of them over the festive season. On another tack, a message to all Newsletter contributors: please let me have your items for the January 2015 issue on or before 16th December so that the printer has the Newsletter before he breaks for Christmas and New Year. Thanks for all your offerings.

Hilary, editor

TINTINHULL

We have good news of Eileen Wilcock, who is making remarkable strides in her recovery after back surgery. It has been a pleasure to see her again at the Post Office in the WMC on the past two Wednesdays. Good news of Eliea who I am pleased to say made it to service Sunday last despite the length of the pathway! Let's pray for good news of Simon, Sandie, Joan and Dee.

"THE BUFFALO GIRLS"

TINTINHULL VILLAGE HALL

SATURDAY 14th MARCH at 7.30pm

Why not let TAKE/ART drive away the winter blues this March by joining the *Buffalo Girls* for a memorable evening's entertainment. The Buffalo Girls are a 6 piece old-time Country String Band who present a lively, authentic and highly entertaining interpretation of traditional and early-recorded American roots-based music. Champion Maryland fiddler, Kate Lissauer, leads the band, which, in keeping with its age-old tradition, travels the rural countryside bringing music and fun wherever it goes!

The Box Office is now OPEN. Tickets £10 to include Supper. Contact Richard Gowring to reserve

Seats/tables

**ALL PROCEEDS TO
ST MARGARET'S CHURCH**

CHILTHORNE DOMER

Angie Clothier writes: "Tickets are now available from me (841659) for *St Mary's Christmas Supper Party* on Saturday 6th December at the Recreation Centre. Supper starts at 7pm. Tickets are £8 adult £4 child, everyone welcome. There will be the usual wonderful array of crafts etc on the Christmas table sale and a Christmas raffle. Even if you don't have supper, come & skittle for a turkey from 8 - 10 pm. And, The Choir are busy practising, I hope you will come & join us at the *Carol Service* on December 21st, followed by mince pies & mulled wine." On the first day of November, Wells Cathedral hosted the confirmation of some 100 candidates including Ben Lye-Forster. Congratulations Ben!

YEOVIL MARSH

No news from Yeovil Marsh this time but do try to support your village church especially at Christmas. You have a service of Christmas Carols to look forward to on 20th December - all are very welcome.

On 9th November a warm welcome was given to Dougie John Griffin at All Saints', Yeovil Marsh on the occasion of his Baptism.

Ring Sandy Rendell on 01935 429510 if you are interested in booking the Church Hall.

THORNE COFFIN

No news of activities in Thorne but Ian Gardner, from Chilthorne reports that arrangements have been made to have certain trees within the church property assessed for signs of disease and to be risk assessed. The trees concerned are those at the southern end of the property adjacent to the tree which fell across the road last year. The results of this assessment will be reported in next month's Newsletter."

If any Thorne residents have good news of fun things happening concerning St Andrew's, do drop Hilary Cozens a line so she can put it in the next issue too.

SERVICES DURING DECEMBER 2014

Day	Tintinhull	Chilthorne	Yeovil Marsh	Thorne
Tuesday 2nd December		10am Eucharist (BCP)		
Sunday 7th December Advent 2		10.30am United Benefice Eucharist		
Sunday 14th December Advent 3	9.15am Parish Eucharist	10.45am Parish Eucharist	10.45am Morning Prayer	8am Eucharist (BCP)
Thursday 18th December	7pm Carols and Readings			
Saturday 20th December			6.30pm Christmas Carols	
Sunday 21st December Advent 4	8am Eucharist (BCP) 10.45am Together4God	10.45am Matins 6.30pm Carol Service		4pm Carols in Saint Andrew's
Wednesday 24th December Christmas Eve	3.30pm Crib and Christingle	5.30pm Crib Service 11.30pm Midnight Mass	9.30pm First Eucharist of Christmas	
Thursday 25th December Christmas Day	10.45am Christmas Eucharist			9.15am Christmas Eucharist
Sunday 28th December Christmas 1	9.15am Parish Eucharist	8am Eucharist (BCP) 10.45am Together4God	10.45am Parish Eucharist	4pm Evensong
Sunday 4th January 2015 Epiphany	10.30am United Benefice Eucharist			

Last but not Least:

Have a really peaceful Christmas; look after yourselves, your family and friends and then look towards 2015 with hope and joy in your hearts because God loves each and every one of us. Good News!