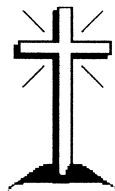


Together



**Parish news for the united benefice of Cranford, Grafton
Underwood, Twywell and Slipton**

December 2019 - January 2020

Letter ...



Dear friends,

'Tis the season to be jolly! Or so they tell us. But when it's cold and gloomy, and pouring with rain outside, it's sometimes hard to be anything of the sort. However, with Christmas just around the corner, there's plenty of things happening in and around our United Benefice to get us into the festive spirit. This edition is full to bursting with events and activities to delight and entertain, as well as give us pause for thought during this often hectic, but important season. From children's nativities to Christmas tree-lighting and Christmas tree festivals, or the beautiful Carols by Candlelight services which have always marked the start of Christmas proper for my family, there is something for everyone to enjoy. So take a look inside and see what you can find to bring out some of that Christmas sparkle!

December is usually when we stop to reflect on what has happened over the past year, but it is also the time when we look forward to new beginnings. We perhaps make resolutions to try something different, to learn something new, or to make some kind of meaningful change to our own lives or to those of others. What will your resolutions be for 2020? Will you manage to keep them? I hope so. I'll be working hard to keep mine!

One thing is for sure. It is far easier to achieve things together. So, as 2019 comes to a close, I'd like to take this opportunity to say a really very BIG thank you to everyone in Cranford, Grafton, Twywell, Slipton and beyond who has helped me to produce this magazine every other month. Despite all the challenges of the past year, we have managed to keep it going between us. It has not always been easy, but we have come together to make it happen, and that is what matters. As a community we are always stronger and happier.

Have a joyful Christmas, and a peaceful and prosperous 2020,
Best Wishes

The Editor



SAMARITANS PURSE SHOEBOX APPEAL

A BIG Thank You to everyone who contributed in any way to our Shoeboxes this year. We sent 113!!

Jenny Daykin



**All enquiries about Church Services to
Churchwardens:**

Cranford

Brian Keech ~ 01536 330232

Grafton Underwood

Rog Hatlem ~ 01536 771279

Paul Harris ~ 01536 330567

Twywell

Sean Flanagan ~ 01832 733569

Michael Hurst ~ 01832 733926

Slipton

Tony Fraser ~ 01832 734059

Parish Representative



Together is distributed to every household in the four parishes. If you would like to contribute to the costs, a donation of £5.00 per annum would be much appreciated.

Please send your donations to the Church Treasurer in your village:

Cranford – Jo Fry

Grafton Underwood – Rob Donnelly

Twywell – Cathy Steele

Slipton – Liz Heath

Many Thanks

Diocesan News

“Hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest”

I love the season of Advent as an attempt to slow down amid all the frantic busyness of preparing for Christmas. It reminds me of all the different ways Jesus comes into our lives – long ago as a baby in Bethlehem, today in prayer and worship and our encounters with other people, and one future day in great glory.

One of my particular pleasures is the much-loved and ever-popular Carol Service. Through readings, carols and a wonderful variety of choir music, we “hear again the message of the angels, and read in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God” as the bidding prayer from King’s College, Cambridge so beautifully describes it.



For many years, the Church of England has celebrated the second Sunday in Advent as “Bible Sunday” because of the memorable words of the Collect:

Blessed Lord,
Who caused all holy Scripture to be written for our learning:
Grant that we may so hear them,
read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them,
that by patience and comfort of your holy Word,
we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Pope Francis has recently encouraged Roman Catholics to keep a ‘Word of God Sunday’ at the end of January. In an Apostolic Letter called ‘He opened their eyes’, the Pope wrote of Jesus helping the disciples to understand the Bible on the road to Emmaus. He said that “we urgently need to grow in our knowledge and love of the Scriptures and of the risen Lord. Otherwise,” he warned, “our hearts will remain cold and our eyes shut”.

The Pope has some quite pointed things to say about the poor quality of some sermons, but his greater concern is that people read the Bible and allow it to speak.

This Advent, Christmas, New Year and Epiphany, why not set aside a personal ‘Bible Day’ in which you perhaps aim to read one of the Gospels. It will only take a couple of hours. I pray that God will open our eyes afresh, and I’d love to hear what new things you discover.

With my love, prayers and best wishes,

Yours,

+John, Bishop of Brixworth

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www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk



Cranford News

St John's Church

By what seemed like a miracle, the quantity of produce for auction after the Harvest Supper in the village hall on Saturday 5th October grew in the space of about half an hour before the supper from very little to a quantity comparable to previous years, which enabled our auctioneer, Richard Barlow to persuade the bidders to part with almost £231. By that time about 65 participants had enjoyed an excellent supper prepared by Rachel Davis and her team of helpers. The net amount raised through the Harvest Festival activities (church collections, supper ticket sales and auction proceeds) enabled a total donation of £710 to be made to TEAR Fund. Thanks to the many who contributed in so many ways.

The village school harvest festival was not celebrated until Tuesday 15th October when the Reverend Doug Spenceley conducted a service in the church which, in addition to the full complement of teachers and children, attracted about 70 family members. The nurturing of the links between the school and the church, with the active support of the Acting Head Richard Albert, School Governor Sandra Day and Parochial Church Council member Elizabeth Ross, is continuing with the planned involvement of the school in four 'All Age Worship' Sunday services in 2020.

The church was very pleased to be invited to have a presence at the village hall event on Saturday 12th October aimed at the development of an informed view as to how Cranford can best be served in the future by its constituent groups. Another event aimed at better informing the village community as to the current situation with St John's Church was a lunch generously hosted by Sir John and Gayle, Lady Robinson on Sunday 20th October. The concept of a 'Friends of St John's Church Group' was put forward and almost before knives and forks were put down a small group on one table were well on the way with preparations for a Christmas Tree Festival over the weekend of 6th, 7th and 8th December. The overall objective of the October lunch was to stimulate thinking amongst those currently involved with the church to ask what more the church could do for the community and, similarly, stimulate those not hitherto closely involved with the church to ask of themselves what they could do for the church.

In follow-up to January's theft of lead from the roof of the south aisle of St John's church, provisional plans for the re-roofing of the south aisle with 'terne-coated steel' have been drawn up by the church architect and are currently under consideration by the Diocesan Advisory Committee. Meanwhile, there are residual deficiencies in the organ as a result of the wetting it suffered which the organ builders estimate will cost £11,520 to put right. Additionally, general cleaning and restoration of the organ, which it is recommended should be carried out every 40 years, is estimated to cost a further £8,940.

A further criminal act involving the church occurred over 14th/15th September, when a window pane was broken to give access to a window catch, allowing the culprit to enter the church and force open the wall safe. However, there was unlikely to have been much, if anything, in the safe as it is emptied frequently.

As these notes are being written, the Remembrance Service on Sunday 10th November is being planned. This year the poppy wreath will be laid on the war memorial prior to the two minutes silence by Brian Coutts who, during his National Service, served in The Royal Corps of Signals from 1956-1958, mostly in Malaya.

Special Christmas events will include the Christmas Tree Festival, the Candlelit Carol Service on Sunday 22nd December, Round the Village Carol-singing on a date yet to be fixed, and the New Year's Day 'Sunrise Service' on Wednesday 1st January.

We are extremely grateful to David and Jean Andrews for once again renewing their generous gesture of providing the church with its main Christmas tree.

The village school will be having a carol concert in church at 2pm on Wednesday 11th December and a Nativity event in the school hall at 9.30am on Monday 16th December to which all are welcome. The school end-of-term service will take place at 9.15am on Friday 20th December.

Although not all pledges have yet been received, Cranford's participation in the Ride and Stride event on Saturday 14th September should result in £270 being sent to the *Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust*.

Other recent events have included the baptism of Marley Florence Thompson on 27th October and a Pastors' County Prayer Meeting, with 18 attendees, on 5th November. *Brian Keech*

The Cranford and District Over 60s

Cranford Coffee Mornings will be held on 10th December and 21st January starting at 10.40 am in the Village Hall, Grafton Road. Cranford and District Over 60s Christmas party will be on Saturday 7th December starting at 4.30pm. January's meeting will be on 31st, details to be announced.

For further details please ring Doreen Mayes on 01832 733961. Meetings are held in Cranford Village Hall, Grafton Road. *Margaret Keevil*

Cranford WI

We have nearly come to the end of a very busy year with some excellent speakers.

Cranford WI have recently been presented with the Northants WI Challenge Trophy because we won the 'Garden Design Competition'. This was a lot of fun

as five members met regularly to plan a very small sensory garden of 4 metres x 3 metres. Baroness Floella Benjamin presented the cup.

A visit has been planned to Burghley House Christmas Fair on Thursday 28th November and our Christmas Party is now on 5th December due to the General Election.

Thanks to those who helped at or attended the Coffee Morning hosted by Cranford WI on 21st September. It raised £556 for Bowel Cancer UK in memory of Bob Stonebridge. *Jenny Potter*

The Village Hall

Visitors will now see the modifications made to the stage area, which gives easier access to the store-room, enabling the majority of chairs to be stored off the stage.

The website is being further developed so more information is displayed and discovery of 'What's On' is possible. Discussion continues concerning the building development with Planning, and the associated funding options.

George Potter

The Ise and Nene Turners Wood Turning Club

The Ise and Nene Turners meet at Cranford village hall on every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. We are a very friendly club who welcome new people to come along and see what we get up to. On the 1st Thursday we have a club night where we just have a talk and members get to use one of our lathes and pick up tips from other members. On the 3rd Thursday we have a demonstration from a turning professional. The show is screened so you can see everything, so please come along see what we get up to. For more information you can contact Sue on 07909912072. *David Parker*

Please contact me with any forthcoming events to be included in the February / March 2020 edition by 8th January 2020 at The Dial House, Rectory Hill Cranford NN144AH or email jandg.potter@btconnect.com or phone 01536 330696.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Jenny Potter

CRANFORD SCHOOL

invites

any older residents to the dress rehearsal
of the younger children's Nativity play
in the School Hall
at 9.30am

Monday 16th December

Coffee and biscuits will be served afterwards.
We do hope you will be able come.



More Cranford News

Holy Baptism

27th October

Marley Florence Thompson

Daughter of Daniel Mark Garnet Thompson & Kimberley Ann Wilson.

Marriage Blessing

12th October

Christopher Merritt and Kayleigh Shaw

At Rest

18th November

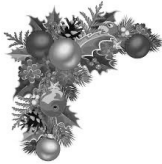
Ian (Nobby) Wilson

at Kettering

Died on 27th October, aged 85 years.

Crematorium

Please pray for his widow Sylvia, his children, Ian and Debbie; for his grandchildren, great-grandchildren; all his family and friends.



Light Up Cranford

Saturday 14th December
from 2pm in the Village Hall

Please come along and help us create
a Village Christmas to remember for Young and Old

CREATE your decoration ~ between 2pm and 4pm

JOIN a Christmas procession ~ at 5pm

EAT, DRINK and be MERRY ~ from 6pm

School Governors Wanted

We are delighted to say that Cranford Primary School are looking to recruit new community governors for our AGC (Academy Governance Committee).

A community governor is someone who resides in the general vicinity of the academy and has active links with the local community and/or church and has suitable skills and background.

In your role as a governor, you would be supported in your duties by other experienced members of the AGC, the Headteacher, PDET's Central Team and the Clerk to governors.

All governors need:

- Commitment to improving education for all pupils
- Commitment to supporting the Christian ethos of the Trust and the school/academy
- Ability to work in a team and take collective responsibility for decisions
- Willingness to learn

The level of commitment required is:

- Attendance at 6 AGC meetings per year on an evening (approx. 2 hours each)
- Attendance at training as required
- Undertaking structured visits to the School – at least one per term
- Working outside of meetings reviewing policies and other documents and/or on task and finish groups

Our School is totally committed to safeguarding children and so the successful applicant will require a DBS check prior to taking up the appointment.

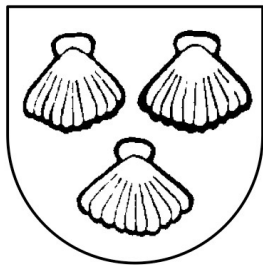
If you would be interested in this role, please do contact the Chair of Governors, Helen Buckley, via the school or email her at helen.buckley@peterborough-diocese.org.uk



Peterborough Diocese
Education Trust



ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER



Grafton Underwood News

September saw the *Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride* yet again. Unfortunately we had no cyclists this year but I would like to thank all those who sat in church to welcome the cyclists that visited.

For our last concert this season we had a full church to listen to Brian and Laura Crichton and the 'surprise' of the evening, *The Alright Jack* saxophonists. We thank them all very much for putting this concert on in memory of Bob and Jane Stonebridge. We also would also like to thank Graham Bell for arranging this and all the many concerts in the past, and the team that have helped him. They have provided many enjoyable evenings for lots of people. Although Graham has 'retired' from booking concerts, have no fear, because of their popularity St James PCC will be taking on future organisation so watch the magazine and our Facebook page.

We had a very enjoyable Harvest Service and lunch and I am pleased to say that we were able to send £179.40 to *Compass Children's Charity*. Our appreciation goes to everyone who helped to provide such a splendid spread.

A number of people both near and far have been busy sewing and knitting for our 'Shoeboxes' during the year. We very much appreciate their continued support which, together with all things given by a number of generous people including Cranford WI members, has enabled us to send 113 boxes this year. A lot of happy children we hope. A big thank you also goes to all those who contributed towards the postage, including Grafton Village Hall Committee who kindly did a raffle to help. We had a lovely service to gather the boxes together at which the Archdeacon blessed them. We were delighted to have him and I think that we can safely say that he enjoyed participating in this happy event.

After many years of leading family Worship and helping Graham with communion services, Colin has decided to step down. We thank him for his dedication and competent way that he has led us for many years, and are sure that he will give guidance to those who have so willingly offered to lead Family worship on a rota with the aid of Ann and Graham.



We will be starting Christmas celebrations on 1st December when we will do the Nativity at Family Half Hour. I would like to thank the few children we have for rallying around and finding enough 'actors' to do this. Their determination is to be commended!

Our Carol service will be at 6pm on Sunday 22nd December and we do hope as many of you as possible will join us for this joyous occasion. Both these services will be followed with festive refreshments.

Jenny Daykin

Below I would like to share a prayer found and read by one of our children at the Shoebox Service.

The Box

This is about a box that held a shoe or two
Now the shoes are gone - so what's a box to do?

"I could hold lots of old stuff.

No," said the box " That's not enough!"

"I want a life with purpose, I say.

There must be something I can do today.

Wait! I can go down to the Church

They won't leave me in the lurch.

Maybe they can find a use for me
to help me be as useful as can be.

What's that?

You want me to do a good deed?

You mean that I can sow a seed?

You will send me where?That is so far away !

And you say that's where I'll stay?

I will live with a child in a new home,
sent as a gift, no more to roam?

So hurry! Fill me with all kinds of things

And a smile on a child's face I will bring

Then they will learn about Jesus the Lord

Hear about his love and spoken word .

You have made this box's dream come true

Bringing happiness is all I want to do.



Village Hall

The recent pub night was a success in many ways, not only did we raise over £400 and a small raffle just over £40 for the Shoe box appeal, but also new and current residents came along making it a proper social gathering. There were traditional pub games with burgers to munch on, and a scrummy chilli on offer made by Helena Walters. It was welcome pub grub on a chilly night, thank you Helena. The committee would like to welcome Odette and Steph on board as new members.

The next event being organised for the village is a Xmas Party at 7pm on 7th December. Come along, bring friends and family, start your Xmas celebrations in the village.

See you there,

Village Hall Committee

Flood warden

One notes that the dead horse chestnut in the paddock by the wall next to the footpath is of moderate hazard to life but low risk. Although still overdue for removal. Also have never seen such a messy removal of the tree by the dewpond on the road leading up to White House farm!

One notes in the local paper that the cricket bat willow planted some years ago by the Ise in Warkton are being felled and used to make cricket bats on the estate. And also note that the bat willow by the brook are long overdue for felling. A favourite of mine as 'tis a fast-growing valuable hardwood.

One came across a tree in a hedgerow by the footpath that one did not recognise! Very rare around here. The Wayfaring Tree (*Viburnum Lantana*, Daniel).

Richard D

Tree warden,

After the wettest October in 40 years (119mm), I have distributed some flood sacs (sandbags are so yesterday), but if you think that you may need some, see me.

Richard D pp Mark Bird





Slipton News

Autumn has been an exceedingly busy season for Slipton. The farmers' crops were finally harvested after a very variable summer allowing the village to celebrate our Harvest Festival on Sunday 22nd September followed by a delicious supper in the church. The festival and supper were greatly supported by the local villagers and our friends from neighbouring churches. It was wonderful to see the church full with the enjoyment of celebrating the harvest. A special thanks to Rev. Graham Bell who led the service and to Hazel Stimpson for playing the organ.

Following the supper Roy Piddington volunteered to auction off the amazing mass of local produce donated to the church for this event. From vegetable boxes to tiramisu the auction was a huge success and we would like to thank all the gardeners, bakers, handcraft experts and many more for all their donations, including the delightful Roy Piddington who carried out the event with great humour and expertise. A particular special thank must go to Gilly Fraser for organising the event and to all the ladies and gentlemen who provided the delicious courses.

September also saw the annual Ride and Stride event. Thank you to the very energetic Dawn Moreton and her father who walked the churches of Northampton on the day, raising money for Slipton and Denford Churches. Slipton Church was open to participants for the entire day providing refreshments and a quiet place to rest. Thank you to all the volunteers who manned the church.

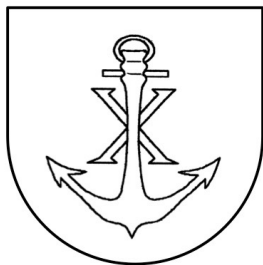
Once again we must thank Peter, Ian and Paul for keeping the churchyard in such good shape. It's a never-ending job but one that is greatly appreciated. Also an enormous thank you to Tony Fraser for organising organists, clergy and lay readers to allow us to continue our services in the Interregnum.

We are looking for volunteers to join our church cleaning rota to help the existing team as our numbers are depleting due to members leaving the village. Please contact Wynn Worsfold 734885 if you are interested.

We are very much looking forward to our candlelight Christmas Eve Carol service followed by mulled wine and mince pies. Do come and join us.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Angela Fenton



Twywell News

The first season of the church year, Advent, commences on 1st December and ends on 24th December. Advent, from the Latin *adventus* meaning 'coming', is a season for preparation. Originally, there was no connection between Advent and Christmas as it was a period of focus for the approaching January feast of Epiphany. Christians once spent 40 days in penance, prayer and fasting to prepare for Epiphany and it reflected on a period where the church was comparable to Israel at the time of the Old Testament - in exile.

The words of the popular carol '*O come, O come, Emmanuel*' perfectly represent the church's cry for God's help at that time.

Nowadays Advent is both the celebration of the first coming (birth) of Jesus Christ, with the expectation of a second coming in the future.

Following Advent and the 12 days of Christmas is Epiphany, on January 6th. This feast commemorates the first two occasions on which Christ's divinity was manifested: God's incarnation represented by the visit of the Magi (Three Wise Men) to the baby Jesus; and also his baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. Epiphany, one of the oldest of Christian festivals has been celebrated since around 200AD.

As the year draws towards a close, we can reflect on events that have occurred in Twywell within the past twelve months. We have, sadly, had more than our fair share of losses in 2019, but equally there are some real positives. New residents have embraced our community spirit and provided an energy boost that motivates us all. Parish groups are growing in number and working ever more closely, with new ones including the Community Events Team and monthly Twywell Book Club along with the resumption of the Twywell Dining Club, hosted by the Old Friar.

Our most popular service of the year is the annual Carols by Candlelight service, this year to be held on 15th December at 4pm. This is a fine example of group co-operation as this delightful family service will be followed by mince pies and mulled wine. Then, a short stroll around Church Lane to The Green for the lighting up of the parish Christmas Tree. (The tree is provided by the Parish Council and the lighting up is organised by the Community Events Team). This is all very healthy and bodes well for 2020 and further years ahead. Much is read about villages struggling to maintain a robust community spirit but Twywell is bucking that trend and long may it continue!

Our final service of 2019 will be the Cross Benefice *Christmas Mass*. This will be held at St. Nicholas Twywell for the first time in three years on 24th December at 10.30pm. (It is not scheduled to return again to the parish until 2022).

‘Comings & Goings’

We were saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Lawrence ‘Laurie’ Oates on 28th September. His wry smile and quick wit were the trademarks of a man who could lift your spirits instantly. For many years after his retirement Laurie’s early evening hour in the *Old Friar* was a constant source of fascinating facts and anecdotes that will live long in the memory. Few may know that Laurie’s chosen career path was to serve the Royal Household, working in the Royal Mews. The Oates’ family has a tradition of royal service at the Royal Mews that continues to this day. You may very well have seen Laurie dressed in ceremonial finery in images of state pageantry without ever knowing it. He will be greatly missed by many in the village that he made his home. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this difficult time.

‘Other news’

An ageing and tired electric organ that had been stored at the Church since its owner kindly allowed its use some years ago has been gifted to a Croydon-based Methodist Minister, Xenophon Parker, who will repair the organ to working condition and then ship it to Freetown, Sierra Leone, for Christian missionary use. The minister, being pleased with the opportunity, made a donation which has kindly been forwarded to Church funds. The Twywell-African missionary connection continues!

The Parish Council has launched its website www.twywellparishcouncil.co.uk. The website headings comprise several topic areas. Under the INFORMATION page there is a link to St Nicholas Church which contains current and past copies of Together magazine along with other church literature. The website will be updated regularly.

The Harvest Festival on 13th October was very enjoyable with a number of past residents and benefice friends present. Well attended by over 40 people it was followed by a sumptuous buffet supper, provided by a few generous members of the congregation and greatly enjoyed by everyone. Our thanks go to the team who worked very hard to provide the delicious and extensive fayre and make it such a wonderful occasion.



The highly anticipated return of the Twywell Dining Club on the evening of 16th October did not disappoint. With a Brexit theme, 24 villagers enjoyed a fabulous Tapas-styled menu served with sangria. Further monthly events are planned – please see *More Dates for your Diary*.

The coffee mornings continue to be a source of significant benefit to the *Air Ambulance* with a further donation of £128 having been made. This brings the yearly total to £443 so far. Each month this enjoyable and popular late morning event is held in a different home- all welcome.

On 31st October, the rain held off for the 2nd Annual Pumpkin Carving Competition which was held on The Green. Standards were very high. The prizewinners were the Furniss children (Junior) and Russell Smart (Adult). Our thanks go to the organisers and the competitors who clearly put in some considerable effort to create their designs.

And finally ‘A Pause for Thought’

“There is no winter without snow, no spring without sunshine, and no happiness without companions.”

As this is the last *Together* magazine for 2019, may we take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Twywell PCC

st.nicholas.twywell@gmail.com

More Twywell News

At Rest

16th October

Lawrence ‘Laurie’ Edward George Oates

Died on 28th September, aged 83 years.

Please pray for all his family and friends.

He rests in peace and will rise and shine in glory.

Banns of Marriage

12th & 26th
January, & 9th
February

Sophie E Winfield and Capt. Thomas E Dudley



Diocesan News

An incredible and inspiring (and tiring) pilgrimage!

Revd Lisa Holland from the parish of Duston and Upton gives her account of the recent Diocesan Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

During October I was extremely privileged to join Bishop Donald's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, along with 48 others – mostly from the Diocese of Peterborough.

After a very early start at Luton Airport, a five hour flight and a two hour coach journey, our pilgrimage started at a hotel beside the Sea of Galilee where we spent three nights. During the trip we moved south, spending two nights in Bethlehem and three nights in Jerusalem. We were very fortunate to stay in lovely hotels and sample some wonderful food everywhere that we visited.

Throughout our stay we were accompanied by Bishop Donald, who celebrated Holy Communion each day at a different site – Galilee, Shepherds' Fields and the Garden of Gethsemane being notable highlights. Joanne and Andre Gibson took care of many of the practical details, and usually brought up the rear to ensure that no sheep had gone astray! We were also accompanied by an Arab Christian guide called Hani, whose knowledge of the area and of the Bible really brought things to life.

Our pilgrimage took in many of the well-known sites which are familiar throughout the Gospels. We sailed on the Sea of Galilee and climbed up to Megiddo (the site of Solomon's chariot city) in 41°C heat! We visited many of the places you would expect during the week, such as Cana (where Jesus performed his first miracle), the site of Jacob's Well (where Jesus met the woman at the well) and the probable site of Emmaus, but we were also challenged by paying visits to places that pilgrims don't often get to see.

Halfway through the visit, we went to Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem, where Palestinian Muslims live, and we were guided round by a third generation refugee. On the same day we went to St Vincent's Orphanage, which cares for 50 abandoned babies. One evening we had a talk from an American Muslim lady who is part of the Relatives Circle. This organisation is made up of both Jewish and Muslim people who have all lost a close relative to violence, and who work together to promote understanding and peace. Towards the end of our trip, we also paid a visit to Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum, which was very moving. We had a two hour visit but it would have taken an entire day to really do it justice. Many aspects of the pilgrimage were challenging and thought-provoking, and I now have a better awareness of some of the challenges which face those working for peace in this region.

Another challenge for me personally as a female priest was the knowledge that the ministry of ordained women was not recognised in the sites that we visited. In a country which has huge reverence and respect for the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene, it was sad to think that my ministry and that of the other ordained women in the group would not be welcomed.



Photo above: Lisa (on left) and Revd Amanda Oliver



Bishop Donald leads Communion at the River Jordan

It is hard to pick out particular highlights, but one special moment for me was on the Mount of Beatitudes. My friend Amanda, who is a fellow curate, read the passage from the Sermon on the Mount. Afterwards we had some free time to look around the church and the gardens. In the church were a group of Korean Christians who were singing Stuart Townend's version of 'The Lord's My Shepherd' in their own language with beautiful harmonies. God felt especially close as I recognised the hymn, and it was a very real reminder of the worldwide Church and the cloud of witnesses of which we are a part.

Another memorable time for me was when we spent time in the Garden of Gethsemane after celebrating Communion. It was incredible to be able to sit and pray, with the background noise of the Jerusalem traffic reminding us that every day was carrying on all around us, just as it carried on all around Jesus as he spent his final hours there. It was a reminder that we are called to be in the world, but not of it.

On the whole, the pilgrimage was an incredible experience. Seeing the evidence for myself of the places where Jesus ministered made the New Testament come to life in a whole new way. Our guide Hani also made many links with the stories of the Old Testament. The sense of history and tradition was amazing. It was certainly not a holiday – the schedule was busy and at times tiring – but it was such a joy to be part of such a wonderful trip with some truly lovely people.

Are you using A Church Near You this Christmas?

Have you got your Advent and Christmas services listed on A Church Near You? The Church of England's local church-finder website gets more than 12 million views a year – and 80% of those people are new visitors to the site.

At this time of year, people are looking to come to church services. Church of England statistics show that 40% of new visitors to churches during the 2018 Advent and Christmas period had visited the A Church Near You site beforehand. In fact, the 72 hours before Christmas Day is the busiest time for people to visit A Church Near You during the whole year – so it's never too late to input your seasonal services onto the site.

Visit www.achurchnearyou.com





Dates for Your Diary

Cross-benefice Groups

- Bellringers** practise on Mondays at 7.30pm, rotating every 2 weeks between Cranford St John and Grafton Underwood churches. Enquiries to Laurence Stapleton (01832 720321) or Michael Hurst (01832 733926).
- Handbell Ringers** Enquiries to John Evans (01832 732993) or Richard Walters (01536 330380).
- Home Group** Meeting twice a month, at the moment we meet on the first and third Monday afternoon, 2-4pm, in various homes. Starting with tea/coffee and biscuits, followed by Bible study, discussion and prayers. Everyone welcome. For current information, please contact Margaret McDonald (01536 370126).
- Over 60s Club** normally meets on the last Tuesday in the month at lunchtime in Cranford Village Hall. Enquiries to Doreen Mayes (01832 733961).
- Cranford WI** meets on the second Thursday in the month at Cranford Memorial Hall at 7.30pm. Enquiries to Lady Fry.

Parish Council Meetings

(See also Parish Council Notice Boards)

- Cranford** please note the Parish Council is changing the day on which it meets due to other commitments at the Village Hall. For all future meetings please refer to Parish Council minutes posted on the village notice-boards or visit <https://cranfordparishcouncil.com> until further notice.
- Grafton** quarterly normally on the second Tuesday at 7.00pm in the Village Hall. Next meeting: 11th February 2020. Enquiries to David Hinckley or Sue Cook (07825 925210 or clerkgupe@gmail.com).
- Twywell** Every 2 months on third Thursday at 7.30pm. Next meeting: 4th December (MacQueen House). Enquiries to Peter Kelly (07768 206314) or twywellclerk@gmail.com
- Slipton** represented on Lowick Parish Council by 2 councillors, meets quarterly normally on a Tuesday at 7.30pm, Germain Rooms, Lowick. Enquiries to Filomena Palmer (01832 733503)

Services in December 2019

Sunday 1st December	8.00am	Cranford St John's, HC BCP
<i>1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>	11.00am	Grafton Underwood, Nativity +RR
	11.00am	Slipton, HC with Father John Tiernan
Sunday 8th December	9.15am	Twywell, HC CW (trad.)
<i>2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>	10.15am	Cranford St John's, All Age Worship
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood, MP CW (mod.) +RR
Monday 9th December	6.0pm	Cranford St John's, CE Primary School Carol Concert
Wed. 11th December	2.00pm	Cranford St John's, CE Primary School Carol Concert
Sunday 15th December	9.15am	Cranford St John's, HC CW (mod.)
<i>3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>	11.00am	Grafton Underwood, Family Worship +RR
	11.00am	Slipton, Private Prayers
	4.00pm	Twywell, Carols by Candlelight, followed by refreshments and Christmas Tree lighting
Monday 16th December	2.30pm	Cranford CE Primary School, Nativity in the School Hall
Friday 20th December	9.15am	Cranford St John's, CE Primary School End of Term Service
Sunday 22nd December	6.00pm	Cranford St John's, Carols by Candlelight & Seasonal Refreshments
<i>4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>	6.00pm	Grafton Underwood, Carol Service followed by seasonal refreshments
Tuesday 24th December	6.00pm	Slipton, Christmas Carols and Readings with Rev. Graham Bell
<i>CHRISTMAS EVE</i>	10.30pm	Twywell, Christmas Mass * Joint Benefice Service *
Wed. 25th December	10.15am	Cranford St John's, All Age Worship
<i>CHRISTMAS DAY</i>	11.00am	Slipton, Prayers with Father John Tiernan
Sunday 29th December		NO SERVICE IN BENEFICE

HC = Holy Communion; MP = Morning Prayer; EP = Evening Prayer;
+RR = Refreshments; BCP = Book of Common Prayer (1662);
CW = Common Worship (2000)
trad. = traditional language; mod. = modern language.

Services in January 2020

Wednesday 1st January <i>NAMING & CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST</i>	7.30am	Cranford St John's, 'Sunrise Service' & walk up Stanbridge Hill followed by breakfast in Church
Sunday 5th January <i>CHRISTMAS 2</i>	8.00am	Cranford St John's, HC BCP
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood, Family Half Hour
	11.00am	Slipton, HC with Father John Tiernan
Sunday 12th January <i>EPIPHANY 1</i>	9.15am	Twywell, HC CW (trad.)
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood, MP CW (mod.) + RR
	6.00pm	Cranford St John's, EP BCP
Sunday 19th January <i>EPIPHANY 2</i>	9.15am	Cranford St John's, HC CW (trad.)
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood, Family Worship +RR
	11.00am	Slipton, TBA
Sunday 26th January <i>EPIPHANY 3</i>	9.15am	Twywell, MP CW
	10.15am	Cranford St John's, Joint Service with Cranford School
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood, HC CW (mod.) +RR

Services in early February 2019

Sunday 2nd February <i>PRESENTATION OF CHRIST Candlemas</i>	8.00am	Cranford St John's, HC BCP
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood, Family Half Hour +RR
	11.00am	Slipton, HC with Father John Tiernan
Sunday 9th February	9.15am	Twywell, HC CW (trad.)
	10.15am	Cranford St John's, All Age Worship
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood, MP CW (mod.) + RR
Sunday 16th February	9.15am	Cranford St John's, HC CW (mod.)
	11.00am	Grafton Underwood, Family Worship +RR
	11.00am	Slipton, TBA

Please keep this schedule for 2 months. Spare copies are available from the churches. The full schedule for February / March 2020 will be printed in the next issue.



More Dates for Your Diary

DECEMBER 2019

- 1st (Fri) **Grafton Underwood**, Nativity at 11am in the Church.
Everyone is welcome.
- 5th (Thu) **Twywell Book Club**, 7.30pm at *The Old Friar*, Lower Street.
Come and share your views of your latest read, get next book ideas, swap books, or just come to listen and be inspired. (Every month on the first Thursday).
- 6th - 8th (Fri-Sun) **Cranford Christmas Tree Festival**, in St John's Church.
Friday from 3.15 - 7pm; Saturday from 11.00am - 4pm and Sunday from 11.30am - 4pm. Entry £2 (including seasonal refreshments), accompanied children free. See Advert for more details.
- 7th (Sat) **Cranford & District Over 60s Club**, Christmas Party starting at 4.30pm. For more details, contact Doreen Mays 01832 733961.
- 7th (Sat) **Grafton Underwood**, Christmas Party at 7pm in Grafton Village Hall. Come along, bring friends and family.
- 10th (Tue) **Cranford Coffee Morning**, at 10.40am in the Village Hall, Grafton Road. Enquiries to Doreen Mays 01832 733961.
- 11th (Wed) **Cranford School**, Carol Concert at 2pm in St John's Church.
All are welcome.
- 11th (Wed) **Twywell Dining Club**, 7.00pm at *The Old Friar*, Lower Street.
Please telephone Becca on 01832 732625 for further information and to book your places.
- 15th (Sun) **Twywell Christmas Tree Lighting**, at 5.45pm on *The Green*.
(After Carols by Candlelight church service and refreshments 4.00pm) Contact Peter and Annette Kelly, *Cosy Nook Cottage*, Oliver's Walk, for further information.
- 16th (Mon) **Cranford School**, dress rehearsal of the younger children's Nativity play at 9.30am in the school hall. Coffee and biscuits will be served afterwards. All are welcome.
- 17th (Tue) **Twywell Coffee Morning**, 10:30am to 12noon at *Model Row*, High Street, by kind invitation of Dale Boyce. Proceeds in aid of *Air Ambulance*. Enquiries to Margaret Ansell (01832 733144).
- 20th (Fri) **Cranford School**, End of Term Service at 9.15am in Cranford St John's Church.

For all Church Services throughout the United Benefice during the Christmas and New Year period, please see the Service Schedule pages at the centre of this magazine.

More Dates for Your Diary

JANUARY 2020

- 2nd (Thu) **Twywell Book Club**, 7.30pm at *The Old Friar*, Lower Street. Come and share your views of your latest read, get next book ideas, swap books, or just come to listen and be inspired. (Every month on the first Thursday).
- 8th (Wed) **Twywell Police Surgery**, 1.10pm-1.40pm at *The Phone Box*, The Green. Meet your local PCSO to discuss safety and general community concerns.
- 15th (Wed) **Twywell Dining Club**, 7.00pm at *The Old Friar*, Lower Street. Please telephone Becca on 01832 732625 for further information and to book your places.
- 16th (Thu) **Twywell Coffee Morning**, 10.30am to 12noon at *Normandy House*, High Street, by kind invitation of Ann & Dave Bargman. Proceeds in aid of *Air Ambulance*. Enquiries to Margaret Ansell (01832 733144).
- 21st (Tue) **Cranford Coffee Morning**, at 10.40am in the Village Hall, Grafton Road. Enquiries to Doreen Mays 01832 733961.
- 25th (Sat) **Cransley Hospice**, Zumbathon 2020 with Roberta Zumba at Grafton Underwood Village Hall. Registration at 12.30pm. Event starts at 1pm. Tickets: Adults £10, Under 11s £5. For more information visit www.cransleyhospice.org.uk/events/
- 25th (Sat) **Peterborough Diocese**, Winter Glory Conference 2020 'Wisdom's Banquet'. Guest speaker Rachel Gardner, director of Youthscape, and President of the Girls' Brigade (England & Wales). Tickets: £18, and £10 for students 16+ in full time education. Time: 9.30am-4.30pm at Buccleuch Academy, Weekley Glebe Road, Kettering NN16 9NS. Email: winterglory1@gmail.com
For more information, please visit www.winterglory.co.uk

early FEBRUARY 2020

- 6th (Thu) **Twywell Book Club**, 7.30pm at *The Old Friar*, Lower Street. Come and share your views of your latest read, get next book ideas, swap books, or just come to listen and be inspired. (Every month on the first Thursday).
- 12th (Wed) **Twywell Coffee Morning**, 10.30am to 12noon at *White Arbours*, High Street, by kind invitation of Jim Bradshaw. Proceeds in aid of *Air Ambulance*. Enquiries to Margaret Ansell (01832 733144).

If you have any local events taking place in February, March and early April 2020 that you would like to promote on these pages, please contact emcoleman@hotmail.co.uk before 15th January 2020.



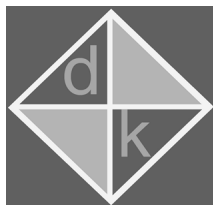
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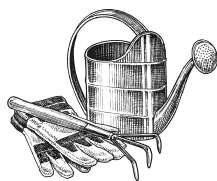
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December Events

Sat 7 and Sun 8 ~ Thorney Abbey Christmas Tree Festival, PE6 0QD. Sat 10am to 4pm; and Sun 11am to 2pm. Free entry. More information is available from Jane Crossland on 01733 270875.

Sat 14 and Sun 15 ~ Christmas Tree and Nativity Crib Festival at St Katharine, Irchester with Stanton Cross, NN29 7AA. Sat 10.30am to 4.30pm; and Sun 12 noon to 4pm – followed by **Lessons and Carols by Candlelight at 6pm.** Everyone is welcome. More information is available from Anne Pooley on 01933 359096.

Sun 15 ~ Carols by Candlelight at St Paul's Church, New England, PE1 2PA. 4pm. The service will include carols and Christmas songs by the Children's Choir of Fulbridge Academy. All are welcome.

Wed 18 ~ Christmas Carol Service at Rushden Lakes (or Cineworld entrance in poor weather), NN10 6AR. 7.30pm. With Revd Richard Coles and Paul Needle's Diamond Jazz Quartet. All are welcome.

Visit www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/events to find events happening near you.

For **Safeguarding training** at all levels: www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/news-and-events/events?tags=safeguarding

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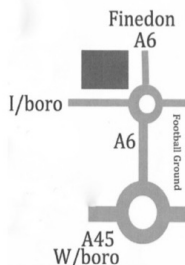
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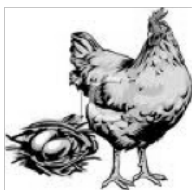
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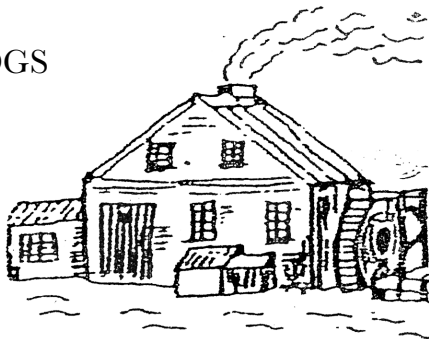
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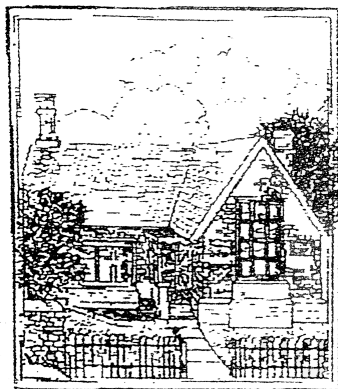
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