



Church Services

The online services will continue on Sundays at 10.30am. Login after 10.00 to chat before if wished. Access the Churn Churches website for login details on how to join: <https://www.churnchurches.co.uk/services-this-week/sunday-service.php>

The link for the service is published in the weekly Churn, which can be downloaded from this page: <https://www.churnchurches.co.uk/resources/>

Weekday evenings Compline at 8.00pm for 10 minutes. Access via Churn Churches website above.

If you would like to be added to our weekly mailing list to receive the Churn, please contact Elaine on 01235 850267 office@churnchurches.co.uk

Services at St. Mary the Virgin

You are always welcome to enter the church even if the service has commenced!

Sunday
4 December

**THE 2nd SUNDAY OF
ADVENT**

9.15am Lay-led service

Sunday
11 December

**THE 3rd SUNDAY OF
ADVENT**

9.15am Parish Eucharist

Saturday
17 December

The Friends of St Mary's
Carol Concert at 4pm

Saturday
24 December

CHRISTMAS EVE
4pm Crib Service

Sunday
25 December

CHRISTMAS
9.15am Parish Eucharist

Sunday
1 January

Second Sunday of Christmas
NO SERVICE IN UPTON

Prayer Focus

Sidesmen, those who help with hospitality & catering. Flower arrangers

Outreach & parish magazines

All the churches in our Benefice & our relationships together

Those recently baptised & baptism visitors

You can contact the clergy & staff on: -

Revd Jason St. John Nicolle 01235 850267 office@churnchurches.co.uk

Revd Louise Butler 07837 009730 revlouiseb@aol.co

Elaine de Ridder 01235 850267 office@churnchurches.co.uk

The Benefice Operations Manager, Elaine de Ridder, is in the office from 9.00am - 2.30pm Monday to Friday.

The Friends of St Mary's Carol Concert Saturday 17th 4 pm

All Welcome to come and join in

As we sing much loved favourite carols

And listen to Fun Readings.

A warm mulled wine or non alcoholic drink to finish.



This year we will also have an

ONLINE CAROL SERVICE

Friday 23rd December 6pm



Everyone welcome!

Please join from your computer, tablet or smartphone:

<https://meet.goto.com/245461501>

You can also dial in using your phone:

United Kingdom: 0330 221 0088

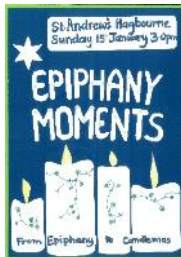
Access Code: 245-461-501

**Service of Nine Lessons and Carols
Sunday 18th December at 6.00pm**



St Michael's BLEWBURY

You are all warmly invited to join us for our traditional candlelit Christmas Carol Service with plenty of opportunity to sing carols, listen to readings, and hear the Church Choir sing. This is an invitation for all your family to join us as you begin your week of festivities to celebrate Christmas. Wine and mince pies will be served after the service.



Date for the diary:
EPIPHANY MOMENTS:
Carols and readings
from Epiphany to Candlemas

Sunday 15th January
3pm at St Andrew's Hagbourne

ALL WELCOME TO THE SERVICE!

The Drop-In Coffee Morning

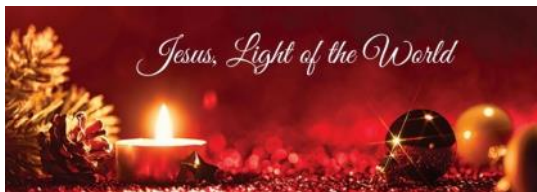
Every Wednesday 10.30am to 12noon, Benefice Centre Blewbury. All welcome to drop in for coffee & a chat. Run by the Churn Branch of the Mother's Union

Home Communion is available to anyone who is unable to get to church through sickness or frailty, either for a short time or on a long term basis. If you, or anyone you know, would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact The Revd Louise Butler on 07837 009730.

A Festival of Light

I wonder how you feel about the nights drawing in? Do you enjoy the long winter evenings, or do you find yourself

yearning for the long days of Summer?



Perhaps at this time of year you make a point of attending a Festival of Light. I can remember visiting one of these a couple of years ago in the grounds of Stourhead, a National Trust property down in Wiltshire. From my memory, there were different coloured lights, and you could walk along a tunnel of light. It was something interesting and cheering to do on a drab Winter's afternoon.

December is a good time of year for a festival of light. In Sweden, such a festival is traditionally celebrated on 13th December. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Saints, on this day "the youngest daughter, dressed in white, wakes the rest of the family with coffee, rolls and a special song." I wonder if the day is still celebrated in this way?

13th December is the feast day of St. Lucy, an early Christian who was martyred for her faith in 304 AD. The name Lucy is connected with the word "lucis", which is the Latin word for light.

Jesus is called the "Light of the World". You may remember the opening words of John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

At times, our world can be a pretty dark place - literally and figuratively. But the darkness is never the whole story. In the darkness, there is a light shining: the light of God's love in Jesus. Jesus brings us forgiveness and new life. The light of God's love in Jesus means that there is always hope, even in the darkest of nights.

- *Father Jason*

Christmas Carols and Readings at St Mary's

The annual Christmas event for the Friends of St Mary's will take place in the church on Saturday, 17th December at 4:00pm.

To set the atmosphere as dusk falls, the church path will be lined with lanterns and once inside, we'll enjoy traditional carols interspersed with readings on a Christmassy theme. At the end, there'll be mulled wine and an almost limitless supply of mince pies!

There's no charge and all are welcome. Do invite your friends and neighbours to join us!

We look forward very much to seeing you on 17th.

Paul Batho

Parish Council News

The Parish Council has shortly to submit a budget for the next financial year. Like every other business and household, there are increased costs to be faced and so difficult decisions to be made. The Council plans to seek the view of villagers regarding their priorities and will hold a meeting, probably in December, to solicit input. A communication and summary of the issues will be circulated as soon as the meeting date is fixed. Watch out for an Upton News Special and also keep an eye on the village's social media sites.

The swings on the play area are currently out of action having been declared unsafe following a RoSPA inspection. Repair costs are being investigated.

Thanks to all those who contributed ideas for the village welcome pack. If you have something that you believe new residents should be made aware of please contact Ben Shaw to make certain it is included. Bens@uptonpc.co.uk

Upton's Speedwatch is in abeyance until the pedestrian crossing works at the end of Chilton Road are completed. Delays and non-compliance with the agreed plans have been discussed with our Country Councillor, Sally Povolotsky, who will raise it with the relevant cabinet member and the contractors.

Dates for your diary:

Next year's Annual Parish Meeting for Upton has been arranged for Wednesday 26th April 2023.

The Churn Churches Climate Action Group

This time we are looking at simple ways to make your home that little bit cosier this winter, and at the same time reduce your carbon footprint!

Draught Proofing Your Home



Draught-proofing your home is one of the cheapest and most effective ways to save energy - and money. The great news is that installing draught-proofing is simple and can be carried out by most people themselves. Installers are available but will cost more than a DIY solution. To draught-proof your home, you should block up unwanted gaps that let cold air in and warm air out. Saving warm air means you'll use less energy to heat your home, so you'll save money as well as making your home snug and warm. Draughts enter your home around any gaps leading to the outside, such as doors, windows, chimneys, wall cracks etc.

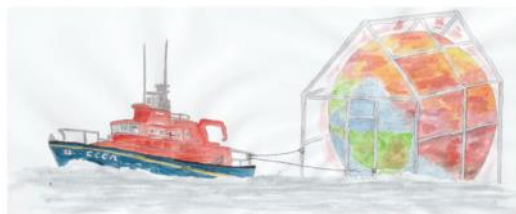
To identify draughts, just walk around your home and feel with your hand the draughts around these features or look for daylight coming in! For older homes you may be surprised just how much cold air comes in! Door and window gaps can be blocked by fitting DIY self-adhesive foam strips, rubber strips, or plastic or metal strips with brushes or wipers attached, for a longer lasting but slightly more costly solution. At the bottom of doors, a simple home-made 'sausage' can reduce draughts. These can be made from old tights or similar stuffed with any beyond-repair textile items e.g., socks. If you have a chimney but don't use it, this may be worth draught-proofing. DIY draught excluders are available, or you may wish to leave this to a professional. Do remember that some rooms require ventilation, so don't over-do draught-proofing in kitchens and bathrooms where a lot of moisture is produced, or in rooms with open fires or open flues.

The following link provides more information regarding draught-proofing. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk Reducing Heat Loss Through Windows In addition to draught-proofing window frames, you may wish to consider improving the energy efficiency of the window unit. A potentially significant amount of heat can be lost directly through the window panes. If you currently have only single-glazed windows, you may wish to consider double or triple glazing. This can be expensive and may not be an option if you live in a conservation area or listed building. You can however consider much simpler and cheaper solutions. Fitting a secondary pane of glass or transparent material over the inside of the window frame (making sure you leave an air gap between the outer glass

pane and the secondary pane) can be an effective lower cost solution. DIY kits are readily available using acrylic sheets and magnetic or clip fixings. Or for an even cheaper and simpler but shorter lasting solution, use cling film taped to the window frame. Again, DIY kits for this are readily available from DIY stores. Finally, heavy curtains, particularly if fitted with thermal linings, can reduce heat loss through a window at night, and will also reduce draughts. Make sure you open curtains on the South side during the day to take full advantage of heat from the sun. The following link provides more information regarding reducing heat loss through windows. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk.

The above suggestions should help you to save energy and money this winter and keep your house that much warmer. It should also help reduce your carbon footprint. Next time we'll be looking at efficient options for heating your home. If you don't have access to the web links shown above, or would like further assistance, please call 01235 814892

S.O.S. Planet Earth calling...



You can help!

This is from The Churn Churches Climate Action Group, with tips on what we can do to reduce our carbon footprint.

Together, we can help avert climate disaster.

Beginner Karate Classes

Beginner Karate Classes are starting in Upton Village Hall on January 2022 from 11.30am Sundays.

Free Trial Class.

Age 4 to Adult;. Families can Train together

Contact: johnhogan67@icloud.com 07548784929

www.tiskakarate-abingdon.co.uk

Astons Online

Free and friendly help for computer users will continue to be available every Tuesday morning through December from 10:00 to 12:00 remotely using telephone, Facetime, Skype, Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp or whatever is best for you. Book a 30 minute appointment using email theastonsonline@gmail.com or phone 07780958249 if you can't email. Website is www.astonsonline.uk.

Face-to-face event for computer users on Tuesday 17 January 2023 10:00 to 12:00 in Astons Village Hall (OX119EQ). Please tell us, if you can, that you're going to join us so we can have helpers available. Also please wear a mask so we all stay Covid safe. Contact using email or phone above.

Next Zoom meeting is on Tuesday 24 January 10:30 to 11:15 to talk about managing your photographs online. Book your place using email or phone above.

Bruno Brunskill (On behalf of Astons Online)

theastonsonline@gmail.com 07780 958249
www.astonsonline.uk

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Thank you everyone for your generous donations to this year's Poppy Appeal. The Upton village collection total to date is £651.83, an excellent result.

I have been the Poppy Appeal Organiser here in Upton for 32 years and would now like someone else to take on the role.....Could that be you?

If you are interested or would like more information, please phone me on 01235 850031.

Many thanks,

Helen Weston.

Drop In

The village Drop-In is up and running again on alternate Thursdays at 3.00pm. It is open to all villagers so please come along if you want to have a nice friendly chat over a cup of tea or coffee.

Please email me at richmondbinov@gmail.com if you're interested and to

Changes to your waste collections over the Christmas and New Year period

Christmas and New Year 2022/23

Normal collection day		Revised collection day	
Monday	26 December 2022	Wednesday	28 December 2022
Tuesday	27 December 2022	Thursday	29 December 2022
Wednesday	28 December 2022	Friday	30 December 2022
Thursday	29 December 2022	Saturday	31 December 2022
Friday	30 December 2022	Tuesday	3 January 2023
Monday	2 January 2023	Wednesday	4 January 2023
Tuesday	3 January 2023	Thursday	5 January 2023
Wednesday	4 January 2023	Friday	6 January 2023
Thursday	5 January 2023	Saturday	7 January 2023
Friday	6 January 2023	Monday	9 January 2023
Monday	9 January 2023	Tuesday	10 January 2023
Tuesday	10 January 2023	Wednesday	11 January 2023
Wednesday	11 January 2023	Thursday	12 January 2023
Thursday	12 January 2023	Friday	13 January 2023
Friday	13 January 2023	Saturday	14 January 2023

Please remember that we suspend garden waste collections over the holiday period to concentrate on Christmas waste collections. Collections resume in January 2023. For more information, please see our garden waste page on our website.

Find out more about recycling tips and waste collections over Christmas and New Year on our website www.more recycling.co.uk

We will post information about any disruption to waste collection services on our websites and social media sites.

Our call centre is open for queries from 9am – 3.30pm on 23 December, 9am - 5pm on 28, 29 and 30 December on 03000 610610.

November Wine Club: Fizz and Port

It was great to see over 40 members and several guests come along to the November wine club, where we enjoyed a comparison of some Crémants followed by a few Ports. Crémants are French sparkling wines, made with differing grapes (which gives you a different taste depending on the region) but all made in the same style as the much more expensive champagne (i.e. a second fermentation in the bottle)!

First we tried a Poulet & Fils Crémant de Die. The principle grape variety here was a less well known Clairette Blanche, which gave it an apple torte taste. Went down well with some members but less so with others, which is great as the point of the club is to help you decide what wine is right for you!

Next we tried a Cuvée Royale from Limoux. Made from 70% Chardonnay, this was compared to champagne by some members, maybe because the same grape can be found in both?

Next was a Crémant de Bordeaux. Unlike the other wines, this was made with predominantly from the red Merlot grapes, which would have been difficult to spot as just the white juice from this grape was used in production, leaving a crisp white sparkling wine, with some brioche and apple notes to taste.

We then moved on to a Crémant from the Jura region, Domaine do Montbourgeau. This was a 100% Chardonnay sparkling wine, bone dry and with some wonderful floral and summer fruit taste. Perfect if you want to try something a little different to Prosecco!

Our last Crémant of the evening came from the Alsace region. A Cuvée Julien Dopff au Moulin. This was made by blending equal amounts of the Auxerrois and Pinot Blanc grape. The result was a wonderfully fine bubble sparkling wine, with hints of quince and white flowers.

If you do want to try something other than a Cava or Prosecco this Christmas then any one of the above would be a wonderful alternative and at a price far more affordable than Champagne!

To finish the evening, we looked at three Ports, the first being a late bottled Port from the Wine Society. A perfect wine for Christmas, that pairs with most strong cheeses for an end of meal or just evening treat!

Next was the Society's Exhibition Crusted Port. Crusted Port is made in the style of a vintage wine (grapes from one year) but will use grapes from various harvests over several years. This was a great value wine with ripe plum and blackberry notes - delicious.

Our final wine was a 10 year old Tawny Port, again from the Wine Society. This has some ageing in oak barrels, which gave it a lovely smooth finish, perfect with a bit of stilton!!

Many thanks to all those who made some food to go along with all the wines. And special thanks to Giulia for making a surprise (but very welcome)

birthday cake all could share with the Chairman!!

On Wednesday 14th December the wine club will be hosting a Christmas dinner and wine evening for just £15! If you would like to come along and see what we are all about then please do get in contact: mail@uptonwineclub.com

Hope to see you there!

Ian

Blewbury Post Office news

It's that special time of year again, Christmas stamps and sending off your parcels to loved ones! Royal Mail have announced strike action over the weekend at the end of November and beginning of December, but talks at UCAS are ongoing, we advise that all overseas mail is sent before then, and post cards extra early for Christmas. Please make sure that airmail stickers & customs labels for ALL overseas mail that's not just a card or letter, are filled in BEFORE you get to the counter, (these are all on the green shelf on your right, as you come through the door)

The post boxes for cards to Blewbury & Upton will be at the post office, the church & The George and Dragon, suggested donation 30p, with the last posting date of Monday 19th December. All the money goes to St Michael's & St Mary's churches.

We do have plenty of Christmas stamps, but also plenty of alternatives, Aardman animations, the Queen, Royal Marines, Transformers, Cats, and some special ones out at the end of November which we are not allowed to tell you about until they are released! Top Secret stuff!

As Christmas Day is on a Sunday, we will not be open on Christmas Eve (Saturday) or the Monday & Tuesday as they are bank holidays, we be open again on Wednesday 28th, Thursday 29th and Friday 30th, for mornings only, 9am til 12noon, closed Monday 2nd for New Year/Hogmanay, and back to our usual times from Tuesday 3rd January.

For 'Emergency gas/electric top ups ' ring my mobile, 07825154842, & I'll meet you at the post office, don't sit in the cold & dark please.

Happy Christmas & a peaceful new year.

Karen, Maggie & Andrew

Blewbury C of E Endowed School

Anti-Bullying Day At Blewbury School



The theme of Reach Out came about following consultation with teachers and pupils by the Anti-Bullying Alliance which coordinates Anti-Bullying Week every year in England and Wales. Teachers and children wanted a theme that empowered them to do something positive to counter the harm and hurt that bullying causes.

Blewbury School marked the week in several ways, starting the week with an 'Odd Socks Day' to celebrate that we are all different. Here is an account of what else happened using words spoken by Kaya and Thomas, who are both in Klimt class:

"We talked in assembly about bullying and what it means - bullying is the **repetitive, intentional hurting** of one person or group by another person or group. It can happen face to face or online - and how we can help stop it. We also learnt that there are different types of bullying such as mental, physical, and cyber-bullying.

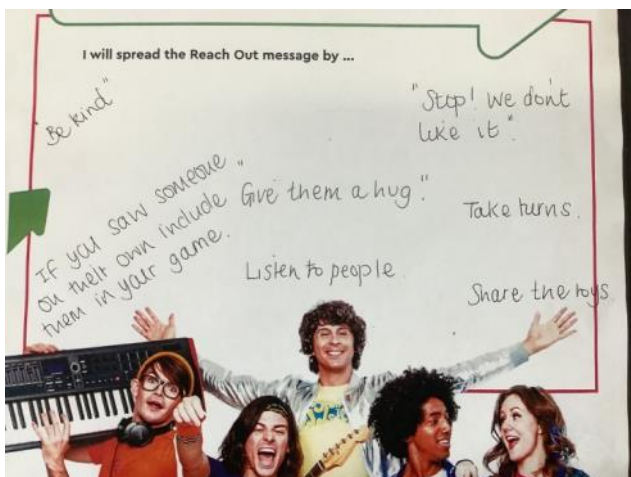
This year's theme for anti-bullying week is 'Reach Out'. This has two meanings - you can reach out and support people if you think they are being bullied by standing up for them or asking someone else to help. It also means, you can reach out to many people if you are being bullied, like your friends, teachers, parents or carers. We can all make a difference if we try.

Anti-bullying week links to the values we learn in school because it is about being kind to each other and showing courage and celebrating difference."



A picture of Miss Reeder and some pupils in odd socks.

A picture of the pledge O'Keeffe class made to 'Reach Out'.



Contributions for Upton News

For those submitting news items, will you please send them to me at neilthorp@btinternet.com.

A few days beforehand I will send a reminder of the deadline day to all regular contributors but early submission will always be welcome. Anything received past the deadline (usually 28th of the month) may NOT be included - if this causes a problem please contact me.

Neil Thorp, Editor



CAN WE HELP?

We are a local charity which supports people of all ages living in Blewbury, Aston Upthorpe and Upton, and have the funding to give a helping hand during these difficult times.

From the weekly food shop to energy bills and other living costs, we can provide one off payments to help you, or someone you know in need.

There is a short application form to complete which can be picked up from St Mary's Church porch, Blewbury Post Office, or requested by email to unitedcharities@outlook.com. We can help you fill in the form if needed. Please don't be reluctant to ask for help, all applications are dealt with confidentially.

CAN YOU HELP OTHERS WITH THE FUEL CRISIS?

At United Charities we continue to help local people who are struggling financially.

Households across Britain are receiving discount on their energy bills to help with the cost of living crisis, starting from this month. For so many, it's much needed. But some who feel they can afford it are donating the extra money. If that's you, you can help local people in Blewbury, Upton and Aston, by gifting your discount through our Just Giving page <https://www.justgiving.com/ucab>

We thank you very much in advance for your generosity and if you have any questions, please do get in touch with us by email at unitedcharities@outlook.com

Didcot & District u3a

2022 has seen the gradual return to 'normality' with lots more socialising and community interactions and non more so than the **Didcot & District u3a** that provides numerous activities and interest groups for all newly retired or semi-retired individuals looking to keep mind, body and soul active! What better way during these dark winter days than to learn a new language, play the ukulele, appreciate art, creative writing, wine tasting, and much, much more!

In addition, there are the monthly meetings held on the **third Tuesday of every month** at the **Didcot Civic Hall** starting at 2:30 to meet and greet new members whilst chatting over tea and biscuits after the Chair's updates and the Guest Speaker presentations which in the coming months include;

17 January: *10th Birthday Tea Party* (afternoon tea with lovely homemade cake!) - featuring the Ukulele Group. Tickets £5 each.

21 February: *Where do novelists get their ideas from?* - Bobbie Darbyshire.

21 March: *Cheltenham Racing Heroes*, a talk about famous jockeys living in and around Cheltenham - Peter Gill

18 April: *Chrissie's Owls* - a non-profit organisation committed to the care and conservation of Owls based in Oxfordshire. More here

16 May: *AGM*

20 June: *Oxfordshire on Canvas* - Marie Louisa

So we look forward to meeting old and greeting new members alike, and arrive early!

Additional information can be found on the u3asites.org.Uk or by contacting; Chairman@didcotu3a.org or Secretary@didcotu3a.org ‘

Thank you all once again for your support in publishing and advertising the Didcot and District u3a, appreciated by all, and we take this early opportunity to . . .

Wish You All a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year!

Brian & Lynn Burscough - PR for the Didcot & District u3a

All newcomers welcome, just **arrive early to ensure you get a seat!!**

For much more information on your local u3a just use Google or the search engine of your choice for 'Didcot & District u3a' and you can see the Interest Groups, News, Events, etc, alternatively you can contact the following:

Chair - chairman@didcotu3a.org

Secretary - Secretary@didcotu3a.org