

OAK HILL GROUP OF PARISHES

(Alderton, Gt. Washbourne,
Dumbleton & Wormington)

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JANUARY 2025



This was captured on film over Glendalough Valley in the Wicklow Mountains over Ireland. Just beautiful.

Dear Friends

Happy New Year and welcome to 2025. A New Year, A Renewed Spirit As the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Day, the world collectively turns the page to a new chapter. For many, the new year brings a sense of hope, fresh beginnings, and an opportunity to set new goals. Every year, my resolutions are generally the same; eat more healthily, do more exercise, spend less time looking at social media and more time enjoying the world around me. So, on New Year's Day it's a fresh salad, a 5k run and playing games with my nieces and nephews. And then the following day I find myself eating up the leftover Christmas chocolate, lying on the couch and scrolling through social media!

But as Christians, we are called to approach the changing calendar not just as a time for resolutions, but as a chance for spiritual renewal. The apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 5:17, 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!'

These words resonate deeply as we step into January, a month that often symbolises fresh starts. In Christ, every day – not just the first day of the year – offers us the opportunity to grow, to repent, and to walk closer with God and to do this effectively, it is important to be able to reflect on the past year.

January is a natural time to reflect on the journey of the past year. What were the victories and the joys? What were the difficulties and challenges? Were there moments when we felt God's presence more clearly? By bringing these reflections to the Lord in prayer, we allow Him to guide us into a deeper understanding of His will for us. Let's also remember to reflect with gratitude. Even in challenges, God allows us to be guided by his light.

It's also a natural time to reflect on the ongoing challenges our beautiful world faces - conflict in Ukraine and the huge implications of that in terms of loss of life in both Ukraine and Russia; the uprising in Syria alongside other conflicts; climate change; millions facing starvation because of drought; the rising food costs at markets; within our country, this winter could be difficult for many. Our churches, in communities across the country, are already reporting alarming rises in demand for foodbanks and other services which have become a lifeline. There is much to pray for.

Writing this January Foreword has allowed me to re-think my resolutions and my path forward, following in the footsteps of Jesus. This year, I plan to make time to sit quietly with God, sharing my thoughts and listening for his voice. I plan to engage more with the scriptures to guide me along the right path in life - most of all I plan to try and find the time to do these things. Often life is so busy, but, as we journey into January, let us keep our eyes fixed on Christ. While we may set goals or hope for specific outcomes, we are reminded in Proverbs 16:9, 'In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.' God's plans for us are always greater than our own and trusting Him to lead us is the best resolution we can make.

As the New Year dawns, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all who took part or attended our wonderful Carols Services, Carols in the church [should have been in the Churchyard], our Midnight Services and Christmas Day Services - a God-filled journey! Likewise, a grateful thanks for your generous donations to the various charities we support. I'm praying that you've had a wonderful Christmas day surrounded by family, friends, and the supernatural joy that comes from reflecting on the birth of Christ.

Christmas doesn't finish on 25th December we continue to celebrate on the feast of the Epiphany and indeed right through to Candlemas on 2nd February. Epiphany, 6th January, is the great celebration of the arrival of the wise men as they come to worship Jesus. At Tewkesbury Abbey there is always a fabulous Epiphany Service [5th Jan] when gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh are placed at the crib as signs of our offering of ourselves, and being open for spiritual renewal

As I continue to reflect, the truth of Christmas and the truth of Easter are one and the same. Love conquers, love wins. Love is at the heart of reality. The light of Jesus the Christ shines from the manger, from the Cross, and from the Empty Tomb; this transcendent light shines in the deepest darkness of our world, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

We do not know what a New Year will bring but we do know that Jesus will go with us, walk with us and help us, when we invite him in. Happy New Year, dear friends and may your new year be filled with abundant light and blessings, and may you experience the hope and warmth of God's love on your journey. With Love Julia

ALDERTON

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all our congregation and friends.

CHRISTMAS CAROL AND CHRISTINGLE SERVICE It was lovely to see the Church filled with over 100 adults and children to sing our well-loved carols, hear the Christmas story and support the work of the Children's Society. Thank you to all for their generous donations which raised £332.85 for the charity.

CHRISTMAS FAIR there was a great Christmassy atmosphere in the Village Hall for this so thank you to everyone who came to support it. We are also very grateful to people who donated items for the stalls and for everyone who manned one, together with the helpers in the background. There was a brilliant £2900 raised for the Church funds which will be very useful for all the different maintenance issues that arise.

CHURCHYARD CAROL SINGING which became indoor Carol Singing because as forecast, it rained very heavily as people started to arrive! However, it was a happy, informal occasion, again singing a selection of carols chosen by people and at least we could enjoy the Christmas tree and the flower decorations. We also enjoyed the mulled wine, mince pies and hot chocolate before we left to cope with an even heavier downpour!

THE FUNERAL OF OUR DEAR FRIEND MIKE NEWMAN will be on Thursday January 2nd at 11am at St Margaret's Church. Mike was born in the village and was related to the family that had previously owned the Hobnails (by generations of the family for over 250 years) Although Mike lived in Bishops Cleeve, he was a great supporter of the Church, becoming Churchwarden, wrote excellent poetry and in his retirement was a gardener to people in the village.

CHURCH HELPERS thank you to the flower arrangers for making the Church look so beautiful for Christmas and for your generosity in doing so. And thank you to all the people who help the Church in so many ways.

GREAT WASHBOURNE

THANK YOU to all who helped make the church such a beautiful and welcoming place for our Christmas services, which were so well supported it was lovely to see so many people. Our retiring collection for Sue Ryder totalled an amazing £90+ and our sincere thanks go to Fliss Hall who kindly took the service on Christmas Day.

Alderton and Great Washburne Churches would also like to give you advance notice of a Fundraising concert in aid of both churches to be held in March:

Music to Delight present '**AN EVENING AT THE MUSICALS**' on **Saturday 8th March 2025**. The venue and times are still to be finalised, but please add the date to your diary for what promises to be a great evening. More details in the next newsletter.

DUMBLETON

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all our congregation and friends.

Thanks to all who contributed to our **CHRISTINGLE AND CAROL SERVICE**. We have been able to send over £360 to the **Children's Society** from the generous donations.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS planned for 2025:

- lent lunches - 18 March and 10 April
- Christian Aid coffee morning - 13 May
- Pig Roast - 5 July
- Gift Day - 6 September
- Harvest Supper - 11 October

FROM THE REGISTERS: Baptism of Otilie Rose Day on 22 December 2024.

WORMINGTON

A very 'HAPPY NEW YEAR' to all from the PCC.

An enjoyable festive Carol Service was held on the 15th December when we were joined by some well voiced choir members from Winchcombe. **THANK YOU** to all the readers and those who helped with the service of mulled wine and mince pies.

A big **THANK YOU** to all who have helped with flower arranging, cleaning, opening, locking, organ playing, PCC meetings and mowing. Our little church thrives on the commitment and care from all of you. Our sincere thanks also goes to Chris Haslam who kindly took the service on Christmas Day.

Repair and restoration to our turret is well underway. Pictures and progress reports will be posted on the Village Meeting website later this month.

SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2025
Lectionary Year C

5th Jan 1 st Sunday Epiphany White	9.00am GT WASHBOURNE Epiphany HC	10.30am DUMBLETON Epiphany HC	Isaiah 60.1-6 Ephesians 3.1-12 Matthew 2.1-12
12th Jan 2 nd Sunday Eph 1 Baptism of Christ White	9.00am WORMINGTON Epiphany HC	10.30am ALDERTON Epiphany HC	Isaiah 43.1-7 Acts 8.14-17 Luke 3.15-17, 21-22
19th Jan 3 rd Sunday Eph 2 White	9.00am GT WASHBOURNE Epiphany HC	10.30am DUMBLETON Morning Prayer	Isaiah 62.1-5 1 Cor 12.1-11 John 2.1-11
26th Jan 4 th Sunday Eph 3 White	6.00PM WORMINGTON Choral Evensong	10.30am ALDERTON Epiphany HC	Neh 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10 1 Cor 12.12-31a Luke 4.14-21
2nd Feb 1 st Sun White Presentation of Christ	9.00am GT WASHBOURNE Candlemass	10.30am DUMBLETON Candlemass	Malachi 3.1-5 Hebrews 2.14-end Luke 2.22-40

CHURCHWARDENS

ALDERTON

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GREAT WASHBOURNE

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WORMINGTON

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