

Copdock & Washbrook Church News

Dear Friends

December is probably my busiest month of the year. I enjoy getting ready for Christmas but I know some of my friends hate it. I love the preparation work, all the special services and the mass of social events. I look forward to the children's nativities, delight in the community spirit particularly the anticipation at the midnight service, and even welcome the challenge of completing the jobs at home ahead of the big day. I am excited by the sight of Christmas decorations, the carols, the tastes, the smells, the sounds, the sights and the feelings of Christmas. My special joy this year will be sharing Christmas with our first grandchild Isaac. It is a time for sharing and joyfulness tinged only by the shadows of empty seats of people no longer able to gather with us and help us to celebrate.

We often hear predictions about the decline of organised religion but at Christmas pews and chairs get filled. More than a million people attended a Church of England Christmas service last year. In the six small churches in this benefice the numbers of attendees doubled if not trebled from a normal Sunday congregation. And we suddenly saw the church as it actually could be. The energy was wonderful.

I think people who come to these services are genuinely happy to be back in Church and that some even promise themselves that they will come back again more regularly in the New Year. But by the time it gets round to that other things are in their minds.

What brings people into church at Christmas? In many ways it is probably a cultural thing with singing carols as much part of Christmas as mince pies and Christmas trees. There is also perhaps a sense of belonging originating from the familiar Nativity story and other Bible passages. But I also think that there is a sense of wonder deep in all of us, even in those who don't believe. Ambivalence towards the Christmas story becomes a reflection of a spectrum of belief, rather than people simply being believers and non-believers. It is also true that many of our parishioners have a real relationship with their local church even if they do not regularly attend or profess to a faith.

The lack of regular attendance is sad because it means there is very limited opportunity for a framework of discussion around faith, but it is a matter of some rejoicing that people still want that touchstone, they want to come back, even if it's only temporary at Christmas.

Whatever brings people to church at this season I am delighted and hope that we can all enjoy a warm atmosphere/the awesome architecture/ vibrant singing and a sense of belonging... after all the Christmas story is all about gathering as a family and of welcome.

Dear God, please bless this Christmas season with peace, joy, and love. May the happiness of Baby Jesus' coming be felt in every home. Amen

With love and prayers
Rev. Annette

Wishing all our parishioners a peaceful Christmas and happy New Year

**Blessings from
North Samford Benefice**

We have a FACEBOOK Page - all Services and events will be updated here:

<https://www.facebook.com/northsamfordbenefice/>

Sproughton Christmas Fayre

11th December - 12 noon in Tithe Barn

Copdock Christmas Fayre

In the Church Room Saturday 3rd December from 10am

Grand Draw, cakes and pastries, jams and preserves, books Christmas gifts, decorations, refreshments and mulled wine. Proceeds to St Peter's Church, Copdock

Christmas Services

Bentley Christingle with a visit from Father Christmas 4th December 10am

Copdock Nativity 11th December at 10am St Peter's Church

Belstead Carols 18th December 6pm

Copdock Carols 18th December 6pm

Tattingstone Carols 18th December 6pm

Sproughton Carols 18th December 6.30pm

Bentley nine lessons and carols 18th December 10am

Burstall Carols 18th December 4.30pm

Sproughton Nativity 24th December 3pm

Bentley Crib Service 24th December 3pm

Tattingstone Crib and Christingle Service 24th December 4pm

Copdock Midnight Mass 11.30pm

Sproughton Midnight Mass 11.30pm

Tattingstone Midnight Mass 11.30pm

From the Registers:

Baptisms

Crystal Whiting-Woodhouse – Sproughton

George Blackwell - Copdock

Weddings:

Alfred Taylor and Sophie Tibbitts - Belstead

Burial of Ashes

David Prangle - Bentley

Terence Rose - Copdock

Keith Marston - Tattingstone

DIARY DATES

DECEMBER

1st Burstall Community Lunch 12.30pm

1st Bentley Coffee & Company 10am

3rd Copdock Christmas Market 10am – 12.30pm

- 3rd Tattingsstone morning market 10am – 12 noon
- 4th Bentley Christingle 10am
- 6th Ministry meeting 7.30pm
- 7th Bentley Home Communion 10am
- 10th Sproughton Monthly Market 10am
- 11th Sproughton Christmas Fayre 12 noon Tithe Barn
- 11th Burstall Christingle 9.30am
- 11th Copdock Nativity 10am
- 15th Bentley Mulled Wine & Carols 7.30pm
- 18th Burstall Carols 4.30pm
- 18th Sproughton evening Carol Service 6.30pm
- 18th Tattingsstone Carol Service 6pm
- 18th Belstead Carol Service 6pm
- 18th Copdock Carol Service 6pm
- 18th Bentley Carols Service 10am
- 19th Sproughton Christmas Experience 9.15am
- 24th Sproughton Nativity 3pm
- 24th Bentley Crib Service 3pm
- 24th Tattingsstone carols and crib service 4pm

JANUARY

- 4th Bentley Home Communion 10am
- 5th Bentley coffee & company 10am
- 5th Burstall Community lunch 12.30pm
- 5th Epiphany School Service - Sproughton
- 14th Benefice Planning Meeting Burstall village hall at 8.30am
- 18th Copdock home communion 10am
- 25th Burstall Approval of accounts
- 28th Wedding preparation day – from 9.45am – 3pm
- 28th Sproughton Burns Night 7pm?

SERVICES IN THE BENEFICE

DECEMBER 4th

8.00 am	Copdock	Holy Communion
9.30 am	Burstall	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Bentley	Family Service
10.00 am	Copdock	Morning Prayer
10.00 am	Tattingsstone	Holy Communion
11.00 am	Sproughton	Holy Communion

DECEMBER 11th

12 noon	Sproughton	Christmas Fayre – Tithe Barn
9.30 am	Burstall	Christingle
10.00 am	Copdock	Nativity
10.00 am	Bentley	Holy Communion
6.00 pm	Tattingsstone	Evensong

DECEMBER 18th

10.00 am	Belstead	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Copdock	Simply Sunday
10.00 am	Bentley	Carol Service
11.00 am	Sproughton	Holy Communion
4.30 pm	Burstall	Carols
6.00 pm	Belstead	Carols
6.00 pm	Copdock	Carols
6.00 pm	Tattingstone	Carols
6.30 pm	Sproughton	Carols

DECEMBER 24th

3.00 pm	Bentley	Crib Service
3.00 pm	Sproughton	Nativity
4.00 pm	Tattingstone	Christingle and Crib Service
11.30 pm	Copdock	Midnight Mass
11.30 pm	Sproughton	Midnight Mass
11.30 pm	Tattingstone	Midnight Mass

DECEMBER 25th (Christmas Day)

9.30 am	Burstall	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Bentley	Holy Communion
11.00 am	Sproughton	Holy Communion

JANUARY 1st

10.00 am	Belstead	Benefice Service
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JANUARY 8th

9.15 am	Sproughton	Croissant Church
9.30 am	Burstall	Family Service
10.00 am	Copdock	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Bentley	Holy Communion
6.00 pm	Tattingstone	Evensong