

The Messenger
December 2023/January 2024

Welcome to the December/January edition of the Messenger. This month's messenger is an important one because as well as being the one with all of our Christmas services and activities it is also going to be the final messenger in its current format.

I'm so grateful to Dorothy Johnson for all the work that she has put into producing, printing and arranging the delivery of the Messenger for such a long time. It's been a really important tool in keeping the 4 churches that made up the Leam Valley Benefice connected and has made my job of coming in and leading us as we become a single benefice with the Draycote Benefice so much easier.

In 2024 we will be relooking at our communications and how we keep everyone up to date with what is happening across the benefice. We are keen to reduce the costs and resources associated with printing and delivering the Messenger, however we are also very aware that for those without access to the internet, a printed copy being delivered through their door is really important. Watch this space for details of how we're going to do that.

In the meantime, the main thing to say is **Happy Christmas**. The following pages should contain details of all of our services over the Christmas period and where we hope you will see that there is something for everyone; whether you are looking for traditional carols, family activities or simply some space in a quiet place to be quiet and reflect.

God Bless
Phil

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6

A note from the Editor

After 13 years of editing The Leam Valley Messenger, now feels like the right time to pass this job on to someone else. Phil Price is going to take this over with help from his Admin Assistant, Eleanor. The Messenger will become more of a Benefice Newsletter, rather than just news from the 4 churches in the Leam Valley.

I have very much enjoyed taking part in the role of Editor, but at some time in our lives, even if we enjoy doing a job, we have to make a decision to give it up and give other people the chance to participate and bring new ideas.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking everyone for their support over the years and to wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas with good health and happiness in 2024. **Dorothy Johnson**.

Flecknoe

Carol Service - We are holding our Christmas Carol service earlier this year on **3rd December at 6.00 pm** as we are now in a Benefice of 8 churches and commitments elsewhere give us less choice. As previously, this will be a service for all the family and Christingles will be distributed. Come and join us to sing carols and enjoy wine and mince pies at the end of the service.

Remembrance Coffee Morning

Thanks to the Reid family for hosting this event and to all who supported us. We raised £181.50 towards church funds.

Grandborough

Farmers' Market – This will be a Christmas market with complementary mulled wine, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, on Thursday 7th December from 10.00-12.30 pm. Our Church stall will be selling home-made Christmas Cakes and Christmas mince pies. A donation box for Hope 4 will be available and we would be grateful for any items you would like to donate. More information on what is urgently required at the foodbank website: <https://rugby.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food>. Christmas treats would also be much appreciated.

Messy Church – The children will be making Christingles and setting up the Nativity scene for our Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve. Everyone is invited. If you haven't been before and are interested in coming along for this special service, we would be delighted to welcome you. We start at 4.30 and will finish with a buffet tea.

Please note there will be no Farmers' Market or Messy Church in January 2024.

Pennies from Heaven

Due to the fact that less and less people are using cash, Dorothy will no longer be coming round the village to collect small change. However, if you would still like to donate any change you may have, to the church, you can hand it in at the Café on Farmers' Market day, or pop it through her door. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this over many years.

Leamington Hastings

The annual church yard tidy took place on Saturday 28th October at Leamington Hastings. Many thanks to the 15 people who came and helped with various tools, and to Steve and Alison Deeming for arranging the hedge cutting. It makes a great difference and looks an amazing, cared for place.

Thank you everyone that helped out over the remembrance weekend. To all those who baked and came and ate cakes and drank coffee.

Over £400 was raised on the day, which was donated to the church, the Royal British Legion and the amazing, moving memorial display which Sonya West put together. Thanks, Sonya, for collating. It's a brilliant tribute and will be available for many years to come."

Willoughby

St Nicholas had a very special Remembrance weekend starting on Saturday 11th with a 1940 afternoon tea where a sing-a-long, raffle, and housey housey, saw us having a memorable fun afternoon raising £500 for the Royal British Legion. Sandwiches and cakes, all donated, were enjoyed. On Sunday 12th, we were looking at events at home and those who kept our home fires burning.

The following events will take place at St Nicholas' Church during the month of December. Everyone welcome to come along and join in the activities.

Friday 8th Tree festival and trail of light from 5.00 – 7.30 pm each night.
Saturday 9th There will be Christmas trees in the church and a trail of light round the village. Donations to church build for Mulled wine and refreshments.

Saturday 9th Craft Market and 12 days of a Tudor Christmas held in Willoughby Village Hall from 10.00 am - 4.30 pm.

Friday 15th Christmas Craft evening with refreshments at the church from 5.00 – 7.30 pm.

Sunday 17th Santa Dash at the church. Families £5 individuals £3. Costumes optional. Registration 11.00 for 11-30 am start. Refreshments for sale. Join us in a fun run, jog or walk round the field. Medals to all.

Services throughout the Benefice for December and January will follow the usual format, with the exception of the dates shown below.

Sunday 31st December will be a Benefice Service held at 9.00 am and 11.00 am at Leamington Hastings (N.B both services are in the same church).

Christmas Carol Services in the Benefice

December

Sunday	3 rd at 6.00 pm	St Mark's, Flecknoe
Sunday	10 th at 6.00 pm	All Saints, Leamington Hastings
Saturday	16 th at 6.00 pm	Birdingbury Club, Birdingbury
Sunday	17 th at 4.00 pm	St Nicholas', Willoughby
Sunday	17 th at 6.00 pm	All Saints, Stretton-on-Dunsmore
Friday	22 nd at 6.00 pm	St Peter's Bourton-on-Dunsmore
Sunday	24 th at 6.00 pm	Candlelight Service at St Peter's, Grandborough

2023 Family Christmas Services across the Benefice

Children and families are welcome at all our services, but the following services over the Christmas period have been planned specifically with children (and the young at heart) in mind.

November

Sunday	26 th at 11.00 am	All Saints, Stretton on Dunsmore
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December

Sunday	3 rd at 11.00 am	Advent Sunday Allsorts at St Leonard's, Birdingbury
Sunday	3 rd at 4.00 pm	Christingle at St Nicholas', Willoughby
Thursday	7 th at 4.30 pm	Messy Church Christingle, St Peter's, Grandborough
Sunday	17 th at 4.00 pm	Family Service at St Nicholas', Willoughby
Sunday	24 th at 4.00 pm	Crib service – All Saints, Stretton-on-Dunsmore
Sunday	25 th at 11.00 am	Christmas Day Allsorts at St Leonard's, Birdingbury