

Benefice Diary January 2025

From Revd Karen

Perhaps unsurprisingly December has been a rather busy month! We started with Advent Carols at St Edward's and for the Mothers' Union in the Church Rooms – both beautiful and reflective services to start the season of preparation for Christmas. Kate's Home Nursing Carol Service was very well attended and raised twenty-seven thousand pounds for their



ongoing work in the community. It is always such an inspiring organisation to work with. Christmas services in the villages included a packed nativity service for Lower Swell School. The service at Condicote was also packed with exciting moments when the organ decided to go rogue and play its own tunes.

Mulled wine and mince pies were well received both at Lower Swell and St Edward's - hospitality is a really important part of the Christian message. I have really noticed in my second year (and Christmas) here how much some services seem to attract visitors whilst others are much more for the "home team". The impact of visitors was really noticeable at St Edwards where we moved the carol service to 4pm and we had almost three

hundred people attending the service for some or all of it.

Thank you so much to everyone who decorated the churches, made mince pies, served mulled wine, played the music, read the lessons, opened the churches, printed the pew sheets, swept up afterwards and did all that needs doing to make it look effortless. Thank you!

Crib Festival

We had some very creative nativity scenes for the crib festival. The veggie nativity from Stow Primary was very much



admired along with the knitted crib scenes from the MU, Closely Knit and the WI. There was a steady stream of visitors who enjoyed the cribs, the brass band on Saturday and who engaged with the prayer stations. There is some interest in running a Christmas Tree Festival next year. It would need to be a community project but watch this space!

Film Night

Film night returns to the Church Rooms on Thursday 16th January at 7pm. We aren't allowed to advertise the title but if you contact the office we can let you know.

Concerts

Following on from a wonderful recital by Marcel Zidani and Shulah Oliver-Smith just before Christmas, our next concert will be The Seraphim Trio playing music by Haydn and Ravel on Sunday 9th February. It would be wonderful to get some really good attendance at future concerts – if anyone has any bright ideas on publicity please let me know.

Tickets at £15 available at www.celebratingaustralianmusic.com/events or on the door

Regular Events

Closely Knit 10am-noon every Saturday in St Edward's Church.

Mothers' Union- first Thursday of the month 2.00pm in the Church Room.

Cotswold Dementia Café Every 1st and 3rd Friday of the month, 2-4pm at the Baptist Church Hall off Back Walls. A community café offering friendship, support, advice and more for anyone living with or caring for someone with dementia.

January Services

Mondays (apart from 27th) 9 am Morning Prayer in the Lady Chapel at St Edward's

Sunday 5th January 10.30 am Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow

Thursday 9th January 11.00 am Holy Communion, Newlands Court

Sunday 12th January 9.15am BCP Matins, St Nicholas Condicote

Sunday 12th January 10.30 am Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow

Sunday 12th January 11am Lay Led Matins, St Mary's Upper Swell

Sunday 19th January 9.15am BCP Holy Communion, St Mary's Upper Swell

Sunday 19th January 10.30 am Holy Communion St Edward's Stow

Sunday 19th January 2.30 pm Dementia Friendly Service Edwardstow Court

Sunday 26th January 9.15am BCP Holy Communion, St Nicholas Condicote

Sunday 26th January 10.30 am Holy Communion St Edward's Stow

Sunday 2nd February, Candlemas 10.30 am Holy Communion St Edward's Stow

Benefice Contacts

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Church office: secretary@stedwardsstow.org.uk

Church Wardens: Stow-on-the-Wold Vacant

Condicote Chris Wynn 830389 and Adam Fleming

The Swells Jolyon Grey 822215 and Hazel James 831367