

St Nicholas Church Linton December 2020



The recent announcements by the Government for their Winter Plan puts us in Tier 3 but we are still able to hold collective worship in church under very strictly controlled conditions.

Christmas brings its own joys (and challenges) and after consultation with PCCs, we have determined that most services will be online, with one Holy Communion for Christmas Eve at West Farleigh, with a strictly controlled maximum of 40 people.

We have lots planned, however. There will be a recorded Carol Service in which many people will take part by reading or singing as part of a virtual congregation; a virtual Christingle; an Instant Nativity – please do join in by dressing up as a character from the Nativity story; and other services.

We will resume our Thursday morning communion services at Coxheath from Thursday December 3rd (which will be streamed on Zoom).

Meanwhile, as we enter yet another period of isolation, please do keep in touch with each other, and let me know if you would like one of the team to be in touch. As we enter the season of Advent, we will have time and space to pause and ponder the wonder of the message that the saviour of the world came to earth in human form, and to consider the importance of that in our own lives.

Peace and blessings,
Peter Callway, on behalf of the ministry team
Lorna, David, Alison, Becky and Sue



Sunday December 6th

9.30am Holy Communion at St. Mary's, Hunton

10.30am Morning Prayer online at

<http://bit.ly/UnitedBenefice>

Sunday December 13th

8am Holy Communion at St. Nicholas, Linton

9.30am Morning Prayer plus Holy Communion at All Saints, West Farleigh

4pm Virtual Christingle

<https://bit.ly/VirtualChristingle> on Zoom

<https://bit.ly/FBChristingle> on Facebook

Sunday December 20th

10.30am Instant Nativity online at

<http://bit.ly/UnitedBenefice>

6pm Carol Service online at

<http://bit.ly/UnitedBenefice>

The Carol Service will also be published online at www.unitedbenefice.church and can be provided on DVD by request.

Christmas Eve

5pm Children's Service online at

<http://bit.ly/UnitedBenefice>

9.30pm Holy Communion at All Saints, West Farleigh

Maximum capacity 40 people

11.30 Holy Communion online at

<http://bit.ly/UnitedBenefice>

Christmas Day

10.30am Family Service online at

<http://bit.ly/UnitedBenefice>

Sunday December 27th

10.30am Holy Communion online at

<http://bit.ly/UnitedBenefice>



The United Benefice of Coxheath, East Farleigh,
Hunton, Linton and West Farleigh

Church Website

For more information about our Benefice and five Benefice Churches go to www.unitedbenefice.church
<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/9958/>

Pastoral Letter from the Rector, Peter Callway

What are you hoping for? Something short term and known only to you? Or a bigger thing that will benefit many? Do you harbour your hope in secret, or share it with others? Hope. It's a strange word and has many interpretations. "To desire or cherish with an expectation of fulfilment" is a common definition. How secure are we in the things we hope for? How confident in them are we?

The opposite of hope is despair, dread, or disbelief. In Dante's *Inferno*, part of his 14th-century epic poem *Divine Comedy*, we are made aware of the sign above the inferno (also known as "hell") which says: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here". What an awful place to be – in a place with no hope. Dante's poem is the story of a journey towards hope and life in all its fullness with God. When we are in such a place, it is often a change in circumstances that can trigger the renewal of hope. As I write, many things have changed in the past weeks, which may have triggered a fresh hope in you; a new president-elect in the USA; the shake-up at No. 10 as long-standing SPADs leave. The successful development of a COVID-19 vaccine.

As we enter the season of Advent, we recall that it is a special time of hope and anticipation. We anticipate the celebration of the first coming of Jesus to earth at Christmas – and whatever the pandemic situation, we can celebrate that in our hearts with joy and peace. And we anticipate the return of Jesus at a time unknown to any of us, when he promises to end all suffering, to bring about a new heaven and a new earth, and when God promises to be with his people. This is the Advent Hope – in which we can be confident because it is based on God's promise to us!

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not yet seen" and St. Paul writes in his letter to the Romans "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." May Advent be a time of hope for you, filled with God's blessings.

Peter Callway