

# - - TEAM NOTES - -

**Swanage Town Carol Service** is to be held this evening (Sunday 19th December) at 6.30pm in St Mary's Church. Restrictions will be in place, but there is no need to register for this service. All Welcome.

## **Swanage Parish Gift Day results:**

On behalf of Swanage PCC may I offer my heartfelt thanks to all who have so generously supported the 2021 Gift Day. The total to date, including gift aid is £18,958.75 (St Mary's £12,461.25; All Saints' £4,438.75; St Mark's £2,058.75). There is likely to be a little trickle of envelopes still to come, as we push up towards the twenty-thousand mark, which is a wonderful result. J.M.

**Living in Love & Faith** is a recent study by the Church of England on "Christian teaching and learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage". A parallel guide to how we may discuss the questions raised has been published, to allow for parish and other groups to meet and share their thoughts. As a team of churches we are planning to form two groups meeting over four consecutive weeks, on Monday and Wednesday evenings, in order to explore these important subjects. A group in St Mark's will be led by Rev'd Solveig Sonet and a group in All Saints' by Rev'd Margaret Williams. The team rector is to attend all eight sessions. We are asking each group to hold a fifth evening free in case we need more time, and we also plan to bring the two groups together eventually to share their findings. Parishioners from any one of the four churches are welcome to attend either series. Each meeting is scheduled to last for one and a half hours.

**The St Mark's group** is to meet in the Church on Monday evenings at 7.00 p.m. from 17th January and **the All Saints' group** is to meet in the Church on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm from 19th January  
*Information as to how the course material may be accessed can be obtained from Margaret or Solveig. Booking for the course, which is essential as material needs to be ordered, should be made through them also.*

*The Parish Office will be closed from Christmas Eve to Tues 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022  
(back in the office on Weds 12<sup>th</sup> Jan)  
Treasury Team off Christmas Eve - Fri 31st Dec)*

## **Funerals this week:**

<b>Bob Bache</b>	Mon 20th Dec	11.30am	St Mary's Church
<b>Shirley Strickland</b>	Thurs 23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	12.00pm	Poole Crematorium

Do access the Swanage and Studland Team website regularly:  
[www.swanageteam.com](http://www.swanageteam.com)

# SWANAGE & STUDLAND TEAM MINISTRY

St. Mary's – St. Mark's – All Saints' – St. Nicholas'  
19<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – Advent 4

**Micah 5: 2-5a; Hebrews 10: 5-10; Luke 1: 39-45 (46-55)**

The visit of Mary to Elizabeth occurs in the Gospel reading today, and this is of little surprise on this the Fourth Sunday in Advent, and so close to Christmas. We are thinking especially on this day of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Oddly enough, she is so easily forgotten this close to Christmas, as many churches lose the particular focus on her by - for obvious and very good reasons - holding Crib Services, Christingles and Christmas Carol Services today, in fact Advent 4 *becomes* Christmas, to all intents and purposes. So in the face of this, let us try and hold fast to Advent for another few hours and consider Mary's call and her sharing of this news with her 'kinswoman' Elizabeth, who has her own story to tell.

The Micah reading today is one that reminds us of the prophecy that Bethlehem is to be the place of the special birth, as the mother who is in travail shall be in the town at the appointed time. So we are in the realm of all happening according to the providence and fore-knowledge of God. The sharing of news between Mary and Elizabeth is consequently felt to be a working of the Holy Spirit. Both women detect - as does the unborn child in Elizabeth's womb - that miracles have already happened and are about to be fulfilled. Elizabeth is already describing the child that Mary bears as "my Lord" and knows within herself the humility that comes from recognising the wonder of their calling.

The passage from Hebrews demonstrates the much greater sense, that all Christians seek to grasp, that Jesus himself was born as one who serves. He offered himself in humility and obedience to the Father, through which sacrifice we have been sanctified - made holy - in him. So it is that the Fourth Sunday in Advent, by recognising Mary in a particular way, brings us to approach Christmas with joy, but on our knees, with expectation, but in utter awe of what God is bringing to pass.  
John Mann