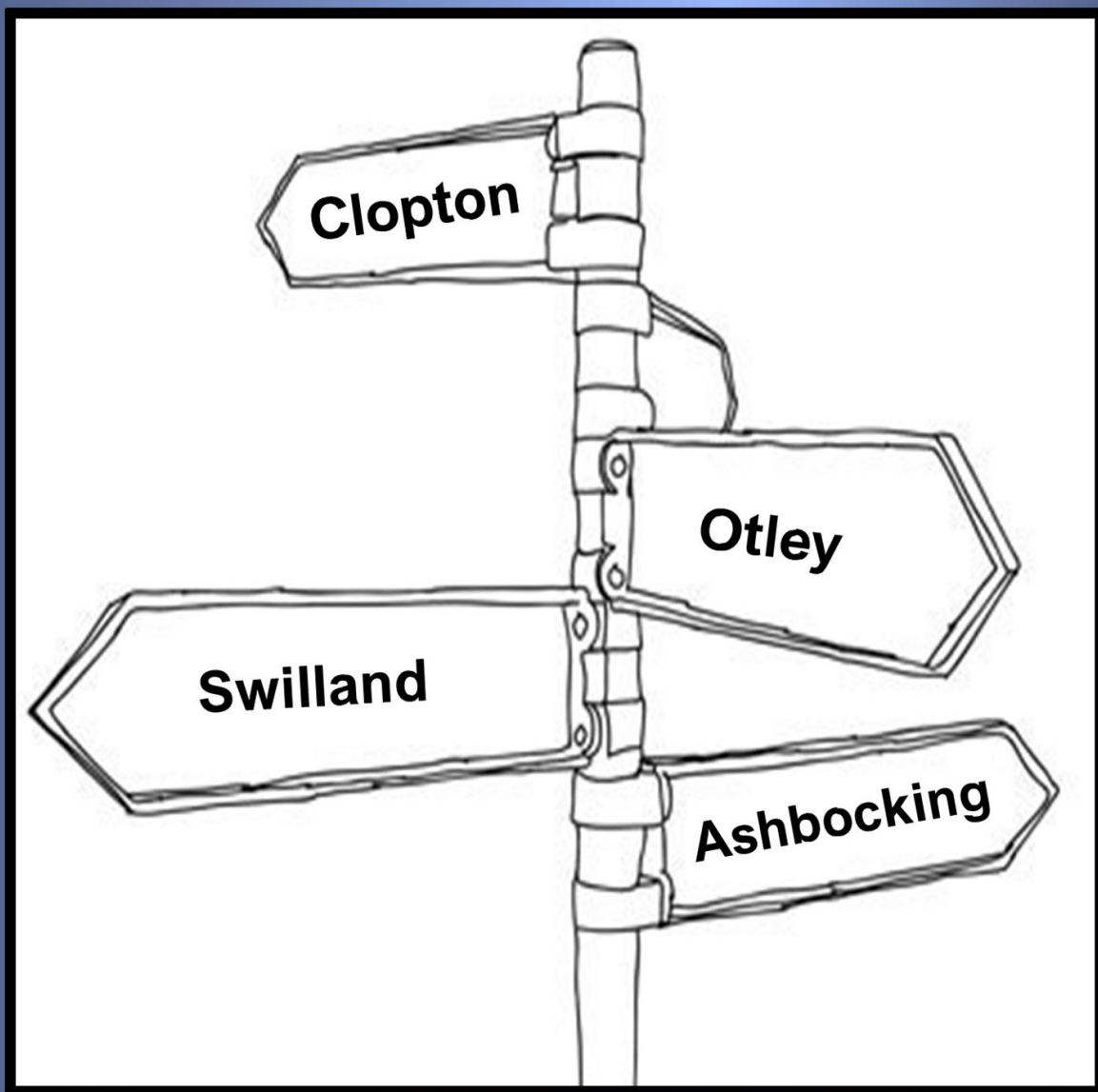


The Signpost



News from the Parishes

Otley Church News for February 2022

Happy New Year and a new start for us!

Unfortunately, Covid is still with us and due to the new and more infectious Covid variant some service plans for December had to be altered. Most affected were the two popular and usually very well attended services. The Crib Service, held at Warren Farm had to be cancelled and the Carol Service was moved to the Village Hall. However, we did manage to get into the church with masks and social distancing for the Advent and Christmas service.



Our Advent service was a Family service on the 5th December taken by Sally Gaze. It was the 2nd Sunday in Advent, so we were able to light two candles on our Advent wreath for a change. Sally pointed out the meaning of the four candles: 1 for the Patriarchs, 2 for the Prophets, 3 for John the Baptist and 4 for Mary. The white candle in the centre stands for Jesus, the Light of the world and is of course only lit on Christmas Day. We were fortunate to have Helen Jay playing the organ and we are indebted to her for still coming out to Otley, although her home is now in Woodbridge.

On the 15th of December Radio Suffolk, Lightwave and the Under Fives joined for the 'Doorstep Carols'. Santa was being pulled along in a trailer all around Otley. Some of his smaller helpers were with him on the trailer and others walked alongside shaking their buckets for contributions. All the money raised went to the Under Fives playgroup. Our popular Carol service was held outside the Village Hall and although it was a damp and drizzly evening 20 people came out to the unusual venue and enjoyed the readings, singing and refreshments. We thank James for masterminding it all including mince pies and mulled wine. Thanks also go to Mike Bullock who gave the technical assistance providing the microphone for the readings and the music to support our singing. There was no choir, but some ladies knew the descant to 'Hark the Herald' by heart and made the last verse sound particularly lovely.



The church had been beautifully decorated for the Christmas Day service. Pauline Crowley donated an artificial Christmas tree and decorated it. Members of the PCC put up the fairy lights and candle holders as well as our two cribs. The wooden candle holders were made nearly 40 years ago by Mr Longbottom, a former parishioner and his wife made one of the cribs. The figures are put in and around a stable with a thatched roof made by Mr Podd who was a Master Thatcher. The other crib was knitted for us by the handbell ringers a few years ago. We thank the 'flower ladies' for their lovely arrangements which added to the festive atmosphere starting with flowers in the porch, and the bells rang out announcing the Christmas service.

Judy Cairns kindly agreed to play the piano and Sally Gaze took the service which was a Family service with Communion at the end, for those who wished to stay.

Our first service of 2022 was the Benefice Communion on the 2nd of January, which was live streamed. Mark Cresswell led the service, "A Celebration of the Epiphany", looking in particular at the presents that the wise men brought. Mark had some frankincense in a bottle and let us all smell its perfume. James Hall took the intercessions marking the ending of the old and the beginning of the new year.

Our monthly coffee mornings started on January 13th. Rose Rogerson was the hostess. As the coffee mornings are indoors, we are conscious that some people may not yet feel comfortable attending. We would like to continue in as safe a way as possible. The next coffee morning will be held in our house at 16 Spring Park on 10th February. If you are coming, please feel free to wear a mask and we can spread out over the ground floor! The next service, a Communion Service is at **9.30am on February 6th**.



We look forward to welcoming you. **Karin Upson**