



**Church of England Covid Guidance.** In light of the new government Covid measures, you will be guided on arrival at services and events about how each event will be managed. In broad terms mask wearing is now mandatory, sanitiser will be available, the building will be well ventilated and guidance will be given regarding seating and distancing.

**Coffee Mates takes place in Denbury on the second Wednesday of each month, 10.30-12 noon** at Church Cottage, Denbury. All men welcome to join us on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January.

**Refresh Revisit Reflect Course** Starting on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January from 6.30pm to 8pm, each Tuesday until 15<sup>th</sup> February. This course explores the Christian way of life looking at Jesus's summary of the law, the Lord's Prayer, The Apostles' Creed. The Beatitudes, The Eucharist and the Life of the Spirit. Feel free to come along to one session or all sessions. All Welcome!



Readings	This week	Next week
<b>Readings for this Sunday:</b>		
1st Reading	1 Samuel 2:18-20	Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm	148	72:1-15
2nd Reading	Colossians 3:12-17	Ephesians 3:1-12
Gospel	Luke 2:41-End	Matt 2:1-12

### Readings for the week ahead:

Mon	27 <sup>th</sup>	John 21:19b-End	Thurs	30 <sup>th</sup>	Luke 2:36-40
Tue	28 <sup>th</sup>	Matt 2:13-18	Fri	31 <sup>st</sup>	John 1:1-18
Wed	29 <sup>th</sup>	Luke 2:22-35	Sat	1 <sup>st</sup>	Luke 2:15-21

They can also be viewed/downloaded from <https://bible.oremus.org/>

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[www.facebook.com/denburyworship](https://www.facebook.com/denburyworship) [www.facebook.com/Broad20/](https://www.facebook.com/Broad20/)

### Today's Sunday Services

10.00 am Mission Community Holy Communion - St Mary the Virgin, Denbury

### Reflection over Christmas Week

Our churches are open for private prayer and reflection this week at the following times:

St Peter & St Paul's, Broadhempston	9am to 4pm	Daily
St Andrew's, Ipplepen	9am to 5pm	Daily
St Mary the Virgin, Denbury	10am to 5pm	Daily
St John the Baptist, Woodland	9am to 5pm	Daily

Both St Andrew's, Ipplepen and St Mary the Virgin, Denbury, have the reserved sacrament present in Church.

Morning prayer and midweek communion services will resume the week beginning Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2022.

### Mid-Week

Rev'd Andrew Down on Annual Leave until Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

Church Office open on Wednesday (12noon to 3pm) and Thursday (11am to 3pm) only this week.

Monday	3pm-5pm	T-Pot	- Church Cottage, Denbury
Wednesday	7.30 pm	Bellringing Practice	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen

### Next Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2022 – Epiphany

9.30 am	Holy Communion	- St John the Baptist, Woodland
9.30 am	Celtic Morning Prayer	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
11.00 am	Holy Communion	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen

**Points for Prayer during advent.** We pray that we will be ready whenever God comes in our lives: That the nations of the world will work for peace. That the broken will find healing.

**The memory tree is now in St Andrew's Church, Ipplepen.** Remember loved ones by writing their names on a card. Hang the card on the tree. Please place your donation for St Andrews Church, in an envelope and place the envelope in the wall safe. Thank you.

**In Memory.** Cynthia Floyd, Muriel Hall, Val Denning, Marysia Willoughby and Cynthia Griffiths.

**Denbury Advent Windows 2021.** All the Advent Windows are on display now. They will remain up for the Christmas week and hopefully beyond that. Come and see the many and varied designs - such talent! Details of where to find them are on posters around the village and on the Denbury Group Facebook page. [www.facebook.com/denburyworship](https://www.facebook.com/denburyworship)



## Reflection by Steve Sheldon

First Sunday of Christmas

John 1:1-14

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2021

*When I get to the bottom, I go back to the top of the slide, where I stop and I turn, and I go for a ride, till I get to the bottom and I see you again.*

This Beatles song is about a helter skelter, a piece of children's playground equipment where you slide from the top to the bottom and then climb the ladder to do it again.

And here we are again approaching a New Year. On Saturday we will be at the bottom of the slide ready to climb back to the top for one more ride, sliding down to the bottom, where I'll see you again, next year. Endless cycles of repetition. Year after year.

Ray Davies wrote a song on that theme: *Standing in the middle of nowhere, wondering how to begin; lost between tomorrow and yesterday, between now and then. And now we're back where we started, here we go round again; day after day I get up and I say, I better do it again.*

In Snakes and Ladders, if you land on the wrong square, you can slide backwards to square one; starting over to do it all again.

In theatre or music rehearsals, after a mistake, the director often wants the actors or the musicians to return *da capo*, back to the beginning, to take it from the top, to do it again.

Christianity offers new beginnings, but this is not the same as a continual starting over. Starting over is a waste of an earlier beginning. To start over is to go backwards. To start over means to lose all the experience and good things we have gained along the way.

To begin again does not mean going back to the beginning, to recapture innocence lost; you can never unring the bell, you can never undo what has been done. We cannot return to the Garden. What Old Adam has done, has been done, and in him we all must die.

But in the very first of all new beginnings, there was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being through him because in him was Life, and this life was the light of *all* people. This light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not, does not, cannot overcome it. It's like the small child, safely tucked up in bed, who will still ask to have the door left open just a crack, so that light can shine in the darkness. Just the smallest glimmer of light can make all the difference.

This light of Christ abides in each of us and we can reflect it in our lives if we allow it to do so, if we consciously and deliberately make Jesus our companion. Or we can choose to be enslaved by the darkness of the World; we can be trapped in prejudice, arrogance, ignorance, selfishness. We can allow ourselves to be overcome by the darkness, if we fail to reach out to the light, to the light that shines in the darkness.

In cartoons, the Old Year is usually portrayed as a broken, tired old man. All our hopes and dreams and visions and best intentions are shattered by the realities of daily living. Opportunities squandered. Aspirations and expectations severely lowered.

But then a New Year comes and that's represented by that cute chubby little baby full of potential and unlimited possibility: innocence as yet unspoiled.

Amazingly all this hope for the future begins at the darkest time of the year; no burgeoning new growth of Spring, no sunshine of Summer, no abundance of harvest in Autumn. Cold. Dark. And yet we look ahead with joyous anticipation. The new possibilities exist in our calendars and in our hearts and minds long before any physical signs.

Jesus came to transform darkness into light. But the world in which God chose to reveal himself did not immediately receive or accept him. The making of all things new did not happen overnight. The transformation of the World was slow. Is slow.

But it continues. The transformation of the World continues in each of us, each New Year, each new generation, in our hearts before there are obvious physical signs on which to base our hopes.

And so here we are again, approaching another New Year.

To begin again in Christ, to be made alive, means that, at any time, we can choose to shrug off the effects of the past, to carry on as new people, along with all of those who have said 'Yes' to life in Christ, who share in the power of his resurrection.

Any time, any day, every day, is a new beginning. There are many sad and broken people out there in the darkness of the World, who need to know that: that any day is the right day for a new beginning. There are many who feel that, once they have slipped into the darkness, they can never return to the light; who, having done something wrong, feel that they can never be forgiven, so they might as well continue on the downward spiral of that endless helter skelter of worthlessness; having stepped on the wrong square and been sent back to square one, they can't be bothered to roll the dice again, they've already lost.

But they are wrong, because in Christ, every day, every year, every minute is another chance to get it right.

We, in the Old Adam, we all die daily and ultimately. The Christian promise is that all deaths are possibilities for new beginnings. Christ invites us to reach out to him and choose the life he offers and begin again.