



St Andrew's Church Magazine - December 25/January 26



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FROM THE VICARAGE

St John the Baptist and RS Thomas: Priest, Prophet, Poet.

Welcome to our December and January edition of the church magazine. This edition I have been asked to write the introduction and during this advent season, I thought a fitting reflection as we approach Christmas, is to consider the ministry of John the Baptist. John the Baptist, born just before Jesus in another miraculous birth also involving the Angel Gabriel (see Luke 1:5-25), spent his ministry pointing toward Jesus, telling crowds to prepare a way for the Messiah and baptising them. He was seen by his contemporaries as a kind of 'wild man', living off the land in the wilderness and dressed in rags. John's words in his ministry, to 'prepare ye a way for the Lord', echo the prophetic voice of Elijah and although they signal Jesus coming to minister in the first century, they also call us to look ahead to Jesus second coming and 'prepare a way for the lord' in our own time. It causes us to ponder, perhaps, where we might be hearing the prophetic voice in our own time? I often find this voice present in the arts and the works of poet and Church of Wales priest R.S.Thomas, a prophetic voice I frequently return to.

From the wilderness of the rural communities of North Wales in which he served Thomas articulated, through poetry, many of the questions we find ourselves asking in the search for meaning and truth. If we search for God and feel Him near at hand, only then to blink and find Him gone then, Thomas' work persuades us that we are not alone in this experience of faith – this poet and prophet has been there before us. Thomas's son, Gwydion, recalls his father's sermons, in which he would "drone on" to absurd lengths about the evil of refrigerators, washing machines, televisions and other modern devices, to a congregation that could barely afford them. Thomas preached that they were all part of the temptation of scrambling after gadgets rather than attending to more spiritual needs. "It was the Machine, you see," he explains. Still, Thomas was raising a deep and unanswered question: What is life for? Is it simply to consume more and more, and divert ourselves with ever more elaborate entertainments and gadgetry? What will this do to our souls? He recognised the 'machine' as an existential threat to the community, the village, the natural world and the gospel. Certainly, this seems a fitting and poignant critique of the era of



social media, the smartphone, and the AI washing machine, yet we must be reminded that Thomas was writing these reflections fifty years ago, before the dawn of the computer age. He had a reputation, which perhaps he cultivated, of being not always charitable and sometimes awkward and taciturn. Critics described him as "formidable, bad-tempered, and apparently humourless", which I find interestingly similar to artistic portrayals of St John. There is also a Biblical sense to which the prophets are regarded as irritants and troublemakers. Elijah is described as the 'troublers of Israel' while Jeremiah and Isaiah continually reflect on the poor reception of their prophecy.

It seems to me that this 'wild-man' priest of Aberdaron was preparing the way for our age, a voice in the wilderness in the school of St John the Baptist, both loved and reviled, who calls to us to surrender not to the 'machine' but to Christ in service to our communities and to the natural world.

Other

It was perfect. He could do nothing about it.

Its waters were as clear as his own eye.

The grass was his breath.

The mystery of the dark earth was what went on in himself.

He loved and hated it with a parent's conceit, admiring his own work, resenting its Independence.

There were trysts in the greenwood at which he was not welcome.

Youths and girls fondling the pages of a strange book, awakened His envy.

The mind achieved what the heart could not.

He began planning the destruction of the long peace of the place.

The machine appeared in the distance, singing to itself of money.

Its song was the web

They were caught in, men and women together.

Then villages were as flies to be sucked empty.

God secreted a tear. 'Enough, enough' He commanded, but the machine looked at him and went on singing.

R.S. Thomas, H'ym, 1972.

George Brett



FROM THE MAGAZINE 10 YEARS AGO

“Some Christmas Quotes”

“Christmas doesn't come from a store, maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more....” *Dr. Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*

“My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?” *Bob Hope*

"To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas." *Calvin Coolidge*

“I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph”. *Child star actress Shirley Temple*

“It snowed last year too: I made a snowman and my brother knocked it down and I knocked my brother down and then we had tea”. *Dylan Thomas, A Child's Christmas in Wales*

“My mother-in-law has come round to our house at Christmas seven years running. This year we're having a change. We're going to let her in”. *Les Dawson*

"Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection." *Winston Churchill*

“Anyone who believes that men are the equal of women has never seen a man trying to wrap a Christmas present”. *Anonymous*

“I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year”. *Charles Dickens*

What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus? - Claustrophobic. *Anonymous*

“Bloody Christmas, here again, let us raise a loving cup, peace on earth, goodwill to men, and make them do the washing up”. *Wendy Cope*

"Christmas isn't a season. It's a feeling." *Edna Ferber*

"Christmas is a necessity. There has to be at least one day of the year to remind us that we're here for something else besides ourselves." *Eric Sevareid*

"I don't think Christmas is necessarily about things. It's about being good to one another, it's about kindness." *Carrie Fisher*

What do you call Santa at the South Pole? A lost clause!



TWO CHRISTMAS QUIZZES

Quiz 1 Which Christmas Carols do these lines come from?

1. Shepherds quake at the sight
2. Bless all the dear children in thy tender care
3. Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
4. Trumpets sound and angels sing
5. Mild he lays his glory by
6. At that manger rude and bare
7. Let ev'ry heart prepare him room
8. Now ye hear of endless bliss
9. Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying
10. Three wise men came from country far
11. No ear may hear his coming
12. For low the days have hastened on
13. All the little boys were killed
14. When like stars his children crowned
15. To save us all from Satan's power
16. The playing on the merry organ
17. Teach us to resemble Thee
18. Right against the forest fence
19. And all the bells on earth will ring
20. See the fur to keep you warm



Quiz 2 Can you fill in the blanks to make these well known Christmas Songs and Carols

1. R _____ D N _____ R _____
2. T _____ T _____ D _____ S
3. A _____ M _____
4. J _____ S
5. M _____ A _____ Y
6. W _____ D
7. F _____ S _____
8. I S _____ M _____ G S _____ S
9. T _____ H _____ Y
10. T _____ T N _____
11. W _____ A _____



12. D _ _ _ Y _ _ _ W I _ _ C _ _ _ _ _
13. M _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ W _ _ _
14. G _ _ _ _ G W _ _ _ _ _
15. H _ _ _ _ H _ _ _ _ A _ _ _ _ S _ _ _
16. M _ _ ' _ B _ _ C _ _ _ _
17. I ' _ B _ _ _ _ _ L _ _ _ A L _ L _ _ C _ _ _ _ _
18. S _ _ _ C _ _ _ _ C _ _ _ _ T _ _ _
19. J _ _ T _ T _ _ W _ _ _ _
20. D _ _ _ U H _ _ _ W _ _ _ _ H _ _ _ ?

Answers are on Page 23

ST ANDREW'S WALKING GROUP

Motto: Better is the end of a thing than its beginning (Ecclesiastes 7:8)

The annual Christmas social walk around Wicksteed Park is on Friday Dec 5th.

After ten years this will be the last walk we will be leading so we would like to thank everyone for their support over that time.

As this is the festive season we would like to bow out with our version of **The Walkers 12 Days of Christmas**.

On the Twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me

12 Eager Walkers

11 Rainclouds forming

10 Wobbly stiles

9 Cows a charging

8 Boots a leaking

7 Blisters forming

6 Dogs a barking

5 Muddy Fields

4 Cosy tearooms

3 Tatty Maps

2 Signposts missing and ..

A Chair to fall asleep in at home

Plus of course lots of fantastic countryside, great company and amazing views!



Rosalind and Malcolm Robinson





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Community Christmas Fair



supporting local
charities &
community groups
Admission FREE,
refreshments, live
music & Santa!

Thu Dec 4th 6-9pm and Sat Dec 6th 10am-1.30pm

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations? Tinsillitis.



ST ANDREW'S LADIES

For our October meeting Lorraine Lewis, the founder of the Lewis Foundation with her husband Lee, came to talk to us, It is a charity which provides items for people who are being treated for cancer who may be taken into hospital and don't always have time to get things together. The foundation provides goody bags for them containing items such as colouring books, pencils, pens, playing cards, body lotion, Aveeno, lip balm, toothbrush & paste, boiled sweets, bath scrunchies, tissues, knickers, socks, books, sachets of hot chocolate, coffee & tea including herbal teas. They started the charity after Lee's mum was being treated for cancer. They realised that there weren't many treats or toilet items available for patients and not much to do when having chemo. They donated TVs, books and puzzle books to pass the time. The council let them have a shop in the Grosvenor Centre free (unbelievable), this charity shop is filled with items donated by Amazon. Also in Northampton they run a café to help their funds enabling the to supply 27 hospitals. For their charity work they were invited to meet the King & Queen. They were one of many charities invited because of the King's cancer treatment. They were very interesting speakers and enthusiastic about their charity.

Our November meeting was on Thursday 20th, at MacQueen House, for our Christmas lunch, - it was delicious. In the week commencing 15th December we will be delivering gifts to the over 80s in our congregation. Our December meeting will be on Friday 19th at 2pm.

We will be running our usual pick-a-parcel at the Community Christmas Fare on 4th & 6th December.

January 16th 2026 at 2pm will be our AGM followed by a Bring and Buy. Coffee: *Doreen & Monica*.

Ending on a sad note, one of our newer members Tina McMillan died recently. She came to many meetings including Holiday at Home and was in the quiz team with Ann Stockham, Sue Merrifield and myself when much to our surprise we won. If you look in the October/November magazine there is a picture of the team including Tina, a nice memory of her. Our thoughts are with her family

Doreen Hancock

Why did no-one bid for Rudolph and Blitzen on eBay?
Because they were two deer.



Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

On October 2nd we welcomed Laura from Baby Basics, Northampton to our meeting. Baby Basics Northampton is part of a Nationwide Charity formed to ensure that every baby born in Northamptonshire has a safe place to sleep and that parents have the essentials that they need to keep them and their baby healthy. There is no means testing and Baby Basics provide starter packs containing everything a family needs for the first three months of the baby's life. Baby Basics works with midwives, health visitors, charities, food banks and other professionals to identify families in vulnerable situations and provide them with the support they need. Baby Basics are delighted to receive preloved items such as Moses baskets without mattresses, blankets and towels, baby baths, baby clothing, toys aged from birth (no batteries) and microwave or cold water sterilisers. Any items can be taken to The Church of Later-day Saints, Rothwell Road, Kettering on a Wednesday 10am-12am.



We welcomed Jerry from Silver Time to our meeting in November. Silver Time is an organization offering legal advice particularly to elder people with regard to writing wills, arranging lasting power of attorney etc. as Jerry said 'helping to get your affairs in order, whilst trying to make sure that your estate goes where you want it to and not to the government'. Jerry's talk was very interesting, easy to understand and very helpful as many of our members signed up for a free consultation with Silver Time to make sure that their final wishes would be adhered to as they wished.

Have you noticed that over the last few months we have acquired a Voltive stand? You may be interested to know that this was donated in memory of René Barnes and her husband by their three daughters. René was a longtime member of our Church community and Mothers' Union member.





The photo shows the votive stand with Lois, one of René's daughters. If you remember René please give her a thought while you are standing lighting your candle.

Just recently I attended Mothers' Union Forum at St. Mary's Church Woolaston. We started off with a lovely Communion Service and then had a talk by Christine, from Eve Women's Rescue. Eve is one of our Church's charities this year and Christine came to talk to our Mothers' Union in September. There was quite a bit of discussion about our 16 days of Activism against Gender based/Domestic violence. 16 days of Activism begins on 25th November and runs until 10th December and we will be showing our support for this within our Church. We also discussed our 150 year Celebration which will be held next year. This will include a Service at St. Paul's Cathedral and various events in our own Church, Deanery and Diocese. We were also interested to hear that the ordination of Sarah, the new Bishop of Canterbury will be held on Lady Day, 25th March 2026.

Hilary Whitwell - Branch Leader

CHRISTMAS TREE BAUBLES



We are very much looking forward to the Christmas Tree Festival taking place in Church over the Christmas period.

Thank you all very much for agreeing to decorate a bauble for your groups and this is a gentle reminder that your

decorated baubles need to be returned by Sunday December 7th.

I have placed a box at the back of church for you to put your baubles in.

The decorated tree will show everyone who visits what a busy and Inclusive Church we are.

Many thanks

Penny



"New Year Lunch"

in the Church Rooms

Sunday 11th January 2026 at 12 noon

Tickets available from *The Social Committee*

'Wednesday Lunch Club'

in the Church Rooms

Wednesday 14th January 2026 at 12 noon



Please join us for a lovely meal with your friends from St. Andrew's at the Wednesday Lunch Club.

Please let a member of *The Social Committee* know if you will be coming

Camerata singers

Christmas Concert

Sunday 14th December at 3pm

Toller United Reformed Church, Kettering

Britten – Ceremony of Carols

Vaughan Williams - Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Lizzi Peacock – Harp Conductor – James Lloyd Thomas

Ticket £12 (Under 18s £8) available on the door.

(includes festive refreshments)

Carol Singing at the Newlands Centre

A Christian Aid event



Saturday 6th December 11-12 noon

Please come to join us if you are free

Why was the snowman embarrassed when he was spotted rummaging in the vegetable isle? He was caught picking his nose.

What happened to the man who stole an advent calendar? He got 25 days.



THANK YOU – FROM BARBARA AND SUE

As a churchwarden it is lovely to be able to thank the congregation and the wider community for their support in finding the funds to pay our recent electricity bill. We are so blessed as a church to have such wonderful and generous people.

We are about to pay off the remaining debt in full and have accepted a £200 gesture of goodwill from British Gas Lite. Thank you, Debbie, for your perseverance with this.

We are looking into ways of reducing our electricity usage; we are putting energy monitors on our appliances, have turned off the electric radiators in the Vicars Vestry, Choir Vestry and Chancel area. We have also turned off the water heater for the sink in the bar area. There is a kettle available to heat water, and transfer hot water from the water urn when it is on, for washing up.

We have now better control over the underfloor heating and are investigating ways of reducing the gas that we use. However, we are not going to go back to a cold church.

Please come and speak to a churchwarden if you have any concerns over our use of energy, or if you have some suggestions to improving our energy efficiency.

A New Projector

Before our energy bill crisis, we had been given a generous donation to help fund a new projector. Many of you will be aware that ours is old, second hand and lacking in some colours! We are now in a position with other donations from the Rooms Trust and congregation members to purchase a new projector and lens. None of this funding has come from the money raised for our heating bill. This will hopefully be installed before Christmas (subject to availability of lens) and will enable other outreach events to be planned for the new year.

It is thought that a Silver Screen and Family Cinema may be possible, especially with the loss of our local picture house.

THANK YOU

Veronica McAngus, Lorna and Kirsty would like to thank everyone who was involved in John's funeral service. Also all who attended, sent cards and messages of support to us all. We were overwhelmed by the attendance in church.

Many thanks to you all, Veronica, Lorna & Kirsty



MY VISIT TO HEREFORD CATHEDRAL

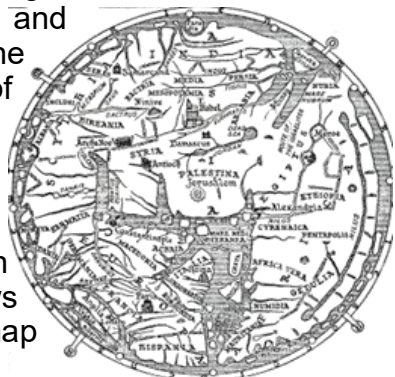
A few months ago I went with my Trefoil friends on holiday to Herefordshire, we stayed in a place called Dunfield House, which is right on the Welsh border. Dunfield House is set in beautiful countryside. It has been owned by the same family for a number of generations and is a Christian Holiday Centre offering accommodation to school groups, youth groups and faith-based groups. One of our trips out was to Hereford Cathedral, I had never been there but was very keen to look around and particularly see the Mapa Mundi and the Chained Library. A place of worship has existed on this site since the 8th century or even earlier and the present building was begun in 1079. Hereford cathedral is a beautiful building with architecture, stained glass windows and art from all periods and while we were there we were lucky enough to hear the choir practising for a performance to be held that evening.



MAPA MUNDI

This is one of the world's unique medieval treasures and measures 1.59 x 1.34 meters or to people like me (5'2" by 4'4") and is constructed on a single sheet of vellum. It is thought that it was made around 1300 and

shows the history, geography and density of humanity as it was understood in Christian Europe in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The inhabited part of the world, as it was known then was Europe, Asia and North Africa and the Mapa Mundi shows Jerusalem at the very centre of the map with the British Isles at the bottom.

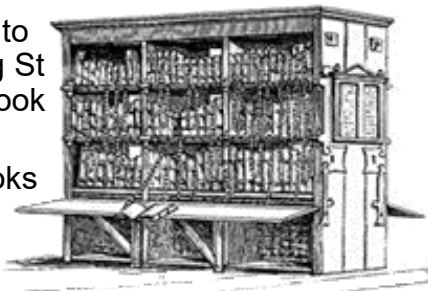


THE CHAINED LIBRARY

The Chained Library in Hereford Cathedral is the only library of its type to survive with all of the chains, rods and locks still intact. Some of the books date back to around 1100, the oldest volume being the Hereford Gospels in Anglo-



Saxon characters and which dates to the year 780 with illustrations depicting St John's Gospel and this was the only book to survive the fire in 1055.



The bulk of the collection of books contain information on theology, biblical and church studies and law but there are also musical manuscripts used in Hereford Cathedral between 17th and 19th centuries and also some on local history.

I am not a great appreciator of modern art but I found these stained glass windows really beautiful.

These windows were created by Tom Denny and dedicated in 2007 in memory of Thomas Traherne a 17th century poet and cleric.



The pictures depict 1 - The landscape seen as the body of God, 2 - The Cross is a tree set on fire with an invisible flame illuminating the world. 3 - There is a figure in this picture standing in wonder and in one-ness with creation, 4 - A gate leading to a city crowded with inhabitants, the city seemed to be standing in Eden or to be built in Heaven.

Of course, there are many more beautiful and interesting things to be seen in Hereford Cathedral including, the Shrine of St. Thomas of Hereford, The Cathedral Tower, Chapter House Garden and Cloisters and a very nice Café, but these were the things that I found most interesting.

If you are in the area, Hereford Cathedral is well worth a visit.

Hilary Whitwell



DECEMBER 2025

<p>Mon 1st 10am A time to pray 6pm Girlguiding</p>	<p>Tue 2nd 10am Make & Natter 6.30pm Scout Carol Service in church</p>	<p>Wed 3rd 10am Communion 11.15am Christmas Fair working Party 6:30pm St A Runners</p>	<p>Thu 4th 9.15am Little And's 6 - 9pm CHRISTMAS FAIR</p>
<p>Fri 5th</p>	<p>Sat 6th 10am - 1.30pm CHRISTMAS FAIR</p>	<p>Sunday 7th 2nd Sunday in Advent 10am Communion inc Sunday Club 6pm Boilerhouse!</p>	
<p>Mon 8th 10am A time to pray 6pm Girlguiding</p>	<p>Tue 9th 10am Make & Natter 5:15pm Scouting</p>	<p>Wed 10th 10am Communion Healing Service 12pm Old Boys Christmas lunch 6:30pm St A Runners 7pm Louise Wright</p>	<p>Thu 11th 9.15am Little And's 1:30pm Sewing group</p>
<p>Fri 12th 9:45am Art Group 2pm Craft Group 3.30pm Friday Fun Café</p>	<p>Sat 13th 10am - 1pm Christmas Tree Festival Launch</p>	<p>Sunday 14th 3rd Sunday in Advent 8.15am Said Communion 10am All Together 5pm Tara Horgan Christmas Concert</p>	
<p>Mon 15th 10am A time to pray 6pm Girlguiding 7.30pm PCC</p>	<p>Tue 16th 5:15pm Scouting</p>	<p>Wed 17th 10am Communion inc Mother's Union 6:30pm St A Runners 7pm Comedians & Carols</p>	<p>Thu 18th 9.15am Little And's 1pm St Andrew's School Service 1:30pm Sewing group 7pm Melody Choir Christmas Concert</p>
<p>Fri 19th 9:45am Art Group 2pm Craft Group 2pm St A's Ladies 3.30pm Friday Fun Café</p>	<p>Sat 20th 10am Café Church 10am - 1pm Xmas Tree Festival 7:30pm Bitter & Sweet Graham Kendrick</p>	<p>Sunday 21st 4th Sunday in Advent 10am Communion 10am Sunday Club Christmas Party 6pm Carol Service 8pm Barrels and Carols in Shire Horse</p>	
<p>Mon 22nd 10am A time to pray</p>	<p>Tue 23rd 7pm - 9pm Christmas Tree Festival</p>	<p>Wed 24th Christmas Eve 10am Communion 3pm Crib Service 11.30pm Midnight Mass</p>	<p>Thu 25th Christmas Day 10am Family Communion</p>
<p>Fri 26th</p>	<p>Sat 27th 10am - 1pm Christmas Tree Festival</p>	<p>Sunday 28th 1st Sunday of Christmas 8.15am Said Communion 10am Morning Praise (No Sunday Club)</p>	
<p>Mon 29th NO 'A time to pray'</p>	<p>Tue 30th</p>	<p>Wed 31st New Year's Eve 10am Communion</p>	



JANUARY 2026

<p>Thu 1st New Year's Day</p>	<p>Fri 2nd</p>	<p>Sat 3rd</p>	<p>Sunday 4th 2nd Sunday of Christmas 10am Communion 6pm Boilerhouse!</p>	
<p>Mon 5th 10am Time to pray 6pm Girlguiding</p>	<p>Tue 6th 10am Make & Natter 5:15pm Scouting</p>	<p>Wed 7th 10am Communion 6:30pm St A Runners</p>	<p>Thu 8th 9:15am Little And's 1:30pm Sewing group</p>	
<p>Fri 9th 9:45am Art Group 2pm Craft Group 3.30pm Friday Fun Café</p>	<p>Sat 10th 7:30pm Simon Evans 'Staring at the Sun'</p>	<p>Sunday 11th First Sunday of Epiphany The Baptism of Christ 8:15am Said Communion 10am All Together 12noon New Year Lunch</p>		
<p>Mon 12th 10am Time to pray 6pm Girlguiding</p>	<p>Tue 13th 10am Make & Natter 5:15pm Scouting</p>	<p>Wed 14th 10am Communion Healing Service 12 noon Wed Lunches 6:30pm St A Runners</p>	<p>Thu 15th 9:15am Little And's 1:30pm Sewing group</p>	
<p>Fri 16th 9:45am Art Group 2pm St A's Ladies 2pm Craft Group 3.30pm Friday Fun Café</p>	<p>Sat 17th 10am Café Church</p>	<p>Sunday 18th Second Sunday of Epiphany 10am Communion inc Sunday Club</p>		
<p>Mon 19th 10am Time to pray 6pm Girlguiding 7.30pm PCC</p>	<p>Tue 20th 10am Make & Natter 5:15pm Scouting</p>	<p>Wed 21st 10am Communion inc Mother's Union 6:30pm St A Runners 7:30pm Matt Rendell Tour de France</p>	<p>Thu 22nd 9:15am Little And's 1:30pm Sewing group</p>	
<p>Fri 23rd 9:45am Art Group 2pm Craft Group 3.30pm Friday Fun Café</p>	<p>Sat 24th</p>	<p>Sunday 25th Third Sunday of Epiphany 8:15am Said Communion 10am Morning Praise inc Sunday Club 5pm Evensong with bring & share</p>		
<p>Mon 26th 10am Time to pray 6pm Girlguiding</p>	<p>Tue 27th 10am Make & Natter 5:15pm Scouting</p>	<p>Wed 28th 10am Communion 6:30pm St A Runners</p>	<p>Thu 29th 9:15am Little And's 1:30pm Sewing group 6:30pm Youth Group</p>	
<p>Fri 30th 9:45am Art Group 2pm Craft Group 3.30pm Friday Fun Café</p>	<p>Sat 31st</p>	<p>For more details on Arts Centre Events see page 26 or the website ketteringartscentre.com</p>		



ST ANDREW'S MEN'S GROUP

Remember the Fallen of the Parish

On the Monday 10th Nov, the annual remembrance and naming service was held, remembering those from the Parish who fell in the Boer War plus the First and Second World Wars. This year the service was well attended with 25 people in the congregation. Traditionally the Men's group have led the service, however this year they were supported by the clergy who recommended some amendments to bring the service up to date. The Men's group organised the hymns, reflection and read the lesson and names.

With the 80th Anniversary of the Victory over Japan in the Far East falling this year, the reflection remembered three St Andrew's parishioners; Leonard Curtis (known as Dick), Douglas Watson, and Geoffry Bailey. All three were Japanese Prisoners of War. Dick and Douglas survived the war, both had careers in the shoe industry and became stalwarts of our church. Geoffry died whilst in captivity.

The service was followed by tea and coffee. Thank you to everyone who generously donated money for their tea - £81.60p was raised which will be forwarded to the Sailors, Soldiers, and Airforce's Association (SSAFA).

The St Andrew's Men's Group meet up on alternate months for lunch, we are a friendly bunch – who socialise, put the world to rights and enjoy a good meal. Our October lunch was our first at The Star in Geddington and we were very impressed with the meal. Conversation was lively and subjects varied. All church men are welcome to join us, and we do our best to share lifts. Malcolm (who kindly administers the lunches) books our meals in advance and asks for a £5-00 deposit to secure the booking. There is some aspiration to move beyond a 'lunch club' and the possibility of occasional day trips among other initiatives are being considered.

If you would like to join us, please contact Malcolm on 01536 519741 or robinson.malcolm@btinternet.com who will provide you with a copy of the menu and happily take a deposit.

Malcolm

What do donkeys send out near Christmas? Mule-tide greetings.

Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing? They drop their needles.

What is Santa's favourite kind of pizza? One that's deep-pan, crisp & even.

How do the reindeer learn to pull a sleigh? They are was elf-taught.



CHOIR NOTES

As summer turns into autumn, you may have noticed that we have an increasing number of people in the choir stalls. We have three new members of our choir - Stephanie, Sunday and Fay - all of whom bring experience of singing in other choirs before this one. It's been a pleasure to welcome new members into the choir, and we now have five people working their way towards the RSCM ribbons that you may have seen longer serving members of the choir wearing. They represent singers sharing their learning and experience, and developing new musical skills.

One of our aims for this autumn has been to learn to sing new musical styles, and we had a great opportunity to do so towards the end of September in a Communion service led by the Resonance Band. The choir had rehearsed parts of the liturgy in advance of the service to be able to join in with the Band, but the first chance we had to rehearse together was about 30 minutes before the service. It was an enjoyable occasion and a chance to sing new music with less familiar rhythmical styles.

We are also already beginning the rehearsals for Christmas, and our Carol Service in particular. With more choir members, and some additional "Christmas choristers" from within the church who will be joining us for the Carol Service, we are able to try some different carols - some new, some old, some with different arrangements, some with very familiar ones. We're fortunate also that our curate, George, is an excellent musician, and so he may be joining us musically as well as liturgically during the Carol Service - although I haven't asked him at the time of writing, so the first time he becomes aware of this might be when he reads this magazine!

Andrew

ROYAL SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC

For those of you who have expressed an interest to me in attending one (or more) of the Choral Evensongs being sung by the RSCM Voices (South) Choir in the first half of 2026, I can now confirm the timings of the services as follow :-

17th January - Chelmsford Cathedral @ 5.15pm

21st March - St. Edmundsbury Cathedral @ 3.30pm

2nd May - Peterborough Cathedral @ 5.30pm

13th June - Southwark Cathedral @ 4.00pm

Your support in the congregation at these services is much appreciated by the members of the choir, who will have been working hard at rehearsing the music since 11.00am on the day!

Brian Reid



THE NEW YEAR

History and development

The earliest known record of a New Year festival dates from about 2000 bce in Mesopotamia, where in Babylonia the new year (Akitu) began with the new moon after the vernal equinox and in Assyria with the new moon nearest the autumn equinox (mid-September). For the Egyptians and Phoenicians, the year began with the autumn equinox (September 21), for ancient Persians it began on the vernal equinox (March 21), and for the early Greeks it began with the winter solstice (December 21). On the Roman republican calendar the year began on March 1, but after 153 BCE the official date was January 1, which continued in the Julian calendar of 46 BCE.

In early medieval times most of Christian Europe regarded March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, as the beginning of the new year, although New Year's Day was observed on December 25 in Anglo-Saxon England. William the Conqueror decreed that the year begin on January 1, but England later joined the rest of Christendom and adopted March 25. The Gregorian calendar, adopted in 1582 by the Roman Catholic Church, restored January 1 as New Year's Day, and most European countries gradually followed suit: Scotland, in 1660; Germany and Denmark, about 1700; England, in 1752; and Russia, in 1918.

Global variations

Those religions and cultures using a lunar calendar have continued to observe the beginning of the year on days other than January 1. In the Jewish religious calendar, for example, the year begins on Rosh Hashana, the first day of the month of Tishri, which falls between September 6 and October 5. The Muslim calendar normally has 354 days in each year, with the new year beginning with the month of Muharram. Nowruz, an ancient Zoroastrian festival, is celebrated as a cultural new year in Iran and other parts of the Middle East and Central Asia with Persian influences. The Chinese New Year is celebrated officially for a month beginning in late January or early February. Other Asian cultures celebrate the day at various times of the year. In southern India the people of Kerala celebrate the new year as Vishu and the people in neighbouring Tamil Nadu as Puthandu on April 14. Tibetans observe the day as Losar in February; and in Thailand the holiday, called Songkran, is celebrated in mid-April. In Japan the new year holiday Shōgatsu is a three-day celebration from January 1 to 3.



Customs and traditions

Many of the customs of New Year festivals note the passing of time with both regret and anticipation. The baby as a symbol of the new year dates to the ancient Greeks, with an old man representing the year that has passed. The Romans derived the name for the month of January from their god Janus, who had two faces, one looking backward and the other forward. The practice of making resolutions to rid oneself of bad habits and to adopt better ones also dates to ancient times. Some believe the Babylonians began the custom more than 4,000 years ago. These early resolutions were likely made in an attempt to curry favour with the gods. In the English-speaking countries, the nostalgic Scottish ballad "Auld Lang Syne," revised by the poet Robert Burns, is often sung on New Year's Eve.

Symbolic foods are often part of the festivities. Many Europeans, for example, eat cabbage or other greens to ensure prosperity in the coming year, while people in the American South favour black-eyed peas for good luck. For Ugadi in southern India, a special culinary preparation called ugadi pachadi combines multiple flavours and whether a person eating it tastes more sweet or bitter flavour is considered indicative of their year to come. Throughout Asia special foods such as dumplings, noodles, and rice cakes are eaten, and elaborate dishes feature ingredients whose names or appearance symbolize long life, happiness, wealth, and good fortune.

Because of the belief that what a person does on the first day of the year foretells what that person will do for the remainder of the year, gatherings of friends and relatives have long been significant. The first guest to cross the threshold, or "first foot," is significant and may bring good luck if the person is of the right physical type, which varies with location. First foot traditions are observed, for example, in Scotland, Isle of Man, and parts of northern England.

Public gatherings, as in Times Square in New York City or in Trafalgar Square in London, draw large crowds. The first Rose Bowl Game was played in Pasadena, California, on January 1, 1902. The Tournament of Roses parade, featuring floats constructed of live flowers, and the Mummers' Parade in Philadelphia are popular New Year's Day events.

Many people mark the new year with religious observances, as, for example, on Rosh Hashana. Buddhist monks are presented with gifts on the day, and Hindus make oblations to the gods. In Japan visits are sometimes made to Shintō shrines of tutelary deities or to Buddhist temples. Chinese make offerings to gods of the hearth and wealth and to ancestors.



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Would like to receive the Magazine by email?

To find out more please contact Roger or Debbie in church or email ad.standrewskettering@gmail.com

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh? Nothing, it was on the house.





Since returning in September all sections have been busy with badge work and activities. We have had to increase our numbers in Beavers to take account of the Squirrels moving up.

Squirrels have been busy crafting, building dens and learning about our local Superheros, including a visit from a local vets. All the Squirrels really enjoyed this session as they got to examine a dog (cuddly) and do surgery on it to remove a rubber duck!

Beavers have earnt their Air Activities Badge. Their International badge where they learnt about Beavers in other countries, learnt to say hello and goodbye and tried different foods. They also had an evening in church with Tom and George to learn about Remembrance.

Cubs have also been working on their Air Activities badge and had visits from some pilots! They had a night at JLC with the Scouts on the Air Rifles and have had an evening on First Aid.

Scouts also enjoyed the evening at JLC on the Air Rifles and have had an evening hike.

All sections have been working on their decorations for our Tree at the Christmas Tree Festival which Doug is organising for us.

All sections also enjoyed an evening at JLC with wide games and campfire. The Scouts also got to toast marshmallows.

We had a good attendance for the Remembrance Parade Service.

We are now looking forward to our Carol Concert and end of Term group night at Tigers Soft Play

Karen Group Lead Volunteer

The parents began to assemble the special Christmas gift they had for their children. They had ordered a kit for a tree house and received the plans for it. However, the materials they received were for a sailboat. They wrote the company to complain.

The company's reply: "While we regret the inconvenience this mistake must have cause you, it is nothing compared to that of the man who is out on a lake somewhere trying to sail your tree house."

Santa's wife told him to take an umbrella. "Because of the rain, dear."



ROTAS

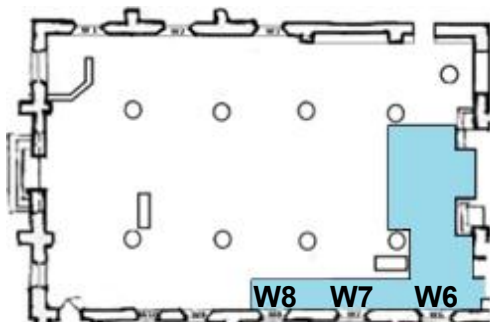
If you are unable to fulfil any of your rota slots please try and arrange a swap or if you cannot arrange a swap please advise Debbie or Tom

Date	Service	Intercessor	Reader	Welcomers
07/12/25	Communion Choir	Bethany Roberts	Fay Rowland	Malcolm & Heather Abrams
14/12/25	All together Band	Brenda Weaver	Jaden Janus	Youth Group & Terry Smith
21/12/25	Communion Choir	Gareth Ogden	Barbara Cross	Ann Stockham & Penny Payne
6pm 21/12/25	Carol Service Choir		Various	Debbie & David Cox
3pm 24/12/25	Crib Service Band			
11.30pm 24/12/25	Communion Choir			Debbie & David Cox
25/12/25	Communion Choir			
28/12/25	Morning Praise Band	Didi Burrows	Rosalind Robinson	Christine Smith & Jenny Coombs
04/01/26	Communion Choir	Rosemary Harradine	Gareth Ogden	Hilary Whitwell & Christine Dornan
11/01/26	All together Band	Sue Merrifield	Brenda Weaver	Karen Osborne & John Mark Edmundson
18/01/26	Communion Choir	Peter Bell	Brian Reid	Malcolm & Heather Abrams
25/01/26	Morning Praise Band	Louise Wilson	Christine Smith	Ann Stockham & Penny Payne
01/02/26	Communion Choir	Roger & Penny Payne	Ivor Jones	Brenda Weaver & Doreen Hancock

Christmas Flowers

As there is a Christmas Tree Festival again this year in Church we do not need to decorate quite so many windows. Please look at the plan to see where flowers are needed.

I will be in Church on Christmas Eve between 9:00 and 10:30am and the



- W6 Hilary Whitwell
- W7 Debbie Cox
- W8 Doreen Hancock
- Ped Penny Payne

Many thanks *Penny P*





Date	Service	Coffee	Cleaning	Silver	Linen
07/12/25	Communion Choir	St Andrews Ladies	Malcolm & Rosalind Robinson	Hilary Whitwell	Christine Smith
14/12/25	All together Band	Christine Smith, Sue Thurston	Emma, Bridget & Sue Merrifield		
21/12/25	Communion Choir	Catherine Dunn, Faye Rowland	Ailish Avery & Corinne Avery		
6pm 21/12/25	Carol Service Choir				
3pm 24/12/25	Crib Service Band				
11.30pm 24/12/25	Communion Choir				
25/12/25	Communion Choir				
28/12/25	Morning Praise Band	Irene Clifford, Kirsty Bathe	Christine Smith & Nick Maple	Doreen Hancock	Jenny Coombes
04/01/26	Communion Choir	Janice Lynch, Angie Barker	Heather & Malcolm Abrams		
11/01/26	All together Band	The Roberts family, Tania Watts	Malcolm & Rosalind Robinson		
18/01/26	Communion Choir	St Andrews Ladies	Emma, Bridget & Sue Merrifield		
25/01/26	Morning Praise Band	Christine Smith, Sue Thurston	Ailish Avery & Corinne Avery		
01/02/26	Communion Choir	Ann Stockham, Penny Payne, Angela Curchin	Christine Smith & Nick Maple	Hilary Whitwell	Sue Merrifield

ST ANDREW'S CAROL SERVICE **Sunday 21st December @ 6pm**

**Come and join us for our annual
celebration of the Christmas Message**

*What do monkeys sing at Christmas? Jungle bells!
What did Frosty's girlfriend do when she was mad at him?
Gave him the cold shoulder.*

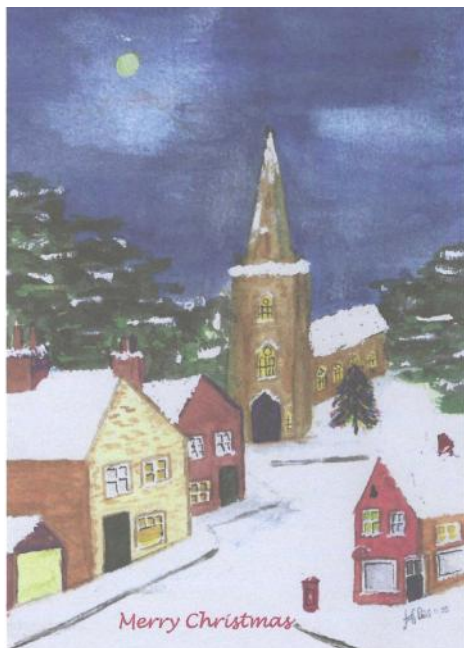
ST ANDREW'S ART GROUP

We have enjoyed another year of painting work with an enjoyable day outdoors at Cranford. We started with coffee at the Old Forge and then split up to paint places from various angles. Unfortunately it was the only day we had out this summer as it was too hot to be in the sun for very long; we were happier indoors!

We had a lady speaker Melanie Hanson, to give us a demonstration called 'Subtraction' Basically the page is covered with fine graphite 'dust' and then using a putty rubber you rub away (subtract) the graphite in varying depths to produce your final design, we then tried this the next week with varying results! - particularly on my part!

Each month we try to have a different theme and this year we have worked on snow scenes, landscapes, buildings, animals, the sea, water and boats, flowers, trees, still life, autumn and Christmas

Below is an example of one of the Christmas cards designed and painted this year.



Sadly one of our members has had to stop coming due to prolonged illness so we now have a vacancy - If anyone out there fancies having a go at painting, mainly water colour but also other media, then get in touch with me on 481559 or Steve on 524306

We are in a good financial position and will be able to subsidise our Christmas Lunch and still be able to donate £150 to the Rooms Trustees as a thank you for the use of the room.

We look forward to another varied programme for 2026

Jeff Pell

Why did the red-nosed reindeer help the old lady cross the road?

It would have been Rudolph him not to.

What could you use to lift a frozen car? Jack Frost!

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas? Mince spies!



None of Them Are Toys!

When my daughters were little I would always tell them around Christmas that this is Jesus' birthday and he only received 3 things so do not be disappointed in what lies under the tree. When it came time for worship on Christmas morning, I asked the children what they thought Jesus would think of Santa and all the hype. Would he ask Santa a question? My youngest daughter replied, "I think Jesus would ask how come I only got 3 things and none of them were toys?"

Answers to the Christmas Quizzes (pages 7 & 8)

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---------------------------------|
| 10. | The First Noel | 1. | Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer |
| 9. | The Holly And The Ivy | 2. | The Twelve Days of Christmas |
| 8. | Santa Claus | 3. | Away In A manger |
| 7. | I Saw Mummy Kissing Frosty The Snowman | 4. | Jingle Bells |
| 6. | Winter Wonderland | 5. | Mary Had A Baby |
| 5. | Like Christmas | 6. | Winter Wonderland |
| 4. | It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas | 7. | Frosty The Snowman |
| 3. | Mary's Boy Child | 8. | I Saw Mummy Kissing Santa Claus |
| 2. | Hark The Herald Angels Sing | 9. | The Holly And The Ivy |
| 1. | Good King Wenceslas | 10. | The First Noel |
- Quiz 2 - Fill in the blanks**
- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---------------------------------|
| 11. | Walking In The Air | 1. | Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer |
| 12. | Do They Know it's Christmas | 2. | The Twelve Days of Christmas |
| 13. | Mistletoe And Wine | 3. | Away In A manger |
| 14. | Good King Wenceslas | 4. | Jingle Bells |
| 15. | Hark The Herald Angels Sing | 5. | Mary Had A Baby |
| 16. | Mary's Boy Child | 6. | Winter Wonderland |
| 17. | It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas | 7. | Frosty The Snowman |
| 18. | Santa Claus Is Coming To Town | 8. | I Saw Mummy Kissing Santa Claus |
| 19. | Joy to the World | 9. | The Holly And The Ivy |
| 20. | Do You Hear What I Hear? | 10. | The First Noel |

- Quiz 1 - Lines from carols**
- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|
| 12. | It came upon a midnight clear | 1. | Silent night |
| 13. | Unto us a child is born | 2. | Away in a manger |
| 14. | Once in royal David's city | 3. | While shepherds watch their flocks |
| 15. | God rest ye merry gentlemen | 4. | Mary's boy child |
| 16. | The holly and the ivy | 5. | Hark the herald angels sing |
| 17. | See amid the winter snow | 6. | As with gladness men of old |
| 18. | Good king Wenceslas | 7. | Joy to the World |
| 19. | I saw three ships | 8. | Good Christian men rejoice |
| 20. | Rocking carol | 9. | We three kings |
| | (Little Jesus, sweetly sleep) | 10. | The first Noel |
| | | 11. | O little town of Bethlehem |

The Christmas jumper my kids gave me kept picking up a lot static electricity, so I exchanged it for another one – free of charge.



FROM THE DIOCESE

Remember, Remember...

Remember, Remember... That is, of course, the beginning of the children's rhyme about the gunpowder plot of 1605.

But Remember is a very good summing up word for the month itself.

November brings us a season of remembering. All Saints followed by All Souls as we remember those who have gone before us. The Saints of old whose lives inspire us in our Christian journey and the local, maybe only known to us, souls who have walked with us in faith.



Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day call us to remember the horrors of war so that in remembering we might avoid such actions as lead to these tragedies.

November also marks the end of the Church year and as with every time of ending and beginning we remember what has been and we look to what will be. The church year ends with the Sunday before Advent when we remember what is important to us. We keep it as the feast of Christ the King remembering that it is in Jesus Christ that all things are held together, that it is Jesus who the saints follow and it is the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, laying down his life for us, that inspired those who lay down their life for peace.

That Sunday is also often known as 'Stir up Sunday' from the collect rather than from the Christmas pudding and cake stirring in the kitchen! The Book of Common prayer Collect leads us to pray "Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

So in this month of November I pray that we will remember...

Those who lived faithful Christian lives (and do so too), those who we love as see no longer (cherishing our loved ones now), those who sacrifice for peace (and commit ourselves to work for peace) and finally Jesus Christ, God who left the glory of heaven to be one of us.

In our remembering may we be inspired to action, to be stirred up, faithful Christian people known for the fruit of Good Works. Amen.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Booker'.

The Venerable Alison Booker
Archdeacon of Oakham



The Christingle Service

I wonder how many oranges will be used in our churches and schools this year as we celebrate a Christingle Service. For me, the lighting of the candle and the singing of 'Away in a Manger' has always been one of the most profound moments of the Christmas season. To watch young children (and adults, too!), be stilled in the gentle candlelight and to sing gently of the birth of Jesus, is a powerful way to recapture the joy and wonder of Christmas.



The Christingle itself is a sign of God's love for the world, it is a promise of hope at times of darkness, it is a message that Jesus is indeed the light of the world. As each candle is lit, we can see how each one joins together to banish the darkness. This is our calling – to live lives that burn brightly with the love of Jesus and to work together to bring hope.

My prayer for you, is that you will know the light of Jesus in your own lives this Christmas and that you will experience that joy that comes from welcoming the Son of God into our lives.

+ Debbie

The Rt Revd Debbie Sellin
Bishop of Peterborough



The Wonder of Christmas: Immersive Light and Sound Display

Combining breathtaking light installations, snowfall, music, and community creativity The Wonder of Christmas takes place at Peterborough Cathedral from 19 November to 4 December.

Ever wondered how does the guy who drives the snowplough get to work!





For a full programme check out the website: ketteringartscentre.com

For tickets see Debbie Cox in church or visit the website

Wed 10th December 7pm

LOUISE WRIGHT THEATRE SCHOOL

Ticket £16 Children £14

Sun 14th December 5pm

TARA HORGAN CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Private event

Wed 17th December doors 7pm

COMEDIANS & CAROLS: PAUL KERENSA

Ticket £14

Thu 18th December 7pm

MELODY CHOIR: CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Ticket £10 over 65 £5 under 16 free

Sat 20th December 7:30pm

BITTER & SWEET: GRAHAM KENDRICK

Sat 10th January 7:30pm

SIMON EVANS: STARING AT THE SUN

14+ guidance Ticket £18

Wed 21st January 7:30pm

MATT RENDELL

Stories of the Tour de France

Ticket £18 Concessions £12

God's Not Deaf

Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents' house the week before Christmas. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers. The younger one began praying at the top of his lungs: "I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE AND A NEW NINTENDO..."

His older brother leaned over and said, "Why are you shouting? God isn't deaf." The little brother replied, "No, but Grandma is!"



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Email: ad.standrewskettering@gmail.com



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revtomhouston@gmail.com - ☎07757 239182 (day off is Friday)

Curate - George Brett

curate.standrewskettering@gmail.com ☎07442 775716 (day off is Friday)

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Bethany Roberts

Lay Ministers in Training

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Derek Price

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