

Welcome! to St Mary's

Services at St Mary's

Holy Communion

9.15am on 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays

10.00am Altogether Communion Service 2nd and 5th
Sundays

9.30am Thursdays followed by Coffee Morning

Open Door, an informal service for all ages

10.45am on 1st and 3rd Sundays, with Children's Church

10.45am on 4th Sundays – All age worship

*Refreshments are served after all regular services.
Please do stay and have a chat.*

Morning Prayer

8am on Mondays and Tuesdays

Night Prayer

8–9pm Wednesdays on Zoom

Please contact the Church Office for link

Youth Groups

2nd and 4th Sundays – please contact Kathryn for details

*The church is open for private prayer during daylight hours
Winter 9am–3pm and Summer 9am–4pm (approx.)*



Email: office@stmaryssawston



St Mary's Church, Sawston



www.stmaryssawston.org.net

Welcome! to St Peter's

Services at St Peter's

Morning Worship

11am on 1st Sunday

Holy Communion

11am on 3rd Sunday

Morning Prayer

8.15am on Wednesdays

Wednesday

12–2pm Time for a coffee and chat
(Full details on page 6)

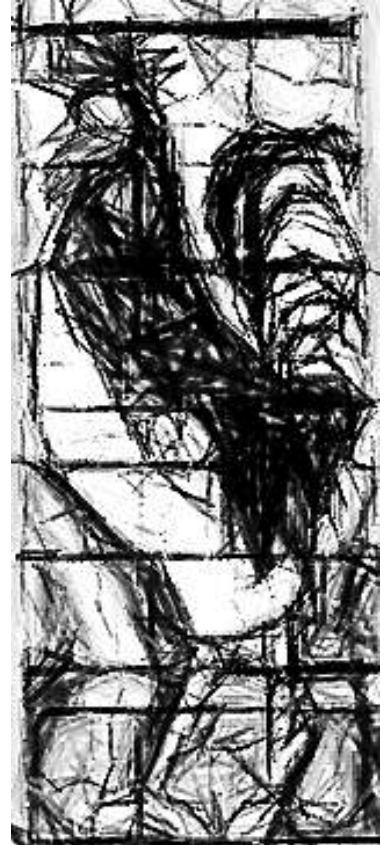
The church is open
from 9am–4.30pm daily



St Peter's Church, Babraham



www.stpetersbabraham.org.uk



What if ... The wise men had been women?

- They would have asked for directions instead of just following a star.
- They would have arrived on time to help deliver the baby and prepare the stable.
- Instead of the traditional gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, they'd have brought a casserole, spare nappies and chocolate for Mary.
- We'd probably never have heard of them!

WHAT'S ON IN SAWSTON AND BABRAHAM

REGULAR ACTIVITIES



Baby and Toddler Group

Mondays 9.30 –11.30am

Chat – toys – rhymes – story – craft

Sawston House Groups

- Mondays 8pm on Zoom
Contact: Rosie Whitmell: rosie.whitmell@gmail.com
- Mondays 8pm at Andrew & Joanne Beale's
Contact: thebeales44@gmail.com.
- Fridays 10am at Petra Shakeshaft's
Contact: petra.shakeshaft1@outlook.com for dates



First Tuesday of each month
2pm or 7.30pm in St Mary's Church

Contact: Janet Martin, tel: 835028, email: janetm.martin@ntlworld.com

TEA AND FRIENDSHIP

warm drinks, warm friendship

First Thursday of each month
2pm–3.30pm in St Mary's Community Hall



SOUP AND SANDWICHES

Second Thursday of each month 12.30–2pm
In St Mary's Community Hall, Church Lane
Supported by Central Cooperative



CRAFT GROUP

Last Thursday of each month 2pm–4pm
In St Mary's Community Hall

Contact: Tina Casey
tina.e.casey@gmail.com



Bring your own craft

From the Vicarage

Dear Friends

Joy to the World



‘Joy to the world’ are the words of a famous Christmas carol by Isaac Watts that we will be hearing in a few weeks’ time. However, many of us are probably not feeling terribly joyful at the moment. The war in Ukraine continues, the ceasefire in Gaza is fragile, to say the least, and as I write this, there have been in the last two weeks a plane crash in Kentucky, a hurricane across the Caribbean and a landslide in Kenya that barely hit the headlines. Added to that are the struggles that many have with illness and simply trying to cope with all that life throws our way – not much joy at all.

Traditionally, the third of the four Advent candles in our Advent crown in church is associated with the theme of joy, very appropriate as we prepare and look forward to celebrating Christmas. The theme of the Church of England’s Christmas campaign this year is also joy. In the *Twelve Joys of Christmas* booklet that has been produced* we will be challenged to examine the ‘stuff’ of Christmas: the food, the Christmas tree, the pantomime, among others, to help us ponder anew the Christmas season and to give us new insights into the feast of Christmas and how it brings us joy.

Joy, of course, is not about being deliriously happy all the time. Joy is about being contented with what we have. We can be joyful even when the world around us is dark and difficult. Joy is about putting our trust in Jesus Christ and not about us or any of our achievements. Joy is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we have been exploring in our Open Door services this term; joy comes from spending time with God and the hope that we can find in God’s word.

It is God’s word made flesh, the child born in a manger, that brings us new hope and joy. The birth of Jesus, in the most lowly of circumstances, in a backwater of the Roman Empire just a little off 2000 years ago, changed the world forever. In Jesus we can find forgiveness, new life and come to know God’s love in a new way. And in doing so, we can discover a joy within us, whatever the season of life we are going through.

May you, and all those you love, know God's love and joy this Christmas.

**Booklets will be available at our Christmas services, and you can also go to the Everyday Faith app.*

News from St Peter's

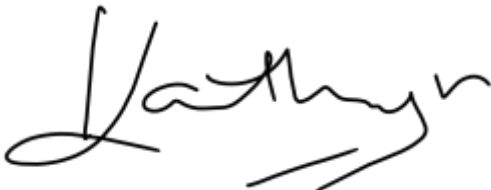
It has been a busy few months at St Peter's. The annual Art Exhibition in September proved hugely popular once again, this time raising over £550 for the church. It was especially lovely to see the beautiful artwork produced by the children of Owls and Magpie classes at Babraham Primary School. Many thanks to all those who exhibited, helped on the day and attended the exhibition. The Harvest treasure hunt and harvest lunch were also successful.


We continue to be extremely grateful to the members of the management team for their help with the upkeep of the church building and the churchyard. As you might have heard in the news, many churches have bats and St Peter's is no different. We will be getting a bat survey done as part of the application process to undertake extensive repair work to the south aisle roof. We will be applying for National Lottery grant funding, but if you are able to support this important and much needed work financially, please do get in touch with me.

The church continues to be open every day for visiting. We are still running Wed@, a 'quiet space' in the church on a Wednesday lunchtime. Hot drinks are available, and a member of the ministry team is on hand to speak to. This is particularly aimed at those who work on the Babraham Research Campus, but everyone is always very welcome to take some time out with God in the middle of our busy lives – just drop in!

We are looking forward to all the Christmas services, including the Christingle, carol service and Christmas Day services (details elsewhere in the magazine) and hope that you might be able to join us at one of them. We look forward to seeing you!

With every blessing,






The kettle's on
You're welcome here

St Peter's Babraham is open for you – whether you're seeking a moment of quiet, a conversation over tea, or a place to think about life's big questions

We're here for everyone – including the scientific community

Every Wednesday 12–2pm



Come and visit us – our quiet location makes it an ideal stop

GRANTA DEANERY



According to Luke, what specific sign were the shepherds told would help them identify the newborn Messiah?

They would find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.



Carols at St. Peter's

Sunday 21 December

3pm



Advent, Christmas and New Year

It's usually a struggle to get articles for the magazine, so it's thrilling to be able to print an absolute feast of reading to get you through these dark winter nights, when there's nothing better to do than settle down by the fire with a hot chocolate/glass of wine/tot of whisky (delete as appropriate) ~~Hot chocolate/tot of whisky~~, and have a good read. Enjoy. Petra

The Gift of Being Here, Together

There is something tender and truthful about this stretch of the year in parish life. Advent to Lent carries a tapestry of moments, doesn't it? School plays and quiet candles, carols and darker nights, laughter shared over mince pies, and the gentle pastoral conversations that happen at a bedside, in a church porch, at the school gate or on a muddy football touchline.

In this season, the Church speaks of Advent watchfulness, Christmas joy and the first whispers of Lent's honesty. But here, in Sawston, Babraham and our wider Deanery villages, these aren't just words in a calendar, they are lived realities. We wait together; we celebrate together; we face hard days together; and, quietly and persistently, we are being shaped.

Over the past year, as I've continued learning what it means to be a priest among you, I've been struck by how faith grows not only in our services and conversations, but in the *ordinary holiness* of community:

- in the person who lights a candle for someone they miss
- in the mum who finds the courage to come through the church door for the first time
- in those who carry grief with dignity and love
- in neighbours checking in, volunteering, offering lifts, showing up.

God is not waiting for us to be polished. God meets us in our routines, our tiredness and hopes, our belonging and our not-yet-belonging, and it is here, together, that Christ's presence quietly takes root.

This past year, I've had the privilege of helping publish a book shaped by stories of fragility, stillness and faith. But in truth, the pages that are shaping me most are written here – in our church, parish hall, homes, churchyards, care homes, schools, crematoria and pavements. You are teaching me what ministry looks like in lived practice – patient, imperfect, hopeful, shared.

As we move through festive warmth into winter stillness and the first steps towards Lent, pray that we continue to be a parish where people feel seen, held and welcomed without needing to pretend. A place where we don't rush the fragile parts of life, where joy and sorrow sit side by side, and where we grow simply by being here, together. Thank you for the privilege of sharing this journey with you.

With love and prayers,
Revd Ian Henderson

ADVENT CANDLES

I confess to a sinking heart when, by the end of September, Christmas appears in the shops. And in mid-November, as I write, several houses have already got Christmas lights up. The fashion seems to be to begin Christmas earlier each year and then to clear everything away on Boxing Day. The period of Advent is consumed in a frenzy of panic about 'being ready for Christmas'. But, when the last present is wrapped, the turkey stuffed, the stockings filled, the table laid (and if you've got all that done by Christmas Eve, you can congratulate yourself!) *are* you really ready for Christmas? Or, are *you* really ready for Christmas?

As the winter wraps around us and we hunker down on dark evenings, Advent approaches and we're not always sure what to do with it. The consumerist Christmas has sucked us all in to a degree, and we want to be ready for that. But how can we make *ourselves* ready to receive the real gift that comes, the gift that *is* Christmas?

Advent begins in the dark. Not just the soft darkness of winter evenings, but the deeper shadow of a world aching for healing: wars that wound the innocent, systems that oppress, hearts that grow numb to pain. We see images and hear the cries of children caught

up in war in other parts of the world, and the pleas for safety, for food and shelter, even in our own towns and cities. Advent holds us in the tension that exists between suffering and hope, darkness and light. We enter Advent because, as people of faith, we trust that even here in the darkness, something sacred is stirring.

Advent is a time when we can embrace the darkness *because* of the light that is to come, the light that no darkness can extinguish. The scripture, poetry, art and song of Advent reflect on our human frailty and hope of redemption. From the temptation of Adam and Eve in the garden and through the prophetic writings of Isaiah, we recall the hopeful waiting of God's people throughout history. On the one hand, in real time, we are on the 'other side' knowing the Light has already come, and yet, we are still waiting. We watch and wait because the world is still broken and we are still fallen creatures looking for healing and hope.

Waiting needs our attention. Waiting slows us down, helps us to acknowledge the darkness that exists in the world and in our own lives, and is the birthplace of hope – *because* of the light. And hope is not simply naïve optimism. It is the courage to believe that love has not abandoned us, that God's presence still breathes beneath the rubble of what is broken. The child we await does not come to *escape* the world's suffering or the messiness of human lives, but to dwell with us, to show that the divine is found *among* the poor, the weary and the searching.

So whether at home or in church, we light candles in Advent not because it is night. We light them because each flame is a small defiance, a whisper that says, 'The light is coming and has come'. Advent calls us to nurture that light: in acts of justice, in compassionate listening, in communities that choose hope when despair seems easier.

Yes, in many ways the world is still dark. But the light is on its way, and it is asking, longing, to be kindled in us.

With love and prayers for a blessed Advent.

Petra

Faith in the Waiting

What do you do when you are waiting for an event you've been anticipating? Perhaps you are filled with excitement – imagine a child on the night before their birthday. Perhaps sometimes the thing you are hoping for is taking a long time and you are feeling slightly worn down. The Jews had been waiting for their Messiah for a very long time by the time Jesus appeared on the scene.

In both Advent and Lent, we find periods of waiting in the Christian calendar: periods of hope, anticipation and spiritual preparation as we revisit the story of Jesus' life and ministry. Life also brings its fair share of periods of waiting in faith: we hope for breakthroughs, for a change in the seasons, for God's work in our lives and the wider world. Sometimes the importance of ritual is to strengthen our faith and resilience by reminding us of God's faithfulness in these key moments.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

For me, these descriptions of God are a part of the Advent season. Every year, as we attend carol services, this is one of my favourite readings. It is layered with the memories of years past, but it has the effect of being fresh every year – making me think on these words and what they mean here and now.

Lent, too, is marked by its own rituals. While I always love making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, it is on Ash Wednesday, as we start the Lenten season, that we are reminded to take a moment of quiet to contemplate the fleetingness of life:

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. For we were made from dust, and to dust we shall return.

The end of Lent is packed with narrative as we follow Jesus' triumphant entry on Palm Sunday through to his crucifixion on Good

Friday, the despair of Holy Saturday, and finally the quiet discovery at dawn on Easter Sunday that is so key to our faith.

There is something in the ritual of these services, reading the same words every year, singing the same songs at Christmas and Easter time every year, that helps to mark these special seasons. In retelling the stories of these seasons, we relive something of the wonder and hope that surrounds Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

May the retelling of the stories of Christmas and Easter strengthen your faith, your resilience and your hope in this season.

Clare Hulme

A Christmas Story

The nativity play rehearsals were going well, mostly. The teacher was optimistic, mostly, that the performance would be a triumph. There was just one problem. Joseph, played by the class wag, Oliver, was a bit cocky. He kept ad-libbing, making funny remarks and showing off. Finally the teacher could take it no more. 'Right, Oliver. I have warned you. You are no longer playing Joseph. You can swap with James and you can be the innkeeper.'

This seemed to do the trick. Oliver was suitably chastened and behaved perfectly for the rest of the rehearsals.

On the big night of the performance, the parents and teachers, school governors and the local dignitaries assembled excitedly in the school hall and the play began. All went well and Joseph and Mary finally arrived at the inn. Joseph knocked on the door and the innkeeper appeared. 'Please' said Joseph, 'We're so tired and my wife is about to have our baby. Do you have any rooms?' 'Yes,' said the innkeeper. 'Plenty.'

Revd Petra Shakeshaft

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER

3PM CHRISTINGLE AT ST PETER'S



SUNDAY 14 DECEMBER

3PM CHRISTINGLE AT ST MARY'S



SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER

10.30AM FAMILY CAROL SERVICE AT ST MARY'S

3PM CAROLS AT ST PETER'S



WEDNESDAY 24 DECEMBER

2.30PM CRIB SERVICE AT ST MARY'S

WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN IN MIND

5PM CRIB SERVICE AT ST MARY'S

11.30PM MIDNIGHT COMMUNION AT ST MARY'S



THURSDAY 25 DECEMBER

9AM CHRISTMAS DAY HOLY COMMUNION AT ST PETER'S

10.30AM CHRISTMAS DAY HOLY COMMUNION AT ST MARY'S



SUNDAY 4 JANUARY

10AM ALL-AGE EPIPHANY HOLY COMMUNION AT ST MARY'S



Sawston Village Carols

A short service of readings and carols for all the family during which mulled wine and mince pies will be served.

Friday, 19th December,

6pm

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Nature Notes: Hark! The Herald

Stephen Roughley

After the morning services on Sunday 1 September 2024, I was told that there was ‘something strange on the ceiling in the accessible toilet’ in St Mary’s. What I found was far more exciting than I initially feared, for there, resting on the ceiling, was an adult Herald moth (*Scoliopteryx libatrix*; see www.ukmoths.org.uk/species/scoliopteryx-libatrix/). The Herald moth looks like a small, ornately decorated orange and brown ‘shield’ – an attempt to camouflage itself as an autumnal leaf. The Scottish ecologist Katty Baird describes it far more poetically in her popular book *Meetings with Moths* (2023, p87):

‘The Herald is a striking moth. It is about two centimetres long with deep russet-brown wings adorned with a generous smudge of fiery orange on each shoulder. Delicate lighter lines cross the wings towards their apex and the wing edges themselves are gently scalloped. The furry thorax is styled into a diminutive Mohican-like crest over the head, and to top it all their dandy legs are striped black and white.’

Unlike many moths, the Herald has a relatively long lifespan as it overwinters by hibernating as an adult, which is almost certainly what it was trying to do inside our church toilet as it prefers cool, dark (well, it is dark in there most of the time) damp places such as an outbuilding or cave. The popular travel and natural history author James Lowen (2021, p44) writes that he received invitations to see ‘Britain’s most famous hibernating moth’, with its ‘tabard-shaped wings emblazoned with fiery colours’ in ‘a cave, a Second World War bunker, a bat hibernaculum, an eighteenth-century ice house and a tramway tunnel’ – no mention of churches. There is even a Facebook group called Hibernating Heralds (www.facebook.com/groups/622450629663062) which encourages people to search for and report their sightings of them in caves, mines, drainage culverts, outbuildings, under bridges and so on.

‘Damp’ was very much a feature of our church building back in the autumn of 2024. A few weeks after this moth was found, we closed and emptied our church building for several weeks to start the process of drying out the walls and floors by removing the cementitious plaster from the interior surfaces of the walls and

installing new drainage and soakaways in the churchyard on the south side of the building. By the time the church had re-opened, there was no sign of the moth unfortunately. It may have decided that it hadn't found such a good place to be after all and left our building altogether, or it may have simply moved somewhere else inside where it was not as visible.

Moths in general do not get a good press in the Bible: there are ten references to them and it is fair to say none of them are exactly complimentary. Matthew 6:19 is typical, where Jesus himself says, 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on Earth, where moths and vermin destroy' (NIV), so what of the Herald? Well, the caterpillars live on the leaves of willow, poplar and aspen trees, and the adults sustain themselves on the juice of ripe or fermenting autumn fruits. Indeed, they are also partial to sugared water and to some of the 'sugaring' mixtures (concoctions of various combinations of ale, red wine, treacle, molasses, brown sugar and rum cooked up to a heady brew) used by lepidopterists to attract moths. Of the almost 2600 species of moths (including butterflies, which account for around 85 species) recorded in the UK and Ireland (Agassiz et al., 2024), the larvae (caterpillars) of only two species will commonly eat clothes and carpets made of natural fibres, and it is almost certainly these species, and their close relatives, that the biblical mentions are referring to. Many adult moths live for only a few days and have no means of eating or drinking at all! Moths are part of nature's clean-up mechanism, chomping their way through leaves, dead plants and wood, bee, wasp and ant larvae, and dead animal fur (yes, those clothes-eating moths have adapted to the nice warm, sheltered environment that most of our modern homes provide, along with a ready food source), feathers and other detritus. Many, particularly those adults which feed on nectar, are excellent pollinators (a recent study by Butterfly Conservation showed that more pollination happened overnight by moths than by bees during the day). They are also a good 'indicator species': monitoring them shows us how good (or bad) the local environment is. And, as I hope you agree from the picture, some of them are very beautiful.

Finally, if anyone is looking for a Christmas present for the nature lovers in their families, then Katty Baird and James Lowen's books are both excellent reads. James' book takes the reader along on an

intensive year-long quest to see a list of around 120 species, each special in their own way. It's interspersed with anecdotes about his family and the moths they find in their own Norfolk garden. Katty's book takes a more relaxed approach as she talks about her work and travels looking for moths around Scotland, and how even without travelling far at all, many moth species can be found.



REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Butterfly Conservation, 'Mighty moths are better pollinators than busy bees'. Available at <https://butterfly-conservation.org/news-and-blog/mighty-moths-are-better-pollinators-than-busy-bees>. The Butterfly Conservation website also provides a couple of recipes for sugaring mixtures used to attract moths at <https://butterfly-conservation.org/news-and-blog/a-recipe-for-moths-sugaring-wine-roping>

David J. L. Agassiz, Stella D. Beavan and Robert J. Heckford, *A Checklist of the Lepidoptera of the British Isles*, 2nd edn, Reading: British Entomological and Natural History Society, 2024.

Katty Baird, *Meetings with Moths: Discovering their Mystery and Extraordinary Lives*, London: Harper Collins, 2023.

James Lowen, *Much Ado about Mothing: A Year Intoxicated by Britain's Rare and Remarkable Moths*, London: Bloomsbury, 2021.

When Christmas Is Not Simple

For many, Christmas brings warmth, familiar music and welcome traditions. But for others, this season can feel heavy – full of memories, absences or quiet worries. Grief can feel sharper when the world seems determined to be cheerful, loneliness can feel louder when Christmas lights shine, and for some, faith can feel fragile when life feels overwhelming.

If that is you this year, please know you are not alone. In church we often speak of joy – and rightly so – but joy is never the whole story. The first Christmas happened in uncertainty, in a tired world, to ordinary people carrying mixed emotions. God came not to a perfect celebration, but to a place of waiting, shadows and hope that had to grow slowly.

Whether this season finds you rejoicing or simply holding on, you are welcome, you are known, you are seen and you are loved. You belong. If you need space for stillness, quiet prayer or simply to be held in community, we are here alongside you. God meets us in the manger, yes, but also in the silence before dawn and in the prayers too deep for words.

Prayer for Stillness and Waiting

God of the quiet hour, in this moment we choose stillness.

We set down the noise we carry,
and breathe in your gentle presence.

In the hush of waiting, meet us in our questions, steady our hearts
and hold the hopes we barely whisper.

Teach us to rest in your love and to trust that even here, in the pain
or unease, you are with us, faithful and near. Amen.

Prayer for Our Parish Community

Gracious God, bless our villages and our homes with peace.

Be with our neighbours in joy and in struggle; strengthen the weary,
comfort the grieving, and kindle kindness in us all.

Make our church a place of welcome,
a shelter for every story, a table with room for all.

By your Spirit, draw us into deeper hope,
deeper compassion and deeper love.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for the Season Ahead

Lord Jesus, light for those who sit in darkness
and hope for all who wait, shine gently on our path.

In our celebrations, be our joy. In our quiet moments, be our peace.
In our uncertainties, be our guide.

Help us to carry your love into every corner of our community,
that in us others may glimpse the tenderness of God. Amen.

Revd Ian Henderson

From the Registers

Baptisms	19 October	Oliver Luca Mazzucato
	26 October	Sophie Megan Gilson
	2 November	Alice Clara Hutton

RIP 25 September Richard Morgan Thanksgiving service St Peter's
9 October Kathleen Fountain
Funeral at St Mary's and burial in the churchyard
7 November Janet Margaret Taylor
Cambridge City Crematorium
19 November Barbara Harris Cam Valley



**Oliver receives his
baptism candle**

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Also in Cambridge and Haverhill



THE WORLD-WIDE MISSION COMMITTEE

This Quarter's Charity

The Mission Committee is currently supporting **Emmaus Cambridge**, our home charity for the fourth quarter of 2025 (1 October–31 December 2025). Emmaus Cambridge offers a home, work and personal support to a community of formerly homeless people. Their Companions all work in the shop in Landbeach where they sell donated furniture, clothing, homewares and more. Living in a stable environment with the opportunity to gain new skills helps their Companions to regain any lost esteem and confidence so they can get back on their feet. Research shows that for every £1 invested in an Emmaus Community, there is an £11 social, environmental and economic return, with savings to the benefits bill and health services, and a reduction in crime.

Recent Donations

The following donations were received for the August house box charities:

- **The Leprosy Mission:** £140
- **The Children's Society:** £50

We made a donation of £500 to **the Amos Trust**, our charity for the third quarter of the year.

2025 Christmas Shoeboxes

We're very pleased to report that 13 Christmas shoeboxes were donated by the congregation of St Mary's and St Peter's for **Blythswood Care**. A very big thank you to everyone who donated a shoebox. Your generosity was very much appreciated.



Fundraising Coffee Morning: Saturday 13 December

The next Mission Committee fundraising coffee morning will be held on Saturday 13 December, 10am–12 noon at St Mary's in support of the **Children's Society**. We are planning a festive occasion with the decorating of the Christmas tree, mince pies, cakes, tea, coffee and

refreshments, and a Tombola and craft stall. We will also be preparing the Christingles for the Christingle Service to be held on Sunday 14 December. Please do come and join us – all are welcome.

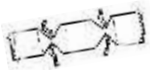
Quarterly Charities for 2026

- **Tearfund** (1 January–31 March 2026 + Lent charity)
- **Christian Aid** (1 April–30 June 2026 + Christian Aid Week)
- **Mission to Seafarers** (1 July–30 September 2026)
- **Scope** (ending disability inequality and support for greater opportunities for disabled people: 1 October–31 December 2026)

My grateful thanks to the members of the Mission Committee for all their help and support during the past year and to the members of congregation at St Mary's and St Peter's for their generous support of our charities and fundraising events. On behalf of Janet, Tina, Anne, Jose, Marian, Agnes, Sarah and Liz, we wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Sue Lowdell

Christmas Crackers



- What is every parent's favourite Christmas song? Silent Night!
- Why did Rudolph have to attend summer school? Because he went down in history.
- What did Adam say on the day before Christmas? 'It's Christmas, Eve!'

*Christmas
Coffee Morning*
in support of The Children's Society

There will be coffee,
tea, mince pies and
cakes, a tombola and
craft stall.
Join us to help
prepare Christingles
and decorate the
Christmas tree.

*Saturday 13 December
10am - 12noon
St Mary's Church*

St. Mary's Church
SAWSTON

Family Carols with Nativity

Sunday 21st December
10.30am

Children are warmly invited to dress as
shepherds or angels if they wish.



SHELFORD MASSAGE

After over 30 years as a
physiotherapist (Shelford
Physio), I have decided to
move into massage therapy.

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Epitaph to a poor old girl

Here lies a poor woman
who was always tired,
she lived in a house
where help wasn't hired.

The last words she said were:

'Dear friends I am going
Where washing ain't wanted,
nor sweeping, nor sewing;

And everything there
is exact to my wishes,
For where folks don't eat
there's no washing of dishes.

In heaven loud anthems
forever are ringing,

But having no voice
I'll keep clear of the singing.

Don't mourn for me now,
don't mourn for me never;

I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever!

Submitted by Eric Jacobs



SAWSTON YOUTH GROUP



This report covers our band and SYG activities as well as looking forward to the future.

SYG ACTIVITIES

The group has had a busy programme this term. The Explorers and Juniors have enjoyed different activities ranging from team games, a

themed pirate night and coding. In their craft sessions they have learned to use glue guns to create foil art poppies. In addition, they have taken part in the Big Junior Sleepover to celebrate the Boys' Brigade's 140th birthday, which involved a quiz and a film in the church before spending the night there.



The Seniors have also been taking part in team games, laser tag and craft sessions where they have learned how to draw and create mosaic pictures.

The Amicus section has been getting active with outings visiting different churches, boot camp and cooking.

Coming up in our programme we have more active and crafty sessions, with Christmas-themed activities and an end-of-year party.

We currently have spaces to fill in our Junior section (school years 3–6). We also welcome anyone to our older sections too.

BAND

The SYG band has supported our neighbouring company by performing at the Soham Pumpkin Fayre for the 1st Soham Brigade. It also played at the Sawston Remembrance Sunday parade.

We are currently planning a band tour to Belgium and France for October 2026 with other Boys' Brigade companies.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD SCHEME

We arranged a Gold trial that had four Amicus members take canoes on the River Severn for two days. Their test is planned for 2026 on the River Wye.

We also have a Silver trial group planned for the end of March 2026 and a new Bronze group that will be starting in January 2026 with their training weekend set for May.

All information and photos can be found on our website at www.syg.org.uk.

Alistair Montgomery, SYG Chairman

ST MARY'S YOUTH GROUP

Youth Trip to Ely Cathedral

Nine of our young people (Years 7–13) travelled to Ely Cathedral on 14 November for a special youth evening – and it was, in their own words, 'amazing'.

Desmond said, 'It's hard to describe the feeling of arriving and seeing the Cathedral.' We had some truly awe-struck children as we pulled up.

William's highlight was the mix of activities: 'We cooked marshmallows, ate pizza and doughnuts, built Lego, drank hot chocolate and had a candlelit service.'



Betty reflected, 'I thought it was a fantastic experience – I felt comfortable in the space, everyone was welcoming, and I'd love to do something like this again.'

Even our older teens (Years 12–13) found plenty to enjoy. We spent time in the Lady Chapel with crafts, games, and conversations, all set within the beauty of that sacred space. The evening ended with candlelit procession and Compline in the Cathedral itself, a gentle and moving way to pray together. There was loads of engagement, lots of laughter, and some wonderful liturgy.

We're so grateful to Sarah and the entire Ely Cathedral team for hosting – and we can't wait to go again.



... And thank you, to Ian, for driving the minibus through driving rain!

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From the Past

The magazine for December 1925 recorded a visit from the Bishop of Ely to Sawston. This was the Right Reverend Leonard White-Thomson, educated at Eton and King's and married into the aristocracy. He had been Archdeacon of Canterbury and only came to Ely in 1924 so this was presumably his first visit to St Mary's. 'Let us bear his words in our minds, and make it the rule of the New Year to do what is worthwhile, whenever the opportunity is given us of serving God and helping our neighbours.'

The seventh remembrance of the armistice had also been marked. 'The gathering at the Cross was well attended, and the Memorial Service on the following Sunday again filled our Church with those who find a simple act of worship the opportunity which they desire of honouring those who made the great sacrifice.'

In addition, there had been what was then known as a Rummage Sale, and which we would call a Jumble Sale. 'The Sale met with a splendid success. The Social Gathering held after the Sale, provided a very enjoyable recreation and substantially increased the receipts. The Churchwardens [Walter Hutchings and Martin Lyles] much appreciate this generous response of the parish to their appeal on behalf of the Maintenance Fund. After a few working charges have been met some £25 will be realised.' My computer tells me that £25 in 1925 is equivalent to £1942 today, so this was a very remarkable result!

Fifty years ago the vicar wrote about another episcopal visit. This time the bishop was the Right Reverend Edward Roberts, who was spending a week in the Camps Deanery (as it was then). His day in Sawston 'began with the Eucharist for Mothers and Young Children at which the bishop was the celebrant and blessed all the children and babies at the altar. After talking with the mothers and children at the Vicarage over coffee, a visit was paid in turn to the Icknield school [then under Gavin Mann], the John Falkner School [Beryl Baker as Head] and the John Paxton School [Brian Frost as Head]. Then on to the Village College [John Marven as Warden] where he visited the three dining halls and spoke to the staff and pupils. Lunch

was provided in the Walnut Room for the warden and his wife, staff and the vicar and his wife and Fr Larry O'Toole and Deaconess Mary Blackburn. After lunch a visit was paid to the Geriatric Part 3 home in the process of completion [what we know as Orchard House], where the bishop met the architect, builder and Social Services Officer and asked many questions, showing a great interest. The last visit was paid to the Over 60s Club where the bishop met the Chairman, Chris Rainbow, and the Secretary, Winifred Beebee, and spoke to everybody present. After a favourite birthday hymn and prayers, the bishop gave his blessing and departed.' He went on to a PCC meeting in Balsham followed by a Deanery Songs of Praise, by which time one can only assume he was quite tired.

Mary Dicken

A brief reflection on 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people'

The church is at its best when everyone knows they belong – not because we all agree, but because we choose to live our differences with peace, humility and love.

Recently I was deeply moved by a sermon from Dean Mark Oakley titled, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people'.* It speaks honestly about the experience many have had of feeling unseen, unwelcome or judged in church life, especially when their story or identity does not fit neatly into tradition or expectation. The sermon is freely available online – simply search for the sermon title in your browser, (or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLM_J8YH8Fk)

This reflection expresses my personal conviction and is not an official parish statement. For me, this isn't about winning arguments, or everyone thinking alike. Our Church today holds a wide range of deeply held theological views, especially on questions of identity, sexuality, Scripture and tradition. Those conversations are not always easy, and faithful Christians do not always reach the same conclusions.

But I believe our calling, especially in these times, is not simply to hold opinions, but to hold one another and to make space where people can breathe, where questions don't threaten belonging, where difference doesn't break relationship, where we recognise the image of God in one another before anything else. Whatever our theologies, we are invited to embody the example of Christ: to listen without fear, to disagree without contempt and to love without exception.

If anyone would like to explore the theology behind this more deeply – whether you resonate with it or feel unsure – I would be very glad to talk and to listen.

Revd Ian Henderson

**The sermon is based on Luke 18. 9–14, the gospel reading set for 26 October.*

David Hatter

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COFFEE AND CHAT with

Anand Pillai



Tell us a little about your life and family.

I was born in Newcastle upon Tyne and began my early life there, but my father's job as a consultant child psychiatrist saw us move to Scotland, Derby and finally Cambridge in 1972. I lived in Stapleford and eventually, when I got married, my wife Vijaya and I lived in Shelford (1998–2002), then from 2002 in Sawston.

What about your work, past and present?

After leaving school in 1978 I started work as a nursing auxiliary at Doddington Hospital, and then at Addenbrooke's. Later, I joined the Ambulance Service in Patient Transport Services, did my Emergency Driving Course and worked on the Neonatal Vehicle ANTS (Acute Neonatal Transfer Service). In 2017 I changed jobs to work at Cambridge Railway Station on gateline duties. My current role is as a Welcome Host with Passenger Assists.

How long have you been worshipping at St Mary's and what do you like about it?

I have been worshipping at St Mary's since 2023 after a long time worshipping at St Andrew's Church, Stapleford. I came to St Mary's to worship because I like the services and the congregation made me welcome the first Sunday I came.

Is there a particular person or event which has influenced your Christian journey?

I feel my mum and my godparents had an influence on my Christian journey. When I was confirmed in 1976, my head teachers, who were my second godparents at my confirmation, were also an influence. More recently Kathryn Waite encouraged me to attend the Ely #39 Cursillo weekend in March to deepen my Christian faith further.

Do you have a favourite hymn?

My favourite hymn is 'Shine Jesus Shine', which was sung at the blessing of my and Vijaya's marriage in 1998. But I also have a favourite Christmas hymn, 'O Come All Ye Faithful'.

Interview by Dianne Conway

... AND CAKE

I made these for All Souls' Day, when they are traditionally eaten, and several people asked for the recipe. I'm sure they're fine to eat anytime!

Soul Cakes (traditional Shropshire recipe)

Ingredients

- 300g plain flour
- 120g softened butter
- 120g caster sugar
- 75g currants (I only had sultanas which seemed to work fine)
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 ½ tsp baking powder
- 4 tbsp milk

Method

Cream the butter and sugar together. Gradually beat in the egg yolks and milk. Fold in the currants, then add the flour. You should end up with a dough you can roll out.

Roll out the dough to approx ½ cm thickness. Using a 6–7 cm cutter, cut out the biscuits. Place onto a baking tray lined with baking parchment/greaseproof paper. Use the thick/blunt side of a knife to press the cross shape on the top of each biscuit. Bake for about 12–15 minutes at 180 degrees until golden brown. As soon as they are out of the oven, sprinkle with caster sugar.

Galette des Rois (Kings' Cake) Traditional French Epiphany cake

Ingredients

- 750g/1lb 10oz ready-made all-butter puff pastry, chilled
- plain flour, for dusting
- 1 free-range egg, beaten, to glaze
- For the filling
 - 100g/3½oz unsalted butter, softened
 - 100g/3½oz caster sugar
 - 1 large free-range egg, plus 1 yolk, at room temperature
 - 100g/3½oz ground almonds
 - 50g/1¾oz flaked almonds
 - 1 tsp almond extract

Method

Line a baking tray with baking parchment. Roll out half of the pastry on a lightly floured work surface until it is about 25x25cm/10x10in in size and slightly thinner than a pound coin.

Cut a 23cm/9in circle from the pastry by cutting around the bottom of a 23cm/9in cake tin. Transfer to the prepared baking tray and cover with cling film. Repeat the process with the other half of the pastry. Chill until needed.

For the filling, beat together the sugar and butter thoroughly until the mixture is pale and fluffy.

Gradually add the beaten egg to the mixture and beat again. Gently stir in the ground almonds, flaked almonds and almond extract. Cover the bowl with cling film and chill for 15–20 minutes.

Remove the cling film from the pastry, leaving one pastry circle on the baking tray. Spoon the filling mixture onto that pastry circle, heaping it into a slight mound in the middle, leaving a 2cm/1in border all around the edge. Brush the pastry border with beaten egg, then gently lay the second pastry circle over the filling, pressing the edges firmly together to seal.

Holding a small knife blade at right angles to the pastry border, 'knock up' the edge of the galette by making small indentations all around the edge of the pastry. Scallop the pastry border by pushing the indentations in at 2cm/1in intervals using the back of the knife. Brush the top of the galette all over with more of the beaten egg, then chill the galette in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220C/200C Fan/Gas 7.

Brush the top of the chilled galette again with remaining beaten egg, then score it with a criss-cross pattern using the tip of a sharp knife. Make a couple of small steam holes in the centre of the galette. Bake in the oven for 25–30 minutes, or until the pastry is crisp and golden-brown. Set aside to cool slightly before serving.

Petra Shakeshaft

Walking the Epiphany Road

The world often moves on from Christmas quickly. Trees come down, routines return, and the 'new year' noise rises – resolutions, pressures, expectations.

But in the Church, we linger a little longer. We follow a slower rhythm as we walk the Epiphany road, where light unfolds gently, not all at once, and where wise travellers take time to arrive. Revelation comes in quiet ways, not in a flash, but in moments of recognition.

Epiphany teaches us that God's light doesn't remove our questions, but helps us see by them. It tells us that Christ is not hidden away for a few, but revealed to all nations, all people, all stories – including ours.

Then comes Candlemas – a threshold moment. A child welcomed, blessed, offered to God; a mother's joy held alongside a piercing prophecy. Light is carried into the temple, but it is a light that knows both tenderness and truth.

From there we take our first quiet steps toward Lent; not in haste, not with heaviness forced upon us, but with the deep awareness that life has seasons: joy and sorrow, clarity and searching, celebration and waiting.

If Christmas tells us God is with us, Epiphany tells us the world is invited; Candlemas tells us God's light is both gift and calling; and Lent will invite us not to be other than we are, but to be honest, courageous, and faithful.

In these winter weeks, look for light, even in small places; welcome mystery without fear; and walk gently with one another, trusting the God who travels alongside us still.

Revd Ian Henderson



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ADVENT

WAITING

JOY

PEACE

JOHN THE BAPTIST

CANDLE

LIGHT

MARY

JOSEPH

MANGER

HOPE

LOVE

BETHLEHEM

MAGNIFICAT

PROPHECY

JESUS

ANGEL

STAR

EMMANUEL



Which Old Testament prophet foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, a prophecy later linked to Jesus' birth?

In Micah 5.2

... And a Happy New Year

As we approach the new year, we find ourselves, Janus like, looking back at the past year whilst turning toward what lies ahead. The New Year invites us into this gentle rhythm of reflection and anticipation, encouraging us to see the past with honesty, gratitude, and even lament, while also stepping forward with hope and renewed purpose.

The past year may have held moments of joy, growth, and unexpected blessings. It may also have carried challenges we didn't expect, losses that still ache, prayers still unanswered, or moments when God felt silent. But Scripture reminds us that God is present in the darkness and the light. When we remember, we trace the golden thread of God's faithfulness woven through all things, even when it was hard to see at the time. Remembering is an act of faith.

But remembering is only part of the journey. The Christian life is also profoundly forward-looking. We are shaped by hope not in our own strength, but in the God who 'makes all things new'. So the new year becomes a signpost pointing us toward the work of renewal that God does in and through us. Just as creation itself was spoken into being, God continues to speak new life into weary hearts, fractured communities, and uncertain futures.

Hope calls us to participate, to trust in a God who brings life out of barren places, to dare to imagine reconciliation in the face of division, and to carry light into corners of the world shadowed by fear or despair. Perhaps we are invited to hold the past with grace and the future with expectation, to remember that each morning is a gift, each relationship an opportunity, each challenge a chance to grow in faith. Above all, we trust that God walks with us, not only in the moments we understand but also in the ones we do not.

May this New Year be one of renewed hope, deepening faith, and surprising joy. May we look back with gratitude and forward with courage, confident in the God who goes before us, who makes all things new.

Petra Shakeshaft

PCC Officials

Vice Chairman	Corinne Roughley
Secretary	Mary Dicken
Treasurer	Sue Chase (not PCC member)

Other Officials

Assistant Secretary	Joanna Johnson
Electoral Roll Officer	Janet Martin
Gift Aid Officer	Marian Watson
Safeguarding Officer	Barbara Hylton
Sidesmen	Sarah Bard, Andrew Beale, Joanne Beale, Peter Green, Jeannie Green, Suella Hunting, Barbara Hylton, Wendy Redgewell, Mary Richmond, Hilary Streeter, Marian Watson
Website and Social Media Co-ordinator	Joanna Johnson

Committees

Standing Committee	Vicar (chairman), churchwardens, secretary and treasurer, David Bard, Suella Hunting.
Fabric Committee	Vicar (chairman), Sebastian Aplin, David Bard, Mary Dicken (secretary), David Holloway, Suella Hunting, Corinne Roughley, Paul Shakeshaft, Marian Watson
Magazine Committee	Petra Shakeshaft (editor), Mary Dicken, Rachel Norridge,
World-wide Mission Committee	Christine Casey, Sarah Caswell, Jose John, Anne Little, Susan Lowdell (chairman), Janet Marven, Elizabeth Parker, Agnes Stamper, Marian Watson

Community Hall Management Committee

Jeanette Harvey (bookings secretary),
George Haddad (treasurer), Katharine
Holloway, Suella Hunting (chairman), Jane
Moloney, John Poulter, Stephen Roughley,
Hilary Streeter (minutes secretary), Vicar.

Ratified appointments which are made externally

Mothers' Union Leader	Janet Martin
SYG Chairman	Alistair Montgomery

Leaders of Activities

Beale's House Group	Andrew and Joanne Beale
Children's Work	Corinne Roughley
Church Office	Joanna Johnson
Craft Group	Christine Casey
Flower Arrangers	Barbara Hylton
Friday House Group	Petra Shakeshaft
Monday House Group	Rosina Whitmell
Open Door Music Group	Clare Hulme
Night Prayer	Dianne Conway
Refresh	Rebecca Herrick
Sacristan	Marian Watson and Anand Pillai (deputy)
Soup and Sandwiches and Tea and Friendship	Mary Richmond
Working Parties and Burial Ground Maintenance	David Holloway

LOOKING AHEAD

CURSILLO WEEKEND 17 – 19 April 2026

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Please speak to Kathryn or Anand for more information
and for application/sponsor forms

ST MARY'S COMMUNITY HALL

REGULAR GROUPS

Rosy Beginnings (baby massage)	Monday morning	Annie
Line Dancing	Monday lunchtime	Lisa
Contento Pilates	Monday evening	Maria
Sawston Toy Library	Tuesday morning	Katie
Contento Pilates	Tuesday afternoon	Maria
Line Dancing	Wednesday morning	Lisa
Contento Pilates	Wednesday lunchtime	Maria
Tai Chi	Wednesday afternoon	Dan
Studio Fit	Wednesday evening	Georgia
Sawston Beavers	Thursday early evening	Yousuf
Sawston Scouts	Thursday evening	Amit
Fitsteps	Friday lunchtime	Kelly
<i>A/so</i>		
Tea and Friendship	1st Thursday afternoon	Mary
Soup & Sandwiches	2nd Thursday lunchtime	Mary
St Mary's Craft Group	Last Thursday afternoon	Tina
Youth Group	2nd & 4th Sunday evening	Kathryn

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