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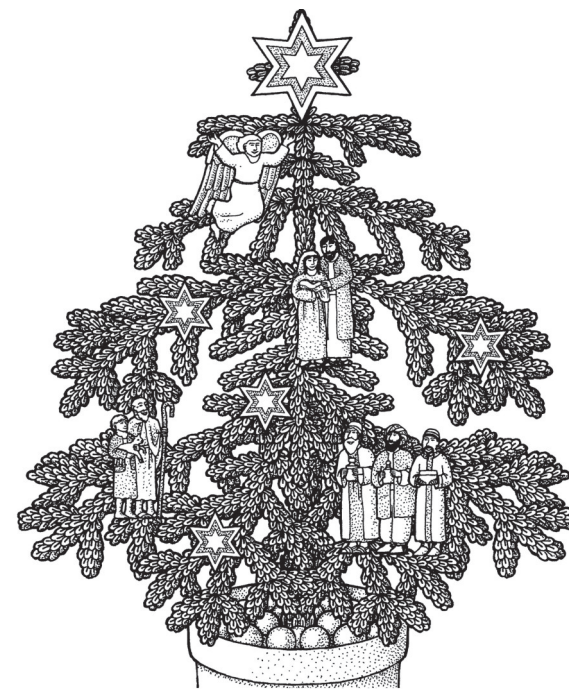


## 'Parish News'

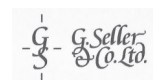
### *The Parish magazine for Broughton Astley and Croft with Stoney Stanton*



December 2025  
& January 2026



Supplied and printed by



The Genuine Independent Funeral Directors & Memorial Masons

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To subscribe to the Parish News please contact:		
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<b>Croft</b>	Hubert Lane	07787 910466
<b>Stoney Stanton</b>	Wendy Howe	07779 194730

For further information, see inside back cover or visit our website: <b><a href="http://www.stmaryandstmichaelschurches.co.uk">http://www.stmaryandstmichaelschurches.co.uk</a></b>		
<b>Or follow us on Facebook: @bacsschurches</b>		

## Services.....January

	<i>St Mary's Broughton Astley</i>	<i>St Michael's Stoney Stanton</i>	<i>St Michael &amp; All Angel's Croft</i>
<b>Sunday 4 January Epiphany</b>	<b>10:00 United Service at St Michael's Church, Stoney Stanton</b>		
<b>Sunday 11 January Baptism of Christ</b>	<b>9:45 am</b> Holy Communion	<b>9:30 am</b> Messy Church	<b>11:15 am</b> Morning Prayer
<b>Sunday 18 January Epiphany 2</b>	<b>9:45 am</b> Messy Church	<b>9:30 am</b> Holy Communion	<b>11:15 am</b> Holy Communion
<b>Sunday 25 January Conversion of St Paul</b>	<b>9:45 am</b> Holy Communion	<b>9:30 am</b> Cafe Church	<b>11:15 am</b> Holy Communion
<b>Sunday 1 February Candlemas</b>	<b>10:00 am United Service at St Mary's Church, Broughton Astley</b>  <b>3:00 pm A service of Confirmation at St Michael's Church, Stoney Stanton With Bishop Saju</b>		

Weekday Services:  
Broughton Astley: Wednesday 9:30 am Either a service of Holy Communion or Morning Prayer  
Stoney Stanton: Thursday 9:30 am A service of Morning Prayer.

***Details of services correct at time of going to print. However, please check weekly news sheet and Church noticeboards or visit the BACSS Facebook page regularly to check for any changes and updates.***

*(You don't need a Facebook login to see these pages).*

<https://m.facebook.com/bacsschurches/posts/>

## Services.....December

	<i>St Mary's Broughton Astley</i>	<i>St Michael's Stoney Stanton</i>	<i>St Michael &amp; All Angel's Croft</i>
<b>Sunday 7 December Advent 2</b>	<b>10:00 United Service at St Michael and All Angels Church, Croft</b>		
<b>Saturday 13 December</b>			<b>4:00 pm</b> Carol Service with Croft Silver Band
<b>Sunday 14 December Advent 3</b>	<b>9:45 am</b> Morning Prayer	<b>10:00 am</b> Messy Nativity at Boundary Farm Arrive from 9:45.	<b>11:15 am</b> Holy Communion
<b>Sunday 21 December Advent 4</b>	<b>9:45 am</b> Messy Church	<b>9:30 am</b> Holy Communion	<b>11:15 am</b> Holy Communion
	<b>6:00 pm Parish Carol Service at St Michael's Church, Stoney Stanton</b>		
<b>Wednesday 24 December CHRISTMAS EVE</b>	<b>4:00 pm</b> Christingle <b>11:30 pm</b> Midnight Mass	<b>4:00 pm</b> Christingle Trail <b>11:30 pm</b> Midnight Mass	<b>3:00 pm</b> Christingle <b>10:00 pm</b> Christmas Eve Mass
<b>Thursday 25 December CHRISTMAS DAY</b>	<b>10:00 am United Service of Morning Prayer at St Michael's Church, Stoney Stanton</b>		
<b>Sunday 28 December 1st Sunday of Christmas</b>	<b>10:00 am United Service at St Michael and All Angels Church Croft</b>		
	<b>No midweek Services 26 December - 1 January inclusive</b>		

Dear Friends -

'BC : AD' - U. A. Fanthorpe

This was the moment when Before  
Turned into After, and the future's  
Uninvented timekeepers presented arms.  
This was the moment when nothing  
Happened. Only dull peace  
Sprawled boringly over the earth.  
This was the moment when even energetic Romans  
Could find nothing better to do  
Than counting heads in remote provinces.  
And this was the moment  
When a few farm workers and three  
Members of an obscure Persian sect  
Walked haphazard by starlight straight  
Into the kingdom of heaven.

I thought that I would begin this article with a piece of prose to get me  
thinking about this season at the end of one year and looking forward  
to the beginning of 2026.

It has been quite hard trying to choose a favourite hymn, poem or  
reading to include in this magazine. There are just so many I enjoy  
singing, reading or listening to, which is why having an extended  
season that runs from Advent to Epiphany is so wonderful. We start  
with the great Advent antiphons, move seamlessly to carolling Joy  
coming down to earth at Christmas by the Saviour's birth, and then  
respond with songs of thankfulness and praise, as God in man is  
made manifest. A wonderful time for reflection, for watching and  
waiting for the coming of the King, and then for celebrating the way in  
which God has caught us up into his love for his creation, by sending  
his only begotten Son in incarnate flesh as love came down at  
Christmas.

As I have reflected, a line from a short Christmas poem by U. A. Fanthorpe kept nagging me, and it was the last line, where the poet describes how heaven touched earth when the shepherds and the Magi 'walked haphazard by starlight' that encapsulates all of the period for me. This poem takes us from Advent to Epiphany, from before time to now time and future time. And while no mention is made of the birth of Jesus, the whole poem resounds with the mystery of the incarnation, that exceptional moment in time when heaven touches earth and the earth resets itself from BC to AD.

One joy of the longer, darker nights in winter is the opportunity to star gaze. As a child I grew up loving the velvety blue-black star-bedecked skies of the nighttime. We had few street lights so the stars were our guides. I still get that magical feeling as I visit the countryside especially in Shropshire and yes sometimes, I do stumble along unlit church paths.

But looking up, the wonder of the heavens is revealed as starlight pierces the darkness. Added to this, Fanthorpe's poem centre stages people from the periphery. The ordinary, often marginalized, farm workers from the hillsides outside the cities and the wandering foreigners, astrologers from faraway places, find their way by starlight to the place of glory. She captures the uncertain wonder and excitement of these so very different stargazers. Although unspoken, we hear through her succinct words, the uncertain wonder which is also felt by a certain young woman and man, people of no high standing, and yet they too have stumbled haphazardly and found themselves in the kingdom of heaven whilst 'the heavens declare the glory of the Lord'.

Our journey through life can often feel haphazard; and we can find ourselves stumbling along in unexpected places, even unexpected roles and responsibilities, with people we never thought we would meet or know. Especially now as we begin the process of moving into Minster Communities with unknown but maybe exciting outcomes.

## Around the Churches

### St Mary's, Broughton Astley

Churchwardens	John Bass Colin Atkinson	07458 315152 07792 801900
DCC Secretary	Moirra Cooper	07951 134920
DCC Treasurer	Steve Windram	01455 272922
Tower Contact		
Tower Captain	Andy Kedie	01455 284777
Teddy Bear Bunch (Weds 10:30 Term time)	Heather Beadle	01455 284689

### St Michael and All Angels, Croft

Churchwardens	Claire Jordan Mike Wootton	01455 282495 01455 283699
DCC Secretary	Claire Wootton	07423 041399
DCC Treasurer	Lester Halling	01455 282189
Tower Captain	Lester Halling	01455 282189

### St Michael's, Stoney Stanton

Churchwardens	Paul Lawrence Rachel Smith	07376 031522 01455 642335
DCC Secretary	Helen Gray	07929 643829
DCC Treasurer	Margie Brimacombe	01455 282429
Ringling Master	Margie Brimacombe	01455 282429
Tower Contact	Fiona	sstantontower @hotmail.com

### Facilities

Each of our three churches has a disabled access toilet and baby changing facility. Each Church also has a hearing loop system.



## Stoney Stanton Village Hall

Newly refurbished throughout, large rooms for events of all types.

- holds up to 150 people
- main room 12m x 6.6m room + extra 5m with bifolds open
- smaller lounge room
- fully refurbished kitchen space
- modern projector system, free wifi
- perfect party/reception venue
- folding tables and chairs included
- great for kids parties as we allow indoor bouncy castles and slides
- from £15 per hour from 1/9/25
- block bookings taken

Please contact:  
clerk@stoneystantonpc.gov.uk

ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEM  
<https://venuehire.scribeaccounts.com/Stoney-Stanton-Village-Hall>



Perfect for that special occasion

But in the same way that those first-century 'farmers and members of some obscure Persian sect' were guided by starlight to the throne of glory, so too we pray that God will guide us. We give thanks and praise that we are never left without a guide, even on the darkest of days and nights. We too can walk haphazardly by starlight. The kingdom of heaven awaits.

A blessed Advent and Christmas when it comes to all, and may 2026 be filled with amazing revelations for us and our parish from our Lord and Saviour.

Peter Yates



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## Bingo is back at St Mary's

**Saturday 24 January**

**6:00 pm**



**£10, including sausage cobs,  
puddings and first drink**

**(Sign up sheets in each Church)**





## Baptisms

**Stoney Stanton**

Kasey Violet Heather McGibbon  
Henry Luke John Alfie McGibbon



## HOLIDAY

### cottages

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## St Michael's Stoney Stanton 100 Club Draw

### November

First Prize - £25.00 - No 65 - Maria Kittle  
Second Prize - £15.00 - No 82 - Wendy Howe  
Third Prize - £10.00 - No 56 - Jackie March

There are numbers available for this draw.  
Please contact Julie on 07738 764245



## 1<sup>st</sup> Stoney Stanton Scout Group

# BEAVERS

### Beaver Scouts

(Age 6 to 8 years)

Meet Wednesdays 6.30pm to 7.30pm

### Cub Scouts

(Age 8 to 10½ years)

Meet Mondays 6.30pm to 8.00pm

# cubs

# SCOUTS

### Scouts

(Age 10½ to 14 years)

Meet Tuesdays 7.00pm to 8.30pm

Interested in playing a part in delivering lifetime skills for young people ?  
We have a whole host of options for adults, from actual team leadership  
to flexible or occasional volunteering.

For more information on this or youth membership  
please contact:-

Carl West (Group Lead Volunteer) on 07711 077606  
gs1stoneystanton@hotmail.com

For general enquiries contact  
Stuart Wilson (Group Trustee Board Secretary) on 07929 479970  
Group Headquarters The Old Chapel, Broughton Road, Stoney Stanton

## Regular Midweek Services and Events

9:30 am - Every Wednesday – Either Morning Prayer or Holy Communion Service at Broughton Astley

9:30 am – Every Thursday – Morning Prayer at Stoney Stanton.

Third Monday each month, Bible Study House Group, in Broughton Astley, 2.30 – 4.00 ish pm. Please contact Paula Atkinson, 07581 574340.

Second Tuesday each month, Prayer Group meets at St Michael's Church, Stoney Stanton 7.30 pm for a time of quiet prayer. Please contact Carol Ford 07779 841555.

Every Wednesday during Term Time,  
10:30 am – 12 noon Teddy Bear Bunch for pre-school children at St Mary's Church, Broughton Astley.

### Home Communion

If anyone within the Parish wishes to receive Holy Communion at their home, please contact John Bass 07458 315152 who will be able to help you, and arrange to visit you.

## To be Confirmed .....?



A series of informal discussions of aspects of our Christian faith, leading to Confirmation for those who wish, will be held at St Mary's Church from 11.15 to 12 noon on the following Sundays:

26 October; 23 November and 7 December.

Confirmation will be on Sunday 1 February at 3 pm at St Michael's Church, Stoney Stanton.

Anyone who is interested in exploring their faith further is very welcome.

For more details please contact Paula Atkinson 07581 574340.

Have you ever felt you would like someone to pray for you? Or maybe there is someone you know who needs prayers.

Help is at hand. The Prayer Chain is a group of people who regularly pray for people who are on the prayer chain list.

All requests are treated in confidence. It is up to you how much you want to tell the prayer chain about the request. It can simply be the first name of the person.

I would ask you to check that the person you are requesting is OK about being on the prayer chain.

Each request is prayed for, from the date of the request, for 1 month. If you want prayers to continue after that month you need to make another request.

**Please contact Jackie March with your request on [bacsprayerchain@gmail.com](mailto:bacsprayerchain@gmail.com) .**

***You don't have to be a member of the Church to use the Prayer chain.***

# TIME FOR AN EYE EXAM?

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**Earl Shilton  
01455 841364**

**Stoney Stanton  
01455 241749**



## *What's in a Name?*

### **Joseph**



Advent is a time of waiting, and there is no period of waiting quite to compare with the period before the birth of a new baby.

So this month we are looking at the name of one of the main players in the drama of Jesus' birth, the name however of a somewhat 'shadowy' character, someone who is just there, in the background.

We first hear of Joseph at the end of a long genealogical table at the beginning of the Gospel according to Matthew, one of the two 'birth narratives' of the New Testament. The other one is found in the Gospel according to Luke, and is a very different affair, concentrating on the story of the women in Jesus' early life, Mary and her cousin Elizabeth.

But the writer which we call Matthew, is probably a Jewish convert, and Joseph is placed in a more prominent position. He is the protector of the young family, descended from King David, guided by dreams, taking the pregnant Mary as his wife, finding safety away from the murderous intentions of Herod. It is quite a remarkable story.

Joseph is a name which has ancient, very clear origins in Jewish history, going right back to Yosef Ben Yakov, the beloved son of Jacob and his wife Rachel, more remembered today in popular myth by the story of his 'coat of many colours', who, driven out of the family by the jealous trickery of his brothers became the right-hand man of the Egyptian Pharaoh, and was able thereby to save them from starvation. The name means 'God will increase' and has kept its popularity from ancient times to the present, resulting in European variations such as Guiseppe and Jose.

But this month it might be good to consider the essential value of the figure of Joseph, standing at the back of the Holy family, protecting them, yet still in the background, offering a stability to the group, which would be necessary to the development of Jesus, as he grew to manhood.



## **St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival**

**Fri 12th to Sun 14th December 2025**  
at St Mary's, Broughton Astley

**Open:** Fri - Sat 10am to 5pm; Sun 11am to 5pm

**Admission** - adults £2, children under 12 free

**Refreshments** available: tea, coffee and cakes; soup and roll; bacon, sausage and turkey and cranberry baps. Veg options available too.

**Christmas Raffle** will be drawn on Sunday 14th December at 4pm.

- **Entry forms to enter a tree,** available by emailing [moira763@gmail.com](mailto:moira763@gmail.com),
- also available in church.



*Our series on the Nicene Creed concludes this month, as Canon Paul Hardingham considers a bedrock of our Christian belief: that the Church has an eternal future.*

## The Nicene Creed: The Church and the Future

*We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

'We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church': The Creed affirms the four marks of the church, defining a truly orthodox Christian community:

one: despite the many different churches and traditions, there is only one Church to which we all belong. 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28).

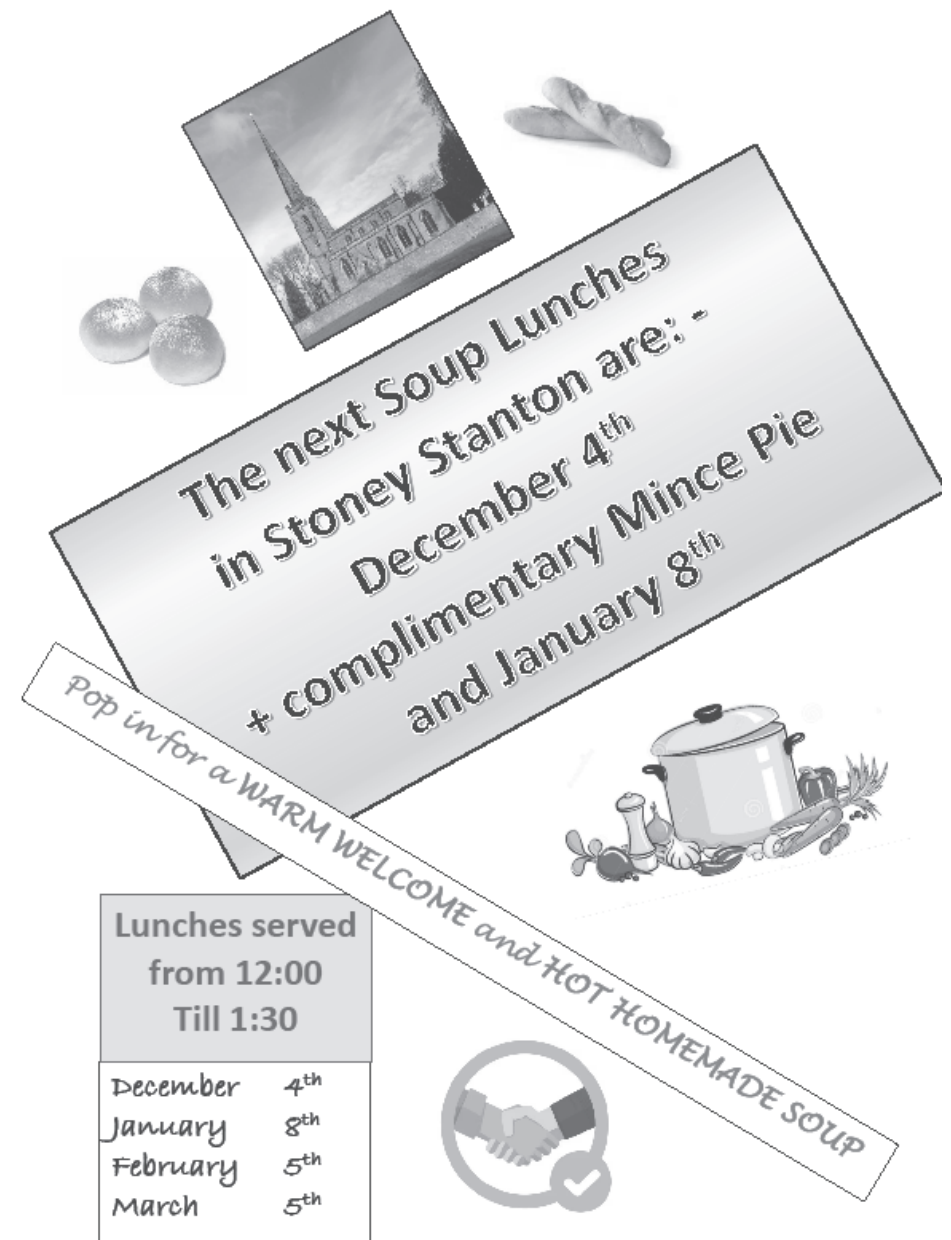
holy: the church is a holy community set apart for God (ekklesia, lit 'called out'), whose mission is to reflect God's holiness in worship and live out His love in the world.

catholic: this doesn't refer to the Roman Catholic church, as the word means 'universal', reminding us of the unity of the church across the whole world and all denominations.

The church aims to apply the same gospel in whatever situation, context or culture it finds itself.

Apostolic: The apostolic ministry of the church ('apostolos') is one of being sent to communicate the good news of the gospel: 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.' (Matt 28.19).

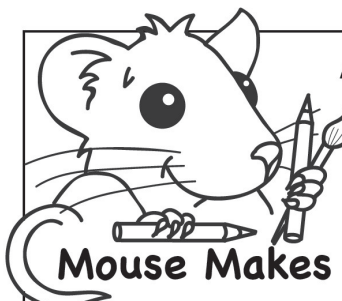
'We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins': As baptism is as sign of belonging to the church, it can only happen once. The issue addressed in the Creed is that of Christians who left during persecution, but wanted to be accepted back by rebaptism. It affirms the principle 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' (Ephesians 4:5). Today, those baptised as children, theologically can't be re-baptised to demonstrate an adult commitment. However, they can



**The next Soup Lunches  
in Stoney Stanton are: -  
December 4<sup>th</sup>  
+ complimentary Mince Pie  
and January 8<sup>th</sup>**

Pop in for a WARM WELCOME and HOT HOMEMADE SOUP

Lunches served from 12:00 Till 1:30	
December	4 <sup>th</sup>
January	8 <sup>th</sup>
February	5 <sup>th</sup>
March	5 <sup>th</sup>



**Mouse Makes**

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus,  
God's Son and our Saviour  
coming into the world as a baby,  
and we look forward to the time  
when Jesus will come again,  
not as a baby but as the  
King of kings and Lord of lords!

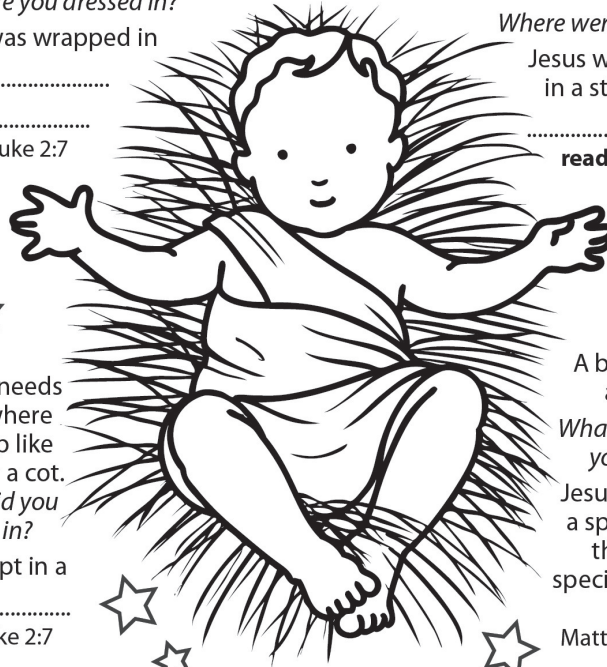
**read**  
John 14:3

A baby needs clothes  
to keep warm like  
a snugly sleep suit  
or a vest and nappy.  
*What were you dressed in?*  
Jesus was wrapped in  
.....  
**read** Luke 2:7

A baby needs somewhere  
to be born like at home  
or in a hospital.  
*Where were you born?*  
Jesus was born  
in a stable in  
.....  
**read** Luke 2:1-6

A baby needs  
somewhere  
to sleep like  
a crib or a cot.  
*What did you  
sleep in?*  
Jesus slept in a  
.....  
**read** Luke 2:7

A baby needs  
a name.  
*What name were  
you called?*  
Jesus was given  
a special name  
that had a  
special meaning.  
**read**  
Matthew 1:21-23



# HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ☆ NOLLAIG CHRÏDHEIL ☆ NOLLAG SHONA  
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN

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be confirmed or reaffirm their baptism vows.

'We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come':  
The Creed ends with a statement of hope, that we will share in Jesus'  
resurrection life after death.

It is not simply about the immortality of our soul, but the resurrection of our  
bodies. They will be transformed to fit us for life of heaven for eternity: 'The  
body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable...it is sown in  
weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a  
spiritual body.' (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

## Agape Celebration

The Parish Bible Study Group warmly invite everyone to join us for an  
Agape Celebration. A tradition dating back to the earliest days of  
Christianity, an Agape Celebration involves sharing a simple meal, prayer,  
praise and fellowship. Please do join us on Monday 15 December at  
St Michael's Stoney Stanton from 2.30 - 3.30 pm. Take an hour out of the  
pre-Christmas busyness to enjoy a breathing space and a time of sharing  
faith and friendship.

If you would like to know more please contact Paula Atkinson on 07581  
574340.





**Christine Margaret Sidey 24 September 1952—1 October 2025**  
**Memories of Christine, shared by her son, Richard**

My Mum was born near Hampton Court in September 1952. She had a doting mother Pamela, a gregarious older brother Nigel and a loving father Barry, who served in the Chindits during the Second World War and then became a commercial traveller.

When she was four the family moved to the Midlands. She went to Enderby primary school where she enjoyed her studies and was entered for the 11+. As an incentive, she was offered the chance to choose the family Sunday lunch if she got the grades. Ever the drama queen, she walked into their home, flung her satchel on the table and told her parents - aged 11 - that they would be having roast potatoes and white wine. Perhaps more on that later...

She went on to Lutterworth grammar school where she discovered some of her lifelong passions. Firstly of course we need to talk about singing. She was a serial choir member, being part of the student choir, then Alumni Cantores the past pupil choir and Lutterworth Choral Union until recently. However the biggest choir in her life was Atherstone Choral Society. Under the musical direction of Bernard Powell she learnt to sign everything from military marches to some of the more questionable Andrew Lloyd Webber numbers to the most challenging Choral works.

You might say of someone who is bad at time keeping that they would even be late for their own funeral. Well my Mum is going to get to sing at her own funeral - as the anthem will be a recording of Verdi's Gloria sung by Atherstone arguably in their hey day with Christine Sidey in the sopranos.

Atherstone gave her the opportunity to perform, for example alongside the Coldstream Guards at the Royal Albert Hall and at St Sulpice as part of a tour to Paris. This perhaps demonstrates that as well as choral excellence there was a strong social side to the choir and some of her nearest and dearest lifelong friends stem from her days at Atherstone.

The other key passion she picked up at school was that for science. She took all three science A-levels and applied for a new course in genetics and microbiology at Swansea University. Tragically her brother was killed in a car accident during her first term, so she took the year out to be with her mother and father at this unimaginably sad time, but she went back next year and again met another group of lifelong friends, some of whom are here today.

University set her up for her career in teaching, computer programming and medical research and she always kept up an interest in science. During the COVID pandemic she said that some of their research into Beta Interferon was one of the potential solutions to the world's woes at the time.

**Down**

- 1 .... and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8) (5)
- 2 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as ... as a lion (Proverbs 28:1) (4)
- 3 One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)
- 4 He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19,20) (8)
- 5 City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)
- 6 Offer your bodies as living .... , holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1) (10)
- 9 Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)
- 12 One who accepts government by God (8)
- 14 Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual (Exodus 30:1) (7)
- 16 He asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) (6)
- 19 Are (Romans 13:1) (5)
- 20 You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will ... his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21) (4)

**November Crossword Solutions**

**ACROSS:** 1. Bartholomew. 9, Evil one. 10, Adore. 11, Ran. 13, Oreb. 16, Zinc. 17, Entail. 18, Hung. 20, Lehi. 21, Joshua. 22, Pity. 23, Wide. 25, Age. 28, Alarm. 29, Partake. 30, Sennacherib.

**DOWN:** 2, Alive. 3, Took. 4, Over. 5, Onan. 6, Emotive. 7, Jehoshaphat. 8, Melchizedek. 12, A light. 14, Beg. 15, Strong. 19, Not have. 20, Law. 24, Iraqi. 25, Amen. 26, Epic. 27, Free.

***Stoney Stanton Methodist Chapel***

***Coffee Morning***

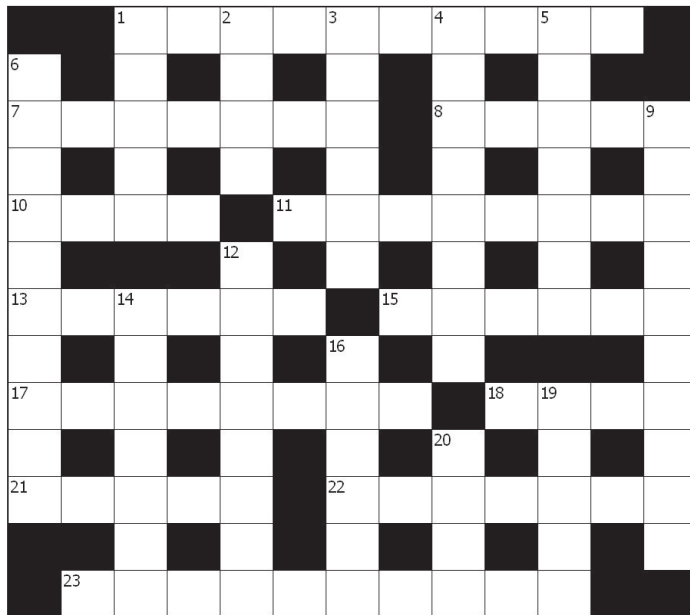
**Thursdays 18 December and 29 January**

**10:00 am—11:30 am**

**Come and Join Us**



## Crossword - December



### Across

- 1 Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)
- 7 David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14,15) (7)
- 8 They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries (5)
- 10 Small deer of European and Asian extraction (4)
- 11 Seized control of (Numbers 21:25) (8)
- 13 Terror (Luke 24:5) (6)
- 15 First World War heroine shot by the Germans in Brussels, Nurse Edith .... (6)
- 17 Stormy (8)
- 18 A bitter variety of this, together with lamb and unleavened bread, was the Passover menu for anyone unclean (Numbers 9:11) (4)
- 21 Arson (anag.) (5)
- 22 How John Newton described God's grace in his well-known hymn (7)
- 23 Habitation (Isaiah 27:10) (10)

However she found it more amusing to talk about her time in early stem cell research. I need to pick my words carefully here because I am in the house of God - but to do the work they were doing they needed a regular supply of recently donated young human tissue. Leicester's Jewish and Muslim communities were able to provide them with regular supplies of small male samples, a fact which she delighted in telling people in the pub every time they had received a new delivery...

As a teenager my mum focused more on deep personal relationships rather than being the belle of the ball - but she was of course invited to her brother's 21st party. As Nigel walked in with his best friend Chris by his side, he was asked "wow...who's that bird in the pink?". So my parents were introduced to each other with the immortal line "that's no bird, that's my sister". They got together and were married soon after my Mum got back from university and found a job.

Married life brought her in to a new perhaps unexpected role - that which she described as "cricket widow". My father would regularly play twice a weekend at the Nomads - so she thought she should literally keep tabs on the situation by becoming the scorer. She also became involved in the much more fiercely competitive field of cricket tea making. Some of her university friends have been in touch to say that they had to come up - from Farnborough in Hampshire to help out - such was the national scale of the competition.

Their marital home was also home to their much loved cat. You might have to help me fill in a gap here - Mum always said that Henry was her 8th cat - but I've only got Candy, Smoky, Bippy, Maxi, Pickle, Mini and Henry - so you might have to let me know which one I've missed at the wake afterwards.

After a long and perhaps painful wait I eventually put in an appearance in 1985 and I could not have hoped for a more loving and supportive mother who promoted my independence. My parents invested in and prioritised my education. They also took me on a range of lovely family holidays. We regularly visited Pembrokeshire and Cornwall in the UK, but also travelled further afield to France, Spain and Greece. This inspired a slightly niche passion for ferry trips that I still hold today...

We would also spend time visiting our close family members - particularly brother-in-Law Peter, with whom she shared an intellectual passion for music - as well as sister-in-Law Angela, with whom she shared a passion for cooking and perhaps a traditional mild antipathy towards their mutual mother-in-law...as well as nieces and nephews Sally, Stella and Graham. We would visit them at their lovely home in the Lake District as well as at their place in Italy. It doesn't sound like too much of an ask when you put it like that, does it?

The biggest theme of my home life, though, was that of hospitality. We would

regularly have meals with my grandparents or welcome the assembled family masses for new year. From an early age I remember being invited to share the dinner table with various different groups of friends who were coming for dinner, whether that be choirs, cricketers, twinning association members or church-goers.

It will not surprise you to learn that my parents were early members of the local Wednesday Wine Club. I was obviously too young to be a member myself at the time - but I got the sense that the focus was very much on the practical, rather than theoretical appreciation of wine... Still, my mother was able to put her knowledge to good use, happily helping us choose and purchase the wine for our wedding.

Perhaps the biggest testament to the quality of the hospitality in Six Acres was that my friends would gladly come to spend their New Years partying there up to the ages of 16, 17, 18, assured of a great dinner, interesting conversation and of course free flowing wine.

It was during my teenage years that my mother discovered God, specifically here in St Mary's Church under the spiritual guidance of Peter Burrows and Anthony Pritchett. She was baptised and confirmed, then became a Pastoral Assistant helping people in the community, some of whom are here today. She briefly considered further theological study but relatively quickly concluded she was perhaps better suited to the science.

Her proudest achievement as part of this church was helping to set up the Teddy Bear Bunch. Sarah who read the lesson was one of the inaugural members having been press ganged after being spotted on Six Acres pushing a pram and she asked my mum to be Godmother to her lovely children. The organisation has gone from strength to strength and is now on its second and possibly third generation of attendees.

Helping children was a huge focus for my mum. She enjoyed teaching and was a popular supply teacher across Coventry, Leicester and Market Harborough. When she retired she took up Home Start where her role was to provide respite care for new parents who might be struggling with their beloved offspring. She also ran classes in cooking economically and healthily. She got a lot from this experience as well. When one of her 4 year old charges set off at top speed across the playground towards a main road, she learnt to run again pretty quickly.

This was all really just a dress rehearsal for her starring role as Grandma to our children George and Timothy. As a bleary eyed sleep deprived and slightly confused new father I rang her to explain that George had just been born, the hospital was in chaos, it wasn't clear what was going on, when we would be let out or what visiting arrangements were so maybe just wait for a bit and I'll be back in touch soon. Sure enough two hours later she informed

## Clubs, activities & events in January

### W.I. Meetings etc.....

Where at.....	Date and Time	Speaker	Competition
Broughton Astley Village Hall	Tuesday 13 January 7:30 pm	"Brilliant Bees" David McDowell	
Stoney Stanton St Michael's Church	Wednesday 14 January 7:30 pm	"Medieval medicine and remedies" Eddie Smallwood	
Ladies Fellowship Group St Mary's Church Broughton Astley	Wednesday 14 January 2pm Contact Denise 285410 or Wendy 07779 194730 for more information	New Year Party and Secret Santa	

### St Mary's Subscription Draw

#### November

First Prize - £40.00 - No 80 - Mrs L Wright  
 Second Prize - £20.00 - No 103 - Rev'd V Goodman  
 Third Prize - £10.00 - No 37 - Mrs C Scarsebrook

Some numbers still available – an excellent way to support the church and have some fun in these difficult times.  
 Contact Tom Cockerill on 01455 698949.

## Clubs, activities & events in December

### W.I. Meetings etc.....

Where at.....	Date and Time	Speaker	Competition
Broughton Astley Village Hall	Tuesday 9 December 7:30 pm	"A Christmas Cracker" Dave Andrews	
Stoney Stanton St Michael's Church	Wednesday 10 December 7:30 pm	Faith Supper	
Ladies Fellowship Group St Mary's Church Broughton Astley	Wednesday 10 December 2pm Contact Denise 285410 or Wendy 07779 194730 for more information	Christmas Meal	

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me that she was installed in the hotel next door and was available to visit at our convenience. Her inability to follow instructions was put hugely into perspective by the unbridled joy on her face as she first sat with George on her knee.

She was a fantastic Grandma to both George and Timothy, always being available for reading, playing, music (which skipped a generation). So infectious was her joy at being a Grandma that we would receive cards and gifts from people we had never heard of whom she had been talking to about the boys. A testament to the breadth of the relationship she had with our children is that it wasn't until a few days in and maybe eight rounds of questions that George eventually got to the real question - will I still be allowed to play on the Hornby now that Grandma has died.

It is fair to say that my mother had her share of sadness in her life. Losing her brother in his 20s, her father in his 50s and her husband in his 60s clearly contributed to her ongoing struggle with depression and I know a lot of people here helped her through some of the toughest times. The isolation of the COVID pandemic brought on her struggles with dementia. Even this she dealt with positively: I have been amazed at the number of lists, processes and systems she had put in place. I was delighted that she was able to live independently right up to the end in spite of the cruel illness.

I don't think it is unkind to share that one result of the dementia was that she had signed up to the Organ Donor register at least three times in the last two years. As a result of this, there is a man in his 70s who had been waiting four years and a woman in her 60s who has been waiting two years, both of whom now have new kidneys as a result of my mum being so giving right up to the very end.

I have only been able to pluck at a few threads of the rich tapestry of my Mother's life. I am sure I have missed out people, places or things that were really important, for which I can only apologise. But I think we can all agree on a few simple words - Thank you - and cheers!



Christine and Richard  
earlier this year at the  
Royal Albert Hall

## **Celebrating Christmas and looking forward to the New Year**

*'Away in a manger  
No crib for a bed  
The little Lord Jesus  
Laid down His sweet head'*

This is such a well-known carol which will be heard at numerous carol services over the Festive period.



At St Mary's Teddy Bear Bunch we share the Christmas story with young children many of whom are hearing it for the first time. Many more children and their families will also celebrate the birth of Jesus at our Parish Christingle Services. It is a magical time for children as they learn about how Jesus came to live on earth amongst us.

The concept of a baby in a crib in a stable is such a simple image, contrasting with our modern lives where materialism is so often seen as the goal and we can become overwhelmed with clutter – both physical and mental.

I hope this Christmas we too can reflect on the image of the baby Jesus with his parents and their visitors, the shepherds, and their animals.

It is a joy to share the Christmas story every year. Our Churches are here for our communities to welcome all – just as the visitors came to visit the baby Jesus.

Christmas is also a time to be with family and friends. May we all share the joy of Christmas with those around us, thinking also of those who may be on their own, or struggling.

As we look towards 2026, people will be thinking about New Year Resolutions. What can we do to make our World a better place? We don't have to make large/extravagant resolutions. Small and simple gestures can also have a big impact. Maybe a smile, or a hello, to those we pass in the street, to brighten someone's day.

## **EFFFI (Elmesthorpe Friends Food and Flower Initiative)**

Raising money for St Mary's Church and other local charities

### **Coffee Morning**

**Elmesthorpe Village Hall  
10:00—11:30**

**Saturday 20 December**

**Christmas Party  
Wear your Christmas Jumper**

**Saturday 31 January**

**Burns Night Bingo!  
Wear something tartan!**

**All Welcome**

### **Carol Service**

**Stoney Stanton Methodist Chapel**

**Thursday 11 December**

**7:30 pm**

**Refreshments afterwards**

**All welcome**





### *St Patrick's Breastplate*

*I bind unto myself today The strong name of the Trinity:*

*By invocation of the same, The Three in One and One in Three.*

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,*

*Christ behind me, Christ before me,*

*Christ beside me, Christ to win me,*

*Christ to comfort and restore me,*

*Christ beneath me, Christ above me,*

*Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,*

*Christ in hearts of all that love me,*

*Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*

*I bind unto myself today, The strong name of the Trinity:*

*By invocation of the same, The Three in One and One in Three,*

*Of Whom all nature hath creation, Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:*

*Praise to the Lord of my salvation*

(This is a shortened version of a much longer prayer, easily found!)



The three leaved clover/shamrock, traditionally believed to have been used by St. Patrick to teach the doctrine of the Trinity

*For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.*

*And he will be called*

*Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,*

*Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6

Heather Beadle



### **Coffee Mornings and Lunches**

**St Mary's Church, Broughton Astley**

Saturdays 6 December and 3 January

10 am— 12 noon

Community Market and Coffee Morning

**St Michael and All Angels Croft**

Lunch

Saturday 6 December

12 noon - 1:30 pm

Booking Essential

For more information

Contact Libby on 01455 282629

No lunches in January and February

**St Michael's Church, Stoney Stanton**

Saturdays 13 December and 10 January

10 am - 12 noon

Coffee Morning

## *Thinking about Prayer.....*

### **A Prayer for the New Year – St.Patrick's Breastplate**

And so the close of another year approaches, with all its regrets, tasks left unaccomplished, but also, hopefully with the remembrance of special times, particular joys, which will give us a warm glow as we reminisce.

As I write, we are looking forward to the arrival of a new baby, my first great grandchild, and the season of Advent and Christmas will be a very special time. But the New Year beckons and we can set the sadnesses aside and begin again.

The Roman god Janus was the god of doorways, passages, entrances and is portrayed often in ancient sculpture as having two heads, looking in two different directions. It is from him that we get the name of the first month of the year, January, and true to form, there will be world wide celebrations as we mark the transition from one year to the next.

As Christians, in years past, the passage of time was often marked with a 'Watch night service' and bellringers have seized the opportunity traditionally to 'ring out the old, and ring in the New' every New Year's Eve.

But this would equally be a good time to take on a New Year's resolution or two. The Celtic Church delighted in 'circling prayers' prayers for protection, prayers which recognised the surrounding presence of God at all times. In recent times, a looking back towards the prayers and traditions of the Celtic Church in these islands has taken place and enriched our understanding of that ancient church.

The Celtic church had its origins in Ireland, thanks to the evangelising of St.Patrick. A nobleman's son in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, probably from the mainland of Northern England, he was taken by pirates and sold as a slave in Ireland, working there for some time until he was able to escape. A faithful Christian, he was ordained as a priest, and returned to his beloved Ireland, bringing the faith to the people. But the Irish Church had a broad understanding of the divine, and it absorbed, on the way, the nature cults of its people.

So the Celtic Church developed in its own way, a theologically sophisticated and cultured body which revered the natural world in a way which the dominant Roman Church of its day would not countenance until the time of St.Francis. Its isolation was helped by the challenges of living in an area which the Romans had called 'ultima Thule' the end of the known world, a particularly wild island surrounded by treacherous seas.

Eventually the faith spread to Western Scotland, thanks to Columba and from there, down into Northern England. The sanctity of Celtic saints is exemplary, Aidan, the Apostle of the North, Cuthbert, at whose shrine Durham Cathedral was created, and many more. But the situation could not continue and eventually the Roman Church asserted itself. At the synod of Whitby, in 664 AD the leaders of both churches met together, ostensibly to discuss fixing the date of Easter, and the ancient church and its practices was absorbed into the larger and more dominant body. However, it would not be left forgotten and its prayers and response to God the creator lived on.

As we turn towards the New Year, St.Patrick's own prayer, his 'breastplate' asking God for protection, and making a total life-commitment to Christ is particularly Suitable. It is also a prayer which may be said daily, through the coming year, the best of good resolutions!



St.John's  
Cross, Iona