

Church Alive!

Swanage Parish Magazine

August 2026



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Rev Natalie Davies writes:

I must admit to the last few months feeling somewhat of a blur. It feels like only yesterday that I was ordained priest, and yet Joseph and I are already preparing for our next chapter as we get ready to move to Windsor.

In September I will take up the role of Succentor at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, and Chaplain to St George's School. As Succentor, I will help lead and sing the daily worship, support the planning and administration of the Chapel's rich liturgical life, and share in the pastoral and teaching ministry of the College of St George. Alongside this, as School Chaplain, I will have the privilege of supporting the spiritual, emotional, and pastoral wellbeing of the pupils, staff, and families of St George's School.

It is both an exciting and a daunting opportunity to serve the community of St George's, Windsor Castle, the wider town, and, through the life of the Chapel, to support the King and the Royal Family. As we prepare for this move, I have found myself returning often to the words of Jeremiah 29:11: *"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."* They have been a great source of encouragement as we step into all that God has in store.

Leaving Swanage, Studland, and the Diocese of Salisbury will not be easy. We have had the most wonderful time here and have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know and serve this community. From the moment we arrived, we received such a warm welcome, and I have been so grateful for all the encouragement and support I have received as I have been getting to grips with being a priest and completing my training.

Along the way I have met and worked with many wonderful people who have become dear friends, and for that I shall always be thankful.

My particular thanks must, of course, go to Revd Ian, who has been my Training Incumbent during my curacy. His wisdom, generosity, and deep love for priestly ministry have been an extraordinary gift to me during these formative years, and I will always be grateful for his guidance, encouragement, and example.

It has been a privilege for Joseph and I to serve this community and to share this chapter of our lives with you all. Please be assured that you will continue to be in our prayers, and we hope that you will remember us in yours as we begin this new season of ministry.

May God continue to bless each of our churches, and may he guide us all as we seek to follow him wherever he leads.

With every blessing,

Revd Natalie



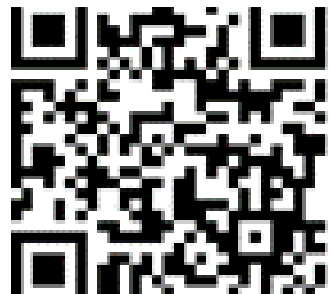
Installation at St George's Chapel

Revd Natalie's last Sunday in Swanage will be 9th August. That day Natalie will be presiding and preaching at the 8am and 10.30am Eucharists at St Mary's with her final service being Choral Evensong at 6.30pm followed by refreshments.

Natalie's installation in St George's Chapel will take place at Evensong at 5.15pm on 1st September. All are welcome. Parking is available in the town centre car parks.

Please arrive to King Henry VIII gate by 5pm, the police officers on duty will let you know when the Chapel doors have opened (seating in the Quire is limited so early arrival is recommended to give the best chance of a view- the screen between Quire and Nave is unfortunately solid!).

We now have a convenient QR code available for anyone who would like to make a donation to any of our three parishes. Simply scan the code shown here to give securely and support our parish.



St Mary's



August Services

Sunday Services

8.00am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Choral Eucharist
6.30pm	Choral Evensong

Weekly Services/Events:

Tues	2.30pm	All Things Bright & Beautiful <i>(particularly suitable for those living with dementia or any kind of special need)</i>
Weds	10am-12.30pm	T-Pot in the Rectory Classroom
	11.00am	Holy Communion <i>(every 4th Weds with Healing)</i>
Fri	5.45pm	Junior Choir practice
	6.30pm	Adult choir practice
Sun 16th	10.30am	Patronal Service
	5.30pm	Lifeboat Service on Swanage Pier
		NO 6.30pm EVENSONG

St Mary's Notes



Lifeboat Service on Swanage Pier Sunday 16th August - 5.30pm

Everyone is warmly invited to the annual Lifeboat Service on Swanage Pier at 5.30pm. This special outdoor service gives us an opportunity to come together in thanksgiving for the dedication and courage of the RNLI volunteers and all who serve our local community.

Please note that, because of the Pier service, there will be no 6.30pm Evensong at St Mary's Church on that day. We hope many members of the congregation will join us on the Pier for this shared act of worship.



Regular Sunday Services in August

8am Holy Communion

10.30am Family Worship with a children's craft activity

1st Sunday communion

2nd Sunday Café Church.

In August all the services will be an hour and be suitable for all ages and stages.

Weekly Church Calendar at All Saints presses pause in August

All Saints Toddlers Mondays 9:15am,

Weekly Prayer Meeting Thursdays 10:30am,

Coffee Pot Thursdays 10:30am

Art workshop Fridays 10am

take a break in August and resume in September

Our Summer sermon series is called Pathways to Life: exploring practices to help draw us closer to Jesus.

Sunday August	Shhhhh: silence & solitude
Sunday August 9	The Power of Music (Café church week)
Sunday August 16	Giving Up, to Go Deeper
Sunday August 23	Daily Time in The Word
Sunday August 30	Holydays with God



News from All Saints

Along with many at All Saints, I have been enjoying the privilege of living so close to the beach and making the most of the hot weather with frequent dips in the sea. As we enter holiday season and welcome so many visitors to enjoy all that Swanage has to offer, I am reminded of the refreshment and joy that Jesus offers to all who come to him: “Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden”, says the Lord, “and I will give you rest. May it be that we as Jesus’ people here in Swanage are able to offer that spiritual rest and refreshment for those who come to visit, as well as a regular holiday by the sea.

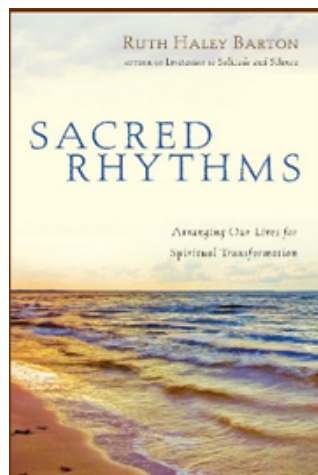
Holiday season also means a good book for many. I wonder what you will be reading over the summer period. At All Saints we are in the middle of a series called “Pathways to Life” looking at spiritual practices that can draw us closer to God. We will be exploring a wide range of habits that believers over the years have discovered bring life to their faith and deepen their connection with our heavenly Father. One of the best contemporary writers on these spiritual practices is Ruth Hayley Barton.

She writes: “How do people change—really? has been my question for a long time, partly because I am so aware of my own need to change and partly because I’ve hung around the church for so long and have seen so little real change there, despite all its big promises. Encountering the richness of the broader Christian tradition in the midst of my own desire has led me to reclaim practices and experiences that spiritual seekers down through the ages have used to open themselves to God’s transforming work.”

Why not try one of her books as your summer read:

Sacred Rhythms: A way of life that works—how bad do you want it? Do you long for deep, fundamental change in your life with God? Do you desire greater intimacy with God? Do you wonder how you might truly live your life as God created you to live it? Spiritual disciplines are activities that open us to God's transforming love and the changes that only God can bring about in our lives.

This is a brilliant and challenging read – are you ready to meet God in a deeper way?



As we reflect on the Generous God, Generous people series that we shared across the team, I wonder if you found yourself challenged in some way?

Some people have expressed an interest in more specific figures to help work out their personal response to our financial needs as a church: Let me quote from our treasurer’s report in the annual accounts.

- There are approximately 116 members of our churches who support us by using the very efficient Parish Giving Scheme.
- The monthly amounts given via PGS range from £5 to £440 (but only 25 people give £100 or more per month)
- There are 276 members on our electoral roll, only 42% are signed up with PGS (noting many couples naturally only have one account)
- If each of the current 116 PGS givers gave £209 per month – we would cover our 2025 expenditure.
- However, if everyone on our electoral roll gave £90 per month – we would cover our 2025 expenditure.

v Swanage Team Expenditure in 2025 was ~ £291,000

We hope to explore ways to express our generosity through service as well as financial giving in more detail in future months.

Let's continue to prayerfully consider how we can reflect God's generosity to us, with a generous attitude to our church and our needy world.

With every blessing

Revd Jo Levasier

Cover Story

*Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young—
a place near your altar,
Lord Almighty, my King and my God.
Psalm 84.3*

DIARY DATES AUGUST 2026



Sunday 2nd August - Holy Communion at **11am followed by a BBQ**

Tuesday 4th August - 7pm Bible Study

Wednesday 5th August - 10am Prayer Walk around part of Herston

Sunday 9th August - 10am Holy Communion

6:30pm Natalie's Farewell Evensong at St Mary's

Wednesday 12th August - 10am Prayer Walk around part of Herston

Sunday 16th August - 10am Holy Communion

5:30pm Swanage Lifeboat Service on the Pier

Tuesday 18th August - 7pm Bible Study

Wednesday 19th August - 10am Prayer Walk around part of Herston

Sunday 23rd August - 10am Holy Communion. Preacher: Chris Campbell

Wednesday 26th August - 10am Prayer Walk around part of Herston

Sunday 30th August - 10am Celebration! Service

There is no Choir rehearsal in August

St Marks News

There has recently been some negative publicity about Herston following the proposals to merge St George's School Langton with St Mark's School. The proposals have been withdrawn, but the inaccurate descriptions of our community, as rather down-market, remain. We are a vibrant village with a popular pub, a great shop, a primary school declared "good" by OFSTED, a busy Village Hall and a wonderful local Church! We want to celebrate our local community, and, in doing so, we hope to challenge the negative comments.

There is a long history of God's people working to promote their local community. The prophet Jeremiah wrote these words to the Jews who had been carried away to exile in Babylon:

"... seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." (Jeremiah 29:7).

Wherever I have served, I have tried to build a stronger community, because Churches are good at community. The C of E Faith in the City Report (1986) called on Churches to be **"Local, Outward-Looking and Participating"**, and this, together with Jesus' call to be "Salt and Light", is our commission to get stuck in to promoting the life of our community.

At the moment we are taking baby steps with a new **Herston Our Village** Facebook page, (please check it out), and lots of conversations with various people about ways to celebrate our wonderful village. Watch this space!

Although St Mark's Church primarily serves Herston, we try to be outward-looking. **Our June Concert** raised £500, split between St Mark's Church and the ALLSORT'D Focus Centre Café Appeal. This £500 was promptly doubled by a very kind person. Any donations from **our July Pimm's and Hymns** will be split between St Mark's Church and the Christian Aid Venezuela Earthquake Appeal. We look forward to hearing about ways in which we can support our link Diocese in South Sudan – a troubled country with many needs.

August is traditionally a quiet month in the Church. At St Mark's we take advantage of this and will have a later (11am) start to the service on 2nd August to allow **a relaxed BBQ lunch** afterwards. It's always good to share a meal together. The Wednesday Prayer and Share will also change during August, and will go "on the road" with a series of **Prayer Walks**, with the aim of praying for every street in our village. Please see the St Mark's Pewsheets or St Mark's Facebook page for details of the route each week.

One of the highlights of our month at St Mark's is the **Celebration!** Service with our Church Band and all-age choir. September's Celebration! Service, on Sunday 27th. will also be a Pets' Service. All pets are welcome, but I will probably delegate blessing any snakes to someone else (we all have our phobias)!

Have a blessed summer!

David Richards

St Nicholas Studland News



It's August, the month of sunshine, warm days, bright sands and the sparkling sea. It's time to hit the beach. Needless to say, the advertisers are busy extolling the virtues of holidays, beachwear and sunscreen. Reminding us of everything we need to stay healthy and look beautiful in the summer days that lie ahead.

In the Church Year, August brings us a truly bright and sparkling event: the Transfiguration. You can find it in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Jesus took his inner circle of friends, Peter, John and James, up to a mountain to pray. While they were there Jesus' appearance was utterly changed, there was dazzling light and he seemed to be accompanied by two of the "Old Testament Greats", Moses and Elijah.

Unsurprisingly, Jesus' friends were terrified and Peter started yacking away about building shelters and so on. In the end they heard a voice which simply said: *"This is my Son my Chosen, listen to Him"*. Whatever the interpretation, of this event, one thing is clear, these close friends were enabled to see Jesus for who he really is: not just a great teacher and preacher and healer, but God's special one, God's Son.

Now, if you're a bit squeamish you may not want to read the next bit...The great eighteenth century Scots poet, Robbie Burns wrote a poem entitled: "To A Louse, On Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church" It was clear to him that the lady in question had no idea of the creature's presence but just continued to toss and preen her hair. And let's not be sexist here...he could probably have seen the same thing on a gentleman's wig!

The final verse is:

*O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!*

Burns challenges his readers to ask "Who am I pretending to be?" and "Would it be so awful if people saw me as I really am?". These seem like very modern questions in the age of seemingly wall-to-wall advertising, TikTok, Instagram and social media influencers.

The good news is, as God sees us through Jesus as amazing and beautiful. The ancient song writer, the psalmist writes:

*"For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well. [Psalm 139 vs 14]"*

The Christian belief is that if we can open our eyes and see Jesus for who he really is (just like Peter, James and John) then we can see and become who we are really meant to be. We are fully human people made in the image of God, infinitely loved, and redeemed by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

There will be no need to pretend, no need to be concerned about how others see us, no need to worry whether we will be beautiful, bright and sparkly enough for the beach or anywhere else. We shall just be. As the Television Meerkat, Oleg would say: "Simples"

Revd. Tony Edmonds

Quotation

"The Bible is the Word of God: supernatural in origin, eternal in duration, inexpressible in valor, infinite in scope, regenerative in power, infallible in authority, universal in interest, personal in application, inspired in totality. Read it through, write it down, pray it in, work it out, and then pass it on. Truly it is the Word of God. It brings into man the personality of God; it changes the man until he becomes the epistle of God. It transforms his mind, changes his character, takes him on from grace to grace, and gives him an inheritance in the Spirit. God comes in, dwells in, walks in, talks through, and sups with him."

Smith Wigglesworth

Purbeck Deanery Link with Terekeka, South Sudan

The Purbeck Deanery is exploring how to build on the long-standing relationship between St Stephen's School, Terekeka, South Sudan, which has been nurtured for many years by the Wareham Benefice.

While the existing link has focused on supporting St Stephen's School, there is now an opportunity to widen this into a Deanery-wide partnership, strengthening our relationship not only with the school but also with the wider Diocese of Terekeka in line with the Salisbury Diocese's Sudan partnership.

A meeting of Deanery clergy in May considered how this link could be developed so that it becomes a shared ministry across Purbeck rather than relying on the enthusiasm of just a few individuals.

What happens next?

The immediate priority is to establish a **Deanery Working Group** to help develop and coordinate the partnership.

Each benefice is being asked to nominate:

- one **lay representative** with an interest in global mission or overseas partnerships; and
- the working group will meet with Mike Quinlan in Wareham to shape the future of the partnership and consider practical ways of engaging churches across the Deanery.

The ideal volunteer is someone who is enthusiastic about developing relationships, communicating stories to the congregation, and helping keep this international partnership alive. Previous experience of overseas mission, education or working abroad is welcome but not essential.

If you are interested in becoming our church's representative, please make your interest to one of the clergy team.

Together we have an opportunity to build a meaningful partnership that enables us to learn from, pray for, and support our siblings in Christ in South Sudan, while enriching the life and mission of our own churches.

Revd Natalie Davies

SWANAGE TOWN BAND have their final summer bandstand gig on Wednesday 26th August at 7pm.

swanagetownband@gmail.com

Quotation

“Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength.”

Corrie Ten Boom, Clippings from My Notebook

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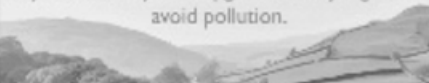
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Family News

Weddings at Studland

4th July ~ Antony Raymond and Gabriella Bagnall

11th July ~ Huw Reynolds and Georgina D'Arcy



Jocelynnne

If anyone has got spare knitting wool, I knit scarves for homeless people. Not furry wool, just double knitting wool, bright colours please. lynnechurchserver@hotmail.co.uk. Please leave on the back pew at St Marks church, with my name on it and your email address. Thank You!



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Hebrew Word of the Month

There are mornings when we wake up carrying yesterday with us. Perhaps it was something we said, a decision we regret, a prayer that still seems unanswered, or simply the weight of a difficult season that has followed us longer than we expected. We open our eyes, but our hearts are still somewhere in yesterday.

It is into this kind of weariness that the Hebrew phrase Chasdei Adonai (חַסְדֵי יְהוָה, pronounced: khas-DEI ah-doh-NAI) speaks so beautifully. It means “the mercies of the Lord” or “the lovingkindness of the Lord.” The Hebrew word chesed (חֶסֶד, pronounced: khesed) is difficult to capture with a single English word because it carries the idea of mercy, steadfast love, kindness, and covenant faithfulness. It is love that does not disappear when circumstances change. It is the faithful love of God toward those who belong to Him.

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” — Lamentations 3:22-23

What makes these words even more powerful is where we find them. The prophet Jeremiah was not writing from a place of comfort or ease. He was looking at devastation. Jerusalem had suffered greatly, the people were grieving, and the future appeared uncertain. Yet in the middle of his sorrow, Jeremiah deliberately turned his heart toward the character of God. He remembered Chasdei Adonai—the mercies of the Lord.

This is one of the great lessons of faith. We do not always have the power to immediately change our circumstances, but we can choose what we bring back to our hearts. Jeremiah remembered that God’s mercy had not disappeared. His compassion had not been exhausted.

His faithfulness had not changed simply because the season was painful. The same truth is revealed to us so beautifully in Jesus.

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”—Ephesians 2:4-5

Through Jesus, we see the mercy of God reaching directly into our brokenness. God did not wait for us to become strong enough, righteous enough, or worthy enough to approach Him. He came toward us in mercy. When we were spiritually dead, He gave us life. When sin had separated us from Him, He opened the way for reconciliation.

This means that God’s mercy is not merely a comforting idea for difficult days. It is at the very heart of our salvation. We live because God is merciful. We are forgiven because God is merciful. We can come before Him again because His mercy is greater than our failures.

Perhaps you have been carrying something from yesterday. A mistake you keep replaying. A disappointment you cannot seem to release. Maybe you feel that you should be further along in your walk with God by now, or that you have failed Him too many times in the same area. Chasdei Adonai reminds us that the mercy of God is not exhausted by yesterday.

Scripture tells us that His mercies are new every morning. That means when you woke up today, you did not wake up to the leftovers of God’s mercy. You did not receive whatever compassion remained after yesterday. His mercy meets you again—fresh, faithful, and completely rooted in who He is.

This does not mean that our choices do not matter or that God ignores sin. His mercy leads us toward repentance, restoration, and a transformed life. But we do not change because God has rejected us. We change because His kindness draws us back to Him and His grace gives us strength to walk differently.

Today, you can pray these simple Hebrew words: Chasdei Adonai.

When yesterday feels heavy, remember the mercies of the Lord. When you feel ashamed, remember the mercies of the Lord. When the future feels uncertain, remember the mercies of the Lord. His compassion has not failed. His faithfulness has not changed. And through Yeshua, Jesus, the mercy of God has reached even you.

Chasdei Adonai—the mercies of the Lord. They are new every morning.

A Prayer

Father, thank You for Your mercy and steadfast love. Thank You that Your compassion does not fail and that Your faithfulness does not change with my circumstances. Help me to release the weight of yesterday and receive the mercy You give me today. When I feel discouraged, remind me of Chasdei Adonai—the mercies of the Lord. Thank You for the mercy You have shown me through Jesus and for the new life I have in Him. Lead me in repentance, restore my heart, and help me walk faithfully with You today. In Yeshua's name, amen.

Blessings,

Pastor Israel Pochtar

Righteousness

We long for peace. We long to be in a right relationship with God and with other people. But how do you receive *‘righteousness from God’*?

Paul argues that no one is righteous on their own. *‘There’s nobody living right, not even one’* (v.10b, MSG). *‘They’ve all taken the wrong turn; they’ve all wandered down blind alleys’* (v.12, MSG). Righteousness is the way to peace, but the reality is that *‘the way of peace they do not know’* (v.17).

Paul concludes his argument: *‘And it’s clear enough, isn’t it, that we’re sinners, every one of us, in the same sinking boat with everybody else?’* (v.20, MSG). The two little words that follow are of huge significance: ***‘But now...’*** (v.21).

Having set out the problem, Paul now moves on to describe God’s game-changing answer – *‘a righteousness from God’* (v.21).

This righteousness from God cannot be achieved through the law because no one (apart from Jesus) has ever kept the entire law. The Old Testament (the Law and the Prophets) testifies about this and points towards God’s answer (v.21).

‘This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe’ (v.22). This righteousness from God cannot be earned. It is a pure gift that you receive *‘through faith in Jesus Christ’*. It is a gift *‘to all who believe’* (v.22).

From “The Bible” A commentary by Nicky and Pipa Gumbel

Letter from the Editor

The beautiful hymn “*How deep the Father’s love for us*” on the back page, is one of several that I often used to listen to when I was in hospital for four months being treated for stage four cancer. I often listened to these stirring words in the evening, after the business and clamour of the hospital day had quietened, a time for contemplation and an opportunity to reflect on the scope and extent of the Father’s love, demonstrated in the life of the Lord Jesus.

That love is indeed “*vast beyond all measure*,” and it is in the darkest moments, the most challenging times of our lives, that we can lean on Him and depend on His unfailing love.

The line “*His dying breath has brought me life, I know that it is finished*,” is one that breathes hope, even when we are facing death, or long term disability. Both my legs were broken because of damage from the cancer, and there was no certainty that I would walk again, or that I would survive. Listening to this song helped me to truly appreciate the truth that His sacrifice for me, on the Cross, brought an end to all argument, doubt and unbelief. “*It is finished*.” In Christ I have dominion over death, failure and disease, He has brought me life.

I do not know “*why should I gain from His reward? I do not have an answer*.” I know that I do not deserve it, but “*this I know with all my heart, His wounds have paid my ransom*.” We will not live for ever on this earth, but as we put our faith and trust in Jesus we can have complete certainty that we will live for ever, one day, in His glorious presence.

Our prayers in the Church in Swanage is that all who are facing illness or deep trouble will find in Jesus a Saviour who will “*bring many sons and daughters to glory*.”

How deep the Father's love for us
How vast beyond all measure?
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss?
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory

It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished

Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

Sung by Celtic Worship on YouTube