

# CHURCH ALIVE!

## SWANAGE PARISH MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2025/JANUARY 2026



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## Rev Natalie Davies writes:

**This issue of the magazine** covers a bumper two months in the church calendar where we journey through Advent to Christmas and Epiphany, with the next issue coming out at the beginning of February, just in time for Candlemas which officially marks the end of the Christmas season.



**But as I write this article**, we have just celebrated Remembrance, honouring the fallen, all those who have given their lives in the service of this country, in striving for peace. Remembering the past year as we approach the end of it, we will be no doubt be mindful that another year has passed in which the yet more conflicts have broken out or continued across our globe.

Advent is a time in the liturgical calendar of waiting and preparation. We are waiting for Jesus, the light of the world and bringer of peace to come into our lives. This year this waiting is again more poignant than ever.

**However, as we mark** the start of Advent at the evening Advent Sunday service at St Mary's, beginning with darkened church which is gradually lit with candles, we will be reminded that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5). Wars continue because there are those who continue to resist evil, who are determined to bring freedom to those who are persecuted and to return peace to places torn apart by violence. During Advent we wait and look toward the coming of the light into the darkness, the root of Jesse, Emmanuel, God with us who was born of the Virgin Mary and sent by God as the saviour of the world. Christ is our hope and our light in the darkest of times.

**Moving through Advent**, closer to Christmas the Church offers us a set of prayers to be used to herald the coming of Christ. The Advent O Antiphons have been used since the early Middle Ages and have

been sung since the sixth or seventh centuries at Evening Prayer between 17th-23rd December. Each are drawn from a description of the Messiah from the Old Testament prophets and concludes with a plea- Veni! 'Come!'. Together these offer us a profound and beautiful meditation on the coming of the Messiah.

*O Wisdom, O Adonai, O Root of Jesse, O Key of David, O Morning Star, O King of the Nations, O Emmanuel, Come! (and if you want to read more about this and how to pray with these, I highly recommend to you O Come Emmanuel: Reflections on the Advent Antiphons which has been recently published by Church House Publishing).*

**In calling the O Antiphons** to mind we can look in joyful expectation to the celebration of the birth of Christ, our light and our salvation, who has so much to offer us today. Because despite all the darkness in our world, there is still much that has happened in which we have been guided and accompanied by Christ that we can be thankful for and celebrate:

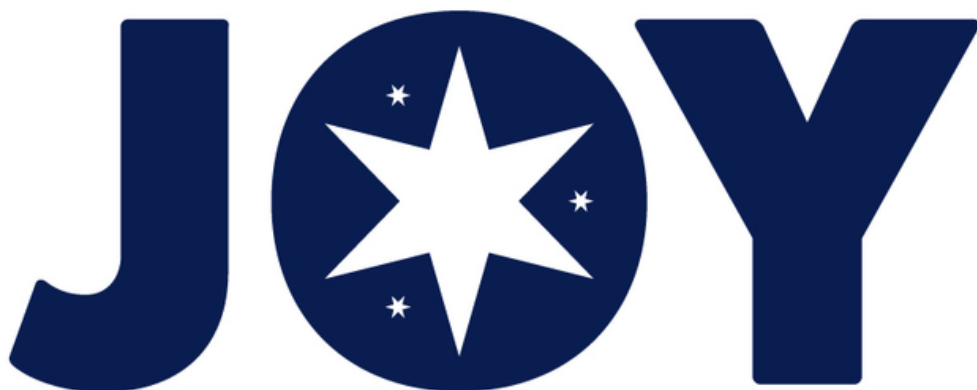
**This year across our churches** we have seen: nine couples married, two of our choristers confirmed, baptisms, the licensing of Revd Dave and Carol Richards at St Marks and Revd Tony Edmonds in Studland; All Saints have had two very successful community Fundays and have seen the successful launch of the new Toddler Group, a Holy Week prayer room, hosted a work experience student, and held many other successful services and events; St Marks had two excellent Teddy Bear Picnics organised by Team Teddy!, and the popular Pimms and Hymns event in July; St Mary's highlights have included the Lent Course, the (as always) rich liturgy and music during our Easter services provided by our very talented musicians and choir, and community celebrations of the Folk Festival and the

annual Lifeboat service which this year marked 150 years of the Swanage Lifeboat Station. It was also a great pleasure to welcome Stephen, the Bishop of Salisbury who preached at the Lifeboat service and preached and presided at the Patronal Festival at St Mary's that morning. As always we have maintained great relationships with other Swanage churches in Churches Together in Swanage events such as the Carnival tent and Carnival Praise service, the United Service and others.

We already have many more exciting projects, events and services planned for the coming year and so as this year draws to a close, I look forward in hope and thanksgiving that Christ, Emmanuel, is with us.

**From all of the us** in the Swanage and Studland Team Ministry we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

**Revd Natalie Davies**



# Swanage Parish Finances July - September 2025

**This is the third quarter** for which I have put together a summary of the financial transactions which have come through the parish office. I have included some categories which didn't occur previously, but which may be of interest. Some do not have a budget figure as they did not feature in the year's budget.

**The total receipts** in this quarter were £58,885 and the payments totalled £62,914. As in the previous quarters, the payments have exceeded the income and that is, unfortunately, the situation we have been in for the last few years. Although the members of our congregations have continued to give and our regular income this year appears to be somewhat increased on last year, we are still not "paying our way". Recently, Ian Bird and I went to a meeting of the diocesan synod at which it was said that if every member of the churches throughout the diocese gave about £2.50 extra each week, the diocesan deficit of £2million would disappear. The same principle applies to our parish finances and if everyone who is able gave something more each week, we would be able to reduce our expected deficit considerably.

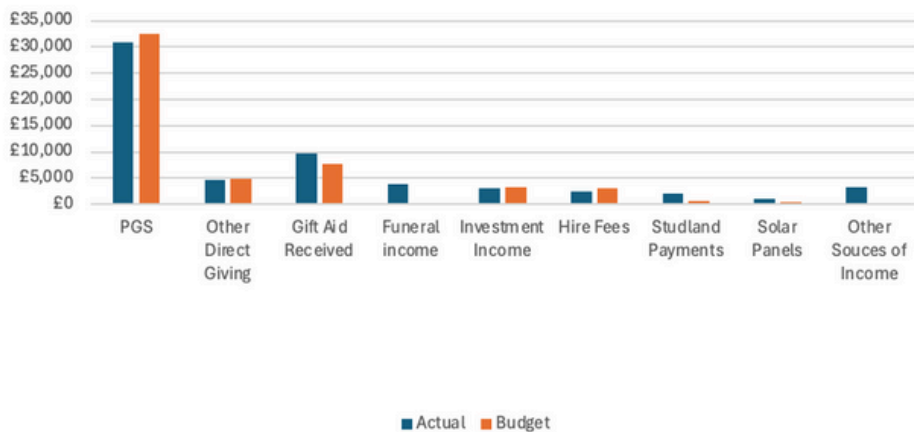
**By the time you read this**, I will have reported to the PCC my estimate of how the figures will look at the end of 2025. In my last report in this magazine, I made a rough estimate of a deficit of £48,000. On more careful calculation, I'm sorry to say the expected figure is rather higher, perhaps over £50,000. We cannot afford to continue to keep having deficits of this order if we wish to see our Anglican churches survive and thrive. Nor would we want to have to report a deficit each year, as it necessitates taking money from our reserves and from recent legacies.

**The Finance and Stewardship Committee** are modelling the next few years to see for how long we can maintain this level of depletion of our remaining available reserves and what actions we can take to mitigate this and I will say more when the results of this study have been reported to the PCC. We have already reduced our costs in some areas but some increase in giving by those who are able to, would help the situation considerably.

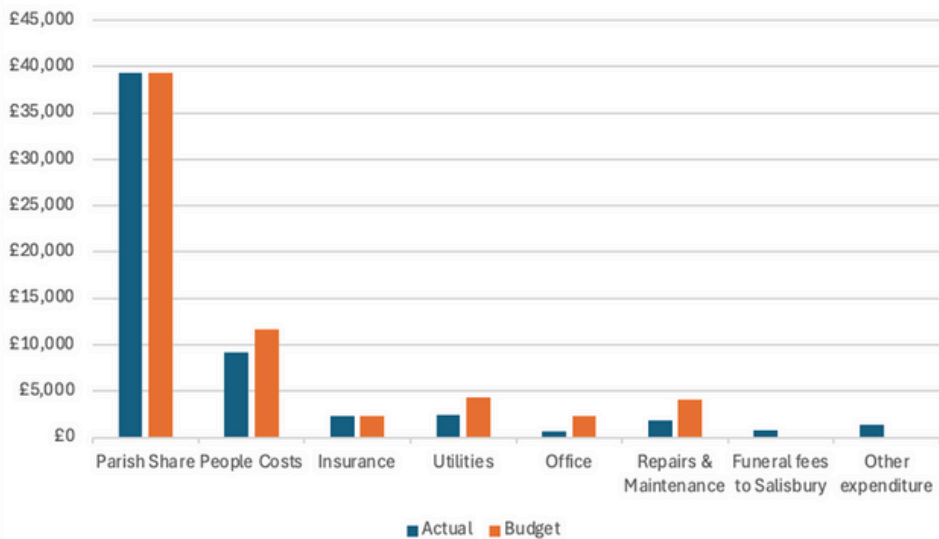
As always, if you have any questions on the figures I present, please feel free to contact me.

**John Way, PCC Treasurer.**

### Income July- Sept 2025



### Expenditure July - Sept 2025





# St Mary's

## December Services

### Sunday Services

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

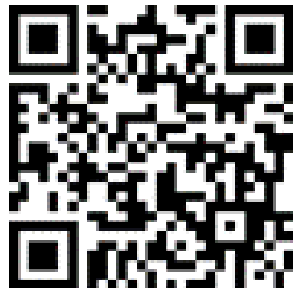


### Weekly Services/Events:

Tues	2.30pm	All Things Bright & Beautiful (particularly suitable for those living with dementia or any kind of special need)
Weds	10am-12.30pm	T-Pot in the Rectory Classroom
	11.00am	Holy Communion (every 4 <sup>th</sup> Weds with Healing)
Fri	5.45pm	Junior Choir practice
	6.30pm	Adult choir practice
	6-30pm	Friday Fun Club in the Rectory Classroom (term time only)

Sunday School (in St Mary's Rooms) follows the 10.30am  
service on 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month

We now have a convenient QR code available for anyone who would like to make a donation to St Mary's Church. Simply scan the code shown here to give securely and support our parish.



## **ST MARY'S DIARY FOR DECEMBER 2025**

Sun 30th Nov 6.30pm Advent Carols evensong

Sat 6th Dec 1-4pm Set up and rehearsal for evening concert  
7.00pm Belvedere Singers Christmas Concert

Fri 12th 2-4pm Christmas Mingle

Mon 15th 9.30am Swanage Primary School rehearsal for  
Christmas Concert

Tues 16th 9.30am Swanage Primary School Christmas  
Concert

Sun 21st 6.30pm Town Carol Service

Christmas Eve 4.00pm Crib Service  
6.30pm Carols by Candlelight  
11.30pm Midnight Eucharist

Christmas Day 8.00am Holy Communion  
10.30am Eucharist for Christmas Day

## **ST MARY'S DIARY FOR JANUARY 2026**

Sun 4th 8.00am Holy Communion  
10.30am Family Eucharist for the Feast of  
Epiphany  
6.30pm Epiphany Team Service at St Mark's:  
Readings & Carols for Epiphany

Sun 18th 10.30am United Service for the Week of Prayer for  
Christian Unity at Emmanuel Baptist Church

## St Mary's Notes

**We've had a busy November** at St Mary's, beginning with our All Souls service A Service in which to Remember... on the 2nd, the Town Remembrance Service on the 9th, and the hosting of Candles by the Sea on the 15th. We hosted this secular event for the first time; previously it has been on the beach and in the Bandstand. Although secular, Rector Ian introduced it and spoke at the end. The candle-lighting (of re-chargeable battery - powered candles) was outside on the lawn. The Town Band played in the church, and St Mary's Choir sang hymns and religious choral pieces which attracted a good number to come into church and listen. The final event on November 29th is Handel's Messiah, performed by the Purbeck Arts Choir. Tickets have been selling fast!

**Practical matters in hand** include an estimate for repairs and redecorating the North Gallery. It can be seen where plaster is falling from the ceiling making it too risky to use the gallery. As it will be costly to erect the necessary scaffolding, it has been decided to make best use of it and decorate the Gallery while the scaffolding is in place. Asbestos guttering and downpipes have been replaced on the Rectory Classroom; the costly part of that is removal and disposal of the asbestos. A grant was obtained for replacement of the clock hands on the south side of the tower – you can look and see whether they have been put in place or not!

**“Christmas comes but once a year....”** begins an old rhyme. Just as well, some may say! Before that, we have Advent to allow us to prepare for Christmas. Over the four Sundays of Advent we light the Advent Wreath. This custom developed in Lutheran Germany and reached Britain in the 20th century. There are several ways that the five candles on the wreath can be used. At

**St Mary's we have three purple**, one pink, and one white candle, lit on successive Sundays to remind us first of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac), then the Prophets, then John the Baptist (pink for rejoicing) and then Mary, with the central white candle lit at Christmas. The choir sing Antiphons (Bible verses) before the lighting and special prayers of penitence are said.

Then on the Christmas Day we have joy and jubilation to celebrate the coming of Jesus into the world. Is this the most important event we celebrate, or is it Easter? Can there be one without the other?

**In December, before Christmas**, St Mary's will once again host Swanage Primary School's Christmas concert and on another day a Christingle Service will be held for the school. There's quite a programme of Christmas services across the Team and we have our usual quota at St Mary's. As last year, we'll have a handy postcard style leaflet listing everything. Let's hope we have lots of people coming to church over Christmas, first-timers especially welcome!

Avril Harris, Churchwarden

### **Christmas Greetings**

The churchwardens at St Mary's, Ray Davis and Avril Harris, wish everyone an enjoyable and peaceful Christmas and many blessings in 2026.

### **Churchwarden's Challenge**

Where in St Mary's Church can you find a depiction of an aircraft carrier?

Written answers to the churchwardens at St Mary's. The prize? A bottle of Prosecco or cordial for the first correct answer drawn by the Rector at the first Family Eucharist in 2026.

## St Mary's clock

Many of you will I am sure be wondering what is happening with the hands on the south face of the clock at St Mary's. These had to be removed last year after the minute hand was dropping to 4 minutes past instead of 1 minute past when it moved past the 12 hour position. Upon inspection by Smith of Derby it was found that the thread in the hand nut had failed and the hour shaft had loosened considerably meaning the hands were at risk of falling on passers by! Over the past few months Revd Natalie and Revd Ian have therefore been working on an application for funding from ChurchCare (a Church of England body that gives grants for the conservation of historic churches) to repair the clock and replace the hands. It is with great joy and relief to report that our grant was successful and so we hope that the repairs will be completed and hands on the South face replaced in time for Christmas!

**Revd Natalie Davies**





**Regular Sunday Services  
December & January**

8am Holy Communion

10.30am Family Worship with children's groups, except on  
2nd Sunday All-Age Café Church.

1st Sundays communion

6pm Worship@6 at Emmanuel Baptist church on Dec 7th – a  
band from All Saints and EBC combine to lead an informal  
hour of worship -all welcome

Weekly Calendar at All Saints

Toddler Group Mondays 9:15-10:45am

Coffee Pot Thursdays 10:30am

Art workshop Fridays 10am

Opportunity to Pray together at All Saints

Weekly Thursdays 9:30 – 10am

Special events

Sat 6th Dec & Sat 3rd Jan 8.15am Swanage Christian Men's  
Group Breakfast @MacAllisters

Sat 31st Jan 2-5pm Praying for Others: a free workshop led by  
outside speakers Vince & Cleo Turner from Spring Harvest.

## COMMUNITY CAROLS AT ALL SAINTS

**6pm Thursday 18th December**

An informal evening of Christmas carols,  
readings and drama with mulled wine and  
mince pies

A perfect opportunity to bring guests.

## CELEBRATING GOD AT WORK

**IN OUR LIVES IN 2025**

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December**

At both our morning services there will be the opportunity to share your story of what God has been doing in the lives of those at All Saints over the last year. All stories welcome or come ready to listen or be encouraged!



**HOLY SPIRIT LED  
PRAYER MINISTRY  
TRAINING**

**SPRING  
HARVEST**

**SATURDAY 31ST JANUARY 2026**

**2 - 5pm**  **SWANAGE**  
All Saints Church

Each session will be delivered by the Spring Harvest Prayer Ministry leadership team.

**Tickets are FREE** - we would welcome a donation towards refreshments.  
Book your place at [eevents.uk/sh2026/prayer](https://eevents.uk/sh2026/prayer)



**SPEAK  
LIFE 321**

**An opportunity to Discover Life According to JESUS.**  
321 is a 4-part outreach course from UK mission agency, Speak Life.

**Starts Tuesday 27th January, 6:30pm at All Saints Hall**  
All Saints Church, 26 Ulwell Rd, Swanage

Each week starts with an informal supper, followed by thought-provoking questions, input from films and discussion. Whom could you invite?

To sign up or for more information contact Rev'd Jo Levasier  
[jo@swanageteam.com](mailto:jo@swanageteam.com) or 07725 343768

## News from All Saints Church family

**October and November have been busy months** up at All Saints with a fabulous free family funday, new monthly BYO picnic lunches to get to know one another better in and across congregations, and a “soup-er” Harvest lunch (thanks Heather and Gill and all those who made a variety of delicious soups and desserts).



**We have been really pleased** to see that the new All Saints Toddler Group on a Monday morning is starting to find its feet and build as a community. Suzanne Dominy, who was working on Community Projects for Swanage team, set the group up in September and although she has decided to step down from this formal role, it is clear that all the hard work and careful planning she put into setting it up has paid off. Thank you, Suzanne (and Alan!). We continue to pray for the team that the right person will come forward to head it up as we move into 2026 and we are so grateful for all those who volunteer; some every week and some every few weeks – everyone is so appreciated.



**November brings with it** the church tradition of remembering those who have gone before us with All Souls and All Saints days. It was a privilege to be part of the event down at St Mary's as we remembered the loved ones whom we have lost, lit candles as a mark of those precious memories and celebrated the Christian hope of eternity in which we trust. The following weekend was another powerful moment, as we marked Remembrance Sunday at Café church and made poppies: thinking about those who had invested in our lives and those whom God might be calling us to invest in, going forward. We have also had two very significant midweek events, with Margaret Williams leading a session diving into the Bible to see what it says about Healing and what we can and can't expect in our lives today. We looked at many of the different healing miracles that Jesus performed, as well as various other scriptures across both the Old and New Testaments.



**It was great to spend time** looking at God's word directly together. Our leaving challenge was to hold together great confidence in the goodness and healing power of our great God, who calls us to pray in any and every situation – and yet leave the answer of our prayers up to Him. At All Saints this year we have had too much experience that sometimes the Lord calls home those He loves - the healing we seek sometimes being found in the next life.

**As we seek to pray for one another,** we are delighted to be hosting a Prayer workshop on Sat 31st January, led by some of the team from Spring Harvest – the wonderful Christian teaching and holiday event held over the Easter Holidays. Spring Harvest has been a huge inspiration and resource for many Christians for several decades and we are very pleased to have Vince and Cleo Turner coming to lead this session. The focus will be particularly on praying for each other, in an informal or more formal setting. Everyone welcome -do sign up using the QR code in the advert in this month's magazine.

**We also have had a wonderful Wednesday** Worship Night where we enjoyed a time of extended band-led worship and delighting in the presence of the Lord. Special thanks to Stuart Spreadborough for organising it – and all the band who played. We are so blessed to have great musicians, good kit and suitable building! [we're always looking for more sound and screen operators though, so if you feel you might be interesting.... do get in touch]

**It is such a privilege** to be part of a church community like All Saints – and we look forward to sharing the joyful news of Christmas with our community in the coming weeks.

**With every blessing**

**Rev'd Jo Levasier**



**DIARY DATES DECEMBER 2025  
AND JANUARY 2026**



Tuesday 2nd December - 7pm Bible Study  
Sunday 7th December - 10am Holy Communion  
Sunday 14th December - 10am Holy Communion- with Rev. John Cooper  
Monday 15th December - 7pm St Mark's Christmas Dinner  
Tuesday 16th December - 7pm Bible Study  
Sunday 21st December - 10am Holy Communion Wear your Christmas Jumper!  
6:30pm Swanage Community Christmas Celebration at St Mary's  
Wednesday 24 December - 4:30pm Christmas Eve Carols by Candlelight  
Thursday 25 December - 10am Christmas Day Holy Communion  
10am  
Sunday 28th December - 10am Christmas Celebration! Service  
Sunday 04 January - 10am Holy Communion  
6:30pm Team Epiphany service at St Mark's  
Tuesday 06 January - 7pm Bible Study  
Thursday 08 January - 7:30pm Church Committee  
Sunday 11 January - 10am Holy Communion - with Rev John Cooper  
Sunday 18 January - 10:30am United Service at EBC No Service at St Mark's  
Tuesday 20 January - 7pm Bible Study  
Thursday 22 January - 7pm PCC  
Sunday 25 January - 10am Celebration! Service  
Choir Rehearsal - Mondays 6:15 - 7pm  
Junior Singing Club - - Tuesdays 3:30pm – 4:25pm (during term-time)  
Prayer and Share - Wednesdays 10 – 10:45am

*Christmas is coming .... and, following some disturbing rumours on the turkey farm, and the shared photos from Facebook, of Frankie the Flamingo and his recent escape to France, there has been a sudden interest in flying lessons!*

**Well, where do I begin!** We, at St Marks, have had another year full of wonderful events; including a concert, Pimm's & Hymns, two afternoon teddy bear picnics, Harvest Festival, Wear It Pink Celebration, and two new events; a summer BBQ, (which was a great success and will now be added to our yearly social events,) and Ride and Stride, for the Historic Churches Trust. Many of these events were in support of various charities and raised several hundred pounds for local and national charities. Plus, two of our church members who independently did sponsored events raising significant amounts of money for charities; as John mentioned in last months edition.

**We also held** a wonderful Licensing Service for Dave and Carol, by Bishop Karen, a great time of celebration.

Our links with St Marks School continues to grow and flourish and we had our first baptism, in four years, with a local family being welcomed into the church family at St Marks.

**A truly wonderful year** of events at the 'Party Church.'

The reordering of the church and meeting room continues resulting in the meeting room now being warm and very welcoming.

**On November 9th**, we held our Service of Remembrance, in the morning. Several of us then joined the Town Remembrance Service in the afternoon, when, as a town, we came together to reflect on and to honour the many service people who 'gave their tomorrow for our today.'

**Sadly, we have also said a fond farewell** to some dear friends and members of our church family, sharing some tears, a smile, and a little laughter as we celebrated their life. As I write, we are preparing for Mary Dennis' funeral on Monday the 24th of November, and for further details of Marion Booth's funeral.

**We have our St Marks Christmas Dinner** on Monday 15th December (details and a sign-up sheet in church) a time of great celebration. A big thank you to Uta for organising this event once again.

**Advent is here**, and we now set our hearts, prayers, and worship to a time of preparation for God's wonderful gift to us, his Son, our Saviour. During Advent there are several events in town and our church services, a time for us to gather together as part of the Swanage and Studland Team in our preparation for Christmas.

**Our big event** will be our wonderful Carols by Candlelight, at 4:30pm on Christmas Eve, when we welcome familiar faces, local children, and parents to this very special Christmas service.

**We also hope** to welcome several visitors, to one of our Christmas services, with a smile and perhaps a mince pie and hot drink!

In January, we will be hosting, once again, the Team Epiphany Carol Service on Sunday 4th January at 6:30pm which, of course, will be followed by some warming and festive refreshments, in true St Marks style!

**We are already planning** our many social events for 2026 and hopefully welcoming some new faces from the local Herston community to join us at St Marks.

**I pray**, that over this time of Advent, you will have time to pause and ask the Holy Spirit to help you enter that first Christmas with delight, wonder and a sense of Peace, to fully rejoice that this is news of great joy, for all people, everywhere.

I would like to leave you with a reading from the start of St John's gospel :- (John 1: 1-4,9,14a)

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*He was in the beginning with God.*

*All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.*

*What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people....*

*The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world....*

*And the Word became flesh and lived among us."*

**Although a little early**, as I write to you mid November, on behalf of John and myself, may we wish you all a 'Blessed and Joyful Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year'

May God Bless and Keep You

**Anne Roper**  
**Church Warden**



# St Nicholas Studland News



“Are we nearly there yet?”, “Are we nearly there yet”, “How much further?”, “When will we get there”.....how many of our journeys have been punctuated by these insistent queries, coming from the back seat occupants of the car? Journeys can seem interminable, especially to children. I suspect adults too find waiting, or watching and waiting rather tiresome. In the Christian year, the weeks before Christmas, which we call Advent, are just such a watching and waiting time. Christians try to slow down a little, to take more time to be reflective. (Yes, I know, in the middle of the preparations for Christmas this is a bit tricky!) In part we’re getting ourselves ready for the wonderful blaze of light that is Christmas day. This is the day we celebrate God’s audacious rescue plan for humanity, a plan involving a baby born to a teenage mother in a makeshift location in an obscure corner of the Roman empire. This Advent season of quiet and reflection makes Christmas day itself even more intense, even more celebratory. But we also take a longer view in Advent, we look forward to a distant time when all of God’s purposes come to fruition and all of time, past present and future will be bound up in his son, Jesus. We recognise that there is an arc, a trajectory to all of history, that it’s not just some mish-mash of random events.

**In St Nicholas Church** our Advent preparations are marked by the lighting of the candles on the Advent wreath, one for each of the four Sundays of Advent. Three of the candles are purple, the colour of the reflective season of Advent (and, incidentally,

Lent). One of the candles is rose pink, a colour associated with joy. (In the reflective seasons of Advent and Lent, the Christian calendar always sets apart one Sunday for a bit of celebration!). The culmination is the lighting of the central white candle on Christmas day. Our Sunday services follow the great Advent themes of watching and waiting. Maybe you could join us: give yourself a bit of a break from the helter-skelter preparations for Christmas. Of course you can also join us to sing carols and celebrate the Christmas story at our traditional service of Carols and Lessons on the 9th December at 18:30 and the Carols in the Barn at 15:30 on the 14th. We have a Midnight Mass service at 11:30 on Christmas Eve and a lively Family Communion at 10:00 on Christmas day. There's plenty of opportunity to be thoughtful and celebratory at St Nicholas!

**The great thing about the Christian** celebration of Christmas is that it does not stop on Boxing day. It goes on for another five weeks, taking us well into the New Year as we remember the arrival of the Wise Men from the East, and the gradual revealing that this baby born of Mary is no ordinary child. This child is the hope for the whole world, God's expression of love towards all humanity.

**All of us** at St Nicholas wish you a thoughtful Advent, a joyful Christmas and a hope-filled New Year.

**Rev. Tony Edmonds**





## Letter from the Bishop of Salisbury

**This December**, Carol and I will visit the tiny Channel Island of Alderney. It is a beautiful but a heavily fortified place having been both the first line of defence historically and an occupied and evacuated community. Having marked the 80th Anniversary of Liberation in Guernsey in May, Alderney has its own unique act of remembrance on 15th December known as Home Coming.

**Alderney** was not liberated because it had been evacuated. The people of Alderney could not return until later in the year when the war ended because the island was in such a state having been brutalised by the German occupation. In particular there were three concentration camps to provide forced labour. This December it is the 80th anniversary of the people of Alderney coming home which must have been both joyous and hugely challenging.

**In these days of Advent** we prepare ourselves for the coming home of our Saviour. Dark days prevail and I reflect upon what that darkness really means for those currently under oppression or war such as in Sudan and South Sudan. It can be difficult to imagine as we prepare for a happy English Christmas, what it must be like if your home is under threat.

**At Christmas**, wherever we are, and however full or fragile our lives are, we mark perhaps the greatest moment in human history. The very fact that God chooses to lower himself and to be born among us, and to make His home as one of us, marks out the Christian experience from any other in our world. Our preparations and our celebrations make it all too easy to miss the full meaning of the incarnation. The fact that God is with us is a liberation all of its own and calls us to make every home in our world as safe and as free as possible. This Christmas as families, and as some remain alone, let us remember before anything else that the God who made his home among us calls us to return to Him and to live lives that proclaim the good news. May the home coming of Jesus be with you this Christmas



# SWANAGE TOWN BAND

## SWANAGE TOWN BAND CONCERT

**Wednesday 3rd December 7.30pm**

**Swanage Methodist Church, High Street, Swanage, BH19 2LZ**

Free admission. Retiring collection for band funds and Admiral Nurse

## CAROLS ON THE BANDSTAND

**Wednesday 10th December 6.30pm**

**If wet, we will play on Wednesday 17th December at 6.30pm,  
weather permitting**

Collecting for band funds and Admiral Nurse

**[www.swanagetownband.co.uk](http://www.swanagetownband.co.uk)**



**follow us @swanagetownband**

Registered Charity Number 1214942

# Mayday Singers

Musical Director: John Watkins

## Winter Concert

Guest soloist: Isaac Jellett (Flute)

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December, 3:30pm

St George's Church,

Langton Matravers

***Tickets £8 on the door, or in advance from  
Carole on 07305 740422***

***Madrigals, Folk Songs and Carols,  
perfect for a winter afternoon.***

Retiring collection in aid of:

Macmillan Local



**BELVEDERE SINGERS**  
CHARITY NO. 1160197  
and special guests  
Music Director Clive Watkiss  
**Ring Christmas Bells**  
Saturday **6<sup>TH</sup>** December  
St Mary's Church Swanage 7.30  
tickets £9 - under 18's free  
from choir members or on the door  
Retiring collection for Purbeck Youth Music CHARITY NO. 1190008

This year's Christmas concert is very much a local affair with soloists Nick Aiko Dando (trumpet) and Martha Harwood (soprano) both hailing from Swanage and both being Purbeck Youth Music Ambassadors. Nick will be playing the Slavonic Fantasia by Carl Hohne while Martha will sing the solo in O Holy Night and also join the choir as soloist in Kenneth Leighton's Lully Lulla, a very beautiful twentieth century version of the text of Coventry Carol. As ever, the choir will be singing music from across the centuries with both familiar and sometimes more unusual Christmas pieces. These will range from Gaudete (1582) to Walking in the Air and Winter Wonderland from more recent times. And the icing on the cake is that the audience gets to join in one or two special pieces - not least the eternal favourite, The Twelve Days of Christmas. What could be more fun?



**Will you be alone on Christmas Day?**

Join us for

## **Traditional Christmas Day Lunch**

**at Swanage United Reformed Church**

High Street, near Arkwrights (Spa).

**12.30 for 1.00**

Followed by entertainment

**Transport arranged if needed.**

**(Offers to drive appreciated)**

No fixed charge – but contributions appreciated (Bring your own wine, if you wish)  
Reserve your place by texting or ringing Alan  
on 07748 672069

or e-mail [alan.dominy@outlook.com](mailto:alan.dominy@outlook.com)

**Tell us about dietary, mobility & communication needs**

## **December Update on Christmas Tree Festival 11th-13th Dec at EBC**

### **10th Purbeck Christmas Tree Festival at Emmanuel Baptist Church - Thur 11th -Sat 13th Dec**

The final preparations are now taking place for this year's Christmas Tree Festival, which will actually mark our 10th year in Swanage. It moved from St James' Church, Kingston in 2015, and has continued to grow each year apart from the 'virtual Tree Festival of 2020', when we ran an on-line Festival with photos submitted of the many beautiful trees in people's homes, (covid restrictions). It begins on Thursday 11th December at 10am and runs until Saturday 13th December and is open until 6pm each evening'

This year we have over 45 local trees which will all be uniquely decorated , many with carefully crafted decorations, to celebrate Christmas Around the World. It is such a special time of year and there are many traditions right around the globe that have their roots in the Biblical Christmas Story, when the Lord Jesus was born just over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem.

There will be a full programme of live music, featuring various choirs, music groups , soloists and school groups, as well as storytelling for pre-school groups. Each day the seasonal café will offer hot drinks, snacks, light lunches and a range of cakes and once again there will be an opportunity to dress up in the life size-stable.

On Sunday afternoon at 4pm, there is a quiet reflective Remembrance Service called 'Lights of Love', at which people can light candles to remember those who are no longer with us. Also we plan to have a large of Tree of Remembrance, on which anyone in the community can add colourful ribbons inscribed with names of friends and family whom they wish to remember.

There is no charge to visit the Christmas Tree Festival , but donations are welcome as this year we hope to support Julia's House, a hospice near Broadstone , also we aim to send funds towards a new helicopter for the Dorset Air Ambulance Service, which is often needed in this area.

There will be something for all ages, also the trees are decorated by people of all ages – from toddler groups to schools, estate agents, businesses and local charities, swimmers, choirs and care homes. Do come and enjoy the event and may it encourage the peace and hope that we long for in these days. May it be a time to reflect on how blessed we are and at the same time, help us to appreciate God's amazing global plan - the greatest gift of all – Jesus, our friend and Saviour.



## **Important update:**

### **Purbeck Furniture Bank (previously Besom in Purbeck)**

Alongside recycling all that is generously donated to us, we have decided to recycle ourselves! As we are at the stage where our yearly insurance is due, we feel it is an opportune time to break our ties with The Besom Network nationally, and function independently where we hope to foster and develop a more local focus with the community and churches.

Why include the name 'Bank'? We feel it says what we do – we take things in and we give things out. Also, and more importantly, it aligns us with the Swanage Food Bank, with whom we have much in common.

We have always functioned slightly differently to the guidelines and procedures of Besom Network nationally and this difference has continued and evolved over the 25yrs we have been in existence, as the needs of the service have grown and developed. Functioning independently is something we have been deliberating about and discussing for a few years now and we have the blessing of Besom's founder members here in Swanage to take that step.

We have much work to do as we recycle ourselves and applying for charitable status is a priority. In the meantime, as we gradually reinvent ourselves, we will continue to collect good condition furniture, linen, kitchen items (inc. white goods), in fact anything needed to furnish a home, and we continue to deliver to those in need.

We continue to embrace the notion of working with all people of goodwill to do God's work in the world. Our vision and fundamental principles for doing God's work will always underpin everything we do. Thank you to all who support us especially our wonderful volunteers.

**Davina Freedman, on behalf of the Purbeck Furniture Bank team (PFB)**

**Contact: 07519 977732**

**[purbeckfbank@gmail.com](mailto:purbeckfbank@gmail.com)**

*Footnote: We are desperately short of electric kettles, toasters, microwaves and kitchen utensils – thank you!*

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## In Memoriam

Mrs Diane Alexandra 'Dee' Barrowclough (78), Mariners Drive 28th  
October

Mr Brian Leslie Barker (82), Gannetts Park 30th October

Mr David 'Dave' Mitchell (78), Priest Road 11th November

Mr David Arthur 'Dave' Whitton (86), Ulwell Road 14th November

### Magazine Distribution

We would like to extend the distribution of Church Alive! as much as possible. If you are able to give a copy, even to a few others, this will have a huge effect. Thank you!

### November Crossword

#### Answers

	B	A	R	T	H	O	L	O	M	E	W	
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# Hebrew Word of the Month

## Kavod (כָּבוֹד)

### The Glory That Changes Everything

**There are moments in life when words fall short** – when we sense something so holy, so far beyond ourselves, that all we can do is stand still in awe. That’s the heart of the Hebrew word Kavod (כָּבוֹד, kah-VOHD) – glory, honor, weight, splendor.

#### **Biblical Foundation**

Kavod isn’t just something that happens around us – it’s something God reveals through us. When Yeshua (*the Hebrew name of Jesus*), came, the eternal Kavod of God took on flesh.

*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory (kavod), the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” – John 1:14.* Through Yeshua, Kavod became personal. He showed us that God’s glory isn’t a distant light – it’s the face of a Savior who kneels to wash our feet, heals the brokenhearted, and dies for love. His glory isn’t about power that overwhelms, but love that transforms.

#### **Meaning of Kavod**

In Hebrew, kavod comes from the root kaved (כָּבַד), which literally means “heavy.” It’s the idea that God’s presence isn’t light or fleeting – it carries substance, a holy weight that fills everything it touches. When Scripture says, *“The glory (kavod) of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34)*, it means His presence became so real, so tangible, that no one could stand inside.

#### **Why It Matters**

This is the most amazing thing: that same Kavod now lives within us (those who are alive in Yeshua).

*“Christ in you – the hope of glory.”*  
*Colossians 1:27.*

**When we walk with Yeshua**, we carry His presence into the world – not as something heavy to bear, but as light that shines through every act of kindness, every word of grace, every heart made new.

Maybe you've been feeling empty, ordinary, or unseen. Remember: God's Kavod rests on you. His glory isn't found only in thunder or miracles – it's seen in every life surrendered to Him, every heart that reflects His love. When Yeshua's presence fills your life, you don't just witness His glory – you become a vessel of it.

### **A Prayer**

Lord Yeshua, thank You for filling my life with Your Kavod. Let Your glory shine through me in everything I do – not my strength or wisdom, but Your love living in me. May Your presence rest on me, changing the atmosphere wherever I go, until all the earth is filled with Your glory.

**Pastor Israel Pochtar**



## From *Why Christmas?* by Nicky Gumbel

**At Christmas we celebrate** the ‘*central event in the history of the earth, the very thing the whole story has been about*’ (C.S. Lewis). We celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is a day of great joy and celebration around the world.

**And yet**, in the midst of all the trappings and celebrations of Christmas, it can be easy to miss why Jesus’ birth is so significant. The key to Christmas lies, not in the details of the shepherds’ visit or the wise men’s journey, but in the identity of the one whom they came to worship. In Jesus, *God became ‘flesh’ and ‘made his dwelling among us’ (John 1:14)*. Christmas is about Jesus!

**The ‘baby Jesus’** is also the ‘*Lord of lords and King of kings, Revelation 17:14*, and in this passage we get a glimpse of the cosmic struggle between good and evil, as a vast array of powers and authorities line up against God. Yet we are reminded that, in the end, it is through the humility and self-sacrifice of ‘*the Lamb*’ that they are overcome.

**Jesus puts aside the glories of heaven** for a humble stall. As the carol, *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, puts it:

*Christ, by highest heaven adored;  
Christ, the everlasting Lord;  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
hail the incarnate Deity,  
pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
‘Glory to the new born King!’*

## Letter from the Editor

All through Church Alive! this month you will see the word “**Joy**” which Rev Jo Levasier sent me. They are best seen in the colour version, which you can see online at [swanageteam.com/team-magazine](http://swanageteam.com/team-magazine).

In the beautiful story of the birth of Jesus in Luke’s gospel we read:

*“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. **I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.** Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”*

For many this year has been stressful, and joy has not been a daily experience, but that is exactly what Jesus wants for us.

I love the verse in Romans when Paul prays:

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15.13*

I pray that this Christmas, as we enjoy the many opportunities to join together to sing carols, praise God and hear once again the amazing Christmas story, that all our readers will be filled with joy by the Saviour who loves us so much, and that we will also all be filled with hope as we head into 2026.

## SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EVENTS & SERVICES



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

**Sun 30 November**

*All Saints, Ulwell*

4pm Advent Christingle Service & tea party

*St Mary's, Swanage Town*

6:30pm Candlelit Advent Carol Service

**Sat 6 December**

*Station Road*

2:30pm Carols at the Christmas Market

**Tue 9 December**

*St Nicholas', Studland*

6:30pm traditional Carol Service & refreshments

**Sun 14 December**

*Manor Farm Tea Rooms, Studland*

3:30pm Carols in the Barn: short nativity outside for all the family with animals!

**Thu 18 December**

*All Saints, Ulwell*

6pm Community Carols: an informal evening of carols, readings, drama, with mulled wine & mince pies

**Sun 21 December**

*St Mary's, Swanage Town*

6:30pm Swanage Community Christmas Celebration: share the joy at our candlelit community celebration, with mulled wine & mince pies after!

**Wed 24 December Christmas Eve**

*St Mary's, Swanage Town*

4pm Crib Service: come as a nativity character and join in the story (costumes available)

6:30pm Carols by Candlelight

11:30pm Midnight Eucharist

*St Mark's, Herston*

4:30pm Carols by Candlelight at St Mark's

*All Saints, Ulwell*

11:15pm Midnight Communion

*St Nicholas', Studland*

11:30pm Midnight Communion

**Thu 25 December Christmas Day**

*St Mary's, Swanage Town*

8am Christmas Communion

10:30am Christmas Choral Eucharist

*St Mark's, Herston*

10am Christmas Family Communion

*St Nicholas', Studland*

10am Christmas Family Communion

*All Saints, Ulwell*

10:30am Christmas All Age Celebration

other regular services will continue during this period  
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call 01929 421117 or refer to church notice sheets