

## CHURCH SERVICES

### January

[December Services Centre Pages]

<b>Sunday 4th January</b>	<b>- Epiphany Sunday</b>
09.00 Welsh Newton	Meditation and Bible Study
09.30 Ganarew	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00 Llangrove	Holy Communion
11.00 Whitchurch	Holy Communion
11.00 Wyesham	Sunday Praise
<b>Thursday 8th January</b>	
10.30 Whitchurch	Holy Communion
11.00 Whitchurch	Bible Study
<b>Sunday 11th January</b>	
09.00 Welsh Newton	Holy Communion
09.30 Bishopswood	Holy Communion at the Village Hall
10.00 Llangrove	Family Service
10.00 Marstow	Holy Communion
11.00 Goodrich	Holy Communion
11.00 Whitchurch	Sunday Praise
11.00 Wyesham	Chatty Church
<b>Wednesday 14th January</b>	
18.00 Whitchurch	Night prayer (Compline)
<b>Thursday 15th January</b>	
10.30 Whitchurch	Holy Communion
11.00 Whitchurch	Bible Study
<b>Sunday 18th January</b>	
09.00 Welsh Newton	Meditation and Bible Study
09.30 Ganarew	Sunday Praise
10.00 Llangrove	Holy Communion
11.00 Whitchurch	Holy Communion with a Kingdom flavour
11.00 Wyesham	Holy Communion
18.00 Llangarron	Evening Service

Services continued p43

## BORDER NEWS

Wye Reaches and Wye Brooks Parish Magazine

Produced by volunteers for the community

**\*\*Your ACE 2025 Award Winning Magazine\*\***



**DECEMBER & JANUARY 2026**



**Stay in touch**

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### Vicar

**Revd Tim Starling**  
07980204572  
[revtimstarling@gmail.com](mailto:revtimstarling@gmail.com)

**Associate Minister** - Licensed to Wye Brooks Benefice

**Revd Simon Tarlton** 07462 893457 [simon.tarlton@gmail.com](mailto:simon.tarlton@gmail.com)

**Retired Priests** - Supporting our Benefices

**Revd Penny Powdrill** 01600 714096 [pennypowdrill@btinternet.com](mailto:pennypowdrill@btinternet.com)  
**Revd Jill Stephens** 01600 890975 [jill.stephens1@btinternet.com](mailto:jill.stephens1@btinternet.com)

**Please submit material for next month's issue NO LATER than 8th of the month to your parish correspondent**

***The email address for each correspondent can be found in the Parish News pages***

***Our Editor, Bobby, can be contacted via [bneditor@mail.com](mailto:bneditor@mail.com)***

**Our Border News Advertising Manager**  
**Bobby can be contacted on 01989 770256**  
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## CHURCH SERVICES Cont'd

### Thursday 22nd January

10.30 Whitchurch Holy Communion  
11.00 Whitchurch Bible Study

### Sunday 25th January

09.00 Welsh Newton Holy Communion  
09.30 Dixon Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)  
10.00 Llangrove Family Service  
10.00 Marstow Family Service  
11.00 Goodrich Holy Communion  
11.00 Whitchurch Sunday Praise  
11.00 Wyesham Holy Communion

### Wednesday 28th January

18.00 Whitchurch Taizé Prayer

### Thursday 29th January

10.30 Whitchurch Holy Communion  
11.00 Whitchurch Bible Study



## Help a family in poverty this year

CAP (Christians Against Poverty) has launched its 2025 Christmas Appeal, to provide emergency aid and support to UK families in financial hardship this winter.

The appeal aims to raise funds to provide essential assistance such as: emergency food parcels, fuel top-ups, free professional debt advice, and Christmas hampers or gifts, given in partnership with local churches and community groups.

CAP works with local church partners to deliver face-to-face help and support. You can donate directly or support local church initiatives creating Christmas hampers and providing emergency packages. Details at: <https://capuk.org>



## John the Almsgiver

On January 23<sup>rd</sup> we celebrate the life of John the Almsgiver. I have often noticed, over years, of doing charity work, that people tend to be either givers or takers. John was definitely a giver – on a very grand scale.

Born into a wealthy family in Cyprus about 560 AD, John was married with children when disaster struck: both his wife and children all died. In his grief, John decided to go into the Church and was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria.

He astonished people with his generosity as he distributed thousands of pieces of gold from his own wealth to help the hospitals and monasteries. John founded new hospitals and introduced maternity wards, poorhouses, and hostels for strangers to the city. He forbid his officials to take any presents and sat in the open air beside his church on Wednesdays and Fridays, to make sure that his people had free access to him.

When the Persians sacked Jerusalem he helped the survivors with money, food, transport, clothes and paid to get captives back giving them their freedom. Whilst he gave for specific Christians purpose, his giving was to benefit all whatever need there was, whatever their creed.

As Patriarch he cared for the souls of his people in Alexandria, encouraging them in prayer and leading a holy life. He was, however, adamant that only true believers could take Holy Communion.

He died in 620, in Amathus on Cyprus, where he had been born and was canonised even though he had not been martyred. He is the patron of the Knights of Malta. Interestingly he is one of the very few Byzantine era saints to have been honoured in the West.

This Christmas why not make a gift to a charity of your choice and follow the example of John the Almsgiver.

*Ed*

## WELCOME FROM YOUR CLERGY TEAM

Festive greetings one and all,

I wonder if you will be tucking into one of the billion scrummy mince pies consumed in the UK during this festive season? Well, it would be rude not too – especially warmed, with a dollop of thick cream or choice of tipple. Love them or hate them, they seem to be a quintessential part of our Christmas traditions.

Traditionally, they were made from 13 ingredients representing Jesus Christ and his 12 disciples; in addition to dried fruit, they originally included lamb or mutton, a nod to the shepherds, and spices, a nod to the magi. And, as I learnt recently, they were often served in an oblong shape, representing the manger, and sometimes included a pastry baby Jesus on top (if anyone is making one of these, could you make me one too?)!

I love that so many of our Christmas traditions point us to Jesus who is after all the reason we have Christmas time. Many years before mince pies and Jesus arrived on earth, a man called Isaiah, a prophet, shared some words that God had revealed to him: *"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned"*. He was talking about Jesus – and he went on to say, *"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 Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"*.

How true Isaiah was. 700 years later Jesus, Light of the World, was born in a most dark situation. Jesus, God in human flesh, entered into the world he had created, and shone brightly indeed. And today he still shines; over this year I have become aware of the steady stream of people drawn into our church buildings sensing something of God's presence and wanting to experience more; it has been exciting to see, especially in these 'darker' times.

Cont'd ...



I would love to invite you to join us too as we are reminded of the story and gift of Jesus Christ, as we celebrate this Christmas expectant that God is still revealed to us all. And perhaps enjoy a few mince pies (minus the mutton & lamb).

And if I, or any of my colleagues, can help in any way, please be in touch – I do understand that this season isn't always an easy one for everyone.

With love to you all over this Christmas season and wishing you good health for a happy New Year.



Rev Tim

Vicar – Wye Reaches group of churches

*REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS*

*THIS MONTH*

**We welcome to our church families with the baptisms of:**

Brady and Jody Wood, who were baptised at St Dubricius' church, Whitchurch, on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October.

The daughter of David and Hannah baptised at St James' church, Wyesham, on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October.

**We pray and give thanks for the lives of:**

Freda Hughes whose funeral took place at the Forest of Dean Crematorium on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November.



## All About Christmas Trees

As you decorate your tree this year here some facts about Christmas trees from *The British Christmas Tree Growers Association (BCTGA)*.

Even before the time of Christ, evergreen trees were seen in winter as a symbol of fertility.

It was the 16<sup>th</sup> century monk, Martin Luther, who is credited with the idea of having lights on Christmas trees. He added candles to his tree, to look like stars in a forest.

Windsor Castle got its first Christmas tree in 1800, brought by Charlotte, wife of George III.

It was in 1835 that the term 'Christmas tree' was first used in English. It was in the 1840s, when Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, began bringing trees inside, that led to their popularity throughout the UK.

It was Woolworths who first sold manufactured Christmas tree ornaments – back in 1880.

The tree in London's Trafalgar Square has been a gift from the city of Oslo, Norway since 1947.

The world's tallest Xmas tree, at 221ft high, was erected in a Washington shopping mall in 1950.

In a survey of the nation's favourite smells, real Christmas trees came eighth, just behind the sea, but ahead of perfume.

About five million real Christmas trees are sold in the UK each year.

Your typical Christmas tree of six to seven feet is between ten and 12 years old.

The BCTGA urges people to buy a British grown tree to support the local economy and help provide employment in the agricultural sector. Find a stockist who stocks British grown trees at [www.bctga.co.uk](http://www.bctga.co.uk)

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## Bible Bite

### A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Luke chapter 2 verses 8 to 20

Shepherds were paid to look after the flocks  
out on the hillside. Uneducated and rough,  
they were usually avoided, or overlooked.







## CHRISTmas - It's so much more than one day!

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests." Luke 2:14

This message from the angels to the shepherds is the most poignant message of hope and peace, it goes beyond the gifts and festivities. It calls on all of us to focus on that gift of peace, challenging us to reflect on how we can live our lives in peace, and inviting us to embrace hope and harmony that Christ's birth made possible.

So how have we lost this simple message of Christmas? One commentator argues that we live in a culture of instant gratification, with a tendency towards external displays of success giving us an artificial sense of joy. Basically, we've lost our connection with the simple pleasures of the season and life.

I read recently an observation that resonates, how we fail to slow down at Christmas to reflect on the significance of Christ's birth and what it means, as we race through the season trying to keep up with this year's latest trend attempting to outdo one another with extravagant gifts and grandiose celebrations.

It's not about the supersized Sunday roast, with every trimming imaginable, or the Christmas tree floating on a sea of parcels or making sure your decorations comply with this year's latest trend. Christmas begins with Advent, a time for reflection, to consider the perpetual themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. So, this year I challenge you to reconnect with the season of Advent to take a few moments to re-evaluate your life and to consider what is actually important and what we want to achieve as we await Christ's birth.

Looking at the four themes the first being hope, which reflects Christ's coming, is celebrated during the first week of December and sets the tone for a period of anticipation and expectation. On a personal level it is a chance to reflect on our hopes for the future for ourselves, our

Cont'd...

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family and those we love.

In week two we focus on peace, the peace that Christ brings into the world, centred on tranquillity and wholeness. Advent peace encourages us to let go of our anxieties, it encourages us to be peacemakers in our own lives, showing kindness, understanding, and forgiveness to others.

The third Sunday is known as Gaudete Sunday and is a celebration of joy the rejoicing in the anticipation of Jesus' arrival. Joy is central to Advent and perhaps we should give joy for the past year reflecting on what we have achieved, how we have dealt with the challenges along the way and cherishing those special moments as we make plans for the year to come.

The week of Christmas celebrates love, pivotal to Advent in remembering God's love for humanity in sending his Son. It reflects the excitement and gratitude for the coming of Jesus and we too, should take time to be grateful for what we have and the love we share.

I don't blame anyone for losing sight of what Christmas is truly about, with the continual bombardment of advertising and social media depicting the perfect Christmas, it's no wonder we have lost touch with what really matters. It's a sad reflection of society that many feel they have failed if they do not recreate the perfect festivities envisioned by the media, thus adding unnecessary stress at what should be a joyous time of year, when what really matters is to spend time with, or thinking of, those we love.

On a personal note, on Christmas morning as I place the baby Jesus at the heart of my nativity scene, I will reflect on the fact there is so much more to Christmas. After all, without Christ there is no CHRISTmas.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful 2026.

*Ed*





## Christmas Throughout the Christian World

For nearly four weeks leading up to Christmas Christians recognise a period called Advent. It means 'coming'. It is a time of spiritual preparation. 'Coming' refers to Jesus' first coming as a baby, but it also looks forward to a day when Jesus is expected to return in triumph at his 'second coming' to establish perfect justice and a new order of peace.

Originally Christians marked Advent as a time when they refrained from excessive eating and drinking. Then Christmas Day reintroduced them to the joys of feasting. Christmas celebrations lasted for twelve days, with gifts exchanged as a climax at Epiphany (6 January). Today, however, Advent is more likely to be associated with accelerating festivity, with the days following Christmas something of an anti-climax until 'twelfth night', on which decorations are removed. Many Christians worldwide are trying to revive the spirit of Advent by setting aside time to pray and address global poverty.

Christmas Day is celebrated as the anniversary of Jesus' birth, although the actual date is not known. Most Christians celebrate it on 25<sup>th</sup> December. However, the Orthodox Church (the ancient churches in Eastern Europe and parts of Asia) follows a different calendar and celebrates on 7<sup>th</sup> January. Christians make a point of taking communion on Christmas Day. Many make it the first thing they do as the clock strikes midnight.

On 6<sup>th</sup> January the Christmas festival continues with a celebration of Epiphany, which means 'the appearance'. Christians remember the visit of wise men (magi) to Jesus, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Christmas tradition of exchanging gifts originally honoured these men, who were the first non-Jews (Gentiles) to worship Jesus. It forms a reminder that in Jesus God was giving Himself for the benefit of the entire world.



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Orthodox Christians use this day to recall the baptism of Jesus as a grown man. The significance of Jesus being baptised was that He identified Himself with human beings in all their needs. They mark the day by praying for God's blessing on rivers, wells and water sources.

Christmas has never been just an escapist festival for Christians. Those who treat it seriously recognise that not all the world is able to face the days with frivolity or joy. The day after Christmas, Boxing Day, was historically marked as the feast of St Stephen. He was the first man to be put to death rather than give up his belief that Jesus was God. And two days later a day remembering the Massacre of the Innocents recalls Herod's attempt to destroy Jesus by killing all male babies in Bethlehem. Although not so widely marked as Christmas Day, it gives Christians the opportunity to pray for children in today's world who suffer as a result of the actions of adults.

This is from: <https://christianity.org.uk/christmas-throughout-the-christian-world/>  
#W9LI\_xNKhsM



## Where Did Christmas Cards Come From?

Christmas cards have a history which may surprise you, their origins lie firmly with the Post Office and railways. The very early 'Christmas cards' were in the form of a simple exchange of Christmas greetings in private letters. The earliest recorded greeting was written in England in 1534.

In 1611 a HUGE Christmas card made a one-off appearance. It measured 33 inches by 24 inches, and was given to King James I of England, also King James VI of Scotland. Its illustration was of a rose, and included four poems, a song, and a Christmas message for the king and his son.

Cont'd...

Two hundred years later in 1843 Christmas cards as we know them today came into being. Sir Henry Cole, a senior civil servant who had helped launch the 'Public Record Office', now called the Post Office, was responsible for this. Sir Henry helped to introduce the Penny Post, as a direct result of building of the railways, which carried far more packages than a horse and cart making a postal service accessible to the masses not just the rich.

He wanted to encourage 'ordinary' people to use the new service and came up with the bright idea of a creating a simple card that people could send each other for Christmas. His friend, John Horsley, an artist, designed a three-panel card. two panels depicted people caring for the poor, and the middle panel showed a family enjoying a large Christmas dinner.

They printed about 1000 cards that first year. The cards sold for one shilling each and could be posted to friends and family for a Penny. There was an immediate, warm response from the public.

Printing methods improved, and by 1860 Christmas cards were produced in large quantities and the custom was rapidly gaining popularity. By the early 1900s, the custom had spread across Europe. The first cards usually included a Nativity scene, and in late Victorian times, robins and snow-scenes. They were mass produced from 1875, and in 1915 John C Hall and two of his brothers created Hallmark Cards, which today offers 2,000 different designs of Christmas card. Last year the Royal Mail estimated that it had delivered 150 million cards during the Christmas period.

*Ed*





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## GOODRICH

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### St. Giles Church

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> **The Roaring Megs** 7.00pm in concert with Goodrich Primary School, please note revised date and time

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> **A Christmas Big Breakfast** from 10.00am to 12noon in the Village Hall. Please contact Caroline Tarlton if you would like to come 07973 880004

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January at The Village Hall at 7.00pm we are celebrating **Burns Night: The Good, The Bad and the Ceilidh** will be calling all dancers, total beginners to those with more experience to come for an evening of delicious food and irresistibly toe tapping music. We have a minimum ticket sale for this, so please book 07973 880004

Progress is being made at regular meetings regarding the appointment of our **new vicar**. The advertisement should be out by the end of January with interviews in March. Our ever-grateful thanks go to Rev Simon for his hours of dedication, Rev Penny for keeping us organised during the vacancy and Rev Jill and others who have helped.

We wish you all **A Very Happy Christmas** with every good wish for the year to come.

### Goodrich Church of England Primary School

In **Open the Book** we learned about a story that Jesus told. It was about how someone invited rich people to a banquet, but they refused to come as they had other things to be doing. He then invited the poor and people who had disabilities. We learnt that you should invite everyone and be kind to people, even if they can't repay you by inviting you back. God invites everyone to get to know him.

**Village Hall Events** There will be no Flicks in December

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January Rain or Shine Theatrical Company **Agatha Appleton and The Perils of the Pyramids**. Side-splitting spills and thrills in a theatrical tour -de-force for all the family. Adults £15 Children £8

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January Flicks at 7.30pm we are showing **Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale**. Tickets £5 on the door. (still to be confirmed)

## BISHOPSWOOD

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our poignant **Remembrance Services** at the War Memorial and the Village Hall on 9<sup>th</sup> November.

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> We hope that you will be able to join us for our traditional **Christmas Carol Service** at 3.00pm, in the Village Hall. We will also be celebrating with **Holy Communion** at 11.00am in All Saints' church.

And from 11<sup>th</sup> January 2026 we will have our **monthly service** at 9.30am, in the Village Hall. A date for your new 2026 diary!!

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> **Christmas Cafe Bishopswood** 10.00 am – Midday  
Delicious cakes and refreshments (Gluten free available)

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> **Christmas Community Lunch** Doors and the Bar will open at 12.30pm for a 1.00pm lunch £10 per Person Booking Only - Telephone 01600891277 or email [treasurer@bvonline.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@bvonline.co.uk) to secure your place

## GANAREW

Sue Harley [sueharleymcsp@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sueharleymcsp@yahoo.co.uk) Tel 01600 890489

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> **Christmas Carol Service** 7.00pm We are delighted to have back St.Swithins Jol to perform for us in the church. This will be followed by mulled wine and mince pies at the Manor House.

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## DIXTON

Kate Richards - kate@summerleas.com

As I write, the **first flood warning** of the season has been issued and we are watching levels anxiously- it looks like we might get away with it this time but it's a constant reminder of what lies ahead over the winter months.

The church looked fabulous for **Harvest Festival**, decked out in autumn colours, and we enjoyed a lovely get together afterwards over some simple food. Thanks to all who helped, and to the volunteers for Christmas decorating as well!

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> **Carol Service** 5.00pm Yes, it's the now famous candlelit service. Do come and join us for this magical event which will really get you in the mood for the special days ahead. From the lantern lined drive to the wreath on the door, step inside to the church ablaze with soft candlelight - help us raise the roof with a good old singalong of your favourite carols. There will be mulled wine, spiced apple juice, and mince pies...

Christmas Day we have our **Christmas Communion Service** at 11.00am - pop the turkey in and come down to celebrate the real meaning of Christmas with us.

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Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> **Christmas Outdoor Church** 9.30am (after the usual 9.00am meditation) - a special, Christmas-themed gathering with carols around the firepit, Christmassy activities in the churchyard (including a live nativity), discussions for the adults, plus breakfast and hot drinks to keep everyone warm. Children are encouraged to dress up in nativity costumes of their choosing!

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> **Carol Service** 6.00pm A traditional carol service with familiar Christmas carols and Bible readings - a lovely way to get in the Christmas spirit, followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> **Community Christmas Eve Service at St John's, Llanrothal** 3.00pm with BYO festive refreshments

Christmas Day **Family-Friendly Service** 9.30am A family-friendly service to celebrate the birth of Jesus. All welcome, however young and excited!

Throughout **Advent** there will also be a short, lay-led **Morning Prayer** service at St Mary's each morning, Monday to Saturday, at 8.30am. We'd love to see you there.

More information at [ourcountrychurch.co.uk/christmas](http://ourcountrychurch.co.uk/christmas)

## LLANGARRON

Helen Edwards [edwardshelen82@gmail.com](mailto:edwardshelen82@gmail.com)

[www.llangarron.info](http://www.llangarron.info) & Facebook Llangarron Village Hall

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> **Pop-up Pub night** 5.30-9.00pm with The Caped Cod Fish and Chip Van. Ben Conrad will be in the car park from 5.30 - 8.00pm selling his delicious fish and chips. The pop-up pub will be open in The Garron Centre for everyone to come in to enjoy their fish and chips with a drink whilst socialising with friends and neighbours.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> **Llangarron Community Cafe** 10.30am -12.30pm The cafe will be open to all serving teas, coffees, cakes, mince pies and delicious bacon sandwiches. Well behaved dogs are very welcome to come along with their faithful owners.

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> **Christmas Carol Service** 6.00-7.00pm at St Deinst Church followed by Mince Pies and Glühwein in The Garron Centre, all are welcome.

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January **Llangarron Community Cafe** 10.30am - 12.30pm The cafe will be open to all serving teas, coffees, cakes, and delicious bacon sandwiches. Well behaved dogs are very welcome to come along with their faithful owners.

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January **BINGO Evening** Eyes down at 7.00pm After the Christmas festivities are over, please come along to enjoy an evening of BINGO in aid of much needed work in St Deinst's church yard. With numerous prizes to be won plus the chance to win one of the wonderful raffle prizes, you'll be sure to have a fun packed evening. A



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Please check the Village Calendar <https://www.llangarron.info/events-calendar> for news of all (and other) events to confirm dates.

## **MARSTOW**

Sue Rolfe rolfe653@btinternet.com Tel: 07971 411020

Website: [marstowchurch.org](http://marstowchurch.org)

West End bookings Phyll Hannah 01989 770617

## **CHURCH NEWS and EVENTS -Christmas at St Matthew's**

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> Preparing The Church** 10.00am Decorating the church for Christmas has become a popular, annual event for our community. Do come along and join in this convivial morning, bring greenery if you can, or just come to help.

**Christmas Eve Carol Service** 4.00pm Start your Christmas festivities by coming to our popular, Christmas Eve service of carols and lessons. We welcome all parishioners, their family and friends. The church will be warm, beautifully decorated and mulled wine and mince pies will be served after the service. Car parking available

**St Matthew's Free Food Basket** If you are in need there is small informal supply of free, tinned and packet food and other household and personal items in the church. Help yourself but please just take what you need. For more information about donating please see our website or phone Sue Rolfe (See above).

## **SOCIAL EVENTS**

Parishioners and friends of St Matthew's and St Swithin's had a very lively evening of music and dancing at our first joint parish venture in October. The **Barn Dance** was a big success and raised £1,000 to be shared between the two Parishes. Thanks to everyone who made such a success of the evening, those who provided the Chilli, baked potatoes and Brownies, the Plump Hill Band, and to all of you who

came along to support us and danced with such enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment.

### ST MATTHEW'S WEST END EVENTS

**Marstow Craft Evenings** Please come along to St Matthew's Church over the Christmas period and see what our Marstow Makers group has been crafting this year. Enjoy the festive artwork and reflect with us on all the amazing community and church events that featured in 2025. Marstow Makers will be taking a break, our next craft evening will be on **18 February 2026** at 7.00pm in the West End, and then every third Wednesday of each month after that. We hope to see you then.

See our **website** for all up to date information about services and events.

Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January, next **Parish Council meeting** St Matthew's West End, 7.30pm See the Parish Council website for future dates and agendas [marstowpc.org.uk](http://marstowpc.org.uk). A list of Marstow Parish councillors is also on the website.

### WYESHAM

Jo Townsend & Marguerite Gordon

[jotown223@hotmail.com](mailto:jotown223@hotmail.com) [marguerite.gordon@btinternet.com](mailto:marguerite.gordon@btinternet.com)

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> **Wyesham Together Tea and Toast** 9.00 - 10.00am  
Kymin View School

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> **Wyedean Embroiderers** meet at Monmouth Library to dismantle their exhibition.

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> **Wyesham Together Tea and Toast** 9.00 - 10.00am  
Kymin View School.

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> **WI** St James Community Hall 7.00pm

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> **Bingo** St James' Community Hall 7.00pm

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> **Wyesham Together Tea and Toast** 9.00 - 10.00am  
Kymin View School

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> **Wyesham Together Carols on the Green** 3.30pm

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> **Wyesham Together Carols by Candlelight** 5.00pm St James' Church followed by refreshments



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Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> **First Holy Communion of Christmas** 5.00pm St James' Church

**January 2026**

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> **Wydean Embroiderers** 10.00am - 3.00pm St James' Community Hall

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> **Wyesham Together Tea and Toast** 9.00 - 10.00am Kymin View School

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> **Bingo** St James Community Hall 19.00

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> **Wyesham Together Tea and Toast** 9.00 - 10.00am Kymin View School

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> **Wyesham Together Tea and Toast** 9.00 - 10.00am Kymin View School

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> **Bingo** St James Community Hall 7.00pm

**LLANGROVE**

Wendy Price [Wendyllangrove@gmail.com](mailto:Wendyllangrove@gmail.com),  
[www.llangrove.org.uk](http://www.llangrove.org.uk) & [llangrovelinks@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:llangrovelinks@yahoo.co.uk)

A thoughtful Advent, Happy Christmas and a hopeful New Year to all from Christ Church.

**Vicar Vacancy Update** Adverts and documents are being finalised. Contributions towards the person specification welcome, please contact Wendy.

Our **Food Bank** continues in church porch.

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> **Village Singers** Friends and Families Evening 8.00pm  
Annual free Christmas evening of special music to entertain and refreshments! Spring Term starts on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 7.30pm.

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> **Advent Coffee Morning** 10.30am in Llangrove Village Hall

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> **Exploring Advent Carols** 7.00pm Join us at Ty-Angles to take a step back from the business of the world and contemplate some of the Advent Carols. We will be discussing the words and finding out the background of the carols. No singing but there will be refreshments.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> **Llangrove Village Hall Christmas Fayre** 2.30pm  
Enjoy festive treats, fun activities, enjoy time with your neighbours and there will be a visit from Father Christmas!

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> **Carol Service** at 4.30pm as we retell the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ in words, carols and songs. The service will be followed by traditional nibbles.

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> and Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> **Church Holiday Clubs** in Llangrove Village Hall for those aged 3 years old and over with something for all ages.

**Christmas Day Worship** 10.00am A Service of Surprises which will be meaningful and enjoyable for all ages. Join us whether you are usually church goers or not.

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> January **Family Activity Day** 10.00am – 4.00pm. Friday mornings from 9.00am could become a **Baby and Toddler** session in 2026. Please contact Wendy if you are interested. (details above)

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January **Coffee Morning** 10.30am at Llangrove Village Hall

**Playground Update** the results of the consultations are being brought together and a contractor will be decided upon soon. Grant forms and fund raising will continue in 2026! Thank you all for your support so far.

## WHITCHURCH

Brigid Hamilton-Jones [brigidhj@aol.com](mailto:brigidhj@aol.com)

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> **Family Christmas Craft Morning** 10.00 – 12.00 noon at St Dubricius Church. Contact Kathy Langham if you can help or want more information: [kathy.y.langham@gmail.com](mailto:kathy.y.langham@gmail.com)

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> **Christmas Community lunch** 12.00 noon at St Dubricius church. Please phone Janet Townsend on 07803 798409 to book your place.

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> **Community coffee mornings** 10.30 – 12.00 noon at St Dubricius church.



# WHAT'S ON IN DECEMBER

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	 <b>COUNT ARTHUR STRONG:</b> A Christmas Carol Thursday 4th at 8pm Tickets: £24.50	 <b>MOTHER GOOSE</b> Sat 22nd at 2pm & 6pm Sun 28th at 12noon and 4pm
	 <b>SIMON EVANS AND FRIENDS!</b> Saturday 6th at 8pm Tickets: £25	 <b>CARAVAGGIO</b> Wed 3rd at 7.30pm (also Sun 30th Nov at 5.30pm) Standard £14, Friends £12
SPECIAL CINEMA EVENTS	 <b>JOHN CLEESE PACKS IT IN</b> (12A) Wed 3rd at 4.30pm (also Sun 30th Nov at 7.30pm) Standard £14, Friends £12	 <b>GABBY'S DOLLHOUSE</b> Sat 6th at 12.30 & Sun 7th at 2pm
	 <b>FIRES OF THE MOON/TANAU'R LLOER</b> (12A) Tuesday 2nd at 4.30pm (with English subtitles, and 7.30pm (in Welsh))	 <b>THE CHORAL</b> (12A) Friday 5th - Thursday 11th (Sat at 4.30pm and 7.30pm except Saturday 8th 7.30pm ONLY)
	 <b>PAW PATROL AT CHRISTMAS</b> (U) Fri 19th - Thur 24th Fri at 12.30pm, Sat & Sun at 1.30pm, Mon - Wed at 12.30pm	 <b>ZOOTROPOLIS 2</b> (PG) Fri 19th - Thur 24th Fri at 2pm, Sat & Sun at 3pm, Mon-Wed at 2pm
FILM	 <b>WICKED: FOR GOOD</b> (12A) Friday 12th - Friday 19th at 4.30pm & 7.30pm Saturday 20th & Sunday 21st at 7.30pm ONLY Monday 22nd & Tuesday 23rd at 4.30pm & 7.30pm Wednesday 30th at 4.30pm ONLY	

All times subject to change. Please check website for details

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**Archenfield Repair Cafe**  
Come and see us and ACEG at the Llangrove Christmas Fayre or bring your broken fairy lights in January. Come and have chat and find out all about ACEG and ARC.

Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan  
Llangrove Village Hall  
7-8.30pm

A presentation by Chloe Churchill co-founder of the Grange Project - Nature restoration on 80 acres of land in Monmouthshire since 2023 and already fully diversified for nature, people and the planet.

Email: [archenfieldceg@gmail.com](mailto:archenfieldceg@gmail.com) for more information

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> **Sticky Little Fingers** 9.30-11.00am at St Dubricius church. Babies and toddlers with their carers are most welcome. Sticky Little Fingers will be back when school starts in January.

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026 Our **first Community lunch of the year**. Please phone Janet Townsend on 07803 798409 to book your place.

**Whitchurch Floral Society** We meet at 2.00pm on the first Wednesday of the month at The Old Court Hotel, Whitchurch for floral demonstrations, talks and outings. Annual membership £35.00. Visitors £8.00 per meeting. For further details please contact: Wendy Cogger 07801 745 829.

**Whitchurch and Ganarew Memorial Hall**



Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> **Hot Fingers (Spatts)** will be returning with his band to entertain us with 20s and 30s jazz music. Doors open 7pm for music from 7.30pm. Licensed bar and snacks. Booking essential: Places £15. Contact: Graham 07768 125452 or email: [wandghall@hotmail.com](mailto:wandghall@hotmail.com)



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January at 7.30pm Llangrove Village Hall

## Pop Up Pub Night



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## Nicholas Theologist to Father Christmas

One person you are bound to run into this Christmas season is Father Christmas. Father Christmas wasn't always the red-suited, white-bearded star of the retail trade that he is today. He began life as Nicholas, born way back about AD260 in Patara, an important port on the southern coast of what is now Turkey. When his parents died and left him a fortune, Nicholas gave it away to the poor. He became a bishop of the nearby city of Myra, where he almost certainly suffered persecution and imprisonment at the hand of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. Nicholas was a serious theologian and a participant at the First Council of Nicaea, which formulated the Creed which we still say today. Venerated as a Saint, his day is celebrated on 6th December in Western Europe.

In the UK, Nicholas became the basis for Father Christmas, who emerged in Victorian times as a jolly-faced bearded character, dressed in green robes associated with nature. It was the Dutch and German settlers who took him to America and here Saint Nicholas received his final two great breaks into real stardom.

The first was when the Rev Clement C Moore, a New York Episcopal minister, wrote a fun poem for his children one Christmas. Today it is known by the first line: 'T'was the Night Before Christmas'. From this poem we discovered that St Nicholas is round, pink-cheeked with a white-bearded, and travels at night by sleigh pulled by reindeer entering houses via chimneys to fill stockings with toys and sweets.

Coca-Cola are responsible for him wearing a bright red, fur-trimmed coat and a large belt, unveiled in their 1931 advertising campaign.

Here's a thought, in order to get round all the children in the world on Christmas Eve, he will travel 221 million miles at an average speed of 1,279 miles a second, or 6,395 times the speed of sound. And you thought you were exhausted getting ready for Christmas!

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### *What's on @ Hereford Cathedral Christmas 2025*

- Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> Hereford Choral Society: Handel's Messiah 7.30pm  
Ticket information [herefordchoralsociety.org/tickets](http://herefordchoralsociety.org/tickets)
- Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> Christmas Fair 9.30am to 4.00pm Carols at 12 noon
- Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> ABF The Soldiers Charity Christmas Concert  
7.00pm Ticket information on our website
- Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> Toddler Carol Service 10.00 to 11.00am
- Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> & Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> Festival of Carols & Lessons  
Admission by free ticket Information on our website
- Christmas Eve 2.00pm Family Crib Service; 5.00pm Choral  
Evensong; 11.00pm Midnight Mass
- Thursday 11th to Saturday 10 January Nativity Family Trail



the minds of first century Magi, but one Victorian scholar has offered an explanation as to the significance of their gifts. The Rev John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, in 1857 wrote his much-loved Christmas carol, 'We Three Kings of Orient Are'.

Gold, he said was a gift that would have been given to a king. Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as they worshipped God in the Temple, and Myrrh was a spice that the ancients used in preparing bodies for burial.

If this is true, then you could say that the Wise Men, in choosing their gifts for this infant, honoured Jesus with gold because He was King of the Jews, with frankincense because He was to be worshipped as divine, and with myrrh, because He would also become a sacrifice and die for His people.

We should remember that the Wise Men were the very first gentiles to worship Jesus, and what faith they had! They travelled for months over difficult terrain, never seeing any evidence of Jesus' kingship, His divinity or His sacrificial death. They worshipped Him through faith in God's promises about Him. It is Isaiah whom foresaw this response to Jesus: 'Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi's faith saw far into the future.

If we compare them with the High Priest and religious leaders in Jerusalem whom the Magi met when they first arrived, these head priests knew all about the prophecies of the Messiah. Interestingly Jewish religious leaders did not feel compelled to travel to look for Him, and Bethlehem is only six miles down the road.



## *PRAYERS FOR CHRISTMAS TIME*

Dear Lord, as we celebrate this Christmas, fill our hearts with the joy of the season. Let the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Your Son, shine brightly in our lives. Help us to share this joy with others, to spread kindness, and to create memories filled with love and peace. May Your presence be felt in every gathering. Infuse our hearts with the true spirit of Christmas, one of love, peace, and goodwill. Let the spirit of Christmas guide our actions and interactions, at this special time of year.

Lord, we lift up those who are grieving during this Christmas season. Provide comfort and peace to those who have experienced loss. Surround them with Your love and support, and help them to find solace in the hope of Christ's birth. May Your presence bring healing and reassurance in their time of sorrow.

### **A Christmas Dinner Prayer**

Heavenly Father, As we gather around this table on this special Christmas day, we come before you with hearts full of gratitude. We thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate today.

Bless this food before us, and may it nourish our bodies and fill our hearts with joy. We are thankful for the love and warmth of family and friends gathered here.

As we share this meal, help us remember the true reason for this season, the love, hope, and salvation that Jesus brings into our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen



## PARISH EVENTS AT A GLANCE



### December

- 1st Wyesham Together Tea and Toast Kymin View School 9.00-10.00
- 2nd Exploring Advent Carols Ty-Angles, Llangrove 19.00
- 3rd Community Coffee Morning St Dubricius Whitchurch 10.30 - 12.00
- 6th Wyedean Embroiderers meeting at Monmouth Library  
Christmas Café Bishopswood Village Hall 10.00 - 12.00  
Family Christmas Craft Morning St Dubricius Whitchurch 10.00 - 12.00  
Pop Up Pub and Fish'n'Chips Garron Centre 17.30 - 21.00  
Hot Fingers Jazz Night Whitchurch & Ganarew Memorial Hall 19.00
- 8th Wyesham Together Tea and Toast Kymin View School 9.00-10.00  
Christmas Community Lunch St Dubricius Whitchurch 12.00  
WI St James' Community Hall Wyesham 19.00  
Village Singers Friends & Families Evening Llangrove Village Hall 20.00
- 9th Sticky Little Fingers Toddler Group St Dubricius Whitchurch 9.30 - 11.00
- 10th Advent Coffee Morning Llangrove Village Hall 10.30
- 11th Bingo St James' Community Hall 19.00
- 12th Roaring Megs at Goodrich Primary School 19.00
- 13th Xmas Fayre Welsh Newton Village Hall 10.30  
A Christmas Big Breakfast Goodrich Village Hall 10.00 - 12.00  
Llangarron Community Café Garron Centre Llangarron 10.30 - 12.30  
Christmas Fair Llangrove Village Hall 14.30
- 14th Christmas Community Lunch Bishopswood Village Hall 12.30
- 15th Wyesham Together Tea and Toast Kymin View School 9.00-10.00
- 16th Exploring Advent Carols Ty-Angles, Llangrove 19.00
- 17th Community Coffee Morning St Dubricius Whitchurch 10.30 - 12.00
- 20th Preparing the Church Marstow 10.00
- 22nd & 23rd Church Holiday Club Llangrove Village Hall



## The Magi: Men of Faith and Devotion

Where did the Wise Men come from? From the East isn't exactly much to go on. The Magi had originally been a religious caste among the Persians. Their devotion to astrology, divination and the interpretation of dreams led to an extension in the meaning of the word, and by the first century the Magi, in Matthew's gospel, could have been astrologers from outside of Persia. Some scholars believe they may have come from what was then Arabia Felix, or as we know it today, Southern Arabia. It was the region where the Queen of Sheba lived, who would have visited Solomon and heard the prophecies about how one day a Messiah would be born to the Israelites and become their king.

The Magi asked Herod: 'Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the East and have come to worship Him.' A definite link that in southern Arabia the Queen of Sheba's story of how a Messiah would one day be sent to the Israelites had survived. This makes perfect sense that the ancient stories of a Messiah, linked to later astrological study had prompted these alert and God-fearing men to the realisation that something incredibly special was happening in Israel. They would have realised that after all these centuries, the King of the Jews, the Messiah, was about to be born.

To add weight to this theory is if you study any map of Palestine as it was during biblical times, you will find that the old Arabian caravan routes all entered Palestine 'from the East' or southern Arabia.

The story of the coming of the Magi grew in the telling, and by the 6<sup>th</sup> century they had acquired names: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. By medieval times they were considered to be kings. Whoever they were, we do know from Matthew that they brought three gifts to Jesus; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We cannot know for sure what was in

Cont'd...



## CHURCH SERVICES Cont'd

### Sunday 28th December

09.00	Welsh Newton	Holy Communion
10.00	Llangrove	Family Service
10.00	Marstow	Family Service
11.00	Goodrich	Holy Communion
11.00	Whitchurch	Sunday Praise

### Advent in the Valley - Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December

A circular walk from Tintern Abbey, of some six miles. All welcome and there's no charge. For details, please visit the Day Walk's page of the Journeyming website: [www.journeyming.co.uk](http://www.journeyming.co.uk)

### Taizé Prayer 2026

Taizé prayer allows us to rest in God's loving presence as we meditate, sing simple Taizé hymns, and enjoy a time of quiet in a candlelit atmosphere.

Please join us at 6pm, at St Dubricius church, Whitchurch on the following Wednesdays:

28 <sup>th</sup> January	15 <sup>th</sup> July
25 <sup>th</sup> February	19 <sup>th</sup> August
25 <sup>th</sup> March	18 <sup>th</sup> September
22 <sup>nd</sup> April	21 <sup>st</sup> October
20 <sup>th</sup> May	21 <sup>st</sup> November
17 <sup>th</sup> June	16 <sup>th</sup> December

[wyereaches.org](http://wyereaches.org)

### Night Prayer/Compline 2026

Night Prayer, or Compline, is a short, reflective time of prayer, lasting around 20 minutes which is a delightful way to round off the day and reflect on God's love and care of us.

Please join us at 6pm, at St Dubricius church, Whitchurch on the following Wednesdays:

14 <sup>th</sup> January	1 <sup>st</sup> July
11 <sup>th</sup> February	8 <sup>th</sup> August
4 <sup>th</sup> March	2 <sup>nd</sup> September
8 <sup>th</sup> April	7 <sup>th</sup> October
8 <sup>th</sup> May	4 <sup>th</sup> November
3 <sup>rd</sup> June	2 <sup>nd</sup> December

[wyereaches.org](http://wyereaches.org)

### January 2026

- 2nd Family Activity Day Llangrove Village Hall 10.00 – 16.00
- 3rd Wyedean Embroiderers St James' Community Hall 10.00 - 15.00
- 5th Wyesham Together Tea and Toast Kymin View School 9.00-10.00  
Village Singers New Term begins Llangrove Village Hall 19.30
- 8th Bingo St James' Community Hall 19.00  
Rain & Shine Theatre Company: Agatha Appleton and the Perils of the Pyramids Goodrich Village Hall
- 12th Wyesham Together Tea and Toast Kymin View School 9.00-10.00
- 14th Coffee Morning Llangrove Village Hall 10.30
- 17th Llangarron Community Café Garron Centre Llangarron 10.30 - 12.30
- 19th Wyesham Together Tea and Toast Kymin View School 9.00-10.00
- 22nd Bingo St James' Community Hall 19.00
- 23rd Bingo evening Garron Centre Llangarron 19.00
- 24th Burns Night Ceilidh Goodrich Village Hall 19.00
- 26th Flicks Goodrich Village Hall "Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale" 19.30  
Community Lunch St Dubricius Whitchurch 12.00

The Editor,  
Parish Representatives and  
Distribution Team wish all our  
readers and our advertisers a  
Happy and Peaceful Christmas and  
a prosperous New Year.



## CHURCH SERVICES

### Wednesday 3rd December

18.00      Whitchurch      Night prayer (Compline)

### Sunday 7th December

09.00      Welsh Newton      Meditation and Bible Study

09.30      Ganarew      Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00      Llangrove      Holy Communion

11.00      Whitchurch      Holy Communion

11.00      Wyesham      Sunday Praise

### Sunday 14th December

09.00      Welsh Newton      Holy Communion

10.00      Llangrove      Family Service

10.00      Marstow      Holy Communion

11.00      Goodrich      Holy Communion

11.00      Whitchurch      Holy Communion

11.00      Wyesham      Chatty Church

15.00      Whitchurch      Carols on the Green (at Grange Park)

### Monday 15th December

13.30 and 14.30 Wyesham Christingle service for parents &  
children at Kymrin View Primary School

### Tuesday 16th December

09.30 and 10.15 Whitchurch Christingle service for parents &  
children at Whitchurch Primary School

16.15      Whitchurch      Lantern Parade for parents &  
children at Whitchurch Primary School

### Wednesday 17th December

09.30      Whitchurch      Christmas service for parents & children  
at Whitchurch School Nursery

15.30      Wyesham      Carols on the Green (by the Village shop)

## DECEMBER AND CHRISTMAS

### Thursday 18th December

19.00      Ganarew      St Swithin's Jol Carol Service

### Friday 19th December

18.00      Llangarron      Carol Service

### Sunday 21st December

09.00      Welsh Newton      Holy Communion and Outdoor Christmas  
Church

09.30      Ganarew      Sunday Praise

15.00      Bishopswood      Carols Service at the Village Hall

16.00      Goodrich      Carol Service

16.30      Llangrove      Carol Service

17.00      Wyesham      Carol Service

17.00      Whitchurch      Carol Service

18.00      Welsh Newton      Carol Service

### Tuesday 23rd December

17.00      Dixon      Candlelight Carol Service

### Wednesday 24th December - Christmas Eve

15.00      Llanrothal      Community Christmas Eve Service

16.00      Marstow      Carol Service

17.00      Whitchurch      First Holy Communion of Christmas

17.00      Wyesham      First Holy Communion of Christmas

### Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day

09.30      Ganarew      Holy Communion for Christmas Day

09.30      Welsh Newton      Family Friendly Christmas Day Service

11.00      Goodrich      Family Service & Holy Communion

10.00      Llangrove      Christmas Worship

11.00      Bishopswood      Holy Communion for Christmas Day

11.00      Dixon      Holy Communion for Christmas Day

11.00      Wyesham      Holy Communion

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