

# CANALSIDE NEWS

*for* DECEMBER 2025



The Canalside Parishes

## Thought from the Rectory



New Year's celebrations. Think about Lent. What are you giving up? Before you know it, it's Easter. Big celebration! Too much chocolate. Into the summer. Hot. Holidays. Sun and seashores. Back to school. Autumn, falling leaves, frown at the Halloween decorations in Sainsbury's. Suddenly it's Advent and we're getting ready for Christmas, the end of another year.

I don't know how 2025 has been for you, but it certainly seems to have been a blur to me. As we gear up for Advent 2025, and even for what's to come in the New Year, it's hard not to look back on another year that has flown by.

During Advent, the Church of England follows a sequence of four Sundays to remember the patriarchs and matriarchs, the prophets, John the Baptist and Mary, Jesus' mother. This year, we're also using an alternate sequence that is used by other church traditions: as we light the four Advent candles, we remember Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. In our preparations for Christmas, and at a time when we look forward to Jesus coming again some day, we tell a story of those four things.

Reflecting on this year, it definitely feels good to remember Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. They are all there, if I look back. It's just that I didn't always take the time to notice them. In the busy-ness of the year, in the frenetic pace of life and when trying to balance all the different things we do (church, family, schools, trying to do some exercise, remembering to answer Michael's emails about the newsletter), we sometimes overlook basic things.

This all counts as we look forward to 2026, as well. What do you hope for? What gives you peace? Where will you encounter joy? When might you receive, or need to offer, love?

A final thought. I don't know what Christmas films you reach for each December, but my three I watch every single year are Die Hard (yes, it's a Christmas film and I am absolutely willing to fight over this), Nativity and Home Alone. Maybe it's just because we're searching for those feel-good vibes, but (perhaps leaving Die Hard to the side), so many Christmas films are all about

people searching for those four things: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Whether it's George Bailey, consumed by despair but given new hope by the end of the film or Ebenezer Scrooge, setting aside selfish miserliness for shared joy and love with others (I do err towards the muppets' version of A Christmas Carol), these films embody things that, in church, we are finding in the story of Jesus.

Enjoy your Christmas films this year. And I pray that you each find Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, spotting where it showed itself in 2025 and receiving it in present-loads for 2026. *Rev. Chris*

## Thankyou for your Support



We are so grateful to everyone who supported, in whatever way, the recent Christmas Festive Fayre at St Mary Magdalen's. It was a wonderful turnout and the event raised an amazing £997 (incl donations) for parish funds. Last year's Fayre raised £632. We also raised a further £435 at the Quiz Night - £1,432 in less than a week – that's pretty good going. That's the good news – sadly despite all our best efforts we are still forecasting an end of year deficit of around £15,000. This hasn't been helped by a couple of unforeseen problems at St Mary's recently – the heater in the chancel has had to be replaced and the kitchen roof has had to be repaired after rain water leaked in. The total cost of the heater and roof repairs is about £3,000. Many thanks to everyone who has responded to Chris' letter last week, setting out the financial situation that we now face. Already we have received some very kind one off donations and I know that some of you are reviewing your giving to church. THANKYOU ALL. *Michael*

## Special Visitors



On the afternoon of Sunday November 9th at St Katharine's Church in Holt it was such a privilege to meet in person Archbishop Ezekiel of Sudan and Bishop Hassan of the Kadugli Diocese (South Kordofan) – here in the UK to highlight the plight of their war ravaged country.

Following welcomes by the Rev. Andrew Evans, singing and prayer, first the Archbishop and then Bishop Hassan spoke in words very wide-ranging. So

many factions – local, national, international – at war in their land. A very complex picture. Some factions supported by weapons from other nations. So much destruction. 12 million people displaced, many thousands killed. Unspeakable, brutal atrocities.

Questions were then invited. One question: “What are your two main needs?” The Archbishop replied: “Food and Advocacy”. (for “Food” read all humanitarian needs). Advocacy – the World has been slow to recognise, to respond to, what many call this “Forgotten War”.

The Archbishop and Bishop Hassan were off to Westminster early in the week. On Monday I rang my MP’s office asking him to do what he can in Parliament to “raise” the plight and needs of Sudan.

Despite all this darkness what is abundantly clear is the Faith and Hope of these two priests – and of their “flock” – and of how important to them is the link between the Episcopal Church of Sudan and Salisbury Diocese. The Deanery of Bradford on Avon they call Bradford on Heaven. A sentence from the Archbishop which will stay with me: “Our children are your children; your children are our children.”

To quote the Archbishop again: “Please do not grow tired of praying for Sudan”. *Jo Davis*

## Used Postage Stamps

No doubt we will all be seeing more post in your letterboxes in the next few weeks. It would be great if you could save the stamps and pass them on to Bill and Marilyn Stubbs who in turn pass them on to the Bible Society. Please keep them coming and use the Storehouse church porch containers for dropping them off.

## 100 Club News

Congratulations to the winner of the November 100 Club Draw: Dawn Charman

## Bill Stubbs

Unfortunately Bill is currently unable to drive as he awaits some treatment needed to his eyes. We wish you well Bill and hope that you are back on the road very soon. In the meantime enjoy a well deserved rest. Whilst Bill is confined to barracks we are looking for a volunteer to take any donations from the Foodbank box at St Mary Magdalen's in Horse Road to Storehouse in Union Street, Trowbridge. If you would like to take this on for a while please let me know. Many thanks to Keith and Janet Waring who emptied the box for us last week.



## Christmas Services Flier



On the back of this newsletter you will see this year's poster of our Christmas Services. Sadly we don't have the resources to deliver a flier to every home in the Benefice but if you could deliver some to neighbours, homes in

your own road or neighbourhood please let me know how many fliers you would like and I will get them copied for you and in church for Sunday 7th. I will also need to know in which roads you will be delivering to avoid any duplication. The fliers need to be distributed before the Christingle and Carols event at St Mary Magdalen's on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>. Many thanks. *Michael*

## Christingle and Carols



On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December our Christingle and Carols event will be held at St Mary Magdalen's at 3pm. At 9.30am on the Saturday (13<sup>th</sup>) the Christingles will be prepared at St Mary Magdalen's. If anyone could help with the preparation please let me know as soon as possible. *Joy*

### TROWBRIDGE STREET PASTORS

How would you like to have fun with Jesus? Are you being called to help people in need? Would you like to find a different way to talk to people who wouldn't normally go near a church? Then maybe becoming a Street Pastor is exactly what you need to do.



I'll be honest – it is a calling and it is a commitment, including undertaking extensive training, having an interview and a DBS check. We need people who really feel called to go out on the streets of Trowbridge late at night, talking to strangers, listening to them and helping them. You may feel nervous or unsure about it, but do give it a try and see if you perceive that call and, truth be told, we really need you!

There has been a Street Pastors Initiative operating in Trowbridge since 2009, but our numbers have gone down, especially since Covid. Currently we have 9 active Street Pastors and have had to reduce our patrols to every fortnight, on a Saturday night. However, each Street Pastor would, generally, only go out on patrol once a month.

Our Chair, David Goldstone, always says that we have fun with Jesus out on patrol; and that is true. I have seen potentially confrontational situations turn into something completely different, even ending in laughter. We certainly each know that we absolutely could not do this without Jesus being with us, or without the Holy Spirit within us. *The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.* Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV UK.

One of the great privileges of being a Street Pastor is that we are on the front line between the world and God's Kingdom and we meet people on *their* patch. We can have really good conversations about why we do what we do, for no pay, which is so counter cultural that people are really taken aback. We have the opportunity to show people God's love, in action, which is truly wonderful. So, if you would like to know more then please contact the Coordinator, Julia Wade, on 01380 870137 or email [trowbridge@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:trowbridge@streetpastors.org.uk) If you would like to hear a short talk about our work in your church, then ask your leader to book us. You are welcome to come out as an observer to see for yourself what we do, without any obligation to take it further.



## Prayer Requests



It is important that we pray for all who seek our support. Please let Michael know of anyone who particularly needs our prayers. Do ensure that you have their permission.

### ***This month we pray for..***

+ Alison Meader	+ Dave, Rosemary, Matthew & Family	+ Maureen Mitchell
+ Amelia-Lily and family	+ Eve and Jim Banks	+ Michelle
+ Andrew Margetts	+ Hannah, Ash, Oliver & baby Leo	+ Mike Aldridge
+ Audrey Sheppard	+ Heather	+ Mitchel and Divine
+ Barbara Tucker	+ Helen Thomas	+ Richard Marshman
+ Bob Cradock	+ Hilary & Mark Heaton	+ Roger Emes
+ Catherine	+ Irene Hicks	+ Rosa Light
+ Cathy and Ian	+ Isabelle & Family	+ Tanya
+ Chloe Stevens	+ Jeannette	+ Val, Phil and family
+ Colin Jackson	+ Joanna Martin	+ Viv and Jan
+ Collette Miyagawa	+ Laurence & Family	
+ Colston Carpenter	+ Maggie & Family	



- We pray for all those who are mourning the loss of a loved one at this time especially the friends and family of Pat Butler.
- We pray for the people of Sudan at this time of conflict, including Archbishop Ezekiel as he leads the Anglican Church there.



## Foodbanks Update

Together with many other Foodbanks across the country both Melksham and Trowbridge are desperate for more donations, as the demand is very high at present, so please give as generously as you are able.

# Storehouse Foodbank



**HELP!**

If you can donate any food or hygiene items PLEASE, pop them in our trolleys or come on down and bring them to us. If you are a little flush; you can do online shopping with ASDA as they will deliver to us on your behalf. Please drop into the building as we now do a breakfast for the homeless so eggs are always needed plus cheese, butter bacon etc as we have a fridge freezer, and fridge. Fruit and vegetables are always welcome but do not put in a trolley. Please continue to donate to us so we can keep blessing the people of Trowbridge. Thank you all.

**Please use the collection boxes in the porches of St Mary Magdalen's and St Michael's to drop off food donations etc.**

If you prefer you can make a one off financial donation or support Trowbridge Storehouse regularly, please follow the link below and select storehouse.

<https://westwiltsvineyard.churchsuite.co.uk/donate/fund/zk54op3a>

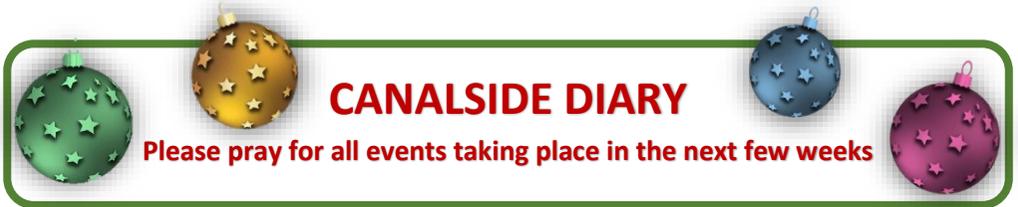
**Storehouse is always in need of carrier bags**



Melksham Foodbank continue to need all items but in particular at the moment require : biscuits, tinned meat, sugar, and in addition to all the usual stuff are collecting

some 'treat' items for Christmas, including 100g bars of Chocolate, and Christmas foods with dates well into January.. The demand for support is very high (please ensure all items are well within the best before date). They can also take large bags of rice, tea bags, sugar & pasta as these can be decanted into smaller bags for distribution. Please take your donations to the porch at St George's, Semington before 6pm on Wednesday.

Our continued support of Melksham FoodBank and Trowbridge StoreHouse is vital, and a part of our response to God's generosity to us.



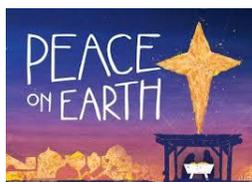
Day	Date	Time	Event details	Location
<b>DECEMBER 2025</b>				
Tu	2 <sup>nd</sup>	0930	<b>Hilperton/Staverton Morning Prayer</b> <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89678887943?pwd=IKy2vBYNviwibNcoWUpqTtf4hpwQTA.1">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89678887943?pwd=IKy2vBYNviwibNcoWUpqTtf4hpwQTA.1</a>	Online
		1450	<b>Collective Worship</b>	St George's School
W	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1000	<b>Midweek Morning Worship</b>	St Michael's
		1430	<b>Collective Worship</b>	Hilperton School
Th	4 <sup>th</sup>	0900	<b>Semington Morning Prayer</b> <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88553953942?pwd=1EHGGg18bBqqYKytMMRbYvZ5JZFZnm.1">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88553953942?pwd=1EHGGg18bBqqYKytMMRbYvZ5JZFZnm.1</a>	Online
F	5 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Toddlers@theTin</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
Su	7 <sup>th</sup>	1030	<b>Service of Holy Communion</b>	St Michael's
		1500	<b>Service of BCP Holy Communion</b>	St Mary the Virgin
		1800	<b>Semington Christmas Lights</b>	High Street
Tu	9 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Hilperton/Staverton Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
W	10 <sup>th</sup>	1000	<b>Midweek Communion</b>	St Michael's
		1430	<b>Open the Book</b>	Hilperton School
Th	11 <sup>th</sup>	0900	<b>Semington Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
		1045	<b>Open the Book</b>	St George's School

		1430	<b>Friendship Group</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
		1445	<b>Open the Book</b>	Staverton School
F	12 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Toddlers@theTin</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
Sa	13 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Preparation of Christingles</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
Su	14 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Breakfast Church</b>	St George's Church
		1030	<b>Service of Holy Communion</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
		1500	<b>Christingle and Carols</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
Tu	16 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Hilperton/Staverton Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
W	17 <sup>th</sup>	1000	<b>Midweek Morning Worship</b>	St Michael's
		1730	<b>Carols by Candlelight</b>	St George's School
Th	18 <sup>th</sup>	0900	<b>Semington Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
		0930	<b>Hilperton School Christmas Service</b>	St Michael's
		0930	<b>St George's Sch Christmas Service</b>	St George's Church
		1530	<b>Staverton Sch Christmas Service</b>	Staverton School
F	19 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Toddlers@theTin</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
		1030	<b>Carols at Staverton House</b>	Staverton House
		1800	<b>Whaddon Carol Service</b>	St Mary the Virgin
Sa	20 <sup>th</sup>	1100	<b>Trowbridge Living Nativity</b>	Civic Centre
Su	21 <sup>st</sup>	1030	<b>Service of Holy Communion / Crib</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
		1500	<b>Semington Carol Service</b>	St George's Church
		1800	<b>Hilperton Carol Service</b>	St Michael's
Tu	23 <sup>rd</sup>	0930	<b>Hilperton/Staverton Morning Prayer</b> <b>(NOT online – IN PERSON)</b>	St Michael's
W	24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b>		
		1000	<b>Midweek Communion</b>	St Michael's
		1400	<b>Christmas Celebration</b>	St George's
		1700	<b>Crib Service</b>	St Michael's
		2330	<b>Christmas Midnight Communion</b>	St George's
		2330	<b>Christmas Midnight Communion</b>	St Michael's
Th	25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>		
		0930	<b>Christmas Morning Communion</b>	St George's
		1030	<b>Christmas Morning Communion</b>	St Michael's
F	26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>BOXING DAY</b>		
Su	28 <sup>th</sup>	1030	<b>Service of Holy Communion</b>	St Michael's
		<b>NEW YEAR'S EVE</b>		

W	31 <sup>st</sup>	1000	<b>Midweek Communion</b>	Online
<b>JANUARY 2026</b>				
Th	1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>NEW YEAR'S DAY</b>		
Tu	6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>EPIPHANY</b>		
		0930	<b>Hilperton/Staverton Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
W	7 <sup>th</sup>	1000	<b>Midweek Morning Worship</b>	St Michael's
Th	8 <sup>th</sup>	0900	<b>Semington Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online

## CANALSIDE CONTACTS

<b>Rector</b>	Rev. Chris Hunter	07396875236 01225 975510	<a href="mailto:rector.canalside@gmail.com">rector.canalside@gmail.com</a>
<b>Associate Priest</b>	Rev. Joy Albone	07931638524	<a href="mailto:revjoyalbone@gmail.com">revjoyalbone@gmail.com</a>
<b>Office</b>	Michael Gamble	07795400262	<a href="mailto:canalsideoffice@gmail.com">canalsideoffice@gmail.com</a>
<b>Churchwardens</b>			
<b>Semington</b>	David Wildsmith	c/o 01380 870784	c/o <a href="mailto:jackbev.woodward@gmail.com">jackbev.woodward@gmail.com</a>
<b>Hilperton and Staverton</b>	James Newton	07803904947	<a href="mailto:jnewton@churchmouse.org.uk">jnewton@churchmouse.org.uk</a>
	Martyn Carpenter	07831309377	<a href="mailto:martyncarpenter55@gmail.com">martyncarpenter55@gmail.com</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://canalsidebenefice.org.uk">canalsidebenefice.org.uk</a>		
<b>Facebook</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/canalsideparishes">https://www.facebook.com/canalsideparishes</a>		



Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed: kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

St James' Church Trowbridge

## Christmas Tree Festival

Tuesday 2nd to Saturday 6th December 2025  
Open daily 10am until 5pm (4pm on Saturday)

All Welcome - Free Admission  
Refreshments available

ST JAMES' CHURCH [www.stjamestrowbridge.co.uk](http://www.stjamestrowbridge.co.uk) | 07565 977441



# CHRISTMAS *in* CANALSIDE



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**Sun CHRISTINGLE AND CAROLS**

**14** 3pm : St Mary Magdalen's, Horse Road, Hilperton

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**Fri CAROL SERVICE**

**19** 6pm : St Mary the Virgin Church at Whaddon

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**Sun CAROL SERVICE**

**21** 3pm : St George's Church, Church Street, Semington

**CAROL SERVICE**

6pm : St Michael and All Angels' Church, Hilperton

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**Wed CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**

**24** 2pm : St George's Church, Church Street, Semington

**CRIB SERVICE**

5pm : St Michael and All Angels' Church, Hilperton

**CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT COMMUNION**

11.30pm : St George's Church, Church Street, Semington

**CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT COMMUNION**

11.30pm : St Michael and All Angels' Church, Hilperton

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**Thu CHRISTMAS MORNING COMMUNION**

**25** 9.30am : St George's Church, Church Street, Semington

**CHRISTMAS MORNING COMMUNION**

10.30am : St Michael and All Angels' Church, Hilperton

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PLEASE COME AND  
JOIN US AT ANY OF  
OUR SERVICES  
THIS

**CHRISTMAS**  
YOU WILL BE VERY  
**WELCOME**

