

The Messenger

December 2025

The Parish Of Dursley



60p each or £6 annually

The Ewelme Benefice

**The parish of Dursley
and**

the parish of Uley with Owlpen and Nympsfield

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DECEMBER 2025

A Message from the Editors

Dear Readers

Welcome to our December edition, the last one of the year!

Christmas is just around the corner and we have all the Benefice service times for you and even a picture for you to colour in. Wishing you all a Very Happy and Blessed Christmas.

We look forward now to a New Year and as usual we are open to new ideas, we also like photos of events in the town.

From Valerie and Judith (editors)

Front Cover: theme for 2025

'In and around St James' –

Nativity Scene 2024. Crib figures sculpted by Tom Preater.

Photo by Clare White

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**DEADLINE FOR JANUARY 2026 ISSUE
IS SUNDAY 16th DECEMBER 2025**

Rev Dr Juliet Jensen writes...



Dear Friends,

Some wounds can only be healed by beauty.

I heard this little phrase the other day and it's helping to make sense of experiences where beauty and tears mingle together. I really hope that this won't put you off coming to church, but when worshipping, beauty touches deeply and silent tears may gently flow.

There are, of course many other tears that find their place too.

Tears of recognition, nostalgia or disappointment. Tears of joy and tears of grief.

All of these are welcome in Church, alongside the exuberant joy of gusty singing, familiar storytelling, the stillness of prayer and the contentment and challenge of knowing that we are community gathered in the presence of Love, where *everyone* is welcome!

The uniquely Christian belief celebrated at Christmas is that God isn't distant and untainted by the realities of life lived here on this earth, but that in Jesus, God became one of us, so that we might encounter God in the middle of the mess and the muddle, the triumphs and the sorrows of our ordinary little lives. We are called to respond to Love with love; to allow ourselves to be healed and to offer that same healing love to our neighbour.

Advent invites us to look honestly at the realities of brokenness of our fractured world and to look for glimmers of light in the darkness. We are called to weep the tears that need to be wept and to watch and pray. To wait with hope and to act before it's too late. We are called to welcome the stranger, to care for the earth, to be good news for the poor and the oppressed, to live in right relationship with God and neighbour and to love our enemies. As we experience the impossibility of this call, we are invited to accept that we are utterly dependent upon the grace of God – and with that may flow more tears.

Our gathered worship during Advent and Christmas will help us to make these journeys of faith. I pray that we will know deep joy, peace and love this Christmas and that we will bring all of yourself to church and encounter our Lord in worship, with or without tears!

PASTORAL CARE

If people are in need, unwell, at home or in hospital.

Please contact the Revd Dr Juliet Jensen.

Tel: 01453 350810 or 07776 910890

*I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship,
should set his love upon the sons of men,
or why, as Shepherd, he should seek the wanderers,
to bring them back, they know not how or when.
But this I know, that he was born of Mary
when Bethl'em's manger was his only home,
and that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,
and so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come.*

*I cannot tell how silently he suffered,
as with his peace he graced this place of tears,
or how his heart upon the cross was broken,
the crown of pain to three and thirty years.
But this I know, he heals the broken-hearted
and stays our sin and calms our lurking fear
and lifts the burden from the heavy laden;
for still the Saviour, Saviour of the world is here.*

*I cannot tell how he will win the nations,
how he will claim his earthly heritage,
how satisfy the needs and aspirations
of east and west, of sinner and of sage.
But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,
and he shall reap the harvest he has sown,
and some glad day his sun will shine in splendour
when he the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is known.*

*I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
when at his bidding every storm is stilled,
or who can say how great the jubilation
when every heart with love and joy is filled.
But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,
and myriad myriad human voices sing,
and earth to heav'n, and heav'n to earth, will answer,
'at last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!'*



SAFEGUARDING

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December Thoughts from The Benefice Office.... by Clare White

I can't believe how quickly this year seems to have gone -
I'm still not ready for winter to arrive!



This year has had its good and bad parts. I try to remain cheerful but sometimes it gets difficult, as it does for everyone. Honesty is always the best policy, often we say "How are you?" and people reply with the stock answer "I'm ok!" even if we're not.



This year my health has troubled me but I have had lots of adventures with my family and friends, some more successful than others!

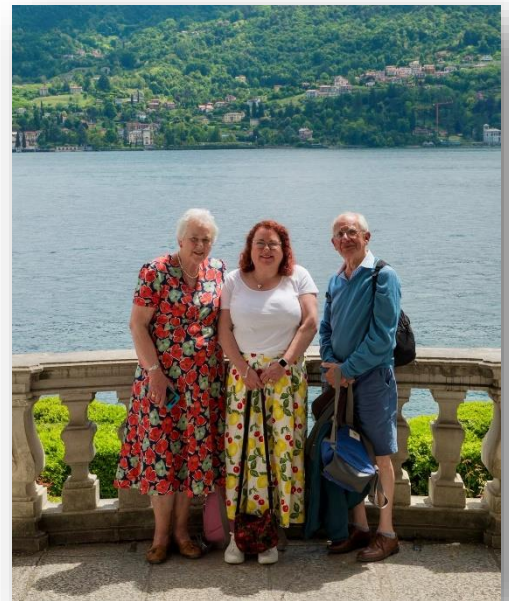
I'm going to miss my youngest daughter this Christmas, she'll be on the other side of the world, she's such a "Christmas fairy" and I'm going to miss her hype and help preparing to celebrate the birth of our Lord.

I think her Christmas will be very different from mine, probably by around 30 degrees centigrade! She'll be missing the pigs in blankets though!

As we enter the last month of the year it is time to reflect on all that has been and remember all that we have, the blessings poured on us.

Biblical blessings are often associated with protection and happiness. God's blessings are meant to protect us, and give us hope.

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of light, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1: 17



The Reflective Worship service on 17th January will be about God's grace, His favour to each of us who believe in Him and repent of our sins.

Our blessings are many even though at times we forget what they are.

As I enter December and get into the whirlwind of Christmas in this office and at home I remember that I am lucky to have made so many memories

this year. I've learnt new ways of working, some of it from home and with people who work differently from me. I've seen so much new scenery, I've experienced lots of new flora and fauna. And received exemplary health care from the NHS, which I'm incredibly grateful for.



I wish you all a very happy and healthy Christmas... see you in 2026 ready to make more memories.

Let us all be filled with God's love.



Acrostic Poem for December....by Sally Hayward

Decorations are up in our loft
Eager to hang them up, 12 days until
Christmas Day
Every shop has candles, tinsel and play Carols from the
Middle of July, when the children break up
By the time Christmas Day comes our Christmas tree has all
tinsel and fairy lights on with baubles
Eager to see what Santa has left
Remembering Christmases when I was small my Daddy was my Santa.



Remembering from November.



These lights decorated with poppies, were made by Sian Graham's Brownies as they don't go into the Remembrance service



EWELME BENEFICE

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2025

Sunday 21st December

10am

“Shine!” Family Service at St James, Dursley

6.30pm

Christmas Carol Service at St James, Dursley

Monday 22nd December

6pm

Christmas Carols at St Bartholomew's, Nympsfield

Tuesday 23rd December

6pm

9 Lessons and Carols at Holy Cross, Owlpen

Wednesday 24th December - Christmas Eve

4pm

Crib and Christingle Service at St James, Dursley

4pm

Crib and Christingle service at St Giles, Uley

11pm

Midnight Mass at St James, Dursley

Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day

8am

Said Holy Communion at St James, Dursley

10am

Christmas Day Communion at St James, Dursley

10am

Christmas Day Communion at St Giles, Uley

ALL AGES ARE WELCOME AT ALL OF OUR SERVICES.



Bellringing *by Elizabeth Byrne*



Our annual outing took place as planned on Saturday 27 September over the river to the Forest of Dean. 19 people took part, ringing first at English Bicknor, (6 bells, 7 cwt.) where we were instructed to park in the school playground. A public footpath runs through it, leading to the church. Access to the ringing room is up an iron spiral staircase. The bells are hung in an anticlockwise circle which can be a challenge. The decorated bell wheel on the wall in the south transept is most attractive and unusual. We moved on then to Littledean, (8, 12 cwt.) augmented from 6 bells to 8 since most of us last rang there. Access this time to the ringing room is up a steep wooden staircase and through a trap door.

Our now traditional 2-hour lunch break was taken at The Kilcot Inn, not far from Newent. We had all pre-ordered, and the excellent food arrived promptly for those who had ordered ham, egg and chips, but less promptly for the others, particularly those wanting pan fried salmon.

The first afternoon ring was at Newent, * (8, 16 cwt.) and those ringing 2, 3 and 4 had to contend with the rope handling hazard of a low clock case, through which the ropes feed. These bell sound lovely outside, but are difficult to ring well.

*Thanks to Heather Arnold and Hugh Clayton for pointing out that Newent is NOT in The Forest.

The final tower was Lonhope, (8, 10 cwt.), again having been augmented from 6 to 8 since we last rang there. Our learners generally managed well all day on unfamiliar bells, and enjoyed the extra practice. Thanks to Phil and Anne Pope for organising such an enjoyable day.

As reported last month, a band from the Forest were visiting our area on their annual outing at the same time. They apparently arrived a little late (they hadn't allowed enough time for lunch) but were pleased to be able to provide entertainment for Nigel's birthday party in the church. Many thanks to Chris Tyler for welcoming them in our absence.

In days gone by, when we rang at 6 towers on our outing, we were so exhausted that we often had very few ringers able to get up the next morning to ring. Such was our stamina this time, that the next day's morning ringing for the Benefice Communion, was one of our "feast" days, with 11 ringers there bright eyed and bushy tailed. Such were

the numbers that we were able to have a Lady's Band, no men involved, for one ring. We have not achieved this for some time ...
Waiting for lunch.



Decorated bell wheel in English Bicknor church

Pictures by Elizabeth Byrne

Apologies to Elizabeth. This should have been in the October Messenger.





ST JAMES FREE BOOK STALL

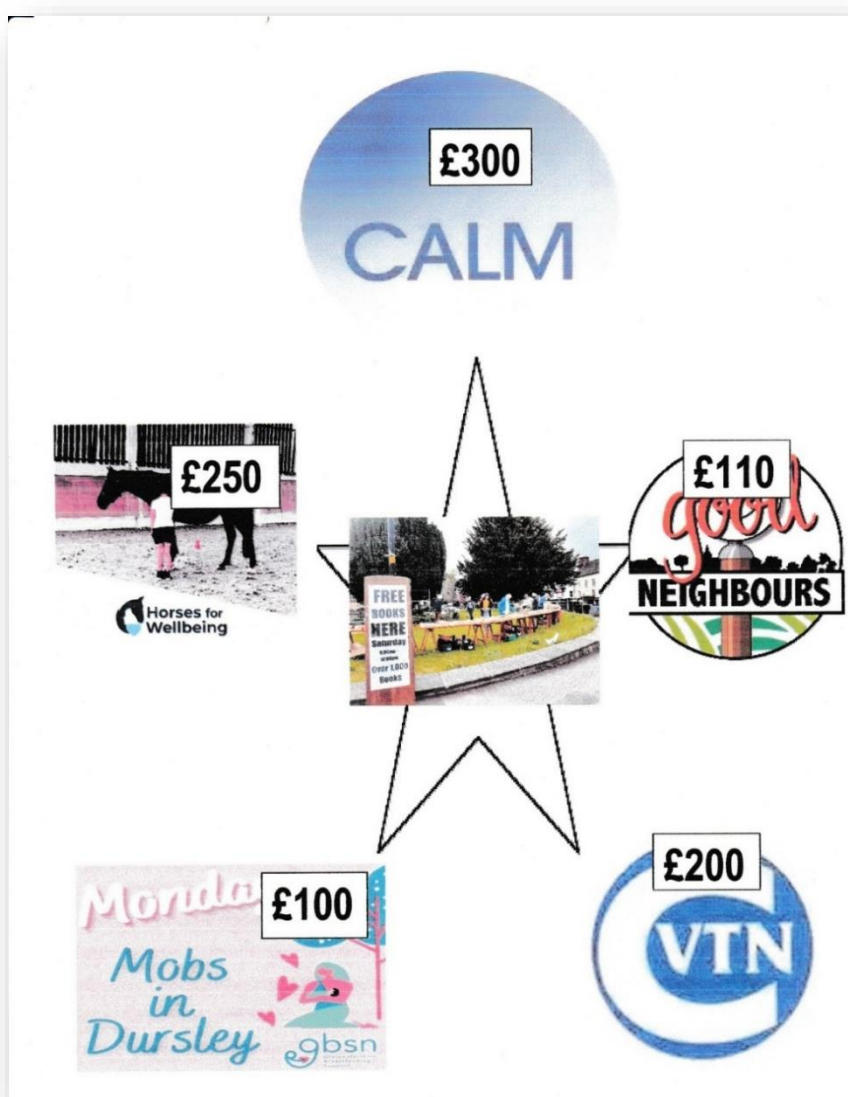
At the beginning of the year I wrote "I wonder what 2025 will have in store for 'The St James Free Book Stall.' With over 3,000 books, stalls every Saturday morning – many with live 'music for browsing' provided by local musicians.

Can we continue to evolve? " We have.

In July we began donating all the receipts taken on the second Sunday of the month to a small local charity. In the last five months we have given £960. One charity, "Horses for Wellbeing" has put our donation towards funding a fresh initiative and they will have a table at the bookstall on 6th December manned by someone who will answer questions about their work. Do come along.

December 6th is the last bookstall for the year, so no more book donations for now, please. There is nowhere to store them with all our Christmas activities.

Thank you for such tremendous support and we'll meet again in January.



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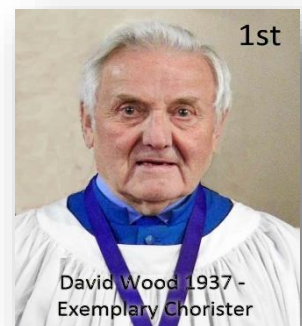
CHOIR NEWS FOR DECEMBER

The annual choir lunch took place in the pleasant surroundings of Della Casa on Sunday 2nd November and we are grateful to Anne Shipton for organising the occasion. The proceedings began with a specially written poem, in honour of David Wood, from Joyce Lombard, and after the meal Nigel Davies thanked the choristers for their invaluable contribution to our worship and was at pains to point out that "choir" is only one facet of the involvement of so many of our members. Part of his talk follows.

Of course, the main thrust of the choir lunch is the presentation of the Tambourine. For over twenty years, David Wood (now the Senior Chorister) has presented this award to the person who has clocked up the most misdemeanours during the year. All these "sins" are carefully recorded by the Tambourine Committee which seems to have but one member. This year's award was given to Caroline Marrow. We all thought she'd be exempt having made a beautiful table runner to celebrate Nigel's birthday only a couple of months ago, but no this was not the case! We do not feel we can print her misdemeanour, so please ask her in person! On the other hand, this year's Not the Tambourine Award went to a choir stalwart who is always "there" helping in all manner of ways; Margaret Lloyd.

From the Choir Dinner

Earlier this year, we celebrated David Wood's astonishing 80 years of unbroken service to St James' choir. He is a prime example of a Dursley Chorister; reliable and faithful with a lovely voice. What a contribution he has made to the choir, St James' church and, indeed, the whole community of Dursley! At this point I have a small presentation to make. We all know that David is a philatelist, but I have here a set of stamps I am pretty sure he won't have. It's called Britons of Distinction.



However, I doubt if David would have still been part of this choir had we gone down the dumbing down route taken by so many churches. At the present time, church choirs are disappearing at an alarming rate and I know of several churches which rely on a small group of singers who meet for 30 minutes before the service to run through the hymns. Perhaps at Christmas they will sing a couple of stand-alone items for the Carol Service, but, sadly, for many churches the idea of a choir meeting together regularly to build a repertoire to

enhance the worship is a thing of the past. In recent years, we have overcome all sorts of obstacles, like Covid (which saw the end of Tetbury's church choir) and, more recently, singing in a church and Parish Centre without heating for over two years! That shows real resilience and dedication.

The C of E prides itself on being a broad church. Under its banner we have everything from the happy clappy informal to near Roman Catholicism, and we, at St James', like many, are happily in the middle. Our services are formal and fussless, but not at all stuffy. We are fortunate in having well-read and extremely capable clergy (even if we do get three sermons for the price from one of their number) and I like to think that our music complements the spoken parts of the service.

Every time the C of E make changes, the numbers attending go down. Those of us who have been through Series 1,2,3, ASB, and now Common Worship (surely they could have found a better title?) have witnessed the ordination of women, the appalling way abuse was covered up; the controversy surrounding same sex blessings and weddings; part of the world-wide church objecting to a female Archbishop, to name but a few. We have "Flying Bishops" (to my mind they are bad enough grounded) to look after those parishes who do not accept women priests; we have cathedrals doing the most ludicrous things to try and appeal to a wider population (Gloucester with its football match; Norwich with its helter skelter and now Canterbury with graffiti on its pillars); there are huge numbers of specially-created diocesan posts, with salaries far beyond those of a parish priest (all part of the great god of administration) and their increasing numbers are in inverse proportion to the numbers of full-time salaried clergy. There is much, much madness within the C of E. So thank goodness we keep our traditions! I think it's true to say that we are an outpost of stability and sanity in a world where, lemming-like, society (the church included) heads towards its own destruction.

Long may our little outpost continue!

Nigel Davies

Music for December

7th am How Beautiful upon the mountains – Stainer
Mass of St Stephen – Ireland
14th am Adam lay yBounden – Ord Willan in D
21st am Family Service
pm Christmas Carol Service
24th pm Music to be confirmed
28th am Benefice Service at Uley

Twelfth Night with Thomas Hardy... from Barbie Davies.



A couple of years ago Edwina Walton lent me a book entitled "Thomas Hardy's Christmas". A keen participant in all our productions, Edwina said, "Wouldn't it make a wonderful Christmas presentation".

So I read it avidly and found that she was absolutely right. There were so many poems, extracts and possibilities which leapt from the page and beyond! So at the time of writing this, here we are mid-rehearsals for a potpourri of an evening with the man himself.

There are delightful scenes enacted from "Under the Greenwood Tree" and short stories known as "Crusted Characters". Add to this traditional carols sung by the "Mellstock Choir" accompanied by a folk band; a couple of folk carols and dances for the audience and we will be getting a real flavour of an 1840's country Christmas, the time of Thomas Hardy's childhood.

There will also be readings of some of Hardy's beautiful poems; extracts from his diary and that of his second wife, Florence. And to round the whole thing off, Hardy's favourite Christmas entertainment will be performed by the Dursley Mummers.

Come along to a traditional Twelfth Night. Leave the clamour and commercialism of Christmas behind and step into the rather magical world of Dorset nearly 200 years ago – and, of course a nip or two of mulled punch and nibbles will help to give it all a festive glow.

Full details of performance will appear on the pew leaflet.



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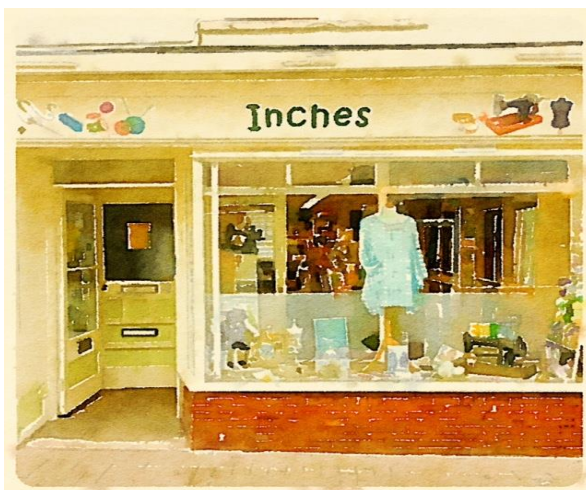
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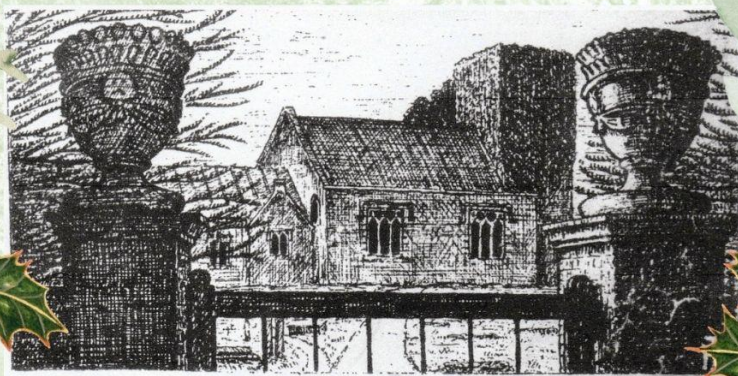
St James the Great, Dursley

Presents...

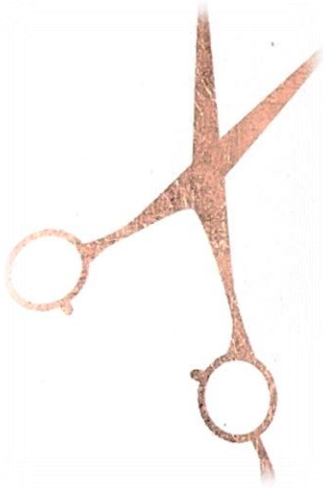
Twelfth Night with Thomas Hardy

Tuesday 6th January 2026

Christmas scenes from Thomas Hardy brought to life with singing and dancing to a folk band; diary readings and poems; and the Dursley Mummers.



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December 2025

(Joining Zoom details on Ewelme Benefice website)



Wednesday 3rd December

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

Thursday 4th December

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

Saturday 6th December

5.30pm Kim Ward's pupils' concert

Sunday 7th December – Advent 2

10am Parish Holy Communion at St James

Wednesday 10th December

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

Thursday 11th December

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

11.15am Communion at Henlow Court

Saturday 13th December

12noon Christmas Carvery in the Parish Centre

Sunday 14th December – Advent 3

10am Parish Holy Communion

7pm Churches Together Beer and Carols (see below)

Monday 15th December

7.30pm Sounds of Music Concert

Tuesday 16th December

7.30pm 1/4 Peal of Bells

Wednesday 17th December

9am Dursley CE Academy School Christmas Service

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

7.30pm Tyndale Choral Society Christmas Concert

Thursday 18th December

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

11.15am Communion at Henlow Court

Saturday 20th December

10.30am Shoppers' Carols

Sunday 21st December – Advent 4

8am Said Holy Communion

10am Shine! Family Service

6.30pm Christmas Carol Service

Wednesday 24th December – Christmas Eve

4pm Crib and Christingle Service

11pm Midnight Mass

Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day

8am Said Holy Communion

10am Holy Communion for Christmas Day

Sunday 28th December – Christmas 1

10am Benefice Holy Communion at St Giles, Uley



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THE REREDOS IN THE TANNER CHAPEL AT ST JAMES

by Judith Staddon

I don't know, dear readers, especially if you are new to Dursley and St James in particular, that this was carved for us by Tom Preater who was born and bred in Dursley. The reredos was the last item in the re-ordering of St James back in 2011. The Rev Janet Bromley (our Rector) oversaw this project and went with Ann and Clive Orchard to see work in progress at Tom's workshop in Taunton, and she is seen here having a go, with Tom looking on anxiously!!



When it was finished and erected it was blessed by the Bishop of Gloucester Michael Perham. Tom's work can be seen in other places around the church too. The Madonna and child, in the Lady Chapel, at Christmas and Epiphany the Nativity figures and the three Kings, plus the reredos at the high altar depicting the manufacturing industry that used to be in Dursley, unfortunately long gone.



Bishop Michael after the blessing of the reredos on 7th October 2011 with Tom Preater the designer and sculptor

CHRISTMAS: THE CRIB AND THE ANIMALS

....by Canon Richard Morgan



The crib is the word used for the place of Jesus' birth, the stable, and depictions of it – baby Jesus, the manger, Mary and Joseph, usually an ox and a donkey, and often shepherds and wise men. Most Churches have a crib at Christmas, and many have a crib scene as one of the stained glass windows. St. James' hasn't, - we just have a wise men's visit window.

Models of the crib were apparently first made by St. Francis of Assisi, 800 years ago, and the ox and donkey were, I believe, included. A manger is a feeding place for animals, so they fit.

But, in a way, the ox and donkey were there long before. They were probably present 2,000 years ago at the stable itself, for there must have been animals who ate from the manger, but, in a way, they were there 700 years before that! And that explains why ox and donkey are usually depicted rather than sheep and goats or other creatures who would inhabit a stable. At the beginning of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, [Chapter 1 Verse 3], we read, 'The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know.'

So the ox and donkey are a warning to us to recognise and trust God in Jesus, and not to be like God's unfaithful people whom Isaiah warned. Jesus' coming to be born in a stable shows God's humility and love, reaching out to us and with us wherever we are, not just to what people consider important people and places.

And the ox and donkey show God's love is not just for humans but for all creation. John's gospel says the Word – the Son of God, the one who expresses and shows who God is and what God wants – was made flesh. Flesh is our physical, material being, which we share with animals, plants and earth and sea. Jesus comes to share in all being, and so will raise up and renew all creation, in ways we cannot understand but can trust. So we must care for our whole environment, and notably for the good of other animals. May we do so at Christmas and always.

A PRAYER

God of love,
thank you for coming to us in your Son, your Word, as Jesus.
Thank you for his birth in a stable, the place of oxen and donkeys,
and his being cradled in a manger, where they feed.
Thank you that in Jesus you shared our life, and the life of all creation.
Help us to trust your love,

and to share it in care for one another, for the animals and all nature,
for Jesus' sake. Amen.



(Here's a drawing of the crib for children to colour in.
Adults can try it too!!).



*“I’m Dreaming of
a Green Christmas!”*

Season’s Greetings and wishing everyone a Happy and Sustainable Christmas.



Like many people, a Christmas wreath hanging up can make things feel festive. Making your own can look great and feel rewarding, and by using sustainable materials helps the environment. There is no limit to what you can use. Cardboard, paper and natural materials such as fir and holly for example. Making your own wreath can also be money saving.

I found some great examples of homemade paper wreathmaking, as well as clear instructions, on the BBC Bitesize website (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/>). Here are some pictures of ones you can make using just paper, cardboard and glue and some I found with a quick internet search.



There are endless variations and ideas of other wreaths
and an Origami wreath!

What a fantastic morning we have had on 15th November, at the Bring & Take/Freegle in St James. Many visitors came and we had a wonderful amount of donations and a large amount of it was 'taken'. Thank you to all who visited as well as donated, and a huge 'thank you' to all who helped. Here are a few pictures before we 'opened'!



More festive recycled bargains will be available on the Freegle Fundraiser stall at the St James Christmas Market in the church – Friday 28th November, 4~7pm

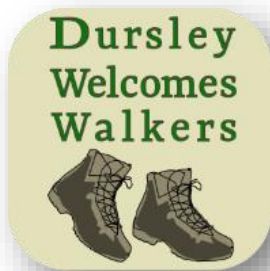
Happy Birthday to Our Eco King!

King Charles celebrated his 77th birthday in November. Many commentators have been writing about his life-long commitment to raising awareness of the natural world and the climate change difficulties we are facing. He first met David Attenborough when he was 9 years old, during a television documentary called 'Zoo Quest'. The king made his first important speech about the environment when he was 21. In this he talked about the problems with plastic waste, chemical dumping in the oceans, combustion fumes and gases in the atmosphere. At the time, his speech was thought of as radical, and some of his ideas such as organic farming a little strange.



Following his life-long commitment to sustainability and care of the natural world, King Charles' beliefs have made him important environmentalist. We can consider ourselves to be fortunate to have a king with such understanding and commitment, at this time when we are facing the environmental problems we have. If I may, Dear

King Charles, we wish you a very Happy Birthday and "Thank you"



Dursley Walking Festival – Five Churches Walk, Sat 4th October 2025

As part of Dursley Walking Festival, Adrian Mather (Dursley Rambling Club) led the Five Churches Walk from St James, Dursley.

Thirteen hardy souls plus Adrian & David Wood as back marker set off on a blustery day, visiting the Churches within the Benefice. We had locals as well as walkers from Oxfordshire and Chicago, which apparently is very flat, so our undulating hills were a bit of novelty.

Austin Meares very kindly gave us a brief history of St James and a little of the history of St Marks before we set off.

Going past St Marks, we stopped briefly, before heading towards Chestal and picking up the Cotswold Way as far as Newlands and then towards Hydegate stopping for refreshment break and explaining about Downham Hill.

Then a steep climb to just below Uley Bury, a few hardy souls went up to the top and were rewarded with quite a view, although very windy. A steep descent followed towards St Giles where we were met by Nikki Clarke and David Thomas who gave us drinks & biscuits as well as a short history of the Church. Before setting off again we lost three walkers, one due to the rough terrain and a couple due to an appointment at Forest Green Rovers they did not want to miss!

A short stroll past The Old Crown we dropped into the valley and up to Holy Cross. Most people were surprised that there are still regular services held there, apart from the numerous weddings. As we were leaving a stream of cars passed us heading towards Owlpen Manor for a wedding.

The route continued past Owlpen Wood and into Dingle Wood with a short quite steep section up to the road just above Nympsfield. We crossed and having negotiated the traffic we descended towards the village with David's sterling sprint to make sure the group could get down the steep bank and onto the road, then a short road walk to St Bartholomew's where we were once again met by Nikki & David with cake, squash and a very brief history of the Church.

It was a lovely walk with kind weather and I need to thank David Wood for back marking as well as Austin Meares & David Thomas for the historical bits and Nikki Clarke for organising refreshments.

If you are interested in more walks generally, in the area or further afield, Dursley Rambling Club walk most weekends ranging from 4m – 12m please contact me and I can let you have more details.

Adrian Mather – 01453 519465 / 07805 078391



Memory

And the image floated
forwards dissolving time..
Days were forever warm
and tranquil and there's
a garden and small figure
in cotton frock
gently and with one small
hand swirling in the
water of an ornamental
pool.

Were there lotus flowers?
And what happened after
tea on the terrace?



Elizabeth Oakley

Elizabeth Oakley
A Dursley Poet

St James' Annual Choir Dinner 2025...

Joyce Lombarde, (second Alto).



Newly into November, Clergy, Choir and friends assembled at Della Casa for a delightful lunch organised by Anne Shipton at a new venue for us.

We were cosy in Della Casa's upstairs room., and, as is usual at these events the buzz of conversation soon filled the room as the choir relaxed after a morning of challenging singing (apart from the three of us who were 'walking wounded').

Rev Dr Juliet Jensen led us in a prayer at the beginning of proceedings. We then raised our glasses to toast 'absent friends'. And before the serious business of the day began, I was introduced as 'Entertainment', having been asked to do a poem about David Wood, and the result follows this report.

After this, Nigel took to the floor, reflecting on the many changes which had taken place over the year, locally and countrywide, in music and generally, and then he nominated Margaret. Lloyd as the recipient of the 'Not the Tambourine Award' for this year, for her quiet, dedication and always willing to help attitude. Special mention was also made of Anne Shipton for her tireless work in the Choir room, sorting music for us all, and helping to keep us in order.

When the Tambourine Award was pondered by David Wood, many of us shook in our sensible shoes, waiting for the ominous sound of the tambourine being shaken above our heads, But the outstanding winner this year was Caroline Marrow. Because of the delicate nature of the matter and the secrecy surrounding the award, you will need to ask Caroline in person about her fall from grace, but it caused a good deal of amusement in Della Casa.

PS: The following day I discovered, in the general scrum at the end of the day that I'd been undercharged, and when I spoke to the staff they said how much they had enjoyed our event, and hoped we come again. Well done Anne!

PPS: I hope that I haven't omitted anything important, but as usual was asked to write this account after the event, so some memories may vary.



DAVID WOOD

For **EIGHTY** years both man and boy
You've graced the choir and spread the joy
If Cecil Adams could see you now
A smile would surely adorn his brow. *(Cheer)

The Choir, You and son Tim, you'll recall
Sang at the Royal Albert Hall (there's posh!) *(Cheer)
And Dursley, at home, all excited and merry
Craned for a glimpse of their choir on the telly!

You umpired at cricket, but now you'll recall
Commitment to Choir meant cricket – no ball!
Your National Service took you to Malta
Then three years later, your life it did alter
And Bailey's Newsagents was never the same
Cos Mr Wood became Manager – his claim to fame!*(Cheer)

But meanwhile your life it did blossom and bloom,
Cos a girl called Maureen did enter the room,
And courting began in a serious way
It's still going strong 65 years away. *(Cheer)

In time you became the Chairman of DODS
From a Tower Warder in "Yeomen of the Guard"
Your tenor voice raised in G & S etcetera
Led the DODS in winning awards.* (Cheer)

And later, of course, You took a delight
In bestowing the tambourine On Choir Dinner night
But sad to say, hoist with your own petard
It's been handed to you, that same dreaded award. *(Cheer)
So, Eighty years David, and it's been a blast
Remembering some of your int'resting past.

AND Let's remember "***The guy has done good***"

And all raise our glasses to toast

DAVID WOOD





Anne Shipton and David Wood



Maureen Wood



The Tambourine



Caroline Marrow being given the award

WARM WOOLY WOTSITS.....by Jennifer Kendrick



Jennifer, in warm woolies knitted from recycled yarn, and wearing a favourite sailor skirt.

'I cannot remember a time from being a little girl that I didn't support the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen. Very often banished to my bedroom to reflect on some misdemeanour or other, I was quite content to be alone with time to imagine adventures of any sort that involved action and innocent romance! Prince Charmings with their flawless good looks were never in the running, and, in any case, nobody could hold a candle to Jesus, but every nice girl loved a sailor so at least some of my pocket money regularly went off to the

seafarers Flying Angel Cellar Club in Newcastle: even the address stirred the senses!

Then my beloved Granny (the one cruelly confined to her chair but whose lap was enormous and wobbly, untethered bosoms made comforting cushions, a whiskery chin that tickled when we had cuddles and elastic arms that exuded gentle strength) taught me how to knit! Fat wooden needles eventually transformed odd balls of wool into hats but first we had to unpick old jumpers, make skeins, gently wash and dry them and wind the yarn into balls! It all took time but we laughed a lot and talked non-stop. Sadly modern materials are not suitable for recycling like that but pins and needles and time and effort and thought can still work magic!

There is a box at the back of St. James Church, both for donated DK wool for anybody to use and completed hats.

I would be so grateful for any contributions and promise they will be used all round the seven seas!



SIMPLE PATTERN FOR WOOLLY HAT.

ANY Double Knitting wool odd balls. No. 8 needles. 108 stitches.
Knit 2" of 2 plain 2purl rib.

Then 7" stocking stitch (total 9").

Shape top:

Row 1. Knit 9. Slip one, knit 2 together, pass slip stitch over.

Repeat to end.

Row 2 and each even row Purl.

Row 3. Knit 7, Slip one, k2tog p.s.s.o. Repeat to end.

Row 5 Knit 5, Slip one, k2tog p.s.s.o. Repeat to end.

Row 7 Knit 3, Slip one k2tog p.s.s.o. Repeat to end

Row 9 Knit 1, Slip one k2tog p.s.s.o. Repeat to end

Row 11 Knit2tog to end. Cut yarn and thread end through stitches.

Secure and sew up seam.



The sentence or poem etc, which best conveys the meaning of the word and will be judged by the editors and Benefice Administrator, will be the winner. There will be a small prize.

The word for December is **explicit**.

(we hope we've made that plain!!)

Send entries to the Judith, Valerie or the Office
by 20th of the month.

The winner for November is.....

Jean G -

Casting was announced for the forthcoming production, a melodramatic comedy bursting with exaggerated theatricals, none of which could compare with the histrionics backstage when Penelope discovered she was not to be cast as leading lady!

We would like to award all the entries, as they all convey, in different ways the true meaning of histrionics.

WORD OF THE MONTH – NOVEMBER.

Histrionic: excessively theatrical in character or style.

When I tried for the part in the school play the teacher said "You're too over the top - Dramatic, histrionic".

The other entries...

If your boredom's getting chronic
And you feel you need a tonic,
Why not just get histrionic?
Raise your voice and loudly shout,
Yell and wave your arms about.
Be excited in your speech,
Heights of eloquence to reach.
Folk may think you overact,
And that may well be a fact.
It may well be quite unclear
Whether you're at all sincere,
But you'll get things off your chest,
Fill yourself with fire and zest,
- Never mind about the rest!

DON'T FORGET

From 1st January 2026

**The Messenger magazine will be 70p each
or £7 annually.**

The price has remained the same for several years now and we do feel that the magazine is still good value for money so we hope you will continue to buy it and more importantly enjoy it.

Clips, cribs, and community: Advent at Sodbury Vale

This year, Sodbury Vale Benefice is spreading seasonal cheer online with their digital Advent calendar – inviting everyone to share in the hopes, memories, and joy of Christmas as seen through the eyes of their community.

Running from 1 to 26 December, the calendar features 26 virtual 'doors', each one revealing a 45-second to one-minute short video clip of a different person or group from the benefice's four churches.

Every clip gives a glimpse into how people in Sodbury Vale celebrate Christmas, from favourite memories to reflections on what the season means to them.

"We've made a joyful digital countdown to Christmas for all to enjoy," said the Revd Christine Butler, Rector of Sodbury Vale Benefice. "We wanted to make more of Advent in the lead up to Christmas, and to make something that's a bit of fun too. It's a daily moment of festive cheer and connection; a space to reflect on the wonder of Christmas and the hope Advent brings. We thought it would be sad to stop on Christmas Day, so we added Boxing Day as well. People will have to wait for the exact date each day to watch the video clips."

Each calendar door is also illustrated with images from CribFest 2024, the benefice's much-loved annual nativity display that showcases nativity cribs from around the world – from simple handmade cribs to stunning semi-precious displays.

Excitement is already building for CribFest 2025, running from 3 to 7 December at St John's Church, Chipping Sodbury. This year's theme, 'Good News', aims to point visitors towards the story of Jesus. On the final day, the town is hosting its annual 'Chipping Sodbury Christmas Sunday', complete with two donkeys in the lay-by next to the church.

To access the calendar, and for more information about CribFest 2025 and Sodbury Vale Benefice's Christmas services, visit

<https://svbcofe.org.uk/cribfest-2025/>.



Year's Mind December.

1st Roy Lewis McWhannell 2007

2nd John Manns 2018; Leslie Martin 2019

3rd Dorothy Woollam 2004

4th Dorothy Attwood 2015; Chris Raffle 2024

5th Jean Northcote 2015; Dorothy Smith 2020

7th Philip Pollard; Gladys Davies

8th Phyllis Evans 2018

9th Olive Bailey 2002; Janet Cox 2023

10th Kathleen Newland 2016

11th Michael Ind 1995

12th George Mills 2000; Vera Orchard 2012; Christopher Catchpole 2015; Jean Pugh 2019

13th Frances Pearson 2010; Pamela Raffle 2011; Keith Preater 2020

15th Eileen Davis; Richard Jackson; Eric Beardsley 2011; Trevor Buck

16th Bill Nelson 1999; David Francis 2005

17th Kathleen Lee 2020

20th Ronald Price 2016; Derek Browning 2018

22nd Barbara Buck 2016; Anne Gurnhill 2016; Jean Dangerfield 2020

23rd Lawrence Lewis 2022; Cyril Pullin 2023

24th Amelia Fletcher; Rosina Kate Fowles 1981

25th Phyllis Green; Ella Grimes 1977

26th Jane Williams 2022

27th Irene Whitman 2019

28th Gillian Hewish 2021

29th Marian Pagett

30th Bernard Thomas 2019

	
<p>Independent Family Funeral Director</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24 Hour Service• Tailored Funerals• Prepaid Funeral Plans• Home Visits• Woodland Burials• Memorials	<p>Cam's Local Post Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cards and Gifts• Parcel Drop Off• Purchase of Stamps• Friendly Service• Cash Withdrawal/Deposit
<p>www.LWClutterbuck.co.uk Dursley: (01453) 542754 Thornbury: (01454) 660088 24-26 High Street, Cam, Dursley</p>	

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS.



FUNERALS & INTERMENT SERVICES:

We share our thoughts and prayers with the families of those who mourn the loss of those they love.

Funeral at St James on 24th November of Kathleen Newman.

FLOWER ROTA

Christmas Flowers - December 21st

High Altar Kate Sant
Tanner Chapel Glenys Muir
Lady Chapel Valerie Meares
Pulpit Anthea Fittall
Nave Pillar Ann Orchard
Font Anne Shipton
Hymn Book Chest Cynthia Martin
Porch Sheila Gardner



100 CLUB

Results for November is as follows:-

1st - 166 - Geoff Whiley

2nd - 179 - Neil Baldwin

3rd - 133 - Clive Orchard

Many thanks Sarah

100 CLUB

The final draw will be the December draw this year, results in the January magazine.

Sincere thanks are expressed to Sarah Hodge who has administered the Club for the last 25 years and to David Wood (greatly helped by Philip Staddon)



Mrs Gregory – Principal

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Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust.

Registered in England Company Number 08149299

**THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JAMES THE GREAT
DURSLEY**

**St James Church is open each day
between 9.00am and 5.00pm.**

Useful Telephone Numbers

TO BOOK THE PARISH CENTRE.

Clare White Tel: 549280

E-mail: ewelmebenefice@gmail.com

BELLRINGERS

Elizabeth Byrne Tel: 07788 800849

100 CLUB

Sarah Hodge Tel: 545155

CHOIR

Anne Shipton Tel: 07557 784858

David Wood Tel: 545073



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