The Athelney Magazine



Covering the church parishes of Burrowbridge, Lyng, North Curry and Stoke St Gregory

December ‘25
January ‘26

£1

Who's Who

Details of other roles can be found on the website, athelneybenefice.com/whoswho

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Treasurer	Pat Sollis	01823 490750, pat.sollis1@btinternet.com
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Churchwarden	Angie Martin	07936 050230, a.martin78630@gmail.com
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Churchwarden	Vacant	
Treasurer	Steve Loveridge	07808 656329, stevejloveridge@gmail.com
School Room Bookings	Pat Sollis	01823 490750, pat.sollis1@btinternet.com

The Athelney Bulletin

As well as this monthly Athelney Magazine, there is a weekly publication available online and in each church. The Athelney Bulletin is emailed out each weekend and printed copies can be found in readiness for Sunday worship. The bulletin contains all the readings for each Sunday and also news and notices of upcoming events. If you would like to receive this bulletin in your email either contact vicar@athelneybenefice.com or complete the form on the benefice website, athelneybenefice.com/signup



Coffee, Tea and Fellowship across the Benefice

Each month there is a pattern of gatherings, featuring tea, coffee, cakes and conversation. All are open to all. All are wonderful opportunities to chat and all the cakes are guaranteed to be of a very high standard.

You can find the coffee mornings here:

Burrowbridge

1st Saturday of each month, from 10am to 12pm in church.
Free to all.



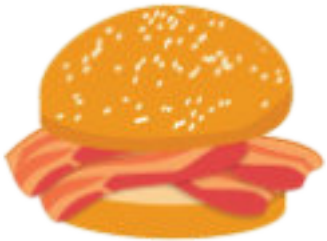
Lyng

Lyng Big Bart Breakfasts are held monthly on the third Saturday of the month, 10.30am.

North Curry

Wednesdays at 10am in church.

Stoke St Gregory



The Levellers meet at 2.30pm every third Tuesday in the Williams Hall. A time of conversation and fellowship, often with a visiting speaker.

Thank you to everyone who helps with these events

To Submit Copy

Copy deadline is **14th January** for the February Magazine; Please note: **July and December are double months.**

Please send **content** in an email attachment (ideally a Microsoft Word document) to **magazine@athelneybenefice.com**. Please add "CONTENT" to the subject line. If you are sending content pertaining to more than one thing, please send separate attachments and for each item, making it clear in which edition it is to appear. Please use 12-point Arial font and ensure that it fits into a maximum of 2 A5 pages where possible. To check this set your word document to be in landscape orientation with 2 columns. ***If none of this makes any sense, please just write it out long hand and put it through the vicarage door…***

To Subscribe

Our printing costs have recently incresased owing to the general price increases of so many things. The annual subscrioption, therefore, will be increased accordingly. **Subscriptions this year (2025-2026) will be £10** and will run as usual from May to April. Please pay your deliverer the £10 requested.

Thank you!

To Advertise

If you wish to advertise in the magazine, please contact us via email using this address: magads@athelneybenefice.com

Prices are for 10 editions of the magazine Full page £100, Half page £55. We no longer offer a quarter page. One off (single edition) adverts are £10 for up to one full page.

To Contact

Any questions please send an email to magazine@athelneybenefice.com and we will respond as soon as possible. Please use the group emails provided rather than sending things direct to one person.

The Athelney Benefice



Wintermas, anyone?

I'm sitting down to write this as we come to the end of November, and already I have begun thinking about plans for Lent and Easter. In between is Advent and Christmas which—for the purists among you—lasts until February 2nd, when we celebrate Candlemas. That's a day of dual celebration of the presentation of the infant Jesus in the Temple along with the Jewish rite of purification for Mary, his mother (a ritual that persists to this day for some traditions of Christianity).

Then there's a few weeks of "Ordinary Time" before Ash Wednesday (18th February) and Lent is up and running. Goodness. Advent is the start of the Church year, a time when we seek to find time to prepare and be ready for the arrival of God. As Revd Martin points out in his musing, this can be a bit tricky as the urgency of Christmas looms. More than that, however, there is a danger that as churches we don't even notice the time of preparation nor consider the importance that the new year has dawned. Each year in the church focuses on one of the Gospels and this year (Year A) it will be Matthew's. Our worship and prayer life will draw on his words, whose purpose was very much to remind us that Jesus is The Messiah, the anointed one of God, who comes to fulfil God's promise to the world.



There is no space here fully to expand on all that means (come along to our worship this year and find out…!), but as we do look ahead we face changes and challenges that include how our benefice might expand to include two more parishes. I've written before about how this change needs to be seen in a positive and enthusiastic light. The message of Jesus The Messiah is important in this regard: God comes to earth to guide our way in bringing love and joy to the world through fellowship. We need to prepare for this year to come and Advent is important, as is Christmas and Lent and… But let's pause and consider… Christmas.

You can almost set your calendar by it: the seasonal emergence of people who bemoan that "we can't even say 'Christmas' anymore." This year it is the fault of Tesco, apparently, who (I gather) have been selling "luxury evergreen trees". Some have found this alarming because it doesn't mention Christmas. Every year this happens, it seems. It might not be trees. Sometimes it's "Winterval" (never happened). The reality is nothing of the sort, of course. "Christmas" as a word and as a season is now about to be all around (to paraphrase "Love Actually"). It has been for centuries, and it shows little sign of disappearing.

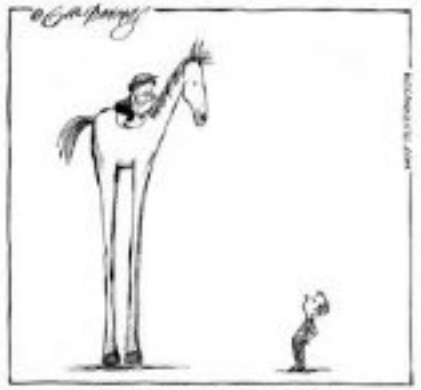
For sure, the ways in which we recognise this time of year might well change and year by year I *do* think that the Christian heart of what Christmas was originally founded on does take a bit of a beating. But, Christmas: it IS the reason for the season. Be blessed this Christmas, and all year long.

My beef isn't at all with whether or not the word gets a headline on a tree box. In fact I truly don't care. What I *do* care about is that anyone who bemoans the loss of Christmas just does something about it being Christian.

[Watch out: the vicar's about to climb on his high horse…]

If people decide to complain about Christmas disappearing, then, I ask them, why not come to church? Why not step through the door and say, "Lord! Here I am. Hear my prayers!" and then sit down quietly and worship? Give thanks to God for the goodness our society promotes. Recognise the importance of the "Incarnate Deity" (that's Jesus, folks) as "veiled in flesh" (same guy) God shows us how to live lives that are good, hopeful and joyful.

Our values as a society are formed out of the Gospel message to do good to others. Our desire to help others at Christmas is a Christian value. It's not only Christians who do good, I know. Many who have no faith at all do good things, all year long and at Christmas. I simply pray that those who berate Tesco for their trees also show up at the door of Church and say, "Jesus: I wish to follow you and do good in this world."



[There: now getting off the horse… it's far too high]

Merry Christmas, Everyone!

Sometimes I write benign pleasantries, other times I share what has been getting under my skin a little more. If you would like to respond to either, I am always interested, please let me know what thoughts in you my words elicit. vicar@athelneybenefice.com

Martin's Musings

A monthly observation on life by Revd Martin Mudie



Christmas is coming ...

Well, as you read this it really is.

I always find the months of December and January amazingly different. December is a time of frantic preparation and celebration of Christmas, even though the actual event occurs at the end of the month. I remember my lovely Aunt, who brought me up after the death of my parents, carefully removing the supplement from Woman's Realm, which lvaid out exactly what had to be done on each day in December to ensure a stress-free Christmas, with an hour-by-hour programme for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Despite this guidance, which hung unread on the kitchen notice board, we all had a wonderful, if somewhat chaotic Christmas, my aunt merely doing things as and when she remembered them.

My Christmas, with just myself and the Girls to worry about, is similarly haphazard, which is just as well, as it is, for us, an unusually busy time. I have worked out this year I have three Christmas lunches, four carol services, four carols in the square or around the church Christmas trees, as well as the services leading up to and at Christmas time. All of these activities are really enjoyable, and I love the community spirit they celebrate, but it does mean that by the time The Girls and I reach 12 o clock on Christmas day we are shattered. So then, all that remains is to prepare my fish finger sandwich, make a coffee and spend the rest of Christmas day asleep in my armchair, with Emma on my lap and Annie curled up in her bed.



By contrast January is delightfully empty of any social events, and we can just hibernate till February. Yet, despite the busyness of the season, Christmas gives our communities an opportunity to celebrate all that is good in those communities. At Christmas we take the time to celebrate the love we have for our family and friends. To select presents and cards to show how much we appreciate their love and care for us. The lights which sparkle on our trees and in our gardens help to mitigate the cold and darkness of the shortest days.

It is an essentially joyful time where we can go out of our way to show kindness and love, not only to those near and dear to us, but by responding to charities like Crisis at Christmas, food banks and the wonderful work of the Salvation Army, for those less fortunate than ourselves. And at the centre of all these celebrations we have the image in our hearts and minds of the Christ child, being cuddled by his mother in a cold, dark and shabby stable because there was no room at the inn. For the true miracle of Christmas is that, 2000 years ago, God sent his Son into a despairing, dark and dangerous world to show people the immense power of true unselfish love and what a wonderful world it would be if we could be kind and loving to each other. Perhaps the best way we can begin the new year is to take the joy, love and kindness of the Christmas season into each and every day of 2026.

The Girls join with me in wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Merry New Year.



Christmas joy for all people

By Rt Revd Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells



We fear that we live in a world of increasing polarisation. Conflicts between and within nations play their part. The amplification of division and hostility by social media algorithms doesn't help. Culture wars exacerbate matters further. Sometimes it feels like common ground is disappearing from underneath our feet like a sandbar being overwhelmed by the tide.

In such a climate, it's good to return to the message that heralded the arrival of Jesus. 'I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be for all people' says that angel who announces the saviour's birth (Luke 2:10). Jesus' story quickly includes all types and sorts of humanity. From local shepherds to exotic visitors from afar. I wonder what the conversation was like as they all crammed into the stable to see the newborn child?

Jesus's story quickly shows that not only is he for all people but that he needs all people. His family must have needed assistance when they fled as refugees to Egypt. Jesus must have needed help when his parents left him behind on a family outing to Jerusalem aged twelve. Jesus was constantly calling on and engaging with others as he went about his teaching and ministry.

What might counter the polarisation of our day? Amongst our greatest resource is to seek out the emotion that accompanied the news of the saviour's birth – joy. When we encounter joy – from that cup winning goal to the marriage of much loved friends – such moments are never the time for division and enmity. We're all far too busy shouting and hugging each other! The invitation of Christmas is to experience such joy afresh. Often, we see joy most obviously in children's experience of the season. Might we seek it for ourselves too? For joy breaks down divisions, overcomes barriers, reminds us that we are one.

'I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be for all people' says the angel. A very merry and joyful Christmas to you all.

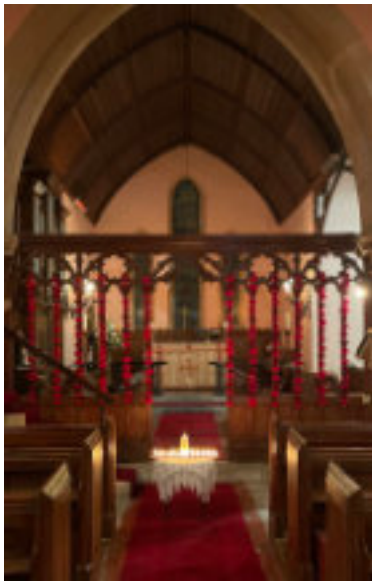
DIOCESE OF Bath&Wells

Living and telling the story of Jesus

Burrowbridge



Knitting knots us together



It can seem like a while ago, but it was only a few weeks back that we remembered those who had given their lives in war and also recalled those who we love and see no more. Over the two weekends of All Saints, All Souls and then Remembrance, all of our churches were decorated in very special ways.



We are so thankful to the many ladies of Burrowbridge who over some weeks knitted the poppies that so beautifully adorned the Rood Screen in the church and also the gates, on the pews and in so many places!



Symbols are fundamental to how we see the world and the symbol of the poppy is strong, far reaching and yet reminds us of humility, gentleness and fragility. We need to pause and notice the various knitted or crocheted poppies found in our churches this Remembrance-tide. The poppy found in Flanders fields is a flimsy, almost gossamer petal. They grow out of the broken earth and bring glorious red to the fields of green.

They are a symbol of hope and of reconciliation. Thank you to all who crocheted or knitted even a single petal for any of our churches, and for all the symbols of remembrance.





Lyng

Christmas Carols and Fayre

As with all the Benefice churches, we will be holding a form of "Al Fresco" carols in the lead up to Christmas. Details of all our found on the inside back pages of this magazine and each event obviously is reliant on good weather, or at least good shelter.



At Lyng we are doing a little more than "just" singing the carols (lovely though that is). On Friday 19th December at 6pm we'll gather around the tree outside the church and sing loud and well to drown out the din of passing traffic (easily done). Then, after the rousing choruses and "silent nighting" we'll move indoors for mulled wine and a chance to browse some of the craft on sale for church funds.

At the same time you will be able to write the name of a loved one on a Christmas decoration and attach it to the indoor tree. We will say a few words of prayer and remembrance for those we miss, and then toast all present with more of the mulled stuff. A time of thankfulness and prayer. All welcome!



Lyng Parish Council

The Parish Council meets at Lyng Village Hall every two months, usually on a Monday evening. Members of the public are always welcome to attend.

Dates of next Parish Council meetings:

- Monday 12th January 2026, 7.30pm
- Monday 9th March 2026, 7.30pm

The agendas and minutes of previous meetings are published on the parish website: lyngparish.square.site

The parish clerk, Mrs Helen Barrington, can be contacted via email lyngpc1@outlook.com or Tel: 01823 490391.

Tick-Tock and Ding-Dong



The Lyng Church clock has been out of action for a long time (pun intended). But it has not been forgotten. The PCC have been working behind the scenes to get matters sorted but as so often there are a lot of details and hoops to navigate. This is a brief update.

First of all, the clock was in a far more parlous state than we realised. When removed from the tower it was clear that the clock face was entirely unrepairable. The mechanism is easily mended, but as you can see: the wooden face is in a very bad state.

So, we have had to go back to the drawing board and obtain quotations for the repair of the entire clock. This is taking longer than expected but we have some good designs in the pipeline and hope to be able to move forward with the repairs in the new year.

Second, as this preparatory work has been progressing we have also been so grateful to Darren Woodyer (Tower Captain at North Curry) for his support of the ringers in Lyng. Together the happy band(!) have been renovating the ringing chamber, installing sound proofing and ropes and all manner of technical things that this editor is unqualified to explain. The end result, also in the new year, will be a newly refurbished tower that will be able to ring out loud on Sundays and at other times.



The paperwork is probably the part that takes longest… and the editor knows only too well how that works.

Thanks to all who are continuing this hard work. We are all so very grateful!



North Curry

200 CLUB

The 200 Club still has room for one more! Players must be 18yrs+ to join. Only £18 per year (£1.50/month). Prizes each month £30/ £20/ £10. Proceeds for churchyard maintenance.

To sign up, contact Sue Bethune on 01823 490179. Cheque payments to North Curry PCC, Standing Order/ BACS payments to North Curry PCC, Account No: 00514650, Sort Code: 30-98-45.

Winners

Sunday 2nd November

1st Gavin Brown
2nd Liz Macfarlan
3rd David Akerman

North Curry Coffee Shop

With the nights drawing in now, we will be changing to our Winter opening hours from Tuesday 2nd December. We will be open on Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10am to 4pm and on Sundays from 10am to 3.30pm, with last orders 15 minutes before closing. We will also be closed over Christmas from the end of Sunday 21st December and will reopen on Tuesday 20th January to allow us time for some much needed maintenance work.

Don't forget we sell a wide range of local crafts, art, cards and jewellery and we are well stocked for the Christmas season, including earrings from £5.50, pottery from £4, Christmas decorations from £1.50, wrist warmers from £4, handmade soap, wooden boxes and plenty more. Come in for a browse - our stocks are refreshed regularly.

If you are looking for an opportunity to help your local community and make new friends, while raising money for your favourite charity, come and join our friendly team of volunteers. Email us at coffeeshop@northcurry.com or call us on 01823 491414.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Merry Christmas: The Parish Council wish you all a very merry Christmas; we hope you have a wonderful festive period! Special thanks and Christmas wish to our brilliant volunteers who create and deliver the Pink Sheet- your work is so appreciated!

Christmas office ours: The Parish Office will be open as usual on Monday 15th December and Wednesday 17th December, then will be closed for the Christmas period before returning to usual hours on Monday 5th January. The Clerk will check emails periodically over the Christmas period

Green bin collection day changes from 24th November 2025: From Monday 24th November the green bin collection day has changed from alternate Friday's to Monday's so that the collection due on Friday 14th will be followed by Monday 24th November and then two weekly intervals.

Drain Covers: The Parish Council would like to remind residents of the need to ensure that covers are of brash and leaves to prevent localised flooding issues. This is particularly important as we move into the wet season thank you.

Large stones and boulders on verges in front of property: These can safety hazards for both cyclists and pedestrians and can cause difficulty and damage to motor vehicles. Because of safety implications any damage can render a householder to be liable if placed in dangerous places.

The Council Office

Wednesdays 10:00am – 1:00pm and Thursdays 1:00pm – 4:00pm Phone: 01823 490136 or email: parishcouncil@northcurry.com. Please check the notice board, website or Facebook for the Council's diary. Council Meetings are the second Wednesday of each month with any extra planning meetings as needed on the last Wednesday of the month (both in the Meeting Room, Village Hall at 7:30pm).

Current consultations: The Current consultation on Sunday Parking charges has now closed and Somerset Council will notify us when they have considered the matter in due course.

Oxen Lane updates: There is a section on the website for the latest monthly Oxen Lane updates under the 'News' heading (https://northcurry.com/?page_id=3973).

These updates will also be shared on Facebook and Nextdoor. If you can't access these online, please visit the Parish Office during opening hours and the Clerk can print a copy for you.

NB. Temporary Clerk: Owen J Cullwick
Mobile No 07917 445215

North Curry and District Amateur Gardeners: Why not join us?



We are enthusiastic gardeners from North Curry and nearby who meet on the first Friday from September to May at 7:45pm in North Curry Village Hall. Invited speakers entertain us on a variety of gardening- related topics. Refreshments and a chat round off the evening.

There's something for everyone with an interest in gardening and plants.New members and visitors are always welcome (membership £12 annually, visitors £3.00/visit).

Need more info? Telephone Sue on 01823 491658 or email northcurrygardeningclub@gmail.com

North Curry Society Meeting

Wednesday December 17th Christmas Social

January 21st 2026: Commonwealth War Graves

NORTH CURRY SOCIETY

Our December meeting takes the form of a Christmas Social with a short presentation on the Wonders of Physics by Keith Gibbs followed by wine, nibbles and festive social conversation!

Then the new year kicks off with a talk by Andy Day, Regional Organiser of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, describing how they honour men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First and Second World Wars, ensuring they will never be forgotten.

Doors open at 7.30 for 8.00. Membership cards with the year's programme are available from the Treasurer. Visitors always welcome, on payment of the £5 guest fee (or you can join on the night for only £15).

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

The Society generally meets on the third Wednesday each month to hear about aspects of local heritage. Our Chairman Colin Trim (01823 490337) would be pleased to learn about topics and speakers of interest to you.

NORTH CURRY F I L M CLUB



On Sat Dec 6 we are showing the very fun filled Paddington in Peru. Paddington returns to Peru to visit his beloved Aunt Lucy, who now resides at the Home for Retired Bears. With the Brown family in tow, a thrilling adventure ensues when a mystery plunges them into an unexpected journey.

The Village doors open at 2.30pm, with the film starting at 3pm. Entry £5 adults & £3 for accompanied children. There's an intermission for tea, soft drinks and home-made cake (donation requested).



On Friday Dec 12, we are showing the sharp and hilarious satire American Fiction. A novelist who is fed up with the establishment profiting from Black entertainment uses a pen name to write a book that propels him into the heart of the hypocrisy and madness he claims to disdain.



The Village hall doors & bar open at 7pm, with the film starting at 7.30pm. Also open to guests (£5).

We start the new year with the Australian classic Muriel's Wedding on Sat Jan 11. It is a hilarious and heartfelt ABBA-filled comedy about a socially awkward woman who reinvents herself and ultimately finds her own happiness. The Village doors open at 2.30pm, with the film starting at 3pm. Entry £5 adults & £3 for accompanied children. There's an intermission for tea, soft drinks and home-made cake (donation requested).

In complete contrast, on Jan 28 we are showing Emily the Criminal. Down on her luck and saddled with debt, Emily gets involved in a credit card scam that pulls her into the criminal underworld of Los Angeles, ultimately leading to deadly consequences. It is a tense, character-driven thriller with a powerful performance by Aubrey Plaza as Emily, making for a compelling and relevant story about desperation, poverty, and how a system can push people to the brink.



The Village hall doors & bar open at 7pm, with the film starting at 7.30pm. Also open to guests (£5). Four very different films – we hope you come to at least one of them!

The North Curry Calendar 2027

(yes... looking ahead...)

By Colin Trim, colinhtrim@gmail.com

The Village Calendar, which is created by the Parish Church and sold through the Post Office, needs fresh photographers to ensure that the quality of the calendar is maintained and that it appeals to the whole village community. You do not need to be involved in any way with the church in order to submit images for consideration!

I have been invited to oversee the production of the 2027 Calendar and I hope that very much, as a resident of the village and/or a recent entrant to the Village Flower Show Photography Section, you can be persuaded to make some images over the next 10 months for submission to the Selection Panel by next August. We would like local landscape and architecture photos, images documenting village residents going about their daily business, and images of village events. Please bear in mind the following points:

1 All images must be submitted as digital files by email and must be in landscape format i.e the picture must be wider than the high. If using a mobile phone that means taking the picture with the phone turned 'on its side!

2. Most mobile phone/cameras nowadays produce images far larger than three megabytes. This however is the absolute minimum to enable sharp, clear images for printing the calendar.

3. I am publicising these details at this early stage as we need images for each of the 12 months in the year with photos shot in Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer. Snow, frost, autumn leaves, wind, rain, low-light, fog/mist and sun are all eminently 'photo-friendly' conditions! Photos of village events may be less climatically dependent, although 'atmosphere' can help!

4. We shall endeavour to include the work of as many village photographers as possible. We need 14 images. and you may submit as many images as you wish.

5. The name of the photographer will be published with each selected image.

Please contact me if you would like any further information. Full details of entry dates, email addresses etc will be published in the Spring and Summer 2026 in The Pink Paper, on posters throughout the village, in the Benefice Magazine and on NextDoor. But please send me what you wish at any time before then.

Happy Snapping, Good Luck, and let's make the 2027 Calendar the best yet!

Reeves Feast: North Curry Parochial Charities



Are you aware of the North Curry Parochial Charities? They are an ancient set of funds administered by a board of six trustees on behalf of the parish council.

Probably they had their origins in the Reeve's Feast which dates to the time of King John or earlier Saxon times. The earliest known document dates from 1314 and is commemorated on a monument in the vestry of North Curry Parish Church (with a copy near the loo!)

The last full feast was in 1865 but in 1868 the funds were converted into a charity yielding a yearly sum of £33.13s.9.5d of North Curry was allocated £21. The balance was due to West Hatch and Stoke St Gregory which were formerly part of North Curry parish. In 1974 the charities link with West Hatch and Stoke was severed (the Stoke fund still operates).

The charities came from an unknown donor, the charities of Sophia Gould, Charlotte Burge Robbs, and Mary Ann Crease.

In 2018 a celebration of 150 years was held on the playing field, and a small surplus was added to the fund. Formerly coal, bread and blankets were distributed to those in need in the parish. In recent years tokens which can be spent at the village stores or Wrantage Mills have been provided. The trustees distribute the income from the investments, but this is limited. They wish to increase the capital and thereby the income which can be obtained.

If you enjoy living in this community would you consider making a bequest to the charities in your will? This is straightforward to do :

Include our name, address and charity number to ensure your gift reaches us. Name: Reeve 's Feast, address: North Curry Parish Council, Town Farm Community Stable, North Curry,TA3 6NP, charity Number: 204996

Remember to choose the type of gift you want to include. It's important to consider how much you want to leave when leaving a gift to charity in your Will, along with if you'd like it to be used for a specific purpose. There are two options: First, a "residuary gift", a percentage or share of your estate when gifts of money or items have been distributed and costs have been deducted. The value of this type of gift will increase as the value of your estate increases. Second, a "pecuniary gift", a specific sum of money. To ensure that it keeps value over the years, you can make it index-linked. Whichever you choose, the Parochial Charities will be most grateful to distribute your gift.

NORTH CURRY WI

By Olivia Spall

At our November meeting we welcomed Christina Strang who is an expert Graphologist. It was a fascinating meeting. Christina uses her expertise to support and develop businesses worldwide and has 20 years' experience.

Following the latest government shake-up on the school's curriculum she had recently been interviewed on Radio 4 to support handwriting remaining as part of the curriculum; handwriting is a fine motor skill linking parts of the brain with the spinal cord and then sending impulses out to the hands and fingers.

Christina explains the influences which make us who we are.

To begin we each wrote a paragraph to analyse our own writing and then were given samples of others to look at the dotting of the 'I's', the slant and spacings. All these indicate character traits. For example, spacings reveal how we relate to others and our inner thoughts.

Graphology links with psychology to identify the true attributes of a person, helping individuals and businesses make important decisions around personal development. One's state of mind and even one's health can be revealed by analysis.

So much to take in in one short talk but an absolute revelation and even a little scary!

Our next meeting on 3rd December is our Christmas party. As well as festive nibbles and fizz Mandy Webb will be leading us in a Christmas themed workshop. Memories of her workshop making withie reindeers, etc. last time she came is still a fun memory, so we look forward to what she has in store. If you would like to join us on this or any other occasion you would be most welcome.

Looking further forward to January our meeting sees Dr Vikki Haffenden coming to demonstrate spinning and weaving. She is a published author and uses natural dyes. We look forward to a very informative afternoon.

We are a friendly group, and it really is a good way to get to know people and make friends. Our meetings are on the first Wednesday of the month in the Village Hall at 2.00, usually comprising of a speaker, but we also have lots of celebrations! To put you more in the picture let me tell you that we very rarely sing 'Jerusalem' and while some of us do make jam (and cakes) it is not a competition!

If you would like more information, please do contact me on 07825 925775 or Barbara our President on 01823 490811. I look forward to hearing from you. In the meantime we wish you a peaceful and happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Music at North Curry Parish Church

As well as the various Christmas services across the Benefice–including Christingles, lessons and carols at the parish and Methodist churches with shepherds and angels at Stoke Baptist church–North Curry Village Choir are bringing their Christmas Concert to North Curry Parish Church on Thursday 4th December (7 for 7.30). There will be selected choral items from Dvořák's setting of the Mass in D major, commissioned for the consecration in 1887 of a new chapel at Lužany Castle, just 70 miles west of Prague. Other items include Stanford's melodious setting of Psalm 23, vocal solos from the Stewart family Gregory (tenor) and Ellen (soprano), and carols for the audience.

January 17th 2026



Then, on Saturday 17th January, West End and opera sensation Anthony Stuart Lloyd returns with Songs Fit for a Queen, featuring hits by Lionel Richie, Billy Joel, The Beatles, Elvis and The Temptations, plus songs from blockbuster Broadway, West End and Hollywood musicals. 'FIT FOR A QUEEN' commemorates Queen Elizabeth II's 2026 centennial.

Tickets as usual are available at North Curry post office, or (if you can risk finding a seat) at the church door.

Thanks to Rosalind Hardwick for this sketch of Nick's guitar, drawn during the Thunderbridge Trios' exciting concert in November!



Dark nights: be seen!

It's the time of the year when it is dark soon after 4.00pm,. There are children getting off of school buses with dark cloths, others walking dogs or running. Please think about how visible you are. Remember to wear something light or, better, high viz. High viz velcro vest can be bought for under £2.00. Or get a roll of reflective tape to put of school bags and such like and share with your friends!

Head torches are fine for the one in front one but make sure everyone is illuminated if possible. And, all road users: please look out for one another.

Organ Fund

By David Akerman (on behalf of the PCC)



We are delighted to be able to say that the appeal for the restoration of the North Curry organ is now closed!

Subject to minor teething problems and annual maintenance we hope our organ is now fit to serve the next generation. (The previous renovation was completed in the mid-1980s.)

The organ has had some original features restored and is easier to play and sounds much fresher having had decades of dust removed



Thanks to generous giving by many individuals and also organisations such as The On Organ Trust , The Benefact Trust, The Parish Council, The Church Music Fund, The North Curry Coffee Shop and a local (but anonymous) Charitable Trust, we have reached our target, and the project was completed within budget and on time.

We are grateful to the Lance Foy Organs, a family company based in Truro for their hard work and expertise.

Donations of £500 or more will be recorded on a plaque (if donors consent) that will be placed near the organ. All donors names will be recorded for the future in the vestry.



Thank you for your patience and generosity in supporting this project

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21st December: Christingle!

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Stoke St Gregory



Stoke St Gregory WI members gather on Tuesday 9th December for the Christmas meal at The Royal Oak.

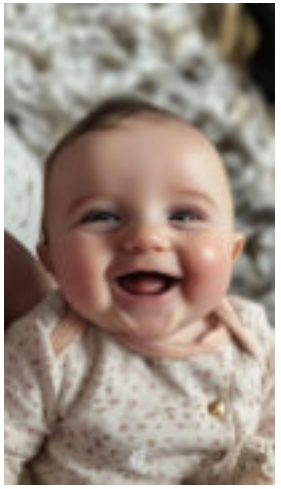


Please note we will start at 12 noon with a very short meeting before quickly moving on to partake of Jo's lovely meal, a few drinks and most importantly the enjoyment of friendship to get us into the festive spirit.

Our New Year programme starts at **7pm on Tuesday 13th January** where our very own member Karen Housego will guide us through the topic of "The Habits of Nuns". An intriguing title.



Please can the members look out an early photograph of themselves so we can have a little guessing game. Will we be able to identify the member correctly from a childhood image? Sue Dare is running the trade stall, Kathryn Astin and Jenny Brown are on refreshment duty, Janice Pearce is filling the rose bowl and Belinda Morgan is giving the vote of thanks. Visitors await a warm welcome and it only costs £5 including refreshments for an evening of fellowship, fun and learning.



The committee including the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary wish all the members a very Happy Christmas and all good wishes as we look forward to the 95th birthday of the Institute in 2026.

If you ever wondered what we get up to at a meeting then please don't hesitate to get in touch for more details.

Amelia Holt,
President, 07985 317252

Church and Yard Update



As the year comes to a close, we can at last report that we are making good progress with the various projects to improve the church fabric.

For many years we have been trying to get approval for major repairs to the paths and particularly from the church car park to the Village Square. We have had to abandon that approach in the face of objections by English Heritage and the County Planners. The way ahead is to proceed with a program of a number of small repairs of the worst areas. This is not ideal, but at least we will achieve some improvement in safety and appearance. Work has now begun and may continue to impede access through the churchyard at intervals into December. As we go to press, much of the repairs to the South Porch approach have been completed. But the masons will be back in action for a few days before Christmas.

On a brighter note, work is approaching completion in the Lady Chapel to reposition the heavy memorial slabs that were damaging the interior walls. We are waiting on some bespoke stones, but this too should be completed in time fro our Christmas celebrations.



Thanks to all who have been so involved in getting us tot his point, but in particular, Steve Loveridge, for his special form of gentle tenacity!







The Mummers Return

The Royal Oak, Stoke St Gregory's Multi-Award Winning Community Hub and Pub in the heart of the village, is delighted to welcome back the North Curry Mummers on Boxing Day, St Stephen's Day, 26th December at 12 noon.

Mumming is best described as early pantomime. The plays are based loosely on the legend of St. George and the dragon. The plays are intended to show the struggle between good and evil.

Mummers' plays are often comic in tone with a formal structure but allowing for many comic asides and there is an element of community celebration and humour in the performance. Broadly comic performances, the most common type features a doctor who has a magic potion able to resuscitate the vanquished character

Many of the costumes for the Mummers hide their faces and gives a to the performance as well as liberating the performers around those they would know. This is consistent with the concept of 'guising', going in disguise as part of festivities. So masks, streamers, hats with strips hanging down and covered faces are often used to strange and beguiling effect.

The Mummers focus is on the changing seasons- St. George as Summer and the Dark Knight as Winter. This **unmissable** free family event is the ultimate feel-good event after a strenuous Christmas, both heartwarming and hilarious.

The HOTV Shop and Café will also be open for snacks and warm drinks Come along and be part of our inclusive Community in our Village.

Flowers



By Amelia Holt

Thank you to all festive flower arrangers who decorated the Church so beautifully for the Harvest Festival, the next date for your diary is Saturday 13th December to decorate Church for Christmas. I will keep the Christmas arrangements going throughout January and remove them for Candlemas at the beginning of February.

The Night the Angels Came (a Christmas story for children)

By Zillah Sykes

It was cold, very cold that night and the air was clear and still. Above the hills of Bethlehem the dark sky was ablaze with a multitude of stars and the full moon shone, bathing a flock of sleepy sheep in its silvery light. A group of shepherds sat warming themselves around a campfire, tired after a day spent tending these sheep, taking their rest yet ever vigilant, keeping watch. "Likely there'll be a frost tonight," Abel, the oldest shepherd muttered, as he pulled his cloak around him and moved closer to the fire. Among the shepherds that night was a ten- year- old boy, thrilled to be out under the stars with his shepherd father. His name was Caleb and this is his story.

"I was throwing sticks onto the fire, bits of wood I had collected out on the hillside that afternoon with my friend Dave, the youngest shepherd. I liked to get the fire burning brightly, to see the flames leaping and dancing and the sparks flying." "Steady, lad!" Old Abel spoke sharply. My father frowned and called me to him; I threw one more stick onto the fire then went to him and curled up under his cloak. There I stayed, listening quietly to Dav playing tunes on the pipe he had made from wood he had found that afternoon and to hear the stories of the shepherds. I tried hard to stay awake as they told their tales of daring and danger, of encounters with wild beasts in wild places, tales told to keep them awake through the dark watches of the night. Somehow though, I had fallen asleep for I was awakened suddenly by a bright and dazzling light and by frightened cries of terrified shepherds. My father held me close and covered his eyes with his cloak.

"Don't be afraid!" These words of peace calmed our fears and I dared to open my eyes and look up. A glorious light shone all around us and in the midst of the light stood an Angel in bright and shining robes. He spoke again and we listened carefully to his message.

"I bring you good and joyful news!" he said "Tonight a Baby Boy has been born in Bethlehem, for you and for all people. He is Christ the Lord, born to be your Saviour." Then he added "You will find him in a stable lying in a manger, all wrapped around with strips of cloth."

When the Angel had finished speaking the whole sky was filled with heavenly light and more and more shining Angels appeared. They began to sing, "Glory to God in the highest Heaven and peace to his people on earth!" I crept out from under my father's cloak and looked on in amazement. My whole body felt full of light and my head rang with the beautiful singing; it was more lovely than anything I had ever heard before. All the world seemed to have disappeared; it was just me and the

Angels on the hillside. All too soon the song of the Angels faded, the light of glory dimmed and the Angels drifted off back to Heaven. The night was dark about us, with just the moon and the stars giving their light and everything was as it had always been-except we were not the same. Our eyes were shining and our hearts were full of wonder. My father held me close and we sat quietly for a while around the flickering flames of the fire, quite overwhelmed by all that we had seen and heard.

Old Abel broke the silence. "Lets us go now," he said "and see for ourselves all that the Angel has told us about." We hurried down the hillside into Bethlehem, leaving the sheep in the care of our Good Shepherd who guided our feet to the lowly stable where our Saviour had been born.

I remember waiting in a dark back yard and the stable door opening. Old Abel spoke in hushed tones to the man that I later found out to be Joseph, and then we were welcomed into the warmth and light of the stable. There by the soft light of a lantern we saw a Baby Boy lying in a manger, all wrapped around with strips of cloth, just as the Angel had said. His father tenderly watched over him while his mother lay resting on a bed of straw. One by one the shepherds knelt reverently on the stable floor while I crept up close and looked at the Baby's tiny, pink, creased face and I gently touched the perfect little hands, unable to believe they were so small. The Baby's finger closed around the tip of my thumb and I smiled at him. My father frowned at me and shook his head, but Mary, the Baby's mother, smiled at me and picked him up, laid him on her lap and beckoned me to sit by her on the straw that was her bed. She put her arm around me and together we looked into that perfect little face. "His name is Jesus," she whispered to me and as I gazed at the Baby it seemed as if nothing else mattered. I could have stayed there forever. All too soon my father called me and slowly I rose to go. "Goodbye, Baby Jesus," I whispered, gently stroking his hair. How soft it felt! Even softer than the fur on my kitten at home.

We left the stable, that holy, lowly place of his birth-with a quiet and reverent awe and made our way back through the dark streets of Bethlehem, then up onto the hillside and back to the sheep, scarcely able to contain the joy that filled our hearts. I don't think any of us slept that night. I snuggled up close to my father and while the shepherds talked excitably of all that they had seen and heard, I lay there content, knowing all that I had heard at the synagogue about God and the Angels was true after all and I felt that God had come down from Heaven that night just to say "Hello" to me.

And that is the message of the first Christmas: God coming down to earth as a tiny baby to be with us, so that we may know that God is Love and that God loves each one of us. This is the good news that the Angel told the shepherds about, on the hillside above Bethlehem, the night the Angels came.

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Rotas

Stoke St Gregory

7th Dec	Barbara P
21st Dec	Simon & Penny (carols)
24th Dec	John (3pm)
	TBA (10pm)
28th Dec	Alex
4th Jan	John
18th Jan	Simon & Penny
25th Jan	Annette
1st Feb	Barbara M

Readers

Please read both Old and New Testament readings as shown in the bulletin. If changing weeks please advise Jane or Pat

7th Dec	Barbara P
24th Dec	Jane (10pm)
28th Dec	Steve
4th Jan	John
18th Jan	Jordan
25th Jan	Annette
1st Feb	Will

Cleaners

7th Dec	Penny & Simon	4th Jan	Marilyn & Terri
14th Dec	Linda & Brett	18th Jan	Penny & Simon
21st Dec	Annette & Susan	25th Jan	Linda & Brett
		1st Feb	Annette & Susan

North Curry

	Sidesmen	Intercessions	Readers
7th Dec	C Trim, L B-Brown	D Walker	A Peters
14th Dec	J Sergeant, T Jones	D Farnham	M Cridge
21st Dec	All Age (10am) & Carol Service (4pm)		
24th Dec (11.30pm)	L Paul, T Jeanes	J Dare	J Satchwell
25th Dec	S Keele, T Jones	M Piers	C Trim
28th Dec	L Farnham, D Walker	J Satchwell	S Harrison
4th Jan	TBC	TBC	TBC
11th Jan	C Trim, P Burgess	D Walker	Z Sykes
18th Jane	L Farnham	D Farnham	D Farnham, H Griffiths
25th Jan	L B-Brown, S Keele	Z Sykes	A Peters
1st Feb	L Paul, T Jeanes	H Griffiths	H Baker

Al Fresco Carols and more



In the week(s) before Christmas we will be gathering in various ways across the Benefice to sing carols, to join in the good will of the season, to eat and to drink... (What's not to like?)

Always, with weather permitting, the following events will take place "Al Fresco":

Wednesday 17th December at 6pm in the King Alfred Inn, Burrowbridge: A jolly sing song in the pub with whoever thought they were going for a quiet meal or pint of Otter.



Thursday 18th December at 6.30pm in Stoke St Gregory Square: gathering outside the church gate and singing along with all in the village before retiring to the Sunday School Room for mulled wine and mince pies. Rumour has it there will be a bearded presence towards the end of the singing.

Friday 19th December at 6pm outside Lyng Church (in the churchyard, not in the road... that would be crazy!): more carols followed in the church with a small craft fayre and a time to remember loved ones by placing decorations on the tree. Also: food. Of course.



Monday 22nd December at 6pm in Queen Square Gardens, North Curry: a gathering to sing carols and dazzle each other with our head torches.

All open to all. Just come along dressed for the weather.

24th December (Wednesday) Christmas Eve

3.00pm	Stoke St Gregory	Crib Service
5.00pm	North Curry	Crib Service
6.30pm	Burrowbridge	First Mass of Christmas
7.30pm	Lyng	First Mass of Christmas
10.00pm	Stoke St Gregory	First Mass of Christmas
11.30pm	North Curry	Midnight Mass

25th December (Thursday) Christmas Day

10.00am	North Curry	United Benefice Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke St G Baptist Church	Service

28th December Holy Innocents

9.30am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist

4th January Epiphany

8.30am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Service of the Word
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist

11th January Baptism of Christ

8.30am	Stoke St Gregory	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Burrowbridge	Service of the Word
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
11.00am	North Curry Methodist Church	Methodist Service

18th January 2nd Sunday of Epiphany (w/of Prayer for Christian Unity)

8.30am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
10.00am	North Curry	All Age Benefice Worship
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Joint Eucharist with Baptists
4.00pm	North Curry	Evensong

25th January Conversion of Paul

9.30am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke St G Baptist Church	Worship
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
11.00am	North Curry Methodist	United Covenant Eucharist

31st January 9.30am: North Curry, Inter-church Prayer Fellowship

1st February Candlemas

9.30am	North Curry	Eucharist
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
3pm	Lyng	Service of the Word

Services across the Benefice

6th December (Sat)

7.00pm	North Curry Methodist Church	Advent Taizé

7th December 2nd Sunday of Advent

8.30am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Service of the Word
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.00am	Stoke Baptist Church	Messy Church
11.00am	North Curry Methodist Church	Methodist Service
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist with Baptism

9th December (Tue), 10am: School Christingle, St Gregory's

14th December 3rd Sunday of Advent

8.30am	Stoke St Gregory	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Burrowbridge	Service of the Word
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
11.00am	North Curry Methodist Church	Holy Communion
10.30am	Stoke St G Baptist Church	Communion Service
4.00pm	Lyng	Carol Service ("Nine Lessons …")

16th December (Tue), 9.15am: School Nativity (St Gregory's)

17th December (Wed), 2pm: School Christingle (North Curry)

Al Fresco Carols: See page 49

20th December (Sat)

9.30am	North Curry	Inter-church Prayer Fellowship
2.30pm	North Curry	Wedding

21st December 4th Sunday of Advent

8.30am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
10.00am	North Curry	All Age Christingle
11.00am	North Curry Methodist Church	Methodist Carol Service
3.30pm	Stoke St G Baptist Church	Christmas in the Stable followed by tea & cake (calling all Shepherds and Angels, we would love you to join us)
4.00pm	North Curry	Carol Service ("Nine Lessons …")
4.00pm	Burrowbridge	Carol Service ("Nine Lessons …")
6.30pm	Stoke St Gregory	Carol Service ("Nine Lessons …")