

St John the Evangelist Manthorpe



Jottings - December 2025

News and views from church, village and estate

Minister's Letter

As Advent begins, the world around us seems to hurry toward Christmas — shops glitter with lights, carols echo in the streets, and plans are made for celebration. Yet the Church invites us into something different: not haste, but stillness. Not noise, but quiet expectation. Advent is a season of waiting — a sacred pause — where we prepare not just for a day, but for an encounter with the living God.

To prepare for Christmas, in the Christian sense, is to prepare the heart. It is to make space for the Christ who comes to us in humility and love. The One born in a stable seeks to be born again within us — not in grand display, but in the quiet corners of our lives, where faith, hope, and love take root.

This preparation is not about perfection, but about openness. It might mean setting aside a few moments each day to sit in prayerful silence, to light a candle, to read the Scriptures, or simply to breathe and remember that God is near. It might mean offering forgiveness, sharing kindness, or carrying someone else's burden. In these small acts, Christ's light begins to shine through us.

Advent reminds us that the greatest gift we can offer God is ourselves — our time, our trust, our willingness to let His love shape our days. As we journey through this holy season, may we learn again to wait with hope, to prepare with joy, and to welcome with wonder the One who comes to dwell among us.

“Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” — Isaiah 40:3

Father Stuart

Services for this month

Wednesday 3rd	BCP Eucharist	10.00am
Sunday 7nd	Advent 2: Morning Prayer	10.00am
Wednesday 10th	BCP Eucharist	10.00am
Sunday 14th	Advent 3: Eucharist	10.00am
Wednesday 17th	BCP Eucharist	10.00am
Sunday 21st	Advent 4: Morning Prayer	10.00am
Sunday 21st	Carol Service with mince pies & mulled wine	6.30pm
Wednesday 24th	No morning service	
Wednesday 24th	Crib Service	4.00pm
Wednesday 24th	Christmas Eve Eucharist	10.00pm
Thursday 25th	Christmas Day: Eucharist	10.00am
Sunday 28th	Holy Innocents: Eucharist	10.00am
Wednesday 31st	BCP Eucharist	10.00am

Dates for your Diary

Friday 5th	Afternoon Whist Drive	2.00pm
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Christmas Eve Communion

Because there is no priest available
for our usual midnight service,
our Christmas Eve Eucharist service
this year will be at **10.00pm**.

Do join us!

Saturday 6th December
10.00am - 3.00pm



Do come and join the fun!
And bring your friends.

It isn't too late to donate bottles (any variety of contents),
Christmas decorations and especially cakes
for the church-run stalls.

Harvest Weekend *(this article should have been included in the November issue, but got mislaid in the ether!)*

Looking round our garden on the Saturday morning, there was very little to find to take to Church, just a few late dahlias and Michaelmas daisies which always make me think of Marian Bristow. Do you remember her and Eric at the Post Office? Anyway, clutching my meagre offering I went to Church on Saturday morning. Pat, Karen, Cynthia, Pam and Yvonne were well away with the decorating and the chancel was beginning to be transformed (thank you to everyone who donated so that what could not be found in the garden could be purchased).

I made coffee for everyone and left them to it to come home to practice *The Sower*, a poem based on the Gospel reading, before heading back to Church for a Harvest lunch (oh by now there was a hoolie blowing and in the churchyard a large chunk of a tree had come down). Well done the very small band of helpers who served up such a delicious lunch cold meats and salads followed by hot puddings and custard. We had to sing for our lunch with a short Harvest Service prepared by Jill and Steve which Rodney kindly accompanied on the electronic organ. Numbers were down (I remember the Suppers in the Playgroup Hall where tickets for the 50 or so were at a premium).

Sunday dawned just as windy but it did not deter the congregation. It was not a Communion and congratulations to June Miller who took a lot of the Service for the first time. The congregation enjoyed singing the traditional Harvest hymns. What we did not know at the time was that Jacky Smith died that morning after a long illness. She used to so enjoy doing the flowers and taking an active part in all church affairs. Rest in peace Jacky. Many thanks to all those who gave to the Harvest gifts at the altar which went to Foodbank and Passage who were most appreciative of everything which will be gratefully received by their clients.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the weekend to make it so joyous for those of us who now do very little.

Margaret Booles



All Souls Service and Silent Tears.

Each one of us in our own tiny world of sorrow and yet we mourned as one grieving unit, one huddle of humanity needing the comfort of each other. Jill and Stephen said all the words in our hearts for us and we sang familiar hymns of years gone by when our loved ones had been by our side.

The young widow of my precious son and her mother travelled up to attend and appreciated the beautiful way of those who lit the candles and guided us through the 'valley of death'.

During this year of 2025 I have never experienced so many farewells to my family and friends. To hear so many of their names in the Roll-call was a reminder that one day my own name will be on it too! Thank you all.

Ann Bramley.

o-o

*A verse from It came upon the midnight clear,
by Edmund Hamilton Sears, which is omitted from our hymn book*

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing!



Manthorpe Pre-school playgroup

Congratulations to the play group for raising £55 for Children in Need on Friday 14th November through their coffee morning and bake sale.



The Playgroup nativity service will be held in church on 10th December at 11.00am following our Wednesday morning Communion service.



Ann Bramley's memories of Jacky Smith

Anita Eckersley and Kathleen Cooke each gave their eulogy and tribute to Jacky at her funeral, but here I write my own memories and those of we Manthorpians.

I start with a story she told me of her time in Russia and how she was asked to project manage the removal of an old building (a church?) to a new location. It was too fragile to be dismantled and rebuilt. Jacky took up the challenge to lift up the entire structure and move it to the new site. Did she do it? Yes, she did.

On another occasion the airliner in which she had travelled to Russia developed a fault once it had landed. The passengers would have been stranded until a replacement was flown in. Jacky strolled up and offered a doubting crew her help. Did she fix it? Yes she did. Eventually, having had enough Kirov and Bolshoi ballets and being followed around by the KGB, she came home.

Fate decreed that two like-minded people - one in a red convertible and one in a Vintage Fiat teamed up, got married and moved to Manthorpe.

We would enjoy hearing of their travels to car rallies all over Europe. Jacky and Ian would often be guests of the Fiat family and there is a newspaper cutting of them leaving a procession in Paris down the Champs Elysée.

Ian encouraged Jacky to put her name forward for the Town Council. Once successful she was part of the initiative for Grantham to have a new cinema. She was also successful, after a plea by Ann Bramley on behalf of her late father Cliff Swallows, in placing a memorial to the men of Manthorpe who fought in WW II in the church.

The kitchen would be busy as we baked cakes, sausage rolls, made 100s of sandwiches for village events. A bi-annual Flower Festival was blessed by Jacky's gift for flower arranging. This she would continue weekly with the church flower team. Our Christmas Tree festival alternated with the flowers.

She and Ian enjoyed Open Gardens weekend, Scarecrow weekend, Red Cross weekend. The last photograph I took of Jacky was of her joining in the Easter Monday races now at the Manor House.

The death of Ian was devastating: I don't think she ever recovered. My annual contribution would be to help man Jacky's poppy stall at Asda when she would wear Ian's medals.

She squeezed in a year as Chairman of Manthorpe WI. and who can forget when, after our Christmas party, we would set off very, very late to startle motorists who stopped to allow a group of ladies to trundle a fully decorated Christmas tree across Manthorpe Road and disappear into the darkness of the churchyard.

We were all very proud to have the Mayor of Grantham as our neighbour and enjoyed our invitations to many of her Mayoral events. How proud Ian would have been.

[illegible]

Fish and Chip quiz

5.30 kick off and everyone was there ready for the supper delivery. Nine tables of six people. Excellent fish and chips with a very quick clear up and no washing up apart from cutlery.

This year the quiz was devised by Joy Hobbs and Steve Potts. Once the debris had been cleared away, Steve got down to the business of the evening... one round by Joy and the next by Steve. 10 rounds in all. Half way through, the raffle was drawn and on with the second half of the quiz.

It was so slick and quick with just a couple of hick ups... Ray Storey thought he had won a torch in the raffle: unfortunately someone had put their torch on the raffle table as they came in...sorry Ray. Steve forgot the answers to the picture quiz and it was by a process of discussion with the audience that a consensus was reached. Ray's team did win the quiz which was some consolation to him.

A HUGE thank you to Joan and Michael who set the room up, to Zoe for clearing the supper debris, Judy for ordering the supper and Steve and Joy for an excellent quiz, Derek for selling the raffle tickets and everyone who helped clear the room so quickly (it reminded me of Mr. Fizzywigs Christmas party in a Christmas Carol) that we were home by 9 o'clock. An excellent evening.

Margaret Booles

Are you ready for Christmas *by Ann Lewin*

Ready for Christmas?
You're joking! With all
I've got to do,
I'll be lucky if
I'm ready by
This time next year.

Stir-up Sunday
Found me without even
the ingredients,
Let alone the time to
Stir them....

The cards
I was going to write
More than
"Hope all is well"
This year
But I haven't

Shopping's a nightmare
With all those people
Intent on spending
Christmas.....

Working out who's
Visiting who, and
Who'll be offended
If we don't.....

The tree, the decorations,
Enough food for the cat,
Not to mention us,
I'll never be ready,

But I'm certainly ready for
Christmas - that moment when
The world seems hushed
In silent expectation,
The light in the stable
Draws us from chaos
To the stillness of
God at the centre.
And love is born

I'm longing for that.



St John's Community Hall

To book the hall please contact

Joan, Administrator 07434 516116

Regular bookings

2nd Mon. am New Layers of Stitch, Mary Bompfrey 07715 171808
3rd Mon. am U3A STEM, John Down 07468 696029
4th Mon. am Bobbin Lace Group, Jean Breckenridge 07929 990708
Mon pm weekly Daisy Chain Yoga, Rachel Metcalfe 079200 96439
Mon eve weekly Pilates, Kristina Hammond 577796
2nd Tues eve Manthorpe W.I., Judy Payne 07913 536 698
Tues weekly Sch.hols ConexuTuition, Karen Shaw 07701 096842
3rd Tues eve bi-monthly Breast Friends, Sara Green 07738 786743
Last Tues eve Grantham Sunflower W.I., Ann Kilroy 07933 0244233
Wed. pm monthly National Trust, Paul Skelton 07818 435 808
Wed. pm weekly Parkinsons UK, Ian Askew 01400 282712
Thurs am weekly Dansana Yoga, Helen Vyse 07513 901 454
1st Thurs pm U3A Psychology, Steve Potts 07434 464712
3rd Thurs pm National Trust, Paul Skelton 07818 435 808
4th Thurs pm U3A Exploring AI, Steve Potts 07434 464712
Thurs pm term time Conexu Tuition, Karen Shaw 07701 096842
Thurs. eve weekly Bridge Club, Peter Simpson 01949 842481
Friday am weekly Daisy Chain Yoga, Rachel Metcalfe 079200 96439
1st Fri pm Church Whist Drive, Joan Lincoln 07434 516116
4th Fri pm U3A Gardening, Caroline Bowman 01476 566411
2nd Fri eve Lincs Wildlife, John Chadwick 01476 561413
4th Fri eve ReaLize Sound, Liz Langford 07971 400769
Sat am weekly term time First Class Learning, Patricia Newman 07528 800300

One off bookings this month

2nd – 1.00-5.00pm
13th – 1.15-4.45pm
20th - 1.00 – 5.00pm

Parish Matters

Vicar: Father Stuart W. Craddock 01202569582

Church warden: Linda Vincent

PCC secretary: Rob Vincent

Safeguarding officer:

Parish Administrator: Joan Lincoln 07434516116

www.stjohnmanthorpe.org.uk Email: stjohnmanthorpe@gmail.com

Registers for November

Baptisms

Oliver Smith

Weddings

None

Funerals

Jacky Smith

Burial of ashes

None

Cleaning rotas

Church

1st

Rev and Mr Potts

15th

Mr and Mrs Hamlyn

29th

Mr and Mrs Storey

Brasses

Nigel McDermot



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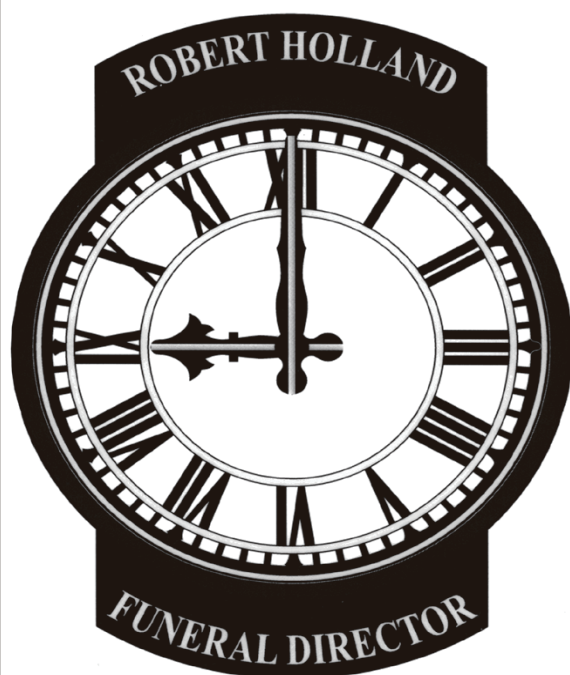
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To ensure entry to the following
month's Jottings, please send
reports, social events and any
news and information to
jilldallygate@gmail.com
by the 18th of each month.

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Don't forget!

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