

Parish Newsletter - Issue No. 95

December 2025 & January 2026

**St Alban's, Blue Bell Hill, St David's, Lordswood,
and St William's, Walderslade**



“The Greatest Gift: A Season of Renewal”

December and January are months filled with noise, light, and movement. The shops are busy, our calendars are crowded, and the days seem to rush past in a blur of preparation and celebration. Yet amid the glitter and bustle of the season, Christians are called to something deeper, to prepare our hearts for the true gift of Christmas, and to enter the new year with a renewed sense of hope and purpose.



In the midst of the world's excitement, the Gospel quietly reminds us of what truly matters: *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given”* (Isaiah 9:6). The arrival of the Christ child is not just a moment in history, but a living truth that continues to shape our lives today. God's love was made visible in the most humble of settings, a manger, among the poor and lowly, reminding us that His gifts are not measured in wealth or splendour, but in grace, peace, and compassion.

As we move through Advent, we are invited to prepare our hearts as carefully as we prepare our homes. We make space not only for guests and gatherings, but for Christ Himself, Emmanuel, “God with us.” In a world that often tells us to seek more, buy more, and do more, Jesus calls us to rest in His presence and remember that *“where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (Matthew 6:21).

Then comes January, a new year, fresh pages, and new intentions. Many of us will make resolutions about health,

finances, or habits. But perhaps this year, we might resolve to draw nearer to the heart of God: to forgive more freely, to give more generously, and to love more deeply. As Paul writes, “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

So, as we move towards celebrating Christmas and step into the new year, let us hold fast to the truth that the greatest gift has already been given, the gift of God’s love, made flesh in Jesus Christ. May we receive that gift with joy, and may our lives reflect it in kindness, service, and faith throughout the year ahead.

“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Rev. Ann Ruby
Team Curate



Worship in December 2025

Sunday 7 December (Advent 2)

10am **Morning Worship** at St David's, Lordswood

Sunday 14 December (Advent 3)

10am **Holy Communion** at St William's, Walderslade

4pm **Parish Carol Service** at St Alban's, Blue Bell Hill

Sunday 21 December (Advent 4)

10am **Morning Worship** at St Alban's, Blue Bell Hill

10am *Family Vibes Christingle* at St David's, Lordswood

Wednesday 24 December (Christmas Eve/Christmas Night)

4pm **Family Crib Service** at St William's, Walderslade

11.30pm **Midnight Holy Communion** at St William's, Walderslade

Thursday 25 December (Christmas Day)

10am **Christmas Holy Communion** at St David's, Lordswood

Sunday 28 December (Christmas 1)

10am **Holy Communion** at St William's, Walderslade

Worship in January 2025

Sunday 4 January (Epiphany)

10am **Morning Worship** at St Alban's, Blue Bell Hill

Sunday 11 January (Covenant Service)

10am **Holy Communion** at St David's, Lordswood

Sunday 18 January (Epiphany 2)

10am **Morning Worship** at St William's, Walderslade

Sunday 25 January (Epiphany 3)

10am **Holy Communion** at St Alban's, Blue Bell Hill



**Carols &
Mince Pies**

*Saturday 20th December
at St David's, Lordswood*

from **10.00am - 12pm**

People of Holy Trinity South Chatham

This month we meet Mark Salter.

Age: 76

Marital status and family:

Married to Phil 53 years 3; grown up children; 6 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

Could you please explain your role in the church ?

I am a Licensed Lay Minister with PTO (Permission to Officiate) I preach or teach about once a month. I am the Parish Safeguarding Officer. I am also a Lay Member of the Chatham and Rochester Deanery Synod as a representative for the Parish. Otherwise: general dogs body.

Where are you from?

Born in Rochester, Kent

What did you want to be as a child? A Missionary, believe it or not.

Could you share any precious childhood memories with us?

At primary school I was a very naughty boy. As my father was the Group Scout Leader, I was brought up to be a cub, scout, senior scout and eventually a Queen's scout. I also attended a free church youth group (Open Brethren) as a Covenanter and made a commitment to Christ at the age of 11 at a Billy Graham film.

What is your favourite food?

Anything I cook.

What do you watch on television? The News, Quiz programmes, documentaries *Call the Midwife*.

What music do you listen to?

Anything by Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Folk Music, Paul Simon. Martin Joseph. Phil has also educated me to appreciate some classical music

What is your day job?

I was a specialist PE teacher then primary teacher finally Head teacher. I am retired but still love teaching the Scriptures.



Can you describe yourself in three words? Hyperactive, Diffident, Questioning.

What is your Church

background? How long have you got? Basically, I am a reluctant Anglican. My background is mixed. I started in an Anglican church choir (my Father was Church Warden). I was a server but announced to the vicar I was leaving the Anglican church at the age of 14. He said, "You never leave the Anglican church!" Baptised by full immersion in the Open Brethren church, where I became a youth leader at 16. Joined Vines United Reformed Church, became an elder and Youth Leader. Became part of a House church for a while; suffered under heavy shepherding! I joined St Justus, in the early 80's, All Saints with St Paul's in the late 80's, Holy Family at Gravesend in the late 90's. Then came to Holy Trinity South Chatham in 2012.

Do you have a favourite hymn?

No there are so many but if pressed: *There is a Redeemer...* Why? because it says so much in 3 short verses. It's easy to learn and sing anywhere.

Do you have a favourite Bible

reading? No except perhaps the book of Romans, because it reveals the struggles the Apostle Paul had and how he overcame in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

What do you draw from

spiritually? Obviously from Scripture, but also reading Richard Rohr, Brian McClaren, Rob Bell, Henri Nouwen, Walter Brueggemann, Rev. Sam Wells and also walking in the countryside and listening to people.

Have you ever had a profound spiritual experience?

Yes, many. The most profound was being made alive to the Holy Spirit and filled, sometimes referred to as 'Baptism in the Spirit' at the age of 20.

Where do you see yourself in ten years time?

Now that is quite a question! A bit slower, less hyperactive, hopefully growing in grace, if I'm still here!

Is there anything else you would like to tell us that not many people know about you?

I still hold the school record and My college record for high jump. 5 feet 8 inches and 6 feet 1 inch (In those days we landed in a sand pit!)

What are your hobbies?

Photography from time to time and I own a Land Rover enough said!

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about?

I think I've said enough about myself.

On the Social side

Coffee & Cake at St David's on the second Friday of each month between 10.30am and 12pm. Next dates: **12 December (featuring the Swingate School Choir) & 9 January**.

Tea at Three at St William's on the third Monday of each month at 3pm. Next dates: **15 December (singing voices at the ready!) & 19 January**.

Holy Communion & Coffee Morning at St Alban's on the third Wednesday of each month. Next date: **17 December & 21 January** (worship at 10am, refreshments from 10.30am)

Cornerstone Coffeeshop at St William's in Walderslade Village is open most days throughout the week; **Monday - Friday** 10am - 2pm and **Saturdays** from 9am.

In our prayers

We remember before God:

- our world; praying for countries affected by conflict and poverty
- those who will receive Blythwood Shoeboxes
- His Majesty King Charles III and the UK Government
- Children, families and young people over the Christmas Season
- the Methodist Southeast District, the churches of the North Kent Methodist Circuit
- Rochester Diocese, our Bishops, and the parishes of this Deanery
- the preparations for Alpha beginning in the new year
- those in hospital and those waiting scans, operations or treatment

- for couples recently married, for Jack Leech and Marcia Ware and those preparing for their wedding day and future life together
- those preparing for baptism and their families.
- the families of Timothy Giddins, Glyn Davies and all those who have lost loved ones during the course of 2025.

Dates: December 2025

Midweek Communion at Woodlands Court on Monday 1 December at 6.30pm

Cornerstone Management Committee at St William's on Wednesday 3 December at 7.30pm

Advent in Narnia - Reflections on the Season based on ***The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*** in the Chapel at St William's on Thursdays 4, 11 & 18 December from 2.30pm

Trinity Prayers in the Chapel at St David's on Thursday 4 December at 7.30pm

Woodlands Study Group (Residents only) at Woodlands Court on Mondays 8 & 22 December at 11am

Bible Study Group in the Chapel at St David's on Monday 8 December at 2.30pm

Wardens Plus at 26 Mayford Road on Monday 15 December at 9.30am

Carols & Mincepies at St David's on Saturday 20 December between 10am and 12pm



Advent *in* Narnia

REFLECTIONS FOR THE SEASON

based on the Chronicles of Narnia

Film viewing at **St David's (ME5 8TR)**
at 2.30pm **on Friday 28 November**

Weekly discussions at **St William's (ME5 9LR)**
at 2.30pm **on Thursdays 4, 11 & 18
December**



Dates: January 2026!

Trinity Prayers in the Chapel at St David's on Thursday 1 January/8
January (TBC) at 7.30pm

Midweek Communion at Woodlands Court on Monday 5 January at
6.30pm

Deanery Chapter at St John's, Chatham on Tuesday 6 January at 8am

Methodist Property Stewards on Zoom on Thursday 8 January at
7.30pm

Woodlands Study Group (Residents only) at Woodlands Court on
Mondays 12 & 26 January at 11am

Bible Study Group (For everyone) in the Chapel at St David's on
Mondays 12 & 26 January at 2pm

Wedding of Jack Leech & Marcia Hare at St Mary Magdalene,
Gillingham on Monday 12 January at 2pm

Alpha BEGINS! at St David's, Lordswood on Sunday 11 January from 4pm (continuing on Sundays 18 & 25 January)

Rochester Deanery Standing Committee on Monday 12 January at 7.30pm

Pastoral Group Meeting at 17 Dornden Gardens on Tuesday 13 January at 10am

Methodist Circuit Meeting on Zoom on Wednesday 14 January at 7.30pm

CEC at Cornerstone Coffeeshop at St William's, Walderslade on Wednesday 28 January at 7.30pm

Wardens Plus Breakfast at Village Cafe, Walderslade 26 Mayford Road on Monday 26 January at 9.30am

Reading & Praying: December 2025 & January 2026!

From Advent 2025 we begin a new liturgical adventure! For many years in the Parish we have unswervingly followed the Revised Common Lectionary with its three-yearly cycle of readings from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke plus accompanying texts. This practice has served us well, but I am always left wondering about the passages in the Bible that get left out.

Our Service Leaders, Preachers and Clergy have therefore decided on an experiment. From this Advent onwards, we will be following an alternative lectionary; one prepared by Wilda C. Gaffrey, Hebrew Biblical Scholar and Episcopal Priest. It is titled 'A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church' and attempts to recover the voices and stories of women and those on the margins of the Bible that the Revised Common Lectionary often misses out. Gaffrey's lectionary also comes with a fresh translations from the Hebrew and Greek which you may hear preachers refer to from time to time.

Each week we will continue to have two readings during Sunday worship as has been our custom, but I hope God leads us into new territory as we listen to parts of the Bible that perhaps we've never heard before. Gaffrey notes:

‘Most simply, these translations seek to offer and extend the embrace of the scriptures to all who read and hear that they might see and hear themselves in them and be spoken to by them. Similarly, taking seriously that we are all created in the image of God, these translations seek to display a God in whose Image we see ourselves reflected and reflecting.’ (Wilda C. Gaffrey, *A Women’s Lectionary for the Whole Church*,’ p. xv.

Advent 2 — 7 December

Genesis 17.15-22, Psalm 78.1-7
Romans 8.18-25 & Luke 1.39-45

Almighty God,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son Jesus Christ
comes again as Judge and Saviour
we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God.

Amen.

Advent 3 — 14 December

Judges 13.2-7, Psalm 115.9-15
1 John 3.1-3 & Luke.46-56

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to prepare
the way of your Son:
give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice, and to suffer for
the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Advent 4 — 21 December

1 Samuel 1.19-18,
Canticle of Hannah (1 Samuel 2.1-10)
Titus 3.4-7 & Matthew 1.18-25

Eternal God,
as Mary waited for the birth of
your Son,
so we wait for his coming in glory;
bring us through the birth pangs of this
present age
to see, with her, our great salvation
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Christmas — 24/25 December

Set I - *Isaiah 26.16-19, Psalm 68.4-13*
1 Thessalonians 4.13-18 &
Luke 2.1-14 or 2.1-20

Set II - *Isaiah 66.10-13, Psalm 103.1-17*
1 Peter 1.22 — 2.3 &
Luke 2.15-20 or 2.1-20

Set III - *Wisdom 9.1-6, 9-11,*
Psalm 33.1-9, Colossians 1.15-20 &
John 1.1-14

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder
at heaven touching earth;
accept our heartfelt praise as we
worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.
Amen.

Christmas 1 — 28 December

*Genesis 2.7-9, Psalm 8,
2 Corinthians 5.16-21 & Matthew 1.1-16*

God in Trinity,
eternal unity of perfect love;
gather the nations to be one family
and draw us into your holy life
through the birth of Emmanuel,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Epiphany — 4 January

*Isaiah 60.1-6, 11, Psalm 67,
2 Timothy 1.5-10 & Matthew 2.1-12*

Creator of the heavens,
who led the Magi by a star to worship
the Christ-child:
guide and sustain us
that we may find our journey's end
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Covenant Sunday — 11 January

*Exodus 24.3-11 or Deuteronomy 29.10-15
Jeremiah 31.31-34
Romans 12.1-2
John 15.1-10 or Mark 14.22-25*

God of grace,
through the mediation of your Son,
you call us into a new covenant.
Help us therefore to draw near
with faith
and join ourselves in a perpetual
covenant with you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Epiphany 2 — 18 January

*Isaiah 62.1-7, Psalm 118.2-11, 16-19
2 Corinthians 6.2-10 &
Matthew 3.1-6, 11-17*

Faithful Lord,
our beginning and our end:
bring us with the whole creation
to your glory hidden through past ages
and made known in Jesus Christ
our Lord. **Amen.**

Epiphany 3 — 25 January

*Zephaniah 3.14-20, Psalm 117.6-9, 13, 15
1 Timothy 4.1-6, 9-10 &
Mark 1.29-31*

God of all mercy,
your Son proclaimed good news to
the poor,
release to the captives, and freedom to
the oppressed:
anoint us with your Holy Spirit
and set all your people free to praise
you in Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Keeping in contact

More information about the Parish is available via weekly emails which you can sign-up to receive from our website, achurchnearyou.com/Holy-Trinity-South-Chatham, or by using the QR code below. You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

Team Rector: Rev. David Kichenside 01634 862265 david.kichenside@gmail.com
(Rest Day: Saturday)

Team Curate: Rev. Ann Ruby 07565 402121 reverendann@hotmail.com
(Parish Days: Wednesdays and Sundays)

Church Wardens Pat Long 01634 309180
Barry Horwell 01634 308552

Pro-Warden & Gift Aid Officer Pauline Bowdery 01634 669215

Church Steward Sylvia Wrigglesworth 01634 683789

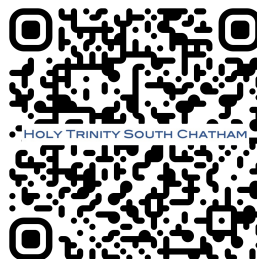
Parish Safeguarding Officer Mark Salter 07719 183940

Prayer Co-ordinator Mary Horwell 01634 308552
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Church Bookings Jean Small 01634 315106

www.achurchnearyou.com/Holy-Trinity-South-Chatham

@southchatham on Facebook and @htscuk on Instagram



HOLY TRINITY SOUTH CHATHAM

One church of St Alban, St David and St William serving Blue Bell Hill, Lords Wood and Walderslade.
A partnership between the Church of England and the Methodist Church

Registered Charity No. 1135416



The **Methodist** Church

