

CALENDAR

Monday	01-Dec-25	9am Monday Coffee Morning at The Wilshere Hall 9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer	Advent & Christmas services/events are in bold
Tuesday	02-Dec-25	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house 7.30pm Life Group on Zoom	
Wednesday	03-Dec-25	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall Midday Prayer at St Mary's, St Margarets	
Thursday	04-Dec-25	9am Teddy Club at The Wilshere Hall 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall 9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer	
Friday	05-Dec-25	2pm-6pm Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's, St Margarets	
Saturday	06-Dec-25	9am All Age Eucharist at St John the Baptist	
Sunday	07-Dec-25	10.30am All Age Holy Communion Service at St Andrew's 2pm-6pm Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's, St Margarets 5pm 'Carols amidst the Christmas Trees' at St Mary's, St Margarets	
<i>Second Sunday of Advent</i>			
Monday	08-Dec-25	9am Monday Coffee Morning at The Wilshere Hall 9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer	
Tuesday	09-Dec-25	7.30pm Monday Life Group at St Mary's, St Margarets 9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house 7.30pm Life Group on Zoom	
Wednesday	10-Dec-25	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall Midday Holy Communion at St Mary's, St Margarets	
Thursday	11-Dec-25	9am Teddy Club at The Wilshere Hall 10.30am Benefice Coffee Morning (The Red Lion) 9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer	
Friday	12-Dec-25	9.30am Benefice Breakfast at The Wilshere Hall	
Saturday	13-Dec-25	9am Eucharist at St John the Baptist	
Sunday	14-Dec-25	10.30am Holy Communion St Andrew's 6.30pm Carols by Candlelight at St John the Baptist	
<i>Third Sunday of Advent</i>			
Monday	15-Dec-25	9am Monday Coffee Morning at The Wilshere Hall 9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer	
Tuesday	16-Dec-25	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house 7.30pm Life Group on Zoom	
Wednesday	17-Dec-25	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall Midday Prayer at St Mary's, St Margarets	
Thursday	18-Dec-25	9am Teddy Club at The Wilshere Hall 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall 9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer	
Friday	19-Dec-25	6.30pm Benefice Bring & Share Supper at The Wilshere Hall (ticketed)	
Saturday	20-Dec-25	9am Eucharist at St John the Baptist	
Sunday	21-Dec-25	10.30am Morning Prayer at St Andrew's 10.30am Holy Communion at St Mary's, St Margarets 4pm Make Church at St Andrew's *NEW*	
<i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>			
Monday	22-Dec-25	6.30pm Carols by Candlelight at St Andrew's 9am Monday Coffee Morning at The Wilshere Hall 9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer	
Tuesday	23-Dec-25	7.30pm Monday Life Group at St Mary's, St Margarets 9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house 7.30pm Life Group on Zoom	
Wednesday	24-Dec-25	3pm The Christmas Journey starting at St Margarets Train Station 11.30pm Christmas Eve 'Midnight' Holy Communion at St Andrew's	
Thursday	25-Dec-25	10.30am Benefice Christmas Day Service at St John the Baptist	
Sunday	28-Dec-25	10.30am Benefice Holy Communion by Extension at St Mary's, St Margarets	
<i>First Sunday of Christmas</i>			
Monday	29-Dec-25	9am Monday Coffee Morning at The Wilshere Hall 9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer 12pm Make Lunch Club at The Wilshere Hall	
Tuesday	30-Dec-25	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house 7.30pm Life Group on Zoom	
Wednesday	31-Dec-25	Midday Prayer at St Mary's, St Margarets	



The 3 Churches Benefice

NEWS & NOTICES ~ DECEMBER 2025

The bells of waiting Advent ring...

This is the first line of the poem 'Christmas' by John Betjeman. It's a favourite of mine, and if you want to hear the whole thing come to 'Carols amidst the Christmas Trees' on Sunday 7th December at St Mary's, St Margarets. The poem captures the preparation for Christmas in villages and cities, and contrasts the commercial side of Christmas with the significance of the birth of Jesus. Written in 1954, we are now 70 years on, and I don't think Betjeman could have imagined how commercialism would develop over that time, or how squashed out the Advent waiting would become.

It isn't that I want to hold back the joy of Christmas, and I don't think it would be possible to turn back the inexorable wave of hard sell that comes with a commercial Christmas. There are however things that we can do to slow down and to engage in the waiting of Advent.

I think the most important one is to recognise the meaning of Advent; that we are waiting for both something that has happened and something that is yet to come. We are waiting for the birth of Jesus, his birthday, that Holy Night that was. At the same time, we are waiting for the return of the risen Jesus, coming in glory out of the clouds; we are waiting for the fulfilment of the visions in the book of Revelation, the return of Christ the King. Advent is not just a chocolate a day calendar as we wait for Christmas.

When the angels sang to the shepherds on that Bethlehem hillside they proclaimed God's glory and brought the message of peace. Holding on to the peace of God, the quiet stillness within, is difficult, especially so when the waiting of Advent is drowned out by the noise of Christmas preparations. I wonder if you have found yourself anxious about all there is to do, worried about the preparations, or concerned about the cost? When the disciples panicked in the storm on the sea of Galilee, Jesus said, 'Peace, be still!'

Do you need some of that peace and stillness in this busy time? Do you need to stop and listen to God's quiet voice in this season of waiting? God doesn't shout, so if you're going to hear Him, you need to slow down and listen, you need to wait quietly.

Vicar of the Benefice: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest
25 Hoddesdon Road, Stanstead St Margarets, Herts. SG12 8EG
07488 914972 / 01920 870009 / Email: vicar@3churches.net

NEWS & NOTICES

The Three Villages Magazine **FREE**

If you or someone you know is not be able to get out and collect a copy of the print magazine, you can now call or text (07488 914972) for a copy. Copies are available to collect at the back of each church.

Warm Welcome Spaces

Please do join us at our Warm Welcome Spaces: Morning Coffee Morning on Monday mornings, 9–11am at The Wilshire Hall, offering a warm drink and a fun activity; and The Community Hub Drop-in on Wednesdays, 10.30–11.30am at St Mary's, St Margarets, offering a cuppa and chat, as well as practical help if needed. These are FREE and open to everyone.

Lights of Love Service

A special Lights of Love Service will be held at 7pm on Thursday 18th December at Holy Trinity, Bengoe in memory of precious babies gone too soon.

Christmas Tree Festival

We are still looking for raffle donations! If you have anything to donate, please take it to the vicarage or church by Friday 5th December. Thank you!

Make Lunch Club

Make Lunch Club will be meeting over the Christmas holidays on the following dates: Monday 29th December and Friday 2nd January. Please do come along and join us! 12–2pm at The Wilshire Hall.

Benefice Bring & Share Supper

On December 20th, from 6.30pm, we will have a Benefice Bring & Share Supper at The Wilshire Hall. £1 per ticket. Soft drinks provided, but please bring your own beer/wine and a dish to share. To book a place please contact Lynne (call 07527 796277 or email lynneheraud@yahoo.com). Everyone is welcome!

Benefice Breakfast

Please note the change in date for this month's Benefice Breakfast. It will be on Saturday 13th December instead. There is also an additional date added for January 2026: Saturday 3rd January.

Ware Christmas Together

If you, or someone you know, is looking for a welcoming place for Christmas, Ware Christmas Together is once again offering a free meal on Christmas Day, 12.30–3pm at The Age Concern Riverside Hall, Ware. To sign up, simply call 01992 531833. Transport can be arranged if needed. We look forward to celebrating another lovely Christmas with old friends and new!

FROM THE CHURHWARDENS

Fundraising for Tearfund

Thank you so much for supporting The Big Quiz Night for Tearfund on 15th November. We were able to raise £80 as a benefice. Furthermore, Margaret Buter-Morris spoke on behalf of Tearfund at St Andrew's Morning Prayer on 16th November. The collection from that service also went to Tearfund, so a grand total of £220.60 from the quiz and the service was raised.

St John Baptist Church Quiz Night : extra thanks

As mentioned last month, the quiz night raised an amazing total of £984 for the west wall damp course on the left of the stain glass window. Thanks again to all who joined and helped make this happen. We want to say specific thanks to Richard, Margaret, Bryan, Martin and Sharon for organising it, and to our raffle prize donations from Bryan Brace, Sue Vaughan, Van Hages, Ware Tesco, Village Cafe, Village Pharmacy, Village Cleaning, French & Jupps, The Sun pub, The Red Lion pub and Leafy Oak Nursery.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep the following people and their loved ones in your prayers this month:

Weddings

• Charlotte Adams and Taylor Smith on 4th September 2026 at St Andrew's.

Deaths

- Lesley Charlton in September.
- Carol Knight on 30th September.
- Betty Grace Wright on 15th October.
- Christopher Saggars on 1st November.



UPCOMING DATES IN JANUARY

2nd ~ Make Lunch Club, 12pm at The Wilshire Hall

3rd ~ Extra Benefice Breakfast, 10am at The Wilshire Hall

18th ~ Make Church, 4pm at St Andrew's



USEFUL LINKS

Online Zoom Services & Events
www.tinyurl.com/3churcheszoom

A Church Near You
Benefice Page
<http://tinyurl.com/3churchesBenefice>

The 3 Churches Website
www.3churches.net