

# CHURCH LIFE MATTERS



January 2026

## A word from Andrew

Sometimes I think that we are too familiar with the Christmas story. We are in danger of losing sight of the amazing miracle that God becomes man for you and me. When you pause to think, it is a moment of awe and wonder... the one who was not created, chose to enter the created order as some cells in the womb of a virgin... Like us the baby in the manger had to learn to walk and speak... He grew, became a man to take our sins upon the cross. He became like us not just to identify with us and to show his love, not just to die for your sins and mine, but so that we might become like him...

And so, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I want to thank you for being part of our benefice of three churches, and for all you have given and contributed to the life of our churches.

As we continue to invite people to our Advent and Christmas celebrations, please have an eye also to the things coming up in January. In this edition you will see that we have two Alpha courses starting (one a daytime one, which is a new departure for us) and our next Invitation Supper with John and Sharon Firth as our speakers. Please do be in contact with Dawn to enquire about either or to book places, thank you.

After our very successful Discipling Journey on Monday nights, I am offering it again on a Tuesday evening. If you are interested please let me know. We won't start until we have sufficient interest to start a group.

I'd like us each to consider joining in three days of prayer and fasting 21 to 23 January. This is being promoted and backed by a lot of Christian streams in the UK including Nicky Gumbel and Holy Trinity Brompton - HTB. You can find more details on the internet under [www.turnthebattle.uk](http://www.turnthebattle.uk) It's great to hear of God moving among Gen Z and obviously there is a huge spiritual need within our nation. Here's something from their promotional material:

### Why Now?

We sense a decisive moment — a spiritual battle at the gate — calling the Church to respond with urgency, unity, and humility.

**This is not a conference or event**, but a national movement of prayer, open to all. We believe we are being called to three things:

## 1. A Fresh Commitment to Prayer

Seeking God with hunger and humility. 2 Chronicles 7:14.

## 2. A Fresh Commitment to Consecration

Returning to holiness and wholehearted obedience. Romans 12:1.

## 3. A Fresh Commitment to Bold Living

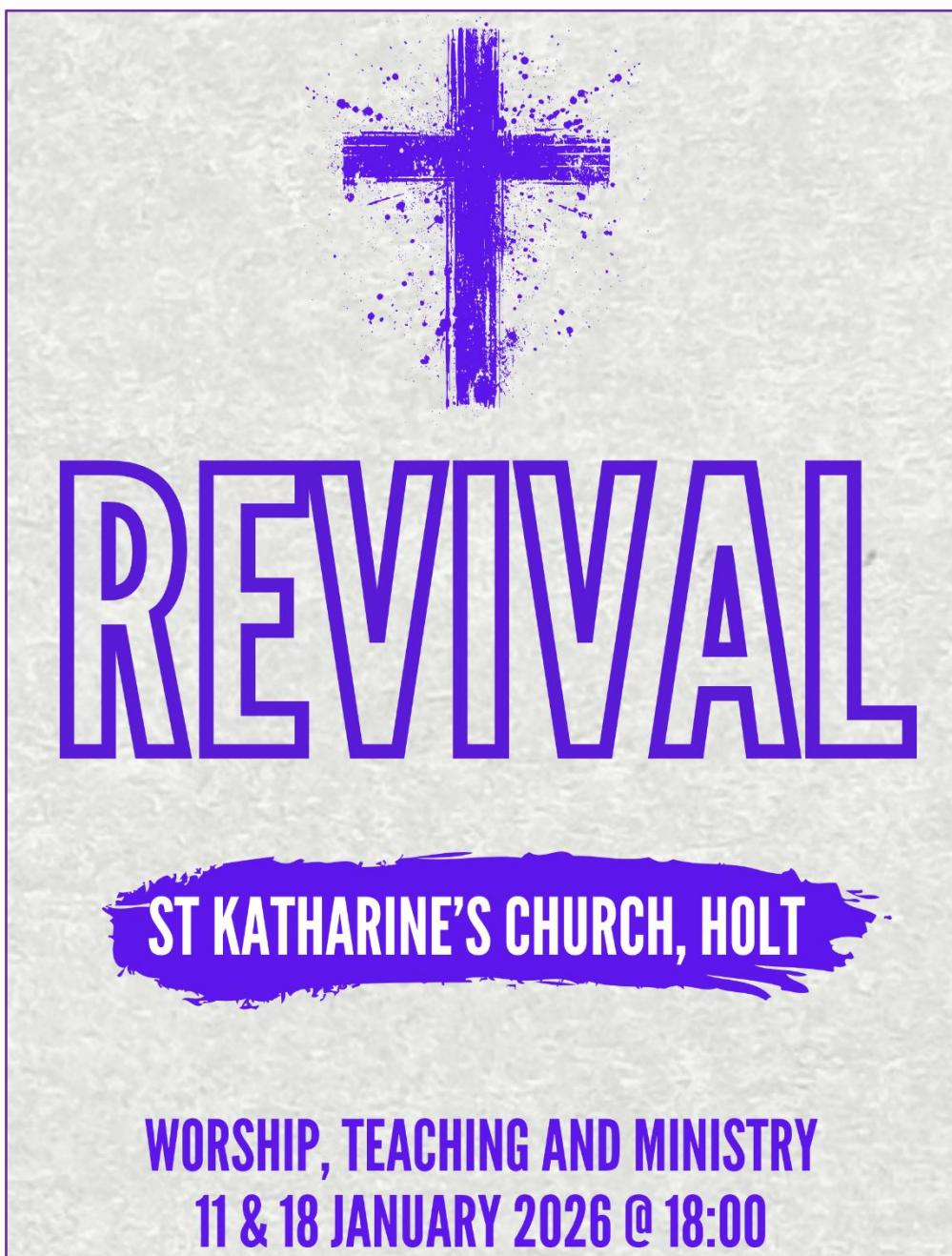
Courageous witness and living out the gospel with power and clarity.

2 Timothy 1:7-8.

I encourage you all to be a part of this.

With Every Blessing

*Andrew*





# St Katharine's Church, Holt SUPPER EVENING

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SAT 24 JAN

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18:15 ARRIVAL

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## JOHN & SHARON FIRTH

John and Sharon have been very aware of God's leading in their lives from an early age; from meeting Jesus, then being filled with the Holy Spirit, feeling led to move to the US and back again, establishing a church in Melksham, and now seeking what God has for them next. They have a passion for seeing Christians working together in unity, empowered by the presence of God and to see others grow in their ministry.

To help with numbers for catering please email

[united.benefice@outlook.com](mailto:united.benefice@outlook.com)

by Monday 19 January 2026 if you would like to attend.

## News from St. Mary's

Writing these notes is rather like writing a report on a football match at half-time; play in the first half has been full of interest, but it is the result at the end that is most important.

Much has happened here since the last Church Life Matters. For our quiz to support the work of Medecins sans Frontieres in Gaza, we had a full house and raised £426. The attendance at our monthly Coffee Morning was lower than usual, but we did not suffer financially. This was largely due to two factors: firstly, the wide range of cakes and pastries baked by Annette and Sarah and secondly by a rather bizarre raffle, where, due to the large number of prizes, everybody who had bought a ticket was sure to receive at least one and we raised £139 on the day.

The afternoon Christingle service is proving popular with children from both the primary and pre-school being present. This guaranteed a large number of parents, grandparents and carers being there. Numbers meant that the children bearing candles could not process around the church, but, fortunately, our team of firewatchers was not brought into action. There was a collection for the work of The Children's Society which raised £133.

Apart from the carols, there were certain similarities between the Beer & Carols and our Carol Service in the church the following Sunday. Both of them attracted approximately fifty people and on both occasions, we were pleased to welcome a number of people not known for being church goers. We must thank Jane Butler, who provided the music in the pub, and Anthony who acted as ringmaster on the night. Thanks are due to all those who have decorated the church for the Christmas season and again to Annette and Sarah for arranging the festive fare after the Carol Service. We are now looking forward to the School Christmas Assembly, the Crib Service, as well as carols in the Old Parsonage.

2026 is also an important year for us as we are due for our quinquennial inspection; every five years an architect carries out an intensive inspection of the fabric of the church. It is the ecclesiastical equivalent of an M.O.T.

One thing that might have escaped your notice is that the Government is phasing out the VAT relief on work on Grade I listed buildings (of which St. Mary's is one). This could have serious financial implications for us if the architect finds any major problem.

Dates for your new 2026 diaries. . .

At the February Coffee Morning we are integrating a cake & produce sale in aid of Sudan.

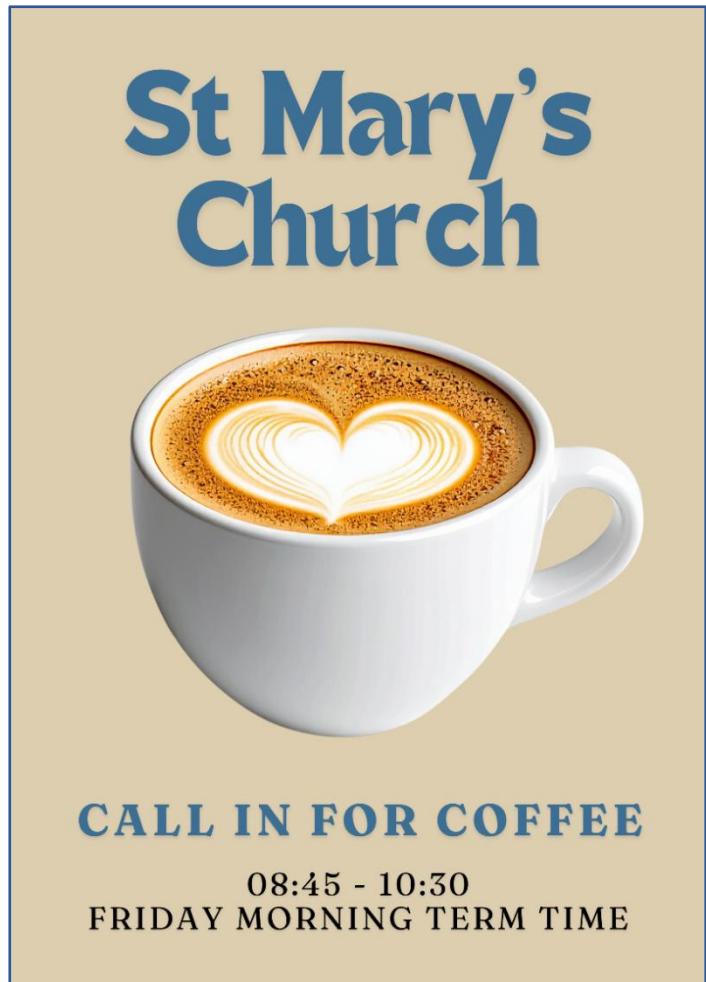
If you cannot be there, please bake a cake so we can raise essential funds, thank you.

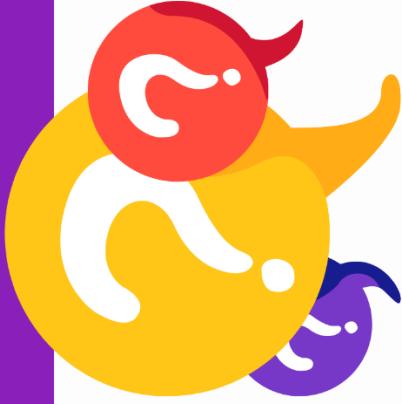


Our next Quiz in the Village Hall will be on Saturday 28 February. So why not gather your team and get booked in with Annette, poster on the next page.

We wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year.

*Christopher Fielden*





# THE QUIZ

SATURDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2026  
AT 7:30PM

BROUGHTON GIFFORD VILLAGE HALL  
£7 PER PERSON TO INCLUDE  
PLOUGHMAN'S SUPPER  
(PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN DRINK AND GLASS)

BOOK YOUR TEAM WITH ANNETTE  
01225 782610 OR  
[ANNETTESTONE7A@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ANNETTESTONE7A@GMAIL.COM)

PROCEEDS TO ST. MARY'S CHURCH



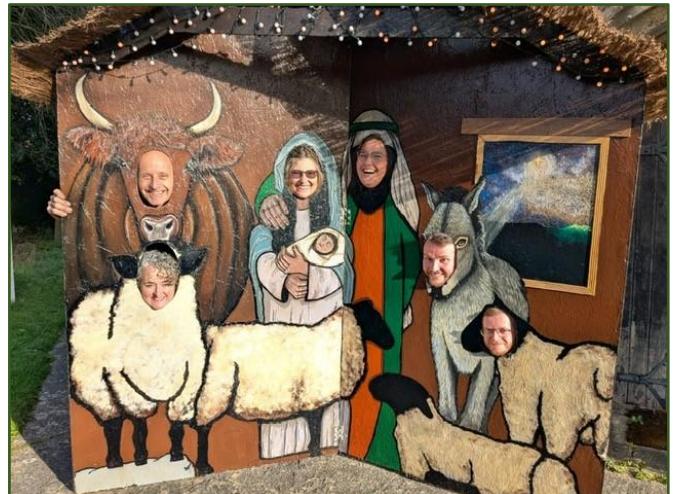
## Cribfest 2025

This year we relaunched the Nativity festival as 'Cribfest', hoping to encourage a little more interactive involvement both within our Church family and throughout the village.



We had our lovely outdoor photo booth, nativity dress up and lots of creative Nativity themed crafts for children (and adults!) and some beautiful nativity sets from around the world, some old and precious sets and an amazing "Lidl Christmas" set, made from recycled Lidl magazines!

Sunday morning, we enjoyed the amazing outdoor – indoor "scratch Nativity" and whilst Sunday afternoon was very quiet, on the Saturday we had several visitors who enjoyed a coffee and mince pie and a few children who very much enjoyed the craft table!



The highlight of the weekend was undoubtedly the Coffee morning! What a lovely festive morning we had with some lovely crowns and nativity displays made, lots of fun with the Nativity dress up and opportunities to welcome lots of visitors to share a coffee with our warm and friendly Church family.

Thank you to all who came, who crafted, who lent their precious Nativity sets and a special shout out to Jane Scheuber whose vision this event is. Jane works so hard, quietly and without attention to share the love of Jesus in such creative and imaginative ways - thank you Jane.

*Catherine Ayers*

## West Wiltshire Good Afternoon Choir and Holt Primary School

It was wonderful to be at the concert of the Good Afternoon Choir and the Holt Primary School choir in early December. It kicked off the festive season beautifully. Both choirs sang with gusto, decked out in Christmas jumpers, sparkly sequins and tinsel. There was a full church of around just over 100 adults - choir spouses, parents, grandparents, villagers and some church folk.

Mince pies and cakes brought along by the choir made the tables groan under the weight of their generous offerings.

My favourite choir pieces were Christmas Sanctus and the Zither carol, (which brought back memories of singing that at primary school eons ago!).

A retiring offering was taken for Parkinsons UK charity.



*Terri Dauncey*

## A Christmas Celebration with The Chalfield Players and Singers

The Chalfield Players and Singers entertained us to a memorable evening of Christmas songs, readings and poems, all in aid of Dorothy House Hospice Care. The program was varied, humorous and thought provoking, with festive refreshments served during the interval.

This was their first visit to St Katharine's Church, and we hope for many more. If you missed it you, missed a treat. . . . .

*Betty Last*

JOIN THE ST. K'S WORSHIP TEAM FOR



# OPEN WORSHIP

ST. KATHARINE'S CHURCH  
THURSDAY 15 JANUARY  
19:45 ONWARDS

HOT DRINKS SERVED  
EVERYONE WELCOME

Pray for  
**St. K's**



*Tuesday 6 January*  
*St. Katharine's Church*  
*@ 19:30*

## St. Katharine's Coffee Morning December 2025

Coffee morning and Cribfest made for a glorious time on the 13 December. After a very frosty start the sun came out and so did the people. Right from the beginning there was a wonderful buzz of activity ... the scurrying around to set up the crib sets, a still centring as we prayed for both the coffee morning and the Cribfest and to welcome the presence of God into our midst, and then the doors opened and the people came in.

Children were doing the Cribfest challenge of finding the angels around the church, others were busy making Christmas crowns, some of our regulars dressed up in nativity costumes, lots of coffee, tea, and cakes consumed. All-in-all such a happy time.

We are so grateful to those who regularly come along to support coffee mornings. A big shout out to our wonderful bakers - Yvonne Bennett, Kath Harris and Jayne Gibbons for faithfully keeping the cake stall so well stocked throughout the year and to those who give items for the raffle. An amazing total of £404.22 was raised for church funds.



We had a surprise visit during the coffee morning as Father Christmas and one of his helpers came and drew the raffle!

The whole team love our monthly gatherings and we look forward to welcoming you in 2026. A very blessed Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us to all of you.

*The St. Katharine's Coffee Morning Team*

## St. Katharine's Coffee Morning January 2026 & Café Church

During the Sudan presentation in November 2025 at St. Katharine's Church from Archbishop Ezekiel of Sudan, and Bishop Hassan of Kadugli I wondered what I could do to help fundraise for their situation. I could bake cakes! So, with your help lets raise lots of money, come along to the January coffee morning and any leftovers will be on sale the next morning at the 10:30 Café Church service. Sudan needs our support, please help.

*With thanks from Lynnette Baston*



## Alpha Courses

Alpha is an opportunity to freely explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment. Everyone's welcome. No matter your background or beliefs, you're invited. In the new year, we are running two Alpha courses for those who are curious about faith.

Why not join us on Wednesday evenings in the upper room at the Tollgate, Holt? We will watch a short film about a different topic of faith each week, followed by opportunities to share your thoughts, ask questions or just listen. There will be refreshments and desserts from the menu.

Or if you are around in the daytime, come into the warmth of St Katharine's Church where the same course is running, with opportunities to listen and discuss aspects of faith. Come and enjoy our hospitality. A creche will be available for babies and toddlers.

So, if you would like to register for either course, or simply find out if the Alpha course is for you, please contact Dawn at the Church Office via email.

### Got Questions?



**Alpha Course starts  
Thursday 22 Jan 2026  
1.15pm - 2.45pm  
St. Katharine's Church**

**The Alpha Course offers the chance to  
explore the Christian faith in an informal,  
friendly environment.**

**Book your free place now by emailing Dawn:  
[united.benefice@outlook.com](mailto:united.benefice@outlook.com)**

### Got Questions?



**Alpha Course starts  
Weds 21 Jan 2026  
@ 7:30pm  
The Tollgate Inn, Holt**

**The Alpha Course offers the chance to  
explore the Christian faith in an informal,  
friendly environment.**

**Book your free place now by emailing Dawn:  
[united.benefice@outlook.com](mailto:united.benefice@outlook.com)**

## Homes Groups at St. Katharine's Church



- Would you like to get to know people at St Katharine's better?
- Are you interested in studying God's word in more depth?

We have two home groups that meet on a Monday or Tuesday evening that have space and would love you to join them.

If you are interested in finding out more please contact Dawn in the office and she will send me your details so we can discuss this further.

*Julia Griffith  
Home Group Coordinator*

## News from All Saints – Great Chalfield

There is no quiet garden in January. The next couple of dates and speakers are as follows:

February 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Revd Ron & Mrs Creddie Hart, former Rector of Broughton Gifford, Great Chalfield & Holt St Katharine
March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Canon Andrew Evans, Rector of Broughton Gifford, Great Chalfield & Holt St Katharine

## February 2026 Church Life Matters (CLM)

Please send content for the February issue of CLM via email to Dawn by Friday 16 January, thank you.

## Donations

To set up a standing order or donate to any of the three churches in the Benefice please find all the information below:

<b>St Katharine's PCC of Holt</b>	Sort code: 30 98 75	A/C: 01525597
<b>Broughton Gifford PCC</b>	Sort code: 40 44 33	A/C: 51168657
<b>PCC of Great Chalfield</b>	Sort code: 30 98 75	A/C: 02075099

Donations towards the Coach House should be referenced "Coach House"

# United Benefice of Broughton Gifford, Great Chalfield & Holt St Katharine

## Services January 2026

Date	Sunday	Holt St. Katharine's	Broughton Gifford St. Mary's	Great Chalfield All Saints
4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Epiphany</b>	10:30 Café Church	10:00 Parish Communion	18:00 Evensong
11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Baptism of Christ</b>	10:30 Outdoor Church  10:30 Parish Communion  18:00 Revival Meeting	10:00 Morning Worship	10:00 Holy Communion
18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany</b>	10:30 Café Church  18:00 Revival Meeting	10:00 Parish Communion	10:00 Matins
25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany</b>	10:30 Outdoor Church  10:30 Morning Worship  16:00 Evensong	10:00 Morning Service	10:00 Holy Communion

Church Office - The Coach House 386a Ham Green, Holt BA14 6PZ  
 E: [united.benefice@outlook.com](mailto:united.benefice@outlook.com) W: [faithinourvillage.org](http://faithinourvillage.org)

Follow us @faithinourvillage    YouTube

# **United Benefice of Broughton Gifford, Great Chalfield & Holt St Katharine**

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Judy Wright		rev.judewright@outlook.com
Curate		
Anthony Matthew	01225 782082	anthony55matthewfcn@gmail.com
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Retired Priest		
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Dawn Farmer	01225 782717	united.benefice@outlook.com
Administrator and Lay Worship Leader (LWL)		