

STOURHEAD BENEFICE NEWS

Editor: Sue Davison - 01440 705829 - suzannedavison747@yahoo.co.uk

December 2025 & January 2026



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

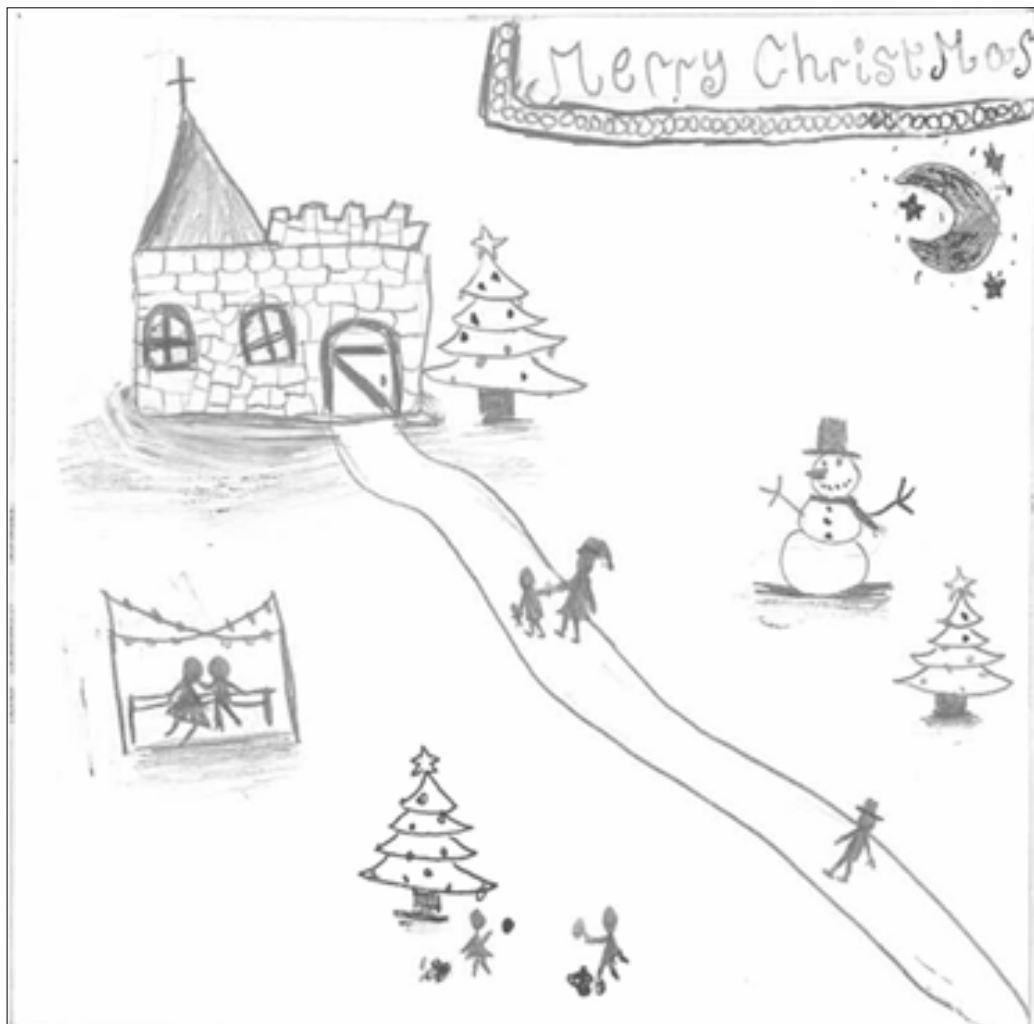


BARNARDISTON - GREAT BRADLEY - LITTLE BRADLEY - KEDINGTON
GREAT THURLOW - LITTLE THURLOW - GREAT WRATTING - LITTLE WRATTING

Rector : Fr Christopher Giles

Benefice email - stourheadbenefice@gmail.com - 01440 762901

Or use the QR code for more information on our Benefice



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Benefice email: stourheadbenefice@gmail.com

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Editor: Sue Davison - 01440 705829 - suzannedavison747@yahoo.co.uk

Deadline for next issue (February/March) 15th January

The Stourhead Benefice is grateful to Barnardiston School for printing the Benefice News. Cover drawing by kind permission of Marli Bagley a year 5 pupil at Barnardiston School.

Father Chris writes

Dear Friends
As I write, Advent is nearly upon us where we will again begin the countdown to Christmas. For those of us fortunate enough to experience Christmas in comfort, surrounded by loved ones, it can be easy to forget that Christmas is not a joyful time for everyone.

Along with the celebrations, for many of us there are so many emotions that this time of year brings. Memories of past Christmases and present sadness evoke strong emotions. We hear the sad news each day of all the troubles in our own country and those around the world, Jesus was not born into a perfect world. He was born into the darkness of a country occupied by a foreign force. He was born into a world of poverty and dishonesty, a world of sickness and death. In many ways the world into which he was born is no different from our own world today.

For us in the Northern hemisphere Christmas comes at the darkest point of the year. Being in the dark is not a good place to be, as we stumble around trying to find a light to be guided by. All of us have expe-

rienced darkness in our personal lives – disappointment, failure, sorrow, grief, broken dreams. We also live in a world darkened by greed, violence, tragedy and wars. But the birth of Christ lights a lamp in our world. Christ is the great light and through his ministry we see light as Christ healed the sick, raised the dead and sought out the poor. Jesus brought to light the injustices of the world.

The light of Christ continues to shine in our world when we see little acts of kindness, when we see the hungry fed through foodbanks, and the many Christian aid agencies reacting to those areas of the world that are in need and in despair.

Christmas Day, the day when we celebrate the birth of the light of the world will soon be with us. However, as we celebrate, whether in the dark or in the light, remember that Christ is with us and remember that the Ministry team of this Benefice will continue to pray for you as we continue to walk together from the darkness to the light of a better world.

Every Blessing
Fr Chris



Coming to Kedington soon....

The Third Kedington Jigsaw Puzzle Festival

As reported in the last Ketton Review, we are pleased to report we are beginning to collect completed jigsaw puzzles. The Jigsaw Puzzle and Beer Festival will take place in early August 2026.

If you would like to donate a jigsaw puzzle, ideally, we would like you to make the puzzle on a piece of sturdy cardboard, which we can supply. This ensures all the pieces are there.

The puzzle is then ready for the festival when they are all displayed in the church and ultimately sold. We can take boxed jigsaw puzzles too and one of our trusty volunteer puzzlers will make them.

Cardboard sheets are available from the steps at the back of the church. Puzzles that need making will also be available to take away. The church is open every day from 10am until 4pm. Please help yourself.

Please bring the completed puzzles back to the same place if you can. If you cannot transport any of the above, please contact Jill Davis 01440 713137 or 07974656813 jill@gourmet-knights.co.uk

Proceeds from the festival will go towards keeping our beautiful and historic church open.

The Prayer Book

The major religions of the world all have Holy Books and prayer books and rituals which have developed over the centuries to guide and lead them in their worship. Christianity is no different, having its initial roots in Judaism but developed by Jesus to a new and better understanding of God's purpose for us.

Early Christians tried to follow his teaching and those of his disciples and by 300 A.D. had writings and creeds laid out to follow. In the West these developed and were practised in religious communities and public worship. In the medieval church they were known as the Latin Roman Rite which tended to have regional differences according to area. In Britain, southern England tended to follow the 'Sarum' rite, relating back to Salisbury.

By the reign of Henry VIII, many different rites and philosophies relating to Christianity were developing, none more so than in Western Europe where divisions between the church led by the Pope and the thinking of Reformers of Protestant persuasion were becoming increasingly intense. In England, this led to Henry breaking with Rome and proclaiming himself as Head of the Church - allowing him to dissolve his marriage to his first wife. The rites of the church initially remained the same as before, but during the period when Thomas Cranmer was Archbishop of Canterbury, many northern and mid-European academics influenced the thinking and introduction of Reformation Theology. On Henry's death, his son Edward IV, who had been educated by and was a product of Reformation Theologians, saw the need for a prayer book for the Church of England. This was published initially in 1549. It was the first book to contain all the complete forms of service for daily and Sunday worship, including prayers, readings and structures for all occasions, including services of baptism, marriage, burial and all that is still found in the prayer book today. It is also worth noting that it was in English not Latin and therefore accessible to the population as a whole - despite the fact that the literacy rate was very low!

In 1552 it was further revised, but on Edward's death, a few months later, his sister Mary I became queen. A staunch catholic, she tried to reverse the Reformation changes and looked again to Rome. Mary died in 1559 and her sister, Elizabeth I came to the throne. She reinstated the 1552 Prayer book, with some modifications and throughout her reign tried to accommodate the differing groups within the country, insisting they use the Book of Common Prayer.

On Elizabeth's death in 1603, James I came to the throne and was made very aware of the unsolved issues still within the church. He gathered a group of theologians and scholars around him who helped produce another Book of Common Prayer in 1604. This remained the Authorised version for the next three hundred years. This was also the time when the Authorised Version of the Bible in English was produced.

During the next three hundred years, there were many changes to British society. We had a Civil War, an Act of Union between England and Scotland, the development and expansion of British Overseas Territories and many new movements within the Established Church and the growth of religious groups within the country, mostly non-conformist. The Church of England remained largely unchanged and with it, the Prayer Book. Attempts were made to alter things in the nineteenth century, but it was not until 1928 that a new edition of the Prayer Book was introduced. Although largely welcomed by bishops, clergy and the laity, it was rejected by the House of Commons who still had power to authorise or refute it.

And so it was another sixty years before another new edition was developed - the Alternative Service Book of the 1980s written in more modern language, which many of us grew up with.

Development continued and Common Worship arrived at the turn of the century, giving the opportunity for many variations of services, accommodating the many styles of churchmanship but essentially maintaining our unity as the Church of England.

Mary Upton

Christmas Bazaar at St Peter & St Paul's Kedington

The Christmas Bazaar held on the 22nd November raised £1,004.11 for church funds. Many thanks to all those who attended in spite of the awful weather or helped in any way to organise this event. Your help is much appreciated with our fundraising.



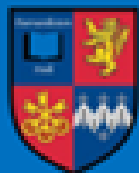
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CHRISTMAS QUIZ 2025

1. In Charles Dicken's 'A Christmas Carol' what was the name of Scrooge's nephew?
2. In WW1 what happened on Christmas Day 1914?
3. Who was the first UK monarch to deliver a Christmas broadcast on the radio?
4. In St Mark's Gospel what is John the Baptist said to eat?
5. *Ilex aquifolium* is the scientific name for which Christmas plant?
6. The Old English expression 'Wes ðu hal' gave rise to the name for which seasonal tradition?
7. On the run up to Christmas whose saint's day is on the 6th December?
8. Traditionally after kissing someone under the mistletoe what should you remove?
9. In the Christmas carol which of the 3 kings brought gold?
10. 'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house not a creature was stirring not even a! What?
11. In the Christmas panto *Aladdin*, who was Aladdin's mother?
12. One of the places where Santa is popularly said to live is Lapland. Who are the indigenous people of Lapland?

Thank you to Mike Morris for the quiz. Answers later on in this issue.



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH,
GREAT THURLOW

INVITATION

Saturday 6th December 2025,
6.30pm

An Evening of Music with The Emergers

to celebrate the completion of major repairs to the church,
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Are there any young musicians out there who might like the
opportunity to join the band for the night?

Please contact Molly as above for more information.

Our Camino Journey

It was an early start to Stansted Airport with an 8.30am flight. We tried to spot the other pilgrims in the mêlée heading towards the Ryanair flight gate bound for Santiago de Compostela, but everyone looked like they were far too well dressed to be humble pilgrims. Nervous that our backpacks would exceed the Ryanair 40x20x25cm restriction and would incur a fine, we waited until the attendants were very busy and distracted to approach the desk at the gate and used our charm offensive to hastily get past them. We also wore multiple tops so we could squash down the contents in our backpacks to make them appear smaller. After our early start we did some napping on the flight trying hard not to dribble or let our heads fall on our co-passengers' shoulders. We were off to Northern Spain to walk enough of the Camino to earn ourselves a Compostela (a Camino certificate).

Having walked a few days of the Camino on a holiday in France, I was spurred on to walk some of it in Spain, ending at the destination city of Santiago de Compostela, the place where the remains of Saint James, one of Jesus' disciples, are buried. I persuaded my sister Amanda to join me, and I started doing some research.... I joined the *Camino de Santiago Women 50+* and the *Gluten Free on the Camino* Facebook groups, borrowed some Camino books from the library and started doing some longer walks with a backpack weighted with tins of beans, to practice carrying the suggested 10% of one's weight in your backpack.

There are seven main routes of the Camino, through Spain and Portugal, which one should we choose...? We had a time window of ten days because of other commitments, and wanted to walk at least 100km in order to qualify for the Compostela certificate. Of the seven routes, we decided on the Camino Norte, as it winds its way across the north of Spain so would be not as hot as some of the routes coming up from Portugal and southern Spain.



We would fly to Santiago on Saturday, spend two nights there, until we were able to catch a bus to Vialba, 122km away. Then we'd set off walking on the Monday, taking six days to return back to Santiago de Compostela, with a well-earned couple of days there recovering before the flight home.

At Santiago airport we decided to walk the 11km to our hostel instead of catching the bus - we were on a walking trip after all! The route took us on a road so we hoped there were pavements...After 5 minutes we happily found we were following the well-marked Camino signs (a yellow scallop shell or arrow on a blue background) which guided us through villages and



shady wooded areas of gum trees shedding their bark, and fields of corn. We were very pleased to feel that we were entitled to say 'Buen Camino' to the other walkers who were overtaking us, the traditional greeting on the Camino, even though they had quite possibly been walking for months and we had been walking the path for 1/2 hour! After a few kilometres we sussed that the Camino we were following would obviously wind its way through the countryside finishing ultimately at the cathedral, whereas our destination was a hostel this side of the city. So we decided to return to walking alongside roads which would lead directly to our 'Dream Inn Hostel'. After 15 minutes along the road, we heard a brass band and had happily stumbled upon a village fete where everyone had turned out in family groups to greet other villagers, drink in cafés and watch entertainment on a specially erected stage. Glad for a break in the shade we sat and drank in the atmosphere and rehydrated with very welcome bottles of chilled water.

Onwards... We lived in hope of trekking on pavements but most of the way we were walking along 'N' roads (national highway roads, which looked like minor roads on Google maps!) bordered with a white line marking a rather narrow strip for us to edge along, adjoining rough terrain of ferns and brambles. Good that our hearing is not impaired so we could sense when a car was coming and edge as far from the road as possible. On we trekked, with frequent stops to drink, eat a snack and cross roads to grab the shade. At one rehydration stop we noticed it was 3.30pm and 33°C. We were finding it very hot walking in the full sun carrying a heavy backpack! At last we reached our hostel destination at 4.30pm, entering a welcome air-conditioned kitchen/dining/chill out room. After dumping our backpacks on our bunk beds we placed our humming walking boots in a special cupboard in the corridor (no smelly boots allowed in the dorms!) and showered our hot sweaty selves. I think we were pretty dehydrated as we were very tired and so had a nap.

At the nearby huge supermarket we luxuriated again in the air conditioning after a 10 minute hot walk. Careful negotiations had to be made about our purchases for two days worth of food as we would be squeezing provisions into our backpacks.

Sunday – Santiago de Compostela

We had a great sleep that night and the next day decided to explore Santiago. The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in all its baroque splendour creates a wondrous backdrop to the unique goings-on in the Praza do Obradoiro, the main square. We sat for ages in the cool arched walkway of the Rajoy Palace opposite the cathedral and witnessed the emotional tears of pilgrims finally reaching their goal, the joy of Camino friends meeting up again having completed their challenge and the incessant hustle and bustle of people arriving on foot (some hobbling with blisters and injuries), on bike or even on horseback. We saw lone walkers, families, couples and large groups of youngsters all celebrating in their own way, ranging from quiet introverted meditation to uproarious chanting and group hugs. This all added to the anticipation of our walk and wondering how we would feel after 122km in a week's time!

Wandering the alleys in the city, we spotted the scallop shells imprinted in the pavements, indicating the route to Santiago. The lines on the scallop shell, the most recognisable of the Camino symbols, are said to represent the different routes that can be taken to the tomb of St James. In medieval times, pilgrims would continue their journey beyond Santiago de Compostela towards Fistera, 78km away on the coast, literally 'Land's End', and there collect a scallop shell from the beach, taking it back home as proof of completion of their pilgrimage. Known in French as Coquille Saint Jacques and in German as Jakobsmuscheln, there was a practical use to the shell as it functioned as a lightweight bowl for food or drink. These days it is brought as a souvenir and tied to pilgrims' backpacks to symbolise your status as a pilgrim.

Monday - Santiago de Compostela to Vilalba, 122km by bus

Those foam ear plugs and the eye mask are paying off - I didn't hear our dorm mate come back late last night and slept until 8am. The morning plan was simple: breakfast, pack, and off to spend the morning exploring the city before catching the bus to Vilalba, 122km away, our starting point for the Camino. In reality, by the time we had packed and repacked (what a squeeze it was!!) we left the hostel at 10! Our packs felt heavier on the shoulders with each of us carrying 3 1/2 litres of water, but we were full of enthusiasm, as we mingled in the cobbled streets with weary but happy pilgrims who had walked 'The Way' and were finally going to reach their destination, the Cathedral.

We enjoyed a relaxed coffee in an atmospheric cobbled alley lined with medieval stone houses and shops. We liked the custom of being given a complimentary piece of cake or pastry with a drink. So far it felt like being on a European city holiday rather than walking the Camino - we were enjoying the calm before the storm. After



more wandering and discovering lush courtyard cafes, which we noted for future reference in a week's time, we ended up in the main square (Praza do Obradoiro), sat under the stoa - covered walkway- opposite the cathedral and watched the jubilant pilgrims arrive at their end goal. We saw some large groups all dressed in matching shirts, family groups with children as young as 10, couples, walkers on their own. Some had cycled, some even arrived on donkeys. One group was a great spectacle - a long line of about 50 teenagers each holding on to the backpack of the person in front, who then gave a loud cheer and jumped wildly, bursting into song and then congregating for a group photo. There was much cheering and running to meet friends that had been made during the route. And lots of selfies and group photos with the cathedral as the backdrop. Most pilgrims were smiling and joyful, although there were the odd few who were hobbling, limping and one lady in a wheelchair - all showing a determination to finish however they could.

The two hour bus ride to Vilalba was a bit surreal – were we really going to walk all that distance back to Santiago?! It seemed a long way....

(to be continued)

Claire Shirm

**Compline at Little Wratting Church at 6pm on the
1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays of Advent**

We will celebrate Compline at Little Wratting on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays of Advent at 6pm (30 Nov, 7 and 14 Dec), following the Anglican service with sections sung in plain chant.

All are welcome - no need to sing or read plain chant - just attending and collecting thoughts can be a great way to end the day.



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Buddy's Blog - November 2025

Hello dear friends,

Our Mum loves the autumn. She loves the colours and fills our porch with pumpkins and autumn decorations. Little sister Millie always likes being in the garden but she loves it more when there are leaves on the ground and she can run and play in them.

Me and Opie, we don't love the autumn. We think of autumn as a dark time. The sun is late rising in the morning and then it goes to bed early so the light time of the day is short. We don't like going out for our walks in the dark, so our walks are shorter. The rains come more in the autumn and the wind and then there will be frost and snow. We are not happy walking when the weather is bad and I don't think Daddy likes it either. So our walks are even shorter.

Somehow the bad things that happen in our life seem worse when it is dark. It was a very dark day when we lost little sister Willow. Sometimes there does not seem to be any light to guide us through these times of sadness and sorrow.

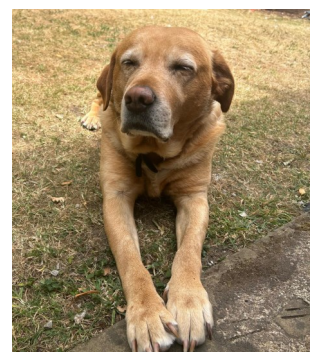
But when we walk across the fields behind the church, there is a house that has lights on inside so when the afternoon is dark, we can follow the light back to the road and to home. It is reassuring when the darkness comes on us quickly that we can find our way safely back home by following the light.

It is in the autumn or winter that we see the Christmas tree go on to the top of the church tower. The tree is covered in lights which shine like a beacon across the fields. I imagine people can see it as they make their way home in the dark after their days at work or school.

I am glad that there is light and beacons in the darkness, they make this time of year special.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas
Your friend Buddy

'Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life' (John 8:12).



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Christmas Decorations Deadline

No need to panic - apparently we don't have to worry about rushing to take down our Christmas decorations by Twelfth Night! Indeed, we will not incur bad luck even if we leave them up until the beginning of February as, (according to English Heritage), it was just a rule brought in by the Victorians so that business wasn't affected by continuing celebrations.

In Medieval times, the Christmas Season lasted 40 days until Candlemas on 2nd February marking the presentation of Jesus at the Temple and the Purification of the Virgin Mary. Traditionally, this is the date that all the candles for use in church in the coming year are blessed by the priest. For Christians, these blessed candles serve as a symbol of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. In John 8:12 Jesus said 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'.

The February date also marks the ending of the darkest quarter of the year. Leaving a few festive lights up for a bit longer (until the eve of Candlemas) seems a good way to keep my spirits up and dispel the gloom.

Sally Churchus © Association of Church Editors

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Access to our churches in the Stourhead Benefice

- Great Bradley, Great Thurlow, Kedington, Little Wrating and Little Thurlow each have a ramp that is put in place when needed.
- Great Wrating does not have a ramp but the step into the church is quite shallow, however the slope to the church gate is steep. Arrangements could be made for wheelchair users to park in the Rectory and access the churchyard through the side gate but this is across grass.
- Little Bradley does not have a ramp. The step into the church is 4 inches deep.
- Barnardiston does not have a ramp and the entry into the church requires stepping over a raised threshold.

Churches in the Benefice open for Private Prayer:

St Mary the Virgin, Great Bradley is always open for private prayer.

St Peter's Little Thurlow is open daily usually at 9am and closes about 5 or 6pm.

St Peter and St Paul's, Kedington will be open daily between 9am and 4pm.

Answers to the quiz.

1, Fred; 2, Unofficial truce on the Western Front; 3, George V;
4, Locusts and wild honey; 5, Holly; 6, Wassail; 7, St Nicholas;
8, A berry for luck; 9, Melchior; 10, Mouse; 11, Widow Twankey;
12, The Sami.

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Events Diary

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
Saturday 6th December	6.30pm	Concert with 'The Emergers' at All Saints' church Great Thurlow (See poster in Benefice News)
Sunday 7th December	10 am	Christingle at Kedington Church
Tuesdays	10am -12 noon	'Dolce Gusto' Coffee morning at St Peter & St Paul's Kedington.
Thursdays	2 - 4 pm	Centre café at Kedington Community Centre.

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Gospel Readings during December

7	2nd Sunday of Advent	Matthew	3: 1 - 12
14	3rd Sunday of Advent	Matthew	11: 2 - 11
21	4th Sunday of Advent	Matthew	1: 18 - end
28	Holy Innocents	Matthew	2: 13 - 18

Gospel Readings during January

4	Epiphany	Mark	6: 34 - 44
11	Baptism of Jesus	Matthew	3: 13 - end
18	2nd after Epiphany	John	1: 29 - 42
25	Conversion of St Paul	Matthew	19: 27 - end

Gospel Readings during February

1	Candlemas	Luke	2: 22 - 40
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Evening Prayer on Mondays

Monday Evening Prayer is at Kedington Church at 5pm.

All are welcome to join this short intimate service as we pray for the world, the Church, our communities and ourselves.

Home Communion – Pastoral Care

The Blessed Sacrament is perpetually reserved for the Communion of the housebound, the sick and dying. Please inform Fr Chris, or a member of the Ministry Team, of parishioners who are sick or in hospital, and of those who are in need of pastoral care.

Baptism: We welcome into God's family Noal Reynolds who was baptised at Saint Peter and Saint Paul's Church Kedington on 5th October.

Holy Matrimony: We congratulate Angus Robb and Georgina Vestey who were married at St Peter's Church Little Thurlow on 11th October. We wish them well at the start of their life together.

Funeral: The funeral of the late Joan Ford was held at St Peter and St Paul's Church Kedington on 23rd October. The funeral of the late Jean Child took place at All Saints' Church Little Bradley on 25th October.

'May they rest in peace and rise in glory'

Thinking of a christening or a wedding in church? Please take a look at our Benefice website where there is useful information about both baptisms and weddings.

Holy Communion

Sharing of the common cup is now permitted. However, if you do not want to receive from the Chalice, please say 'intinct' as the Priest approaches you and they will intinct the wafer in Consecrated wine from a separate Chalice. Good hygiene practises are maintained at Holy Communion.

Gluten-free Communion wafers are available - please ask when you come up to the altar rail.

SERVICE ROTA

December 2025

Sun	7	10:00	Little Bradley	Holy Communion
		10:00	Kedington	Family Service - Christingle
		18:00	Little Wratting	Compline
Sun	14	8:00	Kedington	Said Holy Communion
		10:00	Great Thurlow	Holy Communion
		18:00	Little Wratting	Compline
Sun	21	10:00	Great Wratting	Holy Communion
			Little Thurlow	Family service
Sun	28	10:00	Great Bradley	Holy Communion - Holy Innocents

January 2026

Sun	4	10:00	Kedington	Holy Communion - Epiphany
Sun	11	8:00	Kedington	Said Holy Communion
		10:00	Great Thurlow	Holy Communion
Sun	18	10:00	Little Thurlow	Holy Communion
		10:00	Great Wratting	Family Service
Sun	25	10:00	Great Bradley	Holy Communion
		16:00	Kedington	Evensong

February 2026

Sun	1	10:00	Little Bradley	Holy Communion - Candlemas
		10:00	Kedington	Family Service - Candlemas

Mid-week Eucharist at Kedington on Wednesdays at 10am

The Service Rota for Sunday Services is on the inside of the back cover for this issue

**Christmas Services during December
in the Stourhead Benefice**

Friday	19	18:00	Carol Service at Great Wrattling
Sunday	21	16:00	Carol Service at Kedington
		18:30	Carol Service at Little Wrattling
Tuesday	23	18:30	Carol Service at Great Bradley
Wednesday	24	15:00	Crib Service at Kedington
		16.30	Carol Service at Great Thurlow
		18.30	Carol Service at Little Bradley
		19:00	Carol Service at Barnardiston
		23:30	Midnight Mass at Kedington
Monday	25	10:00	Christmas Day Eucharist at Little Thurlow

**Wishing all our Benefice News readers a
very Happy and Blessed Christmas**

A Christmas Prayer

Christ born for us,
Son of God, given for us,
Help us to know you,
to worship and to serve you.
Amen

