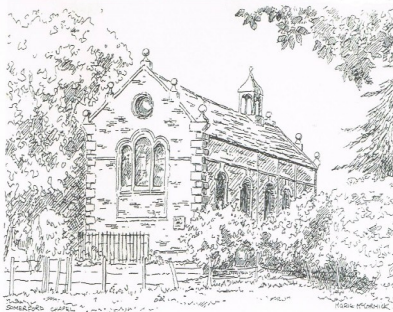
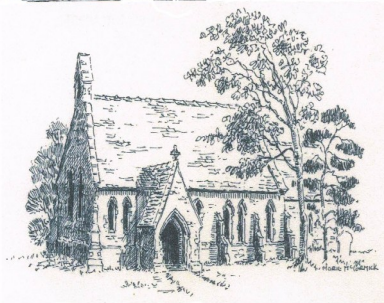


Astbury & Smallwood Parish News

December 2025

Price £1



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Let your light shine before others

Matthew 5, 16

Advent invites us into a time of reflection. We are getting ready and waiting as we prepare for the celebration of Jesus's birth and anticipate him making himself known among us. When I was young, I remember the joy. I relished the journeying towards Christmas with its childhood magic. I almost didn't want Christmas Day to arrive because I loved the anticipation and joy of the Advent season so much. Sadly, as an adult, it has too often felt like a whirlwind: four weeks filled with social commitments, shopping trips, school plays, gift lists and a depleted bank account. I have been guilty of feeling a sense of dread, followed by willing it along to reach the end point! I realise that I had lost the meaning. I could blame social media and consumerism (and I will a bit!), but I know deep down it is my responsibility.

In Church, we light a candle of the Advent wreath on each Sunday in Advent. Each candle represents key people in the story of God's coming to us as the Christ Child, Jesus. The first candle represents the fathers and mothers of faith, our ancestors. On the Second Sunday of Advent, we light a candle to remember the Prophets who foretold the coming of God's Son. The third candle is lit to remind us of John the Baptist, who showed the way to Jesus. On the Fourth Sunday, we remember Mary the mother of Jesus. Finally, on Christmas morning, we light the centre candle for Christ the Light of the World.

As each candle is lit, a little more darkness around the wreath is overcome.

We are all called to be the light of the world, to shine before others so that they can be given the light and know God. The Advent themes for each week can help us to reflect on how to live out Advent and guide those around us towards the real meaning and wonder of Christmas: hope, peace, joy and love. Perhaps we can ask these questions to help shape our mission:

Our ancestors of faith: As we look into the past, what can we learn from those who have come before us? How do we show hope?

The Prophets: Where do we see ourselves and our Church in the future? How will you share your faith?

John the Baptist: How do we show people what is here? How do we proclaim the Good News with joy?

Mary the Mother of Christ: How do you do all this with love and nurture?

Advent embraces the Way of Jesus and encourages us to live with hope, joy, love and peace in a world filled with darkness, fear and suffering. As we step forwards into Advent, remember to live it. Show hope, be peaceful, live joyfully, and spread love, remembering each time it is extinguishing a piece of darkness and making things new in Christ.

Sophie Molyneux
Trainee Pastoral Worker

Editor – Mr W. Ball

The Old Vicarage, Reades Lane, Congleton, CW12 3LL.
Telephone 01260 279276 Mobile 07710 234943

Somerford Chapel reopens for the Carol Service on 14th December at 2.30 pm. Pop the date in your diaries now The all-weather car parking will prove to be a blessing again probably. Ken Wainwright

Boiler Boost: We are very grateful to the Parish Council of Newbold Astbury-cum-Moreton for their generous donation covering the £597.60 repair of our church boiler's ignition system. During the annual servicing, a fault in the ignition system was identified – an unexpected expense at a time when the church budget is already stretched. Their support means the work can be completed before winter, keeping St Mary's warm and welcoming for all.

The PCC thanks a kind donor for their generous cheque of £1,000 towards the church's day-to-day running costs. In a thoughtful gesture, the donor also added Gift Aid, increasing the value of the gift by an additional £250. Such support helps sustain the life and work of St Mary's, ensuring the church can continue serving the community.

Astbury Ladies' Fellowship: The Fellowship's November meeting had a Christmas feel, as we had Jan Hardie Woolridge, our former secretary, to demonstrate making a festive table arrangement and a Christmas gift. However, we began on a sad note, with a minute's silence in memory of Cynthia Garside, who had died on 29th October at the age of 93. Cynthia had been a member of the Fellowship and WI for many years. She was immensely energetic and very caring, as was shown by the tributes paid to her from members of her family and read out in church at her funeral, thanking her for her love and support. She will be missed by a lot of people.





Janet gave her demonstration next, surrounded by piles of greenery, hellebores and berries. She decorated a bottle of wine for a gift with hellebore flowers she had made from vinyl and some greenery. The table decoration was next – a coffee cup covered in a robin serviette, holding oasis. Carolyn and Gwen had opted to work along with her, and they were soon placing greenery on the outside, then the hellebores, then the candle. Janet talked all the time: you could substitute plumber's pipe for the candle, with a light bulb,, safer than a flame, &c. Members gave her their rapt attention, and we thanked her warmly for her inspiring session, and also for the large arrangement which was to be placed in church.

We had a cup of tea – thank you Anita and Margaret Pearson – and drew the raffle. Fellowship business followed: a cheque for £50 was given to Brenda Cook towards the Christmas Tree and church flowers, and thank you Brenda and Joan for turning them into those beautiful arrangements. The chairman asked for a volunteer to be an assistant treasurer to Christine (please get in touch with Carole – 07484 525829). Ken Wainwright is now back at home after his stay in hospital and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Pamela Price had a list for the winter luncheon on Wednesday 21st January, 12.15 for 12.30 pm at the Legs of Man. If you haven't paid (£28), please get in touch with her (01260 591518).

There will be the Advent Carol Service on Sunday 30th November at 6.30 pm in church. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 10th December (NB – 2nd Wednesday) at 12.30 pm, which will be our Christmas Luncheon. We are self-catering again, so, dear members, please bring a plate of food. We are inviting members of the ministry team, Rachel and John, Bill and Marie and any of the church congregation whose service clashes with ours to join us. First there will be the Communion Service, led by Heather, followed by the Lunch. Help will be needed to set up and lay tables – which would be appreciated. The hall will be open about 11.45 am. I hope everyone is keeping well and that the run-up to Christmas is progressing smoothly for everyone.

With love from Carole

Astbury Women's Institute: It is all change at Astbury WI after our AGM on Wednesday 5th November. We celebrated with the traditional Pea and Pie supper, and beautiful 85th birthday cake made by Carol Steer and iced by Dotty Kallis.

The meeting began with a tribute to two members who had recently passed away. A minute's silence was observed for Yvonne Walker and Cynthia Garside, who had both been valued members of our WI family. Margaret Pearson was retiring after 10 years as president and Kate Naylor was elected to the role. Ann Beckett our adviser led the election process, and we all wish Kate well in her new position.

We began the meeting with the usual monthly business which included a special birthday buttonhole for Carolyn Livesley who also received a certificate congratulating her on 30 years of membership. Four new members were welcomed and received their new member's packs.

Bowls cups were presented.

Novice Cup; Kate Naylor

Round Robin Cup; Joan Proctor

Singles Cup; Anita Thompson

Doubles Cup; Brenda Sutton and Margaret Pearson.



Finally in the AGM section of the meeting, Secretary Liz read the minutes of the 84th AGM. Annette our treasurer, presented the financial statement, and Liz then gave the Annual Report. Then Margaret gave her final President's Address. She said, 'Usually, my President's address reads like a thank-you letter to my fellow committee members. Those thank-yous are so very relevant this year.' However, because it was the last address she would give as President, she felt the need to be slightly more reflective. She looked back on her ten years as President of Astbury WI with huge pride yet with humility – for any President achieves success only with the help and support of her team.

Margaret went on to say, 'I have been privileged to lead the committee through a memorable ten years – not least because of that

scary period five years ago when we could not meet at all. We were forced to find other ways of keeping in contact. I shall be forever grateful to Liz, Lisa and Kath Wainright who helped me to steer our WI through that isolating period. Sadly, like Kath, many of the original team are not around to hear my thanks. Talented and devoted committee members like my much-missed friends Glenys Whiston and Sheelagh Steele, who were responsible for galvanising us into action to create the bunting and the banner to mark our 75th anniversary when Catherine Pedley passed on the mantle to me.'

After the election of Kate as our new President, Margaret presented her with the President's badge and Kate presented Margaret with beautiful bouquet of flowers from the WI.



New members are always welcome. For further details please do not hesitate to contact either myself, Margaret, or secretary, Liz. Phone Margaret on 07581 095418, or Liz on 07766 738004, or Kate on 07875 691170. You can also message us through our Astbury WI Facebook page.

Margaret Pearson (Past President)

Sartor's Quiz (Answers on page 17)

1. Identify the author of this quotation: 'Trust in God and keep your powder dry.' a. Abraham Lincoln; b. Oliver Cromwell; c. Horatio Nelson; d. Karl Marx.
2. Which of the Cotswold 'wool' churches, the largest in Gloucestershire, has a three-storey porch, one of the most impressive in England? a. Chipping Campden; b. Cirencester; c. Fairford; d. Tewkesbury.
3. Which of these architectural terms refers to the figure of a woman used as a pillar? a. Arabesque; b. Mensa; c. Caryatid; d. Ogee.
4. How many years did it take Solomon to build the Lord's Temple and his own royal palace? a. 10; b. 20; c. 30; d. 40e.
5. About how many tons of gold did he receive each year? a. 10; b. 15; c. 20; d. 25.
6. Which of these was the father of John the Baptist? a. Zachariah; b. Zechariah; c. Zephaniah; d. Zebadiah.
7. Who travelled with Paul on one of his missionary journeys? a. Barnabas; b. Doreas; c. Peter; d. Andrew.
8. Of what was Pomona the Roman goddess? a. Fruit; b. Corn; c. Hearth; d. Hunting.
9. Who said, 'It is true that you may fool all of the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time'? a. Boris Johnson; b. Richard Nixon; c. Martin Luther King; d. Abraham Lincoln.
10. In which of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas does the character Little Buttercup appear? a. Iolanthe; b. The Gondoliers; c. The Pirates of Penzance; d. HMS Pinafore.

WORDS OF WIT & WISDOM

Contributions of church ladies to church magazines:

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

Say ‘Hell’ to someone who doesn’t care much about you.

Don’t let worry kill you off – let the church help.

Miss Charlotte Mason sang ‘I will not pass this way again’,
giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

Supplied by Susan Bayley of Montreal

Jesus loves me! This I know,

For the Bible tells me so.

Anna B. Warner

There is a green hill far away,

Without a city wall,

Where the dear Lord was crucified

Who died to save us all.

He died that we might be forgiven,

He died to make us good,

That we might go at last to heaven,

Saved by his precious Blood.

Mrs C. F. Alexander

When I am attacked by gloomy thoughts, nothing helps me so much as running to my books. They quickly absorb me and banish the clouds from my mind.

Michel de Montaigne, 1533-1592, French essayist and philosopher

Make new friends but cherish the old ones.

H. Jackson Browne, Jr, *Life’s Little Instruction Book*

The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable.

John Kenneth Galbraith

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give.

Evening Prayer, Second Collect

The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.

John Keble. 1792-1866

FASCINATING FACTS

P. G. Wodehouse

After the First World War people wanted to be amused and to be amusing to help them forget the war, and one Englishman of the pre-War generation became a supreme entertainer, amusing America almost as much as his countrymen. He had been one of the bowler-hatted crowd working in a bank before the Great War like T. S. Eliot. He played games with style, glowed with self-confidence and missed what his characters called the 'Varsity' only because his father lost most of his money. Unlike Eliot, he did not last long in the bank. He tore the front page out of a ledger and for this sacrilege was sacked on the spot.

No author probably had such a wide audience as P. G. Wodehouse. If you had not read at eleven his school stories, or met Psmith at fourteen or sympathized at seventeen with Lord Emsworth and his pigs, or seen yourself as Bertie Wooster attended by Jeeves, you were indeed a dull fellow. Wodehouse revived light English prose. He saw how the American vernacular revitalised the English language, and his metaphors and similes replaced the epigram. Adoring public school life he remained the irrepressible fifth-former to the end of his days.

Despite the fun that Wodehouse had at the expense of education he could turn out a copy of Greek or Latin verse at Dulwich with the best of them. The classical curriculum had some exalted achievements. It trained cryptographers who deciphered enemy traffic with all the skill of Housman in emending a corrupt text. During the Second World War the British often gained points in negotiation with the Americans

despite their inferiority in strength because they drafted documents more lucidly.

Noel Annan, *Our Age, Portrait of a Generation*, pp 90-92

Gillie Potter

Gillie Potter appeared successfully in the Royal Variety Performance in 1930. Queen Mary was reported to have rocked with laughter at him. Within a year, he broadcast for the first time. His talks centred on the mythical village of Hogs Norton and its squire, Lord Marshmallow. He looked on Hogs Norton as 'England in microcosm, a reflection of the true heart of England. There was nothing in it that would offend a child or an adult.' The opening line of the sketch became Gillie's catchphrase: 'Good evening, England. This is Gillie Potter speaking to you from Hogs Norton in basic English,' and a typical exchange with one of his noble patrons would be: 'Au revoir, Lord Waterlog.' 'Reservoir, Old Dear.' In his private life Gillie Potter (real name Hugh William Peel) was a learned man, deeply interested in church history, archaeology and heraldry. He was a frequent contributor to the letters page of *The Times*.

Richard Anthony Baker, *Old Time Variety: An Illustrated History*,
pp 70-71

Prayer

O light inexpressible, shine in me.
O love transcending, work in me.
O word unutterable, speak in me.
O Holy Spirit, transform me.
That I be made hands, feet, voice for thee,
A flame to burn for thee,
A song to sing for thee.

From *How Can I See*, a fundraising book sold in aid of St Mary's
Church, Bowdon, in 1986

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Astbury & Smallwood Parish News

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The January 2026 issue will be published on 28th December, 2025

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Last Date for material 16th January

The March issue will be published on 1st March

Last Date for material 20th February

The April issue will be published on 29th March

Last Date for material 20th March

The May issue will be published on 26th April

Last Date for material 17th April

The June issue will be published on 31st May

Last Date for material 22nd May

The July issue will be published on 28th June

Last Date for material 19th June

The August issue will be published on 26th July

Last Date for material 17th July

The September issue will be published on 30th August

Last Date for material 21st August

The October issue will be published on 27th September

Last Date for material 18th September

The November issue will be published on 25th October

Last Date for material 16th October

The December issue will be published on 29th November

Last Date for material 20th November

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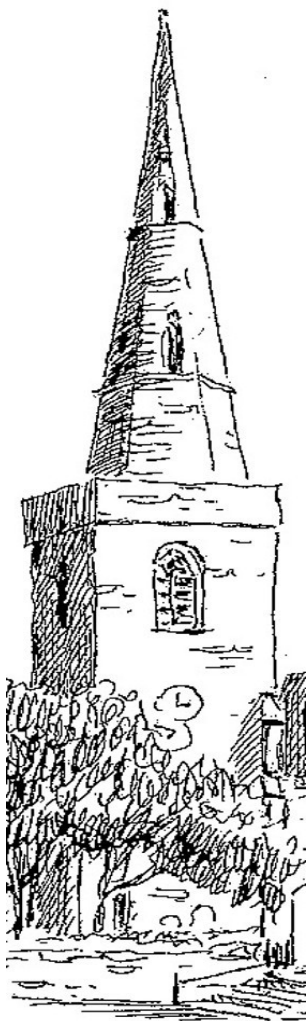
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		Andrew Bailey	01260 640616
		Prof Denise Morrey-Carter	01260 702512
CHURCHWARDEN		Dr Sally Drage	01260 270217
SERVICES	8.00 am	1st & 3rd Sundays	Holy Communion BCP
	8.00 am	2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays	Morning Prayer BCP
	11.00 am	1st & 3rd Sundays	Morning Praise CW
	11.00 am	2nd & 4th Sundays	Holy Communion CW
	11.00 am	5th Sunday	Benefice Service
	6.30 pm	1st & 3rd Sundays	Compline
	6.30 pm	2nd & 4th Sundays	Evensong BCP
Wednesday	11.30 am	every Wednesday	Holy Communion CW
	2.45 pm	every Wednesday	Community Worship

Funerals and Services of Holy Baptism & Holy Matrimony by arrangement with the Wardens

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WEBSITES www.astburychurch.org.uk

CHURCH KEYS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS

Astbury Church choir meets to practise every Friday evening
between 7.00 and 8.00 pm.

Astbury Church bellringers meet to practise every Wednesday evening
between 7.30 and 9.30 pm.

ASTBURY ROTAS for CLEANING & BRASS – *currently suspended*

ASTBURY ROTAS

		8.00 am	11.00 am	6.30 pm
November	30th	Bill Ball	TBA	Peter Snape
December	7th	Bill Ball	Sally Shaw	Peter Snape
	14th	Jean Nadin	Carole Goodwin	Peter Snape
	21st	Bill Ball	Brenda Cook	All Sidesmen
	24th	5.00 pm – Brenda Cook 11.30 pm – TBA		
	25th	-----	Sue Wright	-----
	28th	Jean Nadin	TBA	-----
January	4th	Bill Ball	TBA	Peter Snape

Answers to Sartor's Quiz this month (page 9)

1 – b; 2 – b; 3 – c; 4 – b; 5 – d; 6 – b; 7 – a; 8 – a; 9 – d; 10 – d.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Burial of the Dead

November	4th	Patricia Anne Matthews	87
November	14th	John Thomas Hancock	66 ashes
November	14th	Patricia Hancock	73 ashes

JOINT PARISHES CALENDAR FOR THE COMING WEEKS

NOVEMBER

Sun 30th ADVENT SUNDAY

8.00 am Astbury
10.30 am TBA
6.30 pm Astbury

December *Parish News* published
Morning Prayer (BCP)
Benefice Service
Advent Carol Service

DECEMBER

Wed 3rd 11.30 am Astbury
2.45 pm Astbury
7.30 pm Astbury VH

Holy Communion (CW)
Community Service
Women's Institute

Sun 7th ADVENT II

8.00 am Astbury
9.30 am Smallwood
11.00 am Astbury
4.00 pm Biddulph OH
6.30 pm Astbury

Holy Communion (BCP)
Holy Communion (CW)
Morning Praise (CW)
Christmas at the Old Hall
Compline

Wed 10th 11.30 am Astbury
1.30 pm Astbury VH
2.45 pm Astbury

Holy Communion (CW)
Ladies' Fellowship
Community Service

Thu 11th 5.00 pm Astbury

Quinta Carol Service

Sun 14th ADVENT III

8.00 am Astbury
9.30 am Smallwood
11.00 am Astbury
6.30 pm Astbury

Morning Prayer (BCP)
All age Service
Holy Communion (CW)
Evensong (BCP)

Mon 15th 6.00 pm Astbury

Live Nativity

Tue 16th 2.30 pm Astbury

School Christingle

6.00 pm Astbury

Live Nativity

Wed 17th 11.30 am Astbury

Holy Communion (CW)

2.45 pm Astbury

Community Service

Fri 19th 10.00 am Astbury

Congleton HS Carol Service

6.00 pm

Copy date for *Parish News*

Sun 21st ADVENT IV

8.00 am Astbury
9.30 am Smallwood
11.00 am Astbury
1.00 pm Astbury
6.30 pm Astbury

Holy Communion (BCP)
Holy Communion (CW)
Morning Praise (CW)
Holy Baptism
Service of Lessons & Carols

Joint Parishes Calendar, continued

DECEMBER

Wed 24th CHRISTMAS EVE

5.00 pm	Astbury	Christingle
10.30 pm	Smallwood	Holy Communion (CW)
11.30 pm	Astbury	Holy Communion (CW)

Thu 25th CHRISTMAS DAY

10.00 am	Astbury	Holy Communion
----------	---------	----------------

Sun 28th THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY

		January <i>Parish News</i> published
8.00 am	Astbury	Morning Prayer (BCP)
11.00 am	TBA	Benefice Service

JANUARY 2026

Sun 4th EPIPHANY

8.00 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (BCP)
9.30 am	Smallwood	Holy Communion (CW)
11.00 am	Astbury	Morning Praise (CW)
6.30 pm	Astbury	Compline

Wed 7th	11.30 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (CW)
	2.45 pm	Astbury	Community Service
	7.30 pm	Astbury	Women's Institute

ASTBURY & SMALLWOOD PARISH NEWS

is also available in large-print format.

Please let Mr Ball know if you require such a copy.

Editor – Mr W. Ball

Telephone 01260 279276 email wbbtov@gmail.com

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St John's Church, Smallwood and All Saints' Chapel of Ease,
Somerford by Marie McCormick

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*We wish
all our readers
a Happy
Christmas*

