

PARISH CHURCH NEWS

**Ss. Peter & Paul, Clare
with St. Mary the Virgin, Poslingford**

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No. 453

January 2026



**The Epiphany of the Lord
January 6th**

Rector's Ramblings – January 2026
A Light for the New Year: Stepping Out in Hope

Happy New Year!

As the echo of Christmas carols fades and the sparkle of New Year celebrations subsides, we find ourselves on the threshold of January 2026. The calendar pages turn, offering us a fresh start—a clean slate.

This time of year, often brings a mix of feelings: perhaps a little weariness after the festive rush, but also a palpable sense of opportunity and hope for the months ahead.

From a Christian perspective, this hope is far more than mere optimism; it is rooted in the continuous revelation of God's love. . Just six days into the beginning of the year we celebrate Epiphany. This is the moment the Church remembers the Magi, the wise men from the East, who followed a star to find the Christ-child.

The story of Epiphany is, quite simply, a story of journey and discovery. It reminds us that Christ is a light not just for the people who were near him, but for all nations. The wise men had to step out in faith, leave their comfort zone, and follow the light they were given.

So, I wonder what light are you being called to follow this year? Perhaps it's a quiet prompting to mend a relationship, to dedicate time to a neighbour, or to deepen your own prayer life. The Magi teach us to keep our eyes open, to be willing to embark on a new direction, knowing that the light of Christ will guide us. The New Year is an invitation to begin that journey.

Following the busy start, we move toward a lesser known but equally profound marker: Candlemas (February 2nd). Candlemas gets its name from the tradition of blessing candles for the year ahead. This feast also commemorates the presentation of Jesus at the Temple, forty days after his birth. It is here that the aged Simeon, recognising the infant as the Messiah, declares him to be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." It reminds us that Christ is the Light of the World.

As we look ahead into 2026, let us resolve to be bearers of that light. In a world that can often feel dark, uncertain, or fragmented, our calling is to reflect the hope, peace, and love of God in our daily lives.

This might mean committing to a new resolution—perhaps to worry less, or to offer grace more freely. It could mean seeing the opportunity in the everyday routine: a chance to smile at the postman, to listen patiently to a friend, or to offer a warm welcome to someone new in the community.

As your Rector, I pray that 2026 will be a year of profound blessing and purpose for all of us. So, let us take the lessons of Epiphany and Candlemas to heart: step out in faith, following the light we have been given, and then become a light for others.

May the peace of God be with you all in the New Year.

Mark

The Rev'd Mark Woodrow
(Rector)



You now have your new diaries for 2026. Book the date. The first Friday in March, 6th, is the World Day of Prayer. The service this year is prepared by the women of Nigeria on the theme 'I will give you rest, come'.



There will be a service in the United Reformed Church at 10.30am on 6th March. All are welcome. It is no longer the 'Women's' World Day of Prayer, though it is 'women-led'. That just means that it is women giving their reflections on being a Christian in the community in which they live.

**FROM THE REGISTERS
DECEMBER 2025**

FUNERALS



**PEGGY BOREHAM
LADY ELIZABETH HOLDGATE**



PCC NEWS

The next meeting of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) is scheduled for 29th January. If you have a query or concern you would like to bring to the PCC's attention, please let me or any other member know in good time. It may, of course, not be necessary to include this on the agenda, since it may be possible to deal with the matter more quickly and without the need for formal discussion.

Current members (including Mark and Karen) are: Andy Charlton, Heide Daniels, George Green, David Huggins (churchwarden), Phil Kitchingman, Anna Moore, Jean and Don Ramsey, Jane and Nicholas Turner and Colin Williamson.

James
PCC Secretary



Once again, an appeal for more unwanted books for the church bookstall, as our stocks are currently running down. All contributions (*in reasonably good condition*) – hardback or paperback, fiction, non-fiction – our selection is wide ranging – will be most welcome. Proceeds from the well visited bookstall contribute to the church's income, so that every donated book is welcome.



Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think know,
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
the only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

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Our Churches need your financial help!

Whilst Clare Parish Church has been blessed with some generous historic legacies for the upkeep and improvement of its fabric, the reality is that we are struggling to keep up with the day to day running costs of our churches, which include the contribution we are asked to make towards paying our clergy's stipends, the cost of training future priests and lay workers, and also the important regulatory and administrative support provided by our diocesan office.

Last year (2025) the United Parish of Clare and Poslingford share of the £76,993 requested from the Diocese was £35,805 of which (at the time of going to print, we have only able to raise £11,500 – *although hopefully we can pay more once all the Christmas income has been finalised*)

This year (2026) our Benefice needs to raise £77,040 (of which roughly 50% will fall to Clare and Poslingford) and as always this is before we even turn on the lights and heating, or do ongoing repairs and restoration!

I am enormously grateful for the generosity of every one of you who donates and supports the fundraising activities of the church, and I write this firstly as a way of saying thank you for all that you currently do, and secondly and importantly to ask you to be as generous as you possible can in the coming year.

You can make donations at services, both in cash, cheque, and using the contactless card machine.



You can also make regular and one-off donations with a credit or debit card, securely online using this QR Code or this website:

<https://givealittle.co/c/3arlknwQC8Y9D6Feg8jlhc>

Or by Bank Transfer

Account Name:	PCC Clare with Poslingford
Sort Code:	30-98-31
Account Number:	00594473

You can also sign up to regularly donate via standing order through the Church of England's Parish Giving Scheme:

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/clare-st-peter-st-paul-suffolk/>

Thank you in advance for your support this year. *Revd Mark*



A massive thank you to everyone who volunteered or attended and made all of the Christmas Services, Concert, Events, and of course the Fair, such huge successes. Without you our church would be a poorer place, and our outreach into the community would be very much reduced.



Coffee, Cake, and Chat – Returns for 2026

The every popular Coffee, Cake, and Chat returns on **Saturday 3rd January from 10am until Noon**, and thereafter on the 1st Saturday of each month.

This wonderful community event provides a warm-ish space for everyone, old or young, to meet together over homemade cakes and good fresh coffee and tea and to open the church to everyone.

There is no charge for the refreshments so that anyone can join in regardless of income, but donations are welcome from those who are able to be generous.

Stour Valley Benefice - Services for January 2026

Sunday, 4th January

The Feast of the Epiphany (transferred)

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Clare:	11:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>

Sunday, 11th January

The First Sunday of Epiphany / Baptism of Christ

Hundon	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by Mrs Sarah Smith</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Clare:	16:00	Evensong	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

Sunday, 18th January

The Second Sunday of Epiphany

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Liz Paxton</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>
Clare:	11:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Liz Paxton</i>
Poslingford:	16:00	Evening Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

Sunday, 25th January

The Third Sunday of Epiphany

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by Mrs Sarah Smith</i>
Wixoe:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>
Clare:	11:00	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Hundon:	16:00	Evening Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

Sunday, 1st February

Candlemas (The Presentation of Christ in the Temple)

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Clare:	11:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>

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