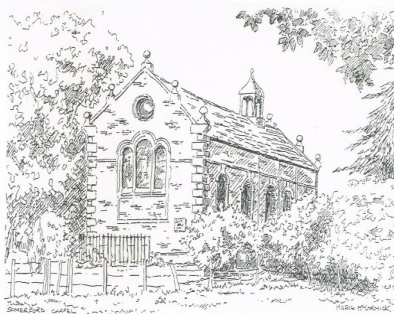
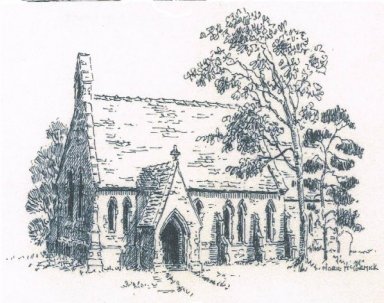


Astbury & Smallwood Parish News

September 2026

Price £1



Rector – Rev Heather Carter

Telephone 01260 702512 email revdheather@astburychurch.org.uk

Assistant Priest – Rev Steph Morris

Telephone 07703 587003 email revstephmorris@gmail.com

Reader– Andrew Bevington

Telephone 07957 961140 email a_bevington@sky.com

Reader – Andrew Bailey

Telephone 01260 640616 email aghsbailey@sky.com

Reader – Prof Denise Morrey-Carter

Telephone 01260 702512 email revdheather@astburychurch.org.uk

Some thoughts on Exodus 1, 8 – 2.20

Dear Friends,

Are you a rule breaker?

Don't worry – I'm not expecting you to answer that one! There are some people who don't follow rules and those that do.

We have just come back from holiday in France, where the ground is even drier and crispier than here. The river is so low they have had to cancel the paddle boarding and canoeing as the jetty is unsafe. The big firework display planned for the annual medieval festival in the next village across was cancelled because the authorities do not want to experience something similar to the dreadful fires that were happening a few hundred miles down the coast near Bordeaux.

Across the whole campsite there was a smoking or vaping ban, except outside the bar, which was a large area of concrete, not very flammable, and the site manager informed us that anyone found smoking anywhere except the terrace would be asked to leave.

Yet the lady in the caravan opposite our tent came out every morning to have her morning fix of nicotine! She **was** careful and brought a glass of water with her, but I found her actions strange considering the dryness of the grass all around us and the threat of being asked to leave.

As you have probably guessed, I am not a rule breaker: this probably stems from some childhood experiences, I follow rules and laws as best I can and have taught my girls this too.

Rules are there to keep us and others safe: road rage is commonly caused when one person is following the rules, and this annoys someone who isn't. How many times have you been travelling at the speed limit and the person behind you is desperate for you to speed up, especially on the A34 coming out of Congleton! Rules are there to keep us safe, to save lives, right? But sometimes breaking the rules can also save lives!

Today we heard the story of five amazing women who broke the rules, putting their own lives in danger to save the life of someone else, a tiny helpless baby who should, if the rules had been followed, have been killed at birth. Five women who challenged the status quo and the power of the Pharaoh. Women who led a quiet revolution. Sometimes breaking the rules is the right thing to do.

The story of Moses, the baby in the bulrushes, is familiar to many, but there is a quiet rebellion by the women in the story that also flows through it.

The king, threatened by the growing number of Israelite slaves, orders baby boys to be killed at birth in an attempt to control their numbers. His insecurity and fear motivate him to act in a way that is cruel and inhuman as he wields his power to try to resolve the problem. The midwives quietly rebelled against the orders of Pharaoh, who had commanded them to kill the baby boys at birth. They cannot agree to do this as they know it would be wrong in the eyes of God. They are empowered by their beliefs, enabling them to stand up to something they see and know is wrong. They stand firm when questioned by Pharaoh, explaining that they arrived too late at the birth to carry out his decree. They acted with great courage, standing up to a man with such power, and they are subsequently blessed by God, who gives them families.

Moses' mother and sister also quietly rebelled against Pharaoh's wishes. His mother was empowered by her love for her precious baby

and by her faith in God, whom she trusted to look after him. Hiding him and putting him in a basket on the river took faith and courage, as did the actions of her daughter, who approached Pharaoh's daughter when the baby was found.

Pharaoh's daughter also quietly rebelled against his orders, although she may not have known the orders or that this baby was subject to them. She acts with compassion when she rescues him, names him and arranges for his care.

Faith in God empowers these women.

We see around us the misuse of power as leaders and regimes promote war, killing and bloodshed. We see the misuse of power creating oppression and fear globally and locally through religious intolerance, slavery and the mistreatment of others. We see the devastating effects of flood, famine and fire, along with the impact of pollution and the disregard of habitats and ecosystems, often caused by poor choices and decisions.

We can feel overwhelmed and powerless, but the women in today's story were empowered by what they knew was right and by their faith in God. Let us look for opportunities to stand firm in our faith, knowing that we can make a difference with our actions and our voice – and even through our quiet rebellion.

One of the marks of mission for the church of England is to challenge the unjust structures of society. This empowers us to look at rules we think are unjust and use our voice, our vote, our money in a way that will support those who are suffering under unjust laws.

Meryl Streep, speaking on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in 2024, used her voice as one of Hollywood's best known actresses to speak up about women's rights in Afghanistan:

‘Today in Kabul a female cat has more freedom than a woman. A cat may go sit on her front stoop and feel the sun on her face, she may chase a squirrel in the park,

‘A squirrel has more rights than a girl in Afghanistan today because the public parks have been closed to women and girls by the Taliban.

‘A bird may sing in Kabul, but a girl may not in public. This is extraordinary. This is a suppression of the natural law.

‘The way that this culture, this society has been upended, is a cautionary tale for the rest of the world, Stop the slow suffocation of Afghan women and girls’ *Kelly Ng, BBC News, Published, 24 September 2024.*

We may not all be able to speak on the world stage as Meryl can, but we **can** challenge those rules we see as unjust, unfair, or cruel. We **can** all have the courage of Shiprah and Puah, the two midwives who risked their lives to save Hebrew babies. We **can** all have the faith and determination of the two nameless women, one Moses’ mother, who hid a tiny baby for three months. Can you imagine the fear she must have had, every time he cried, wondering if her neighbours would betray her – three months! – before placing him in a basket in the Nile, and Moses’ sister who despite being a Hebrew girl approached the daughter of the most powerful man in the land, Pharaoh’s daughter.

Most of the time breaking rules is wrong but sometimes rule breaking can be lifesaving . . .

Let us pray:

God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.
Amen.

(Some of the text in this reflection comes from the ‘Thought for the Day’ taken from Roots on the Web.)

Rev. Steph.

Editor – Mr W. Ball

The Old Vicarage, Reades Lane, Congleton, CW12 3LL.

Telephone 01260 279276 Mobile 07710 234943

The Sunday services at Somerford Chapel continue with Evensong at 2.30 pm on 5th September. The Harvest Thanksgiving service will be on 27th September and the Christmas Carol Service on 12th December.

We had another delightful afternoon on 8th August, listening to Troublesome Reeds, who proved to be not at all troublesome! £304 was raised with three more concerts to go (another offer of a flute ensemble). There are, as you know more ambitious plans for the church and yesterday the discussions ranged from possible bee hives to produce Astbury honey, possible mead making to sell our own mead and possible weaving classes/get togethers to produce crafts with which to enhance the church. I am sure there are many creative folks who have some great ideas, so please get in touch. My thanks go to Carole's granddaughter Rachel, Rhoda, Rachel, Naomi and Liz for all the seriously delicious cakes. Jane Sharman

Heritage Open Days – help please: The church will be open daily from Sunday 13th to Saturday 19th September, between 1.00 and 4.00, and we will need at least two welcomers on duty every day. So, if you could help for an hour or two, or even for a full session, please sign the list at the back of church or contact Sally Drage: music@astburychurch.org.uk or 07977 903561.

This year, the theme is Everyday Histories: exploring daily working life through the ages. We hope people will come and tell us of their family connections with Astbury. For instance, was an ancestor married or buried at St Mary's, or were they a bell ringer, a grave digger, or a churchwarden?

Come and Try the Organ: Is it the King of Instruments or just a box of whistles? What do all the stops and buttons do? How many hands and feet do you need?

As part of the Heritage Open Days there will be two Try the Organ sessions for would-be organists, from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm on Sunday

13th and Saturday 19th September – whether you have played the piano a bit or have no keyboard experience at all. Listeners are welcome but places for participants are limited. For more information or to book, please contact Sally Drage: text 07977 903561 or email music@astburychurch.org.uk Sally Drage

Dates for your diary: Afternoon events:

Sunday 20th September at 2.00 pm: Archie.

Sunday 4th October at 2.00 pm: South Cheshire Flute Ensemble. We will need cake for these concerts (I have already made a fruity traybake!) Please make a cake in order to thank the musicians and raise more money for the church.

Evening events:

Fashion Show 24th October 7.00 – 9.00 pm

Christmas Fair 14th November 11.00 am – 4.00 pm

A Murder Mystery Evening 21st. November 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm

A celebration of Simon and Garfunkel 27th November 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm

We shall be serving wine at these evening events

Russell Watson Concerts: 16th, 17th & 19th December (tickets sold separately)

Tickets for A celebration of Simon and Garfunkel can be booked online at <http://bit.ly/4vhY0pu>

Watch out for online booking for the other evening events.

Here's hoping we have a very successful Summer/Autumn.

Jane Sharman

Astbury Ladies' Fellowship: Jan Hardie-Woolridge will give us a flower arranging demonstration at our meeting on 16th September at 1.30 pm in Astbury Village Hall. At our October meeting (Wednesday 21st) we are holding a fund-raising event which will be an open meeting, when Bill Ball will give a talk about the church. Meet in the Village Hall car park at 12.30 pm, then go across to the church for Bill's talk. There will be time to look round, then come back to the Village Hall for refreshments. Please tell your friends about this event – it is free, but donations will be very much appreciated. Let us fill the Hall! Members' help will be needed.

I look forward to seeing you at Jan's demonstration on 16th September at 1.30 pm. Carole (07484 525829)

Astbury Women's Institute: Our next meeting is on Wednesday 2nd September. Should you wish to find any more information about Astbury WI please contact Kate Naylor on 07875 691170. We always warmly welcome new members! Dotty Kallis

Sartor's Quiz (Answers on page 14)

1. Which of these authors wrote *The day thou gavest* . . . ?
a. Isaac Watts; b. John Newton; c. George Herbert; d. John Elleston.
2. Which ecclesiastical tradition has a hierarchy which includes bishops? a. Baptist; b. Congregational; c. Episcopal; d. Presbyterian.
3. Which of these words is the odd one out? a. Breeches; b. Treacle; c. Bishops'; d. Vinegar.
4. Who defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel?
a. Elijah; b. Elisha; c. Ahab; d. Nebuchadnezzar.
5. Who wrote many of the Psalms? a. Isaiah; b. Paul; c. Moses; d. David.
6. What was the name of the man sent by God to lay his hands on Saul and restore his sight after his conversion? a. Amplias; b. Ananias; c. Andronicus; d. Apollos.
7. Most of the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran have which time relationship to the life of Jesus? a. Before; b. Contemporary; c. After; d. Unknown.
8. Apart from a crown, what other symbol appears of the face of a Victoria Cross? a. Oak leaves; b. Sword; c. Shield; d. Lion.

9. Which artist painted *The Night Watch*? a. Constable; b. Delacroix; c. Rembrandt; d. Vermeer.
10. Which of these French words is the odd one out? a. Sou; b. Bijou; c. Caillou; d. Genou.

WORDS OF WIT & WISDOM

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

Proverbs 29, 18

I've finished that chapel I've been painting. The Pope is quite satisfied.
Michaelangelo (1475 – 1564): Letter to his father in October 1512, on
completing the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Generally speaking, God won't send a thunderbolt from heaven to get your attention. More often he speaks through your thoughts, a family member, a friend, a teacher, a pastor, a change in your circumstances, the sudden discovery of the 'perfect' Scripture, the writing of a gifted author, or in the quietness when he fills your heart with perfect peace. So learn to listen to God's voice.

UCB *Word for Today*, Wednesday 3rd October 2018

Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away.

John 6,37, a favourite text of Edith Gilling Cherry, who suffered from poliomyelitis from the age of 16 months until her death at the age of 25, and who wrote the splendid hymn *We rest on Thee, our Shield and our Defender*.

No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money.

Samuel Johnson

There's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream.

A. P. Herbert

If a writer is writing for money, only a blockhead would do so without the help of someone able to extract the maximum from the reluctant publisher.

Kathleen Burk: UCL History Professor and writer of history books

Harold Wilson's going round the country stirring up apathy.

William Whitelaw, at election time

Pray that your words to others would be affirming, sensitive and encouraging.

UCB *Word for Today*, Saturday 6th October 2018

FASCINATING FACTS

As Trade Secretary, Edward Heath was responsible for the abolition of retail price maintenance, the importance of which is difficult for people today to appreciate. It was not until this reform was passed in 1964 that shops could compete against one another on prices of branded goods. At long last the customer was able to shop around for the best buy.

Susanna Wesley had nineteen children (nine died as infants), and she spent an hour each praying for each one by name. Her prayers paid off. One of her sons, John, brought a spiritual awakening to Britain and founded the Methodist Church.

UCB *Word for Today*, Mothering Sunday, 11th March 2018

Percy Shaw (1890 – 1976) was a British inventor. While operating a small road repair service in Halifax, West Yorkshire, he devised the idea of self-cleaning reflective road studs or 'cat's eyes'. He set up a factory to manufacture them, and became a millionaire.

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Astbury & Smallwood Parish News

Publication & Copy Dates 2026

Publication is on the last Sunday of the preceding month –

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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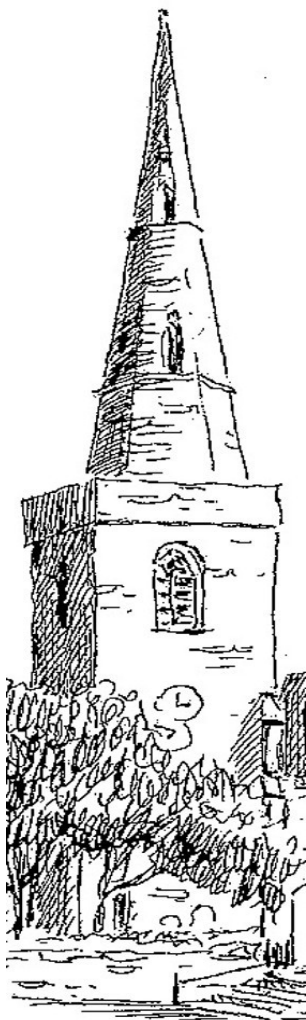
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Registered Charity No. 1178664

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ASSISTANT PRIEST	Rev Steph Morris	07703 587003
READERS	Andrew Bevington	07957 961140
	Andrew Bailey	01260 640616
	Prof Denise Morrey-Carter	01260 702512

CHURCHWARDENS	Dr Sally Drage	01260 270217
	Mrs Brenda Cook	01260 290194

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

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

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Hon. Secretary	Prof D. Morrey-Carter	
Hon. Asst. Secretary	Mr A. Bailey	01260 640616
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Head Teacher	Miss P. Blythe	01260 272528
Chairman of Governors	Mrs H. Bourke	

WEBSITES – www.astburychurch.org.uk www.facebook.com/StMarysAstbury
CHURCH KEYS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE RECTOR

Astbury & Smallwood Parish News – September 2026

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*

Answers to Sartor's Quiz this month (page 8)

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

FROM THE REGISTERS

Burial of the Dead

August 27th Derek William Beech 90 ashes

JOINT PARISHES CALENDAR FOR THE COMING WEEKS

AUGUST

Sun 30th TRINITY XIII

			September <i>Parish News</i> published
	8.00 am	Astbury	NO SERVICE *
	9.30 am	Smallwood	NO SERVICE *
	11.00 am	Astbury	NO SERVICE *
	2.30 pm	Somerford	Hymns and Pimm's Picnic
	6.30 pm	Astbury	NO SERVICE *
	*	Due to Ministry Team holidays, not all services will be held in July and August	

SEPTEMBER

Wed	2nd	11.30 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (CW)
		7.30 pm	Astbury	Women's Institute
Fri	4th	12.00 noon	Astbury	Holy Matrimony
Sat	5th	12.00 noon	Astbury	Holy Matrimony

Sun 6th TRINITY XIV

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

Joint Parishes Calendar, continued

SEPTEMBER

Wed	9th	11.30 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (CW)
Sat	12th	12.00 noon	Astbury	Holy Matrimony

Sun 13th TRINITY XV

		8.00 am	Astbury	<i>Morning Prayer (BCP)</i> – to be
		9.30 am	Smallwood	Morning Praise (CW) [confirmed
		11.00 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (CW)
		1.00 pm	Astbury	Heritage Open Day (to 4.00 pm)
		2.00 pm	Astbury	Come and play the organ (to 4.00 pm)
		3.00 pm	Somerford	Audley MVC Concert (page 4)
		6.30 pm	Astbury	Evensong (BCP)
Mon	14th	1.00 pm	Astbury	Heritage Open Day (to 4.00 pm)
		7.30 pm	Astbury	PCC Meeting
Tue	15th	1.00 pm	Astbury	Heritage Open Day (to 4.00 pm)
Wed	16th	11.30 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (CW)
		1.00 pm	Astbury	Heritage Open Day (to 4.00 pm)
Thu	17th	1.00 pm	Astbury	Heritage Open Day (to 4.00 pm)
Fri	18th	1.00 pm	Astbury	Heritage Open Day (to 4.00 pm)
		6.00 pm		Copy deadline for <i>Parish News</i>
Sat	15th	12.00 noon	Astbury	Holy Matrimony
		1.00 pm	Astbury	Heritage Open Day (to 4.00 pm)
		2.00 pm	Astbury	Come and play the organ (to 4.00 pm)

Sun 20th TRINITY XVI

		8.00 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30 am	Smallwood	Holy Communion (CW)
		11.00 am	Astbury	Morning Praise (CW)
		2.00 pm	Astbury	Summer Music with Archie
		6.30 pm	Astbury	Evensong (BCP)
Wed	23rd	11.30 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (CW)
Sat	26th	2.00 pm	Astbury	Holy Matrimony

Sun 27th TRINITY XVII

		8.00 am	Astbury	Morning Prayer (BCP)
		9.30 am	Smallwood	Morning Praise (CW)
		11.00 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (CW)
		2.00 pm	Astbury	The Sunshine Ukelele Band Concert
		2.30 pm	Somerford	Harvest Thanksgiving Service
		6.30 pm	Astbury	Evening Prayer (said) (BCP)
Wed	30th	11.30 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (CW)

Joint Parishes Calendar, continued

OCTOBER

Sat	2nd	12.00 noon	Astbury	Holy Matrimony
Sun	4th	TRINITY XVIII		
		8.00 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30 am	Smallwood	Holy Communion (CW)
		11.00 am	Astbury	Harvest Festival (CW)
		2.00 pm	Astbury	Flute Ensemble
		6.30 pm	Astbury	Harvest Festival Evensong (BCP)
Wed	7th	11.30 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (CW)
		7.30 pm	Astbury	Women's Institute

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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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Typeset & printed at The Old Vicarage, Reades Lane, CW12 3LL

Brother MFC-J5330DW (A4) & MFC-J5910DW (A3)

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