CHURCH LIFE MATTERS



December 2026

A word from Andrew

Welcome to Serena and family

First, I want to give a warm welcome to Serena Stanton and her family. We hope they will be very happy and fulfilled in their time here at St Katharine's and in the benefice. They are arriving at one of the busiest times of the year, so let's work hard on helping them to settle in. We pray that they will make a great connection with our families and young people, and that we will be a blessing to them.

Advent and Christmas Season

What a wonderful time of the year for inviting our neighbours, friends, work colleagues and family into church for one of the many events we are hosting this Advent/Christmas! Let's each please aim to bring at least one person to one of our events. The news is bad and we have the good news. Christmas is a time for sharing good news!

Benefice Prayer

At the last prayer and fasting day at St Katharine's, people fed back what they thought the Lord was saying. This is leading us into putting on some mission activities next year and I was asked to write a Benefice Prayer. This is what I have put together. It is inspired from the feedback that day and from the description of the early church's activity at the end of Acts 2. I commend it to you. Please pray this prayer until it becomes who we are and what we do.

Lord Jesus Christ

- Teach us to seek your Presence and **Pray** powerfully and effectively to see your kingdom come in our villages and communities

- Help us to **Disciple** each other so that we present each other mature in Christ, reading the bible every day, becoming confident in praying out loud, and learning to hear what God is saying

- Give us confidence to offer **Healing** prayer to the sick and the faith to see them made well

- Make us bold in our **Witness**, taking the gospel out, for we desire to be like the early church and see the Lord adding to our number daily those who are being saved

And give us the grace to **Devote** ourselves to you and what you call us to do

With Every Blessing,
Andrew

Prayer Meeting Dates

St Mary's
BROUGHTON GIFFORD

Tuesday 19 January @ 14:00 taking place at the home of Annette Stone: 7a The Street, Broughton Gifford

St Katharine's
HOLT, WILTSHIRE

Monday 7 December & Wednesday 6 January @ 19:30 taking place in St. Katharine's Church, Holt

Morning Prayer

Morning prayer meetings take place online on a Monday, Wednesday and Saturday @ 08:15. Come and join together for readings and prayers to get your day off to a great start.

Contact Dawn for the zoom details to be emailed to you or cut and paste this link to access Morning Prayer when you would like:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9299304685?pwd=T05SYzZmeG1odnBNRTdPVnJ5OVIwZz09

Meeting ID: 929 930 4685
Password: vgy987

Hello from Serena Stanton, Youth & Children's Worker

Hello everyone!

I'm so excited to be joining you at St Katharine's Church, Holt, as your new Youth & Children's Worker!

I'm coming from St Luke's Church, Bath, where I've spent the last three and a half years as Children & Families Minister.

Before that, I spent six years working as their children and families worker within the joint benefice of St Swithun's Church, Bathford, and St John's Church, Batheaston.

Before moving into church ministry, I was a professional actor for 15 years, working with companies including Ragamuffin Theatre Company and Saltmine Theatre Company.

My work with Saltmine included writing and performing Theatre in Education productions in secondary schools, followed by workshops where young people could explore important issues, ask questions and have their voices heard. While working with Saltmine, I also had the opportunity to work at HM YO Brinsford Prison in Wolverhampton, using drama and performance to help inmates explore their own lives and experiences and consider positive ways of moving forward.

I also ran my own theatre company and theatre school in Bath for five years.

I have a BA in Theology from the London School of Theology, postgraduate qualifications in Therapeutic Play and Drama Therapy, and have also completed the CMS Certificate in Pioneer Mission Leadership.

I'm also mum to two daughters, Yve (pronounced Eve), aged 12, and Tabitha, aged 10, who will be joining me in becoming part of the St Katharine's church family. We're all really looking forward to this new chapter!

My heart is to see every child and young person feel seen, known and valued, discover their gifts and grow in confidence and faith. I love seeing them released into their God given identity, growing in who Jesus says they are and becoming all He has designed them to be.

I'm passionate about creating spaces where they can explore faith, encounter the Holy Spirit, ask questions and express their worship creatively and freely. I'm really looking forward to getting to know you all, working alongside the leadership team and building on all that is already happening within the children's and youth ministry.

I'm also looking forward to exploring the village, getting to know the wider Holt community and meeting people in all sorts of places – from the school and local shops to the cafés and pubs. I'm excited to become part of village life, build relationships and discover together what God has in store for this next chapter.

I can't wait to meet you all!

Blessings, Serena

Serena's working hours will be as follows and in a hybrid format of working from home and the office:

Monday	8am - 4.30pm
Tuesday	8am - 4.30pm
Wednesday	8am - 4.30pm
Thursday	8am - 4.30pm
Friday	Off (but will work 6 - 9pm on SKY nights)
Saturday	Off
Sunday	9am - Noon (Sky weeks) / 9am - 3.30pm (non-Sky weeks)

Supporting Sudan

I am pleased to report the sum of £125 was raised at St. Katharine's cafe church (15 November) from my home produce table for Sudan. So together with £108 previously raised at St. Mary's this is a good total of £233 for the Kadugli diocese.

Thanks to all who came along and made a purchase, much appreciated, with thanks and it will make such a difference.

Lynnette Baston

Quiet Garden at Great Chalfield

In November, our speaker was Sue Glanville who spoke around Hebrews 12:1 – 3 and the season of Autumn. She posed some questions:

- what helps us not to grow weary and lose heart in these days?
- what are we being asked to do? Throw off everything that hinders!
- in Autumn, as it becomes more difficult to find light, what nourishment do we need?
- turning our hands palms down, what is it that we need to let go? What does it mean to let go? What are we carrying that isn't ours to carry?
- turning our hands palms up, what treasures are left, what fruits are there in this season?

Having collected a leaf during the morning (we were encouraged to let it choose us!), we gathered after lunch and stood in a circle. Each of us put our leaf on the ground, saying out loud - if we felt comfortable - what we were laying down and then what we were accepting as our treasure.

It was a very special and gentle time.

Invited Speakers

December 1st, 2026
Annie Wintour, Retired minister

- No Quiet Garden in January 2027, returning on . . .

February 2nd, 2027
Canon Andrew Evans, Rector of Broughton Gifford, Great Chalfield & Holt St Katharine

Everyone is welcome on the first Tuesday of the month ten times a year, from 09:30 to 14:30, though you are welcome to stay longer, and please do come and go when you have to. We look forward to welcoming you for as much of the day as is possible for you.

Anthony Matthew & Celia Waghorn

CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE

ALL SAINT'S CHURCH GREAT CHALFIELD

SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER AT 6PM



Christmas Day

Holy Communion

All Saint's Church,
Great Chalfield
10:00

BENEFICE MORNING WORSHIP

Sunday 27th December | 10:00
All Saints Church, Great Chalfield



News from St. Mary's

The weather was kind to us on Remembrance Sunday. Whilst it was cold, it was dry and we could process up the village to the war memorial without problem. As usual, strengthened by the presence of the scout contingent, a good congregation in the church took part in the service led by Rachel. For the two minutes silence at the war memorial, we were joined by as many again. Was this because there is so much armed conflict around the world at present, that we feel fit to remember those who have died in past wars? The collection in church raised £296.53 for the poppy appeal / Royal British Legion.

The previous day we held our monthly coffee morning in church, where we were joined by our regular attenders not just from the village but from further afield. The table of raffle prizes was particularly endowed with such exotica as a singing Christmas teddy from Canada, a Lancashire parkin and a £20 biography of Queen Elizabeth II. I think everyone went away satisfied and we raised £147 for church funds.



It seems a long time since we had one of our regular quizzes, but they still seem to have their appeal as all our tables were fully subscribed for our one on 21 November, with all the proceeds going to Kadugli, our link diocese in Sudan, currently in the grip of three warring factions. Our thanks to the Smart family for taking up the reins on the setting of the questions.

Christopher Fielden & Annette Stone

Christingle

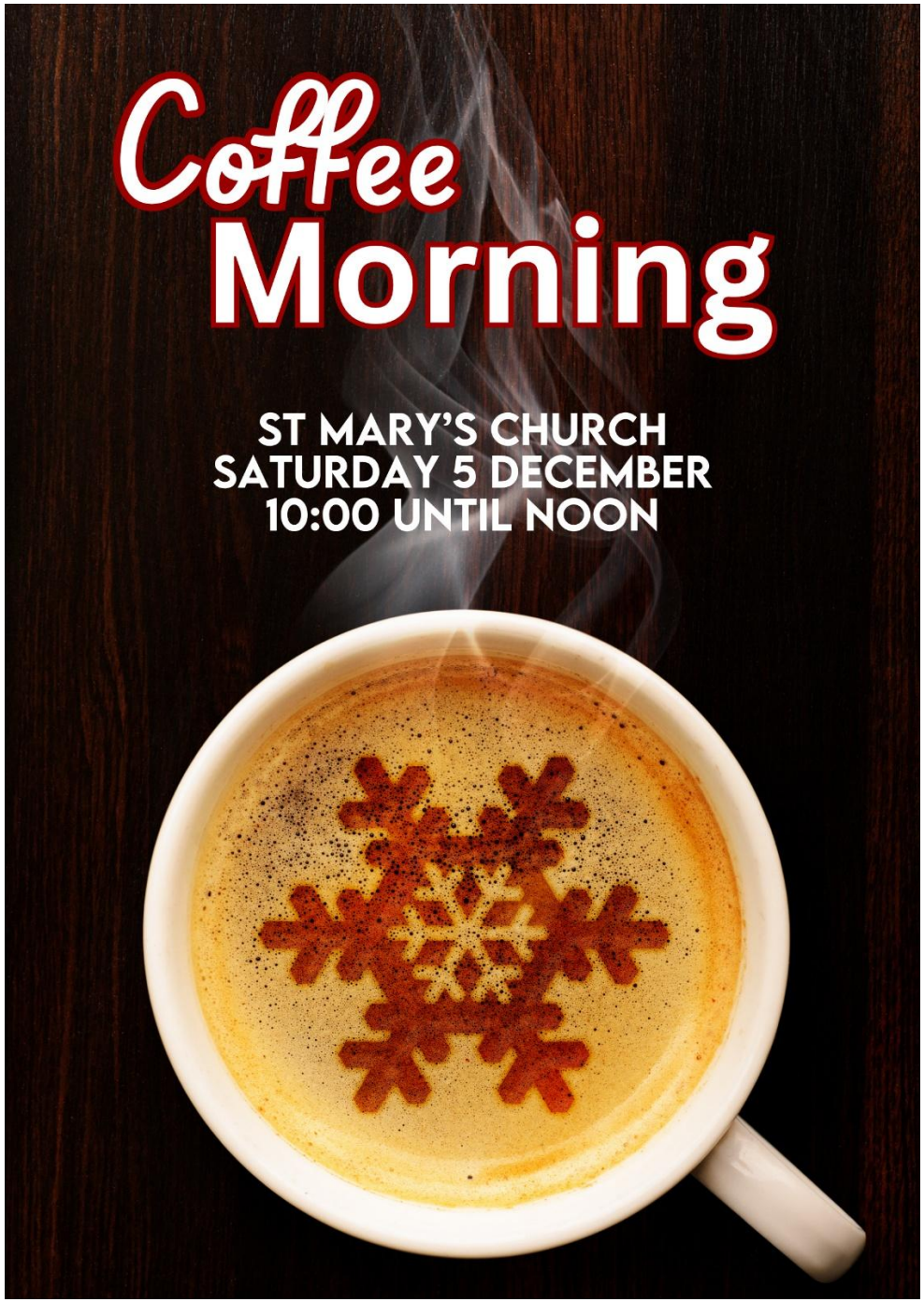
The Children's Society

Let's come together to celebrate!

St Mary's Church, Broughton Gifford

Monday 7 December, 2pm




Coffee
Morning
ST MARY'S CHURCH
SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER
10:00 UNTIL NOON


BEER & CAROLS
TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 8PM
THE FOX AND HOUNDS
BROUGHTON GIFFORD

CAROL SERVICE

FOLLOWED BY FESTIVE REFRESHMENTS

ST MARY'S CHURCH
BROUGHTON GIFFORD

SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER AT 4PM



Christmas Day

Family Communion



St Mary's Church,
Broughton Gifford
10:00

Christmas Eve Crib Service at St. Mary's Church

Come and enjoy the retelling of the story of Mary and Joseph, and the birth of the baby Jesus. I wonder what Ruth has got planned. Come along and find out at 3pm on Christmas Eve. We'd like to encourage any children and young people to come dressed up as any nativity character or animal. We look forward to seeing you.



St. Katharine's Light Party!

I really value having an alternative to Halloween to take our children to especially as they can otherwise feel left out. The light party is always bustling and welcoming. The children of all ages enjoy the food, games, and activities. It's fun. A great night for primary school age children and under.

50+ children

I have a seven year old and a one year old and they both had a wonderful time. There were activities for all ages which was lovely.

I thought the craft was really good and having something explicitly Christian to take away (candle boxes) was excellent. I know my 3 year old loved the cake decorating and face painting.



The food was good and all the helpers for the event were great.

I thought the light party was a success, absolutely full of kids and adults all coming together, it was an amazing time.

80+ sausages

St. Katharine’s Church Coffee Morning on 21 November

I can't believe I'm saying this, but there's only one more coffee morning this year and it's before (shhh....) Christmas. We love Christmas in the church, it's the point of the year when everyone can identify with the faith as it's about the arrival of a baby, and let's face it - we've all been a baby! But Jesus was no 'ordinary baby'.

The raffle table groaned with wonderful prizes (even more next month, folks) and we always love it when a new visitor wins a prize...well done Katie. It was lovely to welcome back a few who hadn't managed to come in a long while (but we missed a number of our regulars) and the volume was back to its noisy setting as our guests chattered and laughed. It's amazing how loud people having fun can be!

Hazel and Helen ran a card stall, selling Hallmark cards at totally bargain prices to raise money for Dorothy House hospice, over £60 was raised through them. The cake stall ran out of offerings...that's always a good thing; coffee and tea and biscuits were consumed with gusto.

We were collecting items for The Hub in Bradford on Avon to go out in the Christmas hampers for their clients. A big thank you to everyone who brought in foodstuffs for that collection; we pray it will be a blessing to those who receive it.

We had just below 60 humans through the door who helped raise the amount of £254.31 and 5 dogs who made absolutely no contribution to the funds whatsoever but were all very good dogs...well done to Danny, Bianca, Finlay, and PJ and Daisy who just popped in before their walk.

Our next coffee morning, the last one of 2026, is a week earlier than usual on 12 December, to accommodate the various events over Christmastide. Please come to that, and at least one of the various services that the benefice is hosting over the coming weeks to celebrate the arrival of that very special 'no ordinary baby'.

This is probably our last chance to say to you before the new year but the whole team at coffee morning wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and we hope to see you in the New Year.

Terri Dauncey on behalf of the Coffee Morning Team

THE Good Afternoon CHOIR

HOLT

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

with special guests - Children from

HOLT VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WHERE

St Katharine's Church,
Holt, BA14 6PZ

WHEN

Friday 4th December 2026

1:45pm - 2:45pm

Free Admission Concert

EVERYONE WELCOME

With a retiring collection for WILTSHIRE +BATH AIR AMBULANCE

Telephone: 01761 472468

www.goodafternoonchoir.org

Find us on Facebook
@TheGoodAfternoonChoir

Christingle

Café Church

SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER | 10:30
WORSHIP, COFFEE AND FOOD

COLLECTING FOR THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY



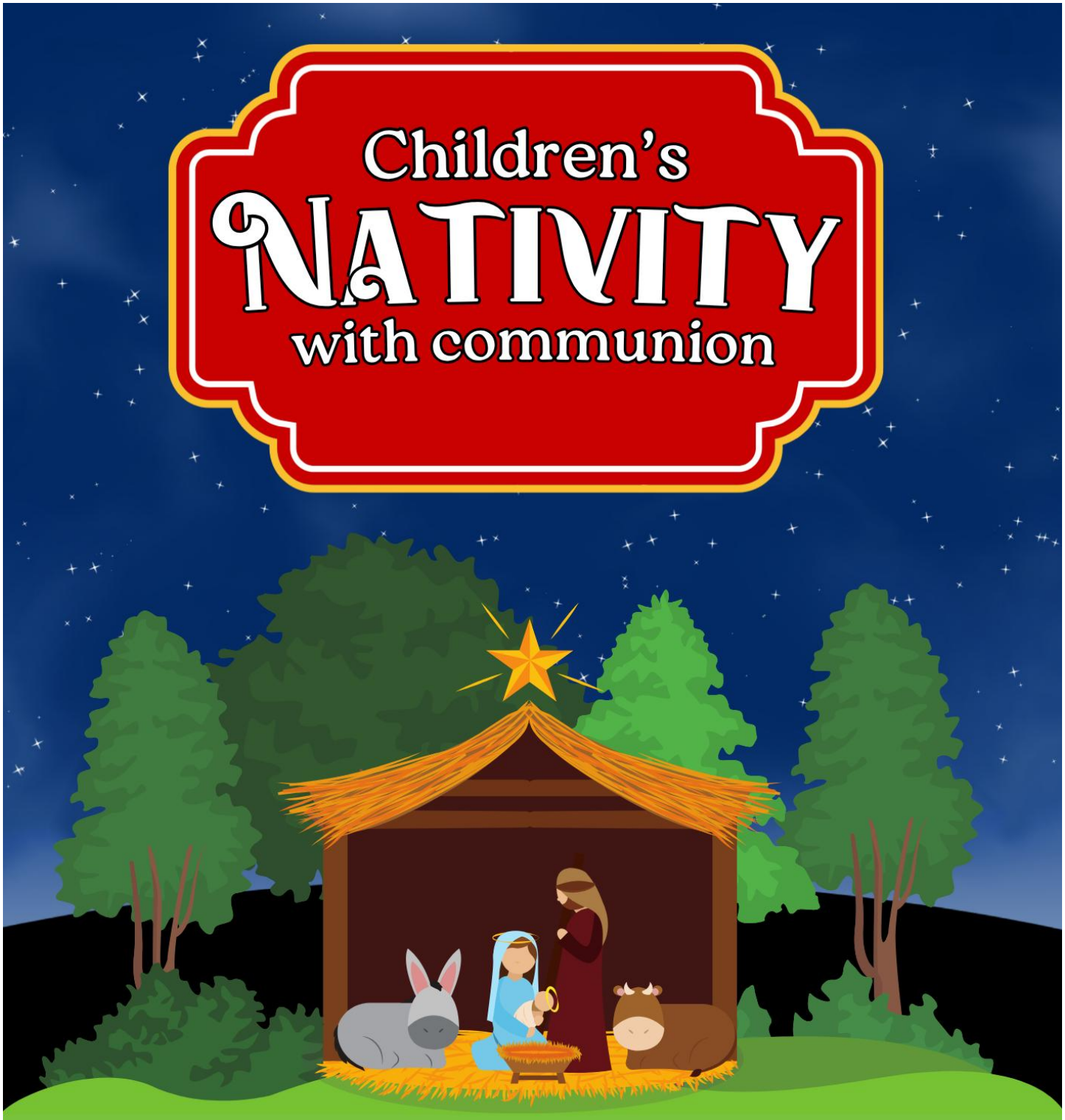
ST KATHARINE'S CHURCH,
HOLT

Coffee Morning

ST KATHARINE'S CHURCH
SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER
10:00 UNTIL NOON



Children's NATIVITY with communion

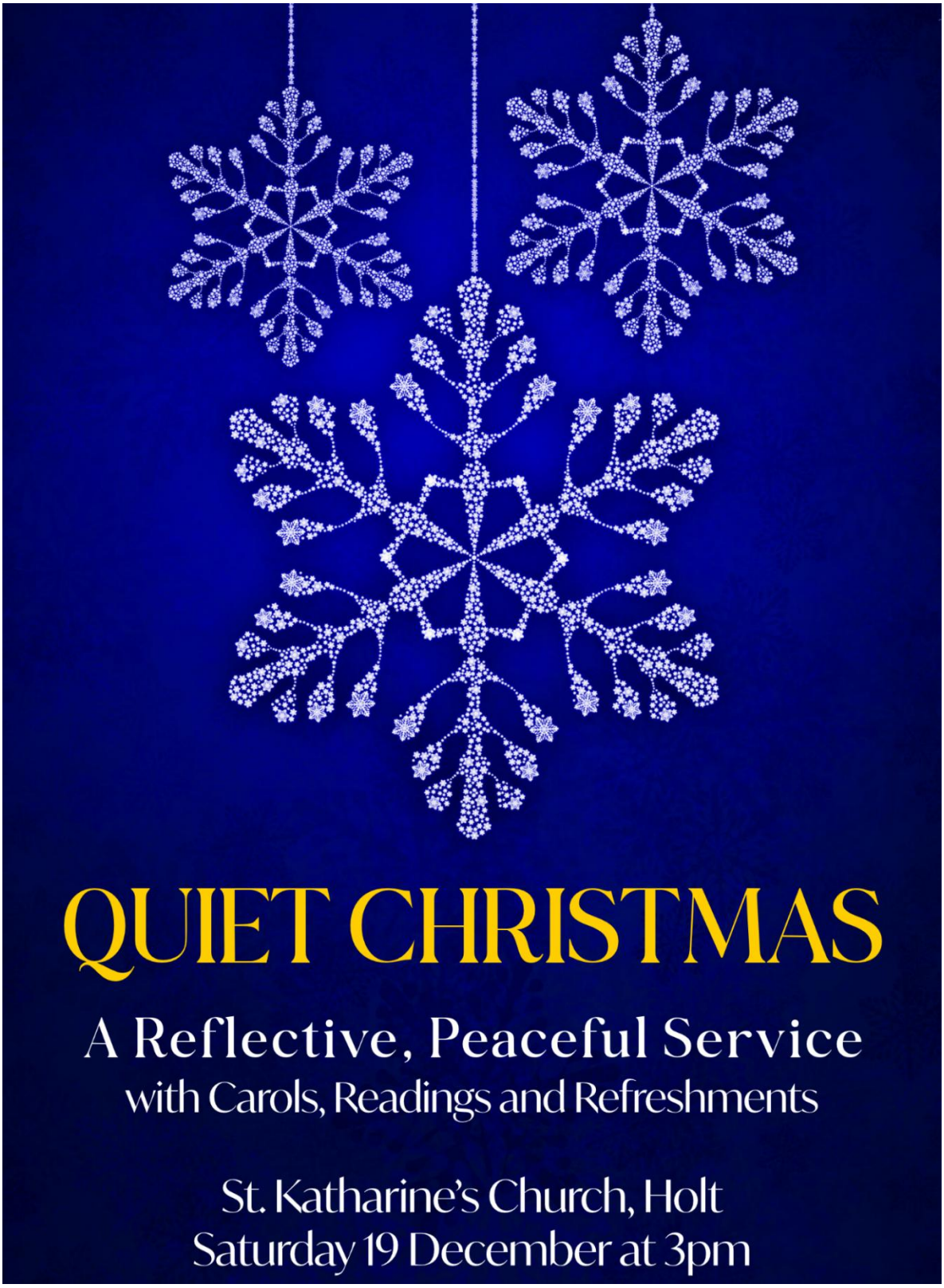


13th December, 10.30am
St. Katharine's Church

Quiet Christmas Saturday 19 December at 3pm

A quiet service for anyone who finds this time of year difficult for whatever reason, for anyone who wants space to reflect, recall and regroup, or it's just been a hard year for a whole host of reasons (bereavement, illness, worry) please do join us for this "Quiet Christmas service" you are welcome.

Rachel Firth & Dawn Farmer



Carol Service

With Festive Refreshments

ST. KATHARINE'S CHURCH, HOLT

SUNDAY 20th DECEMBER

AT 6PM

Christmas Day

Family Communion



St. Katharine's Church, Holt
10:30

Ham Green Nativity Christmas Eve

A retelling of the Christmas story with a real life donkey and carols for all the family. So, looking forward to this annual Nativity on Christmas Eve at 5pm.

Please do dress for the weather including for children if they would like to dress up as their favourite nativity character.

Don't forget to bring a torch or charged up phone to light up your song sheets!

Heather Marshall & Serena Stanton





Burns Lunch

Sunday, 24th January 2027
at St Katharine's Church, Holt

In aid of

Alzheimer's Society

Join us after the morning service
for haggis, neeps and tatties,
poetry and dancing



Tickets £5



Please contact united.benefice@outlook.com
to let us know if you can join us

Please RSVP by 8th January

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

Services December 2026

Date	Sunday	Holt **St. Katharine's**	Broughton Gifford **St. Mary's**	Great Chalfield **All Saints**
6th	2nd Sunday of Advent	10:30 Café Church & Christingle	10:00 Parish Communion	18:00 Evensong
13th	3rd Sunday of Advent	10:30 Nativity & Communion	10:00 Morning Worship	18:00 Carol Service
19th	Saturday	15:00 Quiet Christmas		
20th	Sunday 4th Sunday of Advent	10:30 Morning Worship 18:00 Carol Service	16:00 Carol Service	10:00 Matins
24th	Thursday **Christmas Eve**	17:00 The Ham Green Nativity with Donkey	15:00 Crib Service 22:45 Midnight Mass	
25th	Friday **Christmas Day**	10:30 Family Communion	10:00 Family Communion	10:00 Holy Communion
27th	Sunday 1st Sunday of Christmas			10:00 Morning Worship

Church Office – The Coach House, 386a Ham Green, Holt BA14 6PZ
E: united.benefice@outlook.com
W: faithinourvillage.org

Follow us @faithinourvillage

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

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Anthony Matthew *Licensed Lay Minister*	01225 782082	anthony55matthewfcn@gmail.com
Rachel Firth *Licensed Lay Minister*	01380 871464	rachel.firth@btconnect.com
Marilyn Stubbs *Licensed Lay Minister*	01225 753118	marilynistubbs@yahoo.co.uk
Serena Stanton *Youth & Children's Worker*	01225 782717	ChildrenAndYouth@stkatharinesholt.org
Jacque Bennetts *Parish Safeguarding Officer*	07738 763951	safeguarding@stkatharinesholt.org
Dawn Farmer *Administrator & Lay Worship Leader*	01225 782717	united.benefice@outlook.com

Please send content for the January 2027 issue of Church Life Matters via email to Dawn by Friday 18 December, 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:

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

Donations towards the Coach House should be referenced "Coach House" and transferred to the St. Katharine's PCC of Holt bank account, thank you.