Benefice Newsletter
with Thought for Thursday

for the parishes of Etton, Glinton, Maxey, Northborough and Peakirk

Thursday November 19th

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https://9bridges.church/



This Sunday is the Celebration of Christ the King which is the last week of the Liturgical Year. Advent starts on Sunday 29th November.

SERVICES THIS WEEK	
Christ the King **22nd November**	**09:00 Holy Communion – Northborough** **10:30 Family Holy Communion - Glinton** **18:00 Taizé – Maxey**

Thought for Thursday

In our Morning Prayer on YouTube just now, we're reading from two of the Bible's great apocalyptic books, Daniel and the Revelation of St John the Divine. Some mornings, when we've had another vision full of extraordinary beasts and mysterious numbers, I do find myself wondering what St John had for supper.

And yet we know more of these books than we think. There's Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace, and the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast. And the moment I hear "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord," I'm already hearing the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah. So what do these strange and sometimes uncomfortable books have to say to us as we come towards Advent and begin that joyful walk to Christmas?



I keep coming back to those three men in the furnace. Before they're thrown in, they tell the king that God can save them. And then they say something extraordinary. Even if God doesn't save them, they still won't bow down to the golden image. They've decided how they're going to live, whatever happens next.

I think there's something in that for us. Living a life of faith is a conscious act. It doesn't just happen. Advent reminds us that we're answerable to God for how we respond to the choices before us. Sometimes that means being willing to say what we believe among friends who don't share our faith. Sometimes it means listening to a criticism of the Church and admitting that it's fair. Both can take a little courage.

For me, though, one of the hardest things is that I can get so caught up in the job of being a Christian. There are meetings to go to, things to organise, responsibilities to see through, and all those expectations, some of which I've managed to put on myself. I can spend a whole day doing things for the Church and still be short with the person who asks me a perfectly reasonable question at the end of it.

As we head towards Advent, I'd like to give a little more attention to how I do the work in front of me, how I care for the people I love, and how I respond when somebody catches me at a bad moment. And if, somewhere in the middle of all that, someone were to think, "He knows that God loves him," I'd be glad.

Reader Simon

Christmas Services in our Benefice

Five parishes • One family • All welcome



Thursday 3rd December	18:45	Glinton Lights Switch-On	Glinton
Saturday 5th December	19:00	Choir Christmas Concert	Sissons Barn
Sunday 6th December	15:00	Messy Church Festivities	Peakirk
Saturday 12th December	18:00	Carol service	Maxey
Sunday 13th December	09:00	Love came down at Christmas	Peakirk
	16:00	Christingle service	Northborough
	18:00	Carol service	Glinton
Sunday 20th December	10:30	Carol Service	Northborough
	18:00	9 Lessons and Carols	Peakirk
Thursday 24th December	14:00	Crib Service	Glinton
Thursday 24th December	16:00	Crib Service	Maxey
Thursday 24th December	17:00	Crib Service	Etton
Thursday 24th December	23:30	Midnight Mass	Glinton
Friday 25th December	10:30	Christmas Communion	Peakirk
Sunday 27th December	10:30	Benefice Holy Communion	Maxey

The usual pattern of services will continue alongside these special Christmas services.

NEWS

Winter Night Shelter re-opening



As winter approaches, there is a practical opportunity to share God's love with people experiencing homelessness in our city. Light Project Peterborough has secured funding from Peterborough City Council to re-establish the Peterborough Communal Night Shelter from December, and is calling on churches and volunteers to help make it possible.
The response from churches has already been fantastic, but more support is still needed.

Volunteers are needed for evening, overnight and breakfast shifts. The evening team arrives at 6pm to set up and welcome guests, with dinner at 7.30pm. The overnight team takes over at 10pm, and breakfast volunteers arrive at 6am, helping with breakfast and clearing up before leaving by 9am. You do not have to be able to stay all night to help.

Could you offer some time this winter? To find out more and complete a volunteer application, please visit the Peterborough Night Shelter webpage. For further information, including enquiries about church hosting, contact Paddy at paddy.berryman@lightprojectpeterborough.org.uk.

Christmas Quiz

Every year there are certain signs that Christmas is on its way. The lights begin to appear, mince pies mysteriously find their way into our shopping baskets, and, of course, Bob Quinn produces another of his wonderfully challenging Christmas Quizzes!

Once again, Bob has put together a festive brain-teaser packed with questions to entertain, perplex and delight. Whether you're a seasoned quiz enthusiast, a lover of obscure facts, or simply someone who enjoys gathering family and friends around the table for a bit of Christmas fun, this quiz is for you.

Why not make an evening of it? Put the kettle on, enjoy a mince pie (or two), and see how many answers you can uncover together. A little friendly competition never hurt anyone... although it may reveal who has been secretly storing away useless Christmas trivia all year!



At just **£2 per quiz sheet**, you'll not only enjoy some festive fun but also be supporting the life and work of the **Nine Bridges Benefice**. Better still, there are some excellent prizes to be won.

Quiz sheets will be available from **1st December** in all five churches or you can also obtain a quiz by contacting **Bob Quinn** on **07958 572095** or by email at **r372quinn@btinternet.com**.
So, dust off your thinking caps, sharpen your pencils, and prepare for another festive challenge. A huge thank you to Bob for the time, imagination and good humour he pours into creating this annual Christmas tradition. We look forward to seeing who will emerge victorious this year!
Good luck... and remember, Christmas is a season of joy, goodwill, and fellowship. Looking up the answers online is between you and your conscience!

Christmas Chocolates for HMP Peterborough

A quick reminder following last week's appeal: we're collecting tubs of chocolates for the Christmas gift packs prepared by the chaplaincy team at HMP Peterborough. For many prisoners, these gifts may be the only present they receive at Christmas, and this simple act of kindness can make a real difference.



If you'd like to contribute, please bring tubs of **Heroes, Quality Street, Celebrations, Roses**, or similar chocolates to the **Benefice Office at Glinton Church by Sunday 6 December**.



Thank you to everyone who has already donated. We can also report that the growing mountain of chocolate in the Benefice Office is providing a significant opportunity for spiritual growth, as Rev Keir undertakes the annual discipline of walking past multiple boxes of festive treats without opening them "just to check they're suitable." Your prayers for perseverance in this testing season would be greatly appreciated.

Together we can help share a little Christmas joy and remind people that they are not forgotten.

Christmas fun for Children

Get ready for an afternoon packed with fun, friendship and Christmas cheer! The Deanery Youth Events programme is back with ***Dominus Illuminatio Mea*** ("The Lord is my light"), a special Advent event inspired by Psalm 27:1 for children and young people from across our area.



We're especially excited that **Roisin Kuruvilla**, whom many of you will remember fondly from her time as our intern, is helping to lead the day. It is wonderful to see her continuing to encourage and inspire young people in their faith journey.

The event takes place on **Saturday 5th December, from 1.00pm to 4.00pm at St Jude's Church, Peterborough**, and is open to **young people aged 8-14**. Expect games, activities, new friendships, plenty of laughter, and an

opportunity to explore the Christmas story together as we discover what it means to shine God's light in the world.

Parents, grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles, and honorary family members: if you know a young person who might enjoy the afternoon, please encourage them to come along. Better still, invite a friend and come together! We'd love to see children and young people from across the benefice joining in, making connections, and having a memorable start to Advent.

One final confession: some of you may have discovered that last week's QR code had all the navigational reliability of a wise man without a star. Our apologies! The new QR code has been tested and now appears to be behaving in a much more Christian manner. Please do give it another try.

Take a look at the event poster for booking details and help us spread the word. Let's fill St Jude's with the sound of laughter, excitement and the joyful anticipation of Christmas

Christingle Service 2026

As the evenings draw in and the season of Advent begins, why not join us for one of the most loved services of the year? Our Benefice Christingle Service is a joyful and family-friendly celebration of the light of Christ shining in the darkness.

Through the simple yet powerful symbolism of the Christingle orange, candle, ribbon and sweets, we are reminded of God's love for the whole world and the hope we find in Jesus. Whether you come every year or have never been before, everyone is warmly welcome.

Come along, bring your family and friends, and help us share in the wonder of this special service while supporting the work of The Children's Society.



Mission 2027

Alpha: Explore Life, Faith and Meaning

Have you ever wondered whether there's more to life? Asked questions about God, faith, prayer, or who Jesus really is? You're not alone. Alpha is an eight-week course that offers a relaxed and welcoming space to explore the Christian faith, ask questions, and discover more about Jesus. There's no pressure, no expectation, and no commitment beyond coming along and seeing what you think.



Whether you're new to faith, returning after time away, or simply curious, Alpha is for anyone who wants to explore life's big questions. Our next Alpha Course begins on **Tuesday 12th January** and runs every Tuesday for eight weeks.
Why not consider inviting a friend, neighbour, colleague, or family member? Sometimes a simple invitation can make all the difference.

To find out more or reserve a place, please email: **alpha@9bridges.church**. Bring your questions. Bring your curiosity. Come and explore with us.

Mission Day 2027

Saturday 6th February | 9.30am - 1.30pm
What does it mean to be the Church in rural North Cambridgeshire today?
Across our villages, much has changed in recent years. Communities are growing and shifting. People's patterns of life are different. Yet the need for connection, belonging, hope and faith remains as strong as ever.

Mission Day is an opportunity for everyone across the Nine Bridges Benefice to come together, pray, reflect and think creatively about our future. How can we serve our communities well? What gifts has God already placed among us? Where might God be calling us in the years ahead?
This is not about finding quick fixes or importing ideas from elsewhere. It is about exploring what mission looks like in our own villages, among our own neighbours, and within the reality of rural church life. Together we will consider how our churches can continue to be places of worship, welcome, service and community for generations to come.



Whether you are deeply involved in church life or simply care about the future of our villages, your voice, experience and ideas matter. The best conversations happen when we gather people of different ages, backgrounds and perspectives around the same table.
Come prepared to listen, share, dream and pray as we seek God's leading for the next chapter of life across our benefice.
Mission Day
Saturday 6th February
9.30am - 1.30pm
Let's come together to explore what it means to be God's people in this place, serving our communities with faith, hope and love.

DATES for your DIARY

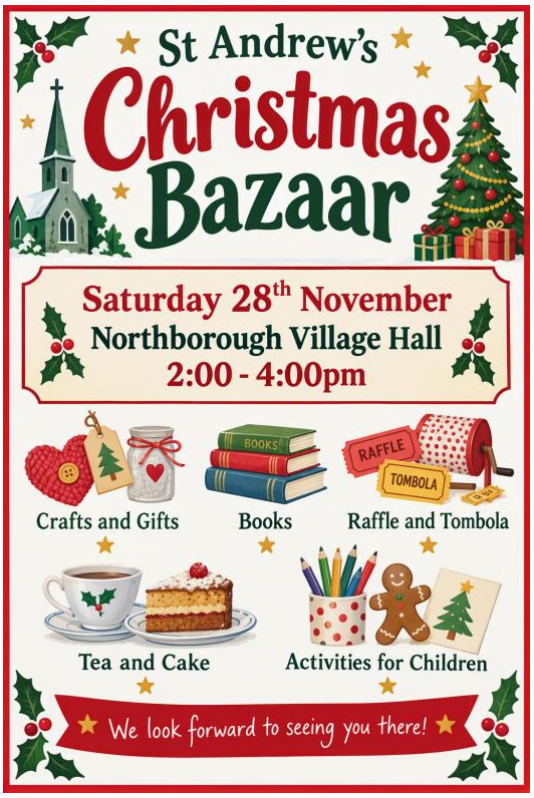
St Andrew's

Christmas Bazaar

Northborough Village Hall

Saturday 28th November

14:00 – 16:00



St Pega's Christmas Fayre

Saturday 28th November

2-4pm

Peakirk Village Hall



Christmas Wreath Making Workshop

The Golden Pheasant pub

Etton

Monday 30th November

14:00 – 16:30

Or

18:00 – 20:30

All equipment provided





Last few Tickets

Nine Bridges

Christmas Concert

Sissons Barn

Peakirk

Saturday 5th December

19:00

Tickets available form Simon Richards (simon.richards@9bridges.church)



Peakirk Christmas Tree Lighting and Festivities

Sunday 6 December at 3.00pm

Join us in **Peakirk Church** for the lighting of our Christmas tree, accompanied by carols as we begin the Christmas season together.

Afterwards, everyone is warmly invited to **Messy Church** and a **Bring-and-Share Christmas Tea** in the Village Hall. Whether you're a regular churchgoer or simply looking to enjoy some festive community spirit, we'd love to welcome you.

All are welcome. Come and celebrate the joy of Christmas with us! 🎄✨



Sunday 13 December at Peakirk Church
9:00 Morning Worship: *Love Came Down at Christmas*

Join us at **Peakirk Church** for a special Christmas service exploring the wonder of God's love revealed in the birth of Jesus Christ. Through familiar carols, readings, reflection, and opportunities for congregational participation, we will celebrate the hope, peace, joy, and love that Christmas brings.

Come and share in this uplifting and festive act of worship as we prepare our hearts for Christmas.

Everyone is warmly welcome. 🎄✨



This Week's Collect and Readings

Collect

God the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow in his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory. **Amen**

First Reading

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel

For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:15-23

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Gospel Reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

Matthew 25.31-46

This is the Gospel of our Lord**; Praise to you, O Christ**

Post Communion Prayer

Gracious Lord, in this holy sacrament you give substance to our hope: bring us at the last to that fullness of life for which we long; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

Benefice Prayers

For Our Community

We lift up in prayer all who live in Orchard Grove, Maxey, Helpston Road, Etton, Walker Road, Glinton & Deeping St James Road, Northborough. We also pray for those who live beyond our benefice but whom we see. May they all be surrounded by love, peace, and the presence of God in their daily lives.

For Those in Need of Healing

We pray for all who are suffering in mind, body, or spirit, especially those dear to us: **Ann Rata, David Cupit, Jacqui Barnard** and **Derek Harris.** May they find strength, comfort, and restoration.

For Those We Hold in Our Hearts

We remember with love those who have gone before us: especially**, Jo Briggs.** We also gather into our prayers those whose passing is not recent, yet who are brought into our remembrance before God at this time of year, **John Stables**. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

For the Growth of Our Church

We pray for all who are finding their place in the changing life of our church, especially those who feel on the edges of our community. Draw us together, that all may know they are welcome and belong. Help each of us to discern how our gifts might serve your mission in this place, and give us courage to speak openly with one another, encouraging all to discover their part in the life we share.

Contact Simon C (administrator) Tel: 01733 372726 admin@9bridges.church Works Monday PM & Tuesday PM	Contact for Rev Keir: Tel: **01733 372725** Mob: 079804 12345 vicar@9bridges.church Rest day usually Friday

The Funeral of Jo Briggs will be held at 4pm on Tuesday 1st December in Glinton Church.

And Finally

As our usual editor continues his extended holiday, travelling adventure, sabbatical, semi-retirement, or strategic avoidance of the British winter (reports vary), Rev Keir remains at the newsletter controls.

Whilst the admin ninja is apparently enduring sunshine and warmer climates somewhere around the globe, Keir is bravely battling formatting issues, overflowing inboxes, and the ever-present temptation of the chocolate stash in the Benefice Office.

And remember, if you spot a typo this week, I have no one else to blame! Rev Keir

admin@9bridges.church

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