

Prayer Diary

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill among people!' Our prayer theme this week shall be the 'Peace that passes all understanding, and our desperate need for this in the world and in our lives today' Each day we also pray for those in our own prayers who are unwell.

Sunday 21st December - *The Fourth Sunday of Advent*

- As Bethlehem prepares again for a subdued keeping of Christmas surrounded by conflict we pray for Peace and Justice to come to the Holy Land and surrounding countries. We pray for the feeding of the hungry, the healing of the injured, for shelter and for the comfort of the bereaved and sorrowful.
- Our Bishops Graham, Jane & Ian.
- Our Rector, Revd. Joanna Haywood, our 'ministry team', churchwardens and PCC's that under Joanna's leadership and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christ's Church in this benefice may grow in faith, service and witness.
- The residents of Mill Field Close, Frettenham.

Monday 22nd December

- The residents of Harvest Close, Hainford

Tuesday 23rd December

- Those in Wroxham Road, Coltishall

Wednesday 24th December - *Christmas Eve*

- All in Buxton Road, Horstead

Thursday 25th December – *Christmas Day*

We give thanks for the good news, 'God with us'.

- All those who struggle with the customary celebrations because they are alone or bereaved. That the message of this day will break through into their lives.
- For the residents of Cromer Road, Stratton Strawless.

Friday 26th December – *Stephen, Deacon, First Martyr*

On St Stephen's Day we pray for all who may the cost of bearing witness for the faith.

- The inspiration of 'Good King Wenceslas' who on St. Stephen's Day not only took pity and acted for the good of the one in need, but shared that vision with his servant. We pray for all those struggling with the cost of living over the Christmas holidays.
- For asylum seekers and refugees, in our own county, this Christmas, who are waiting for decisions over their future and the opportunity to fully live their lives.
- For all in Mill Road, Frettenham

Saturday 27th December - *John, Apostle and Evangelist*

We give thanks for the life of the 'Beloved Disciple' and the Gospel that bears his name.

- May the message 'The word was made flesh and dwelt among us' break through into our lives and our secular western setting at this time.
- Our Benefice Service tomorrow, 10am at Hainford and all involved in leading and facilitating our services.
- All homeless at this time. For the work of St. Martins in tackling homelessness in Norwich and district.
- All in Newton Road, Hainford
 - Those unwell and all in our prayers

THE COLTISHALL GROUP OF PARISHES

*Serving the communities of Coltishall, Frettenham
Hainford, Horstead and Stratton Strawless*



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21st December 2025

Fourth Sunday of Advent - Joy

Services Today

- 11.00am Holy Communion, Coltishall
- 4.00pm Community Carols, Hainford
- 6.30pm Carols by Candlelight, Horstead

Monday 22nd December

- 9.00am Morning Prayer, Horstead Church

Tuesday 23rd December

- 9.00am Morning Prayer, Hainford Church

Wednesday 24th December, Christmas Eve

No Midweek communion or Community Lunch until 7th January

- 3.00pm Crib Service, Coltishall,
*come dressed as a Nativity character if you wish,
with costumes available in church on the day!*
- 9.00pm Bethlehem Midnight Mass, Stratton Strawless,
followed by sherry and mince pies

Thursday 25th December, Christmas Day

- 9.30am Family Holy Communion, Hainford
- 11.00am Family Holy Communion, Horstead

Friday 26th December

Rev'd Joanna's rest day

Saturday 27th December

Rev'd Joanna off

Next two Sundays

28th December – Holy Innocents

- 10.00am Benefice Holy Communion, Hainford

Readings:

Jeremiah 31.15.17, 1 Corinthians 1.26-29, Matthew 2.13-18

4th January – Epiphany

- 9.30am Holy Communion, Hainford
- 10.00am All Age Worship for Epiphany

Readings:

Isaiah 60.1-6, Matthew 2.1-12

Rev'd Joanna will be away from 26th December until 2nd January inclusive. Please leave a voicemail or send an email, and she'll get back to you as soon as possible.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE BENEFICE

Rector: Rev'd Joanna Haywood

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Collect

Eternal God,
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,
so we wait for his coming in glory;
bring us through the birth pangs of this present age
to see, with her, our great salvation
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

1st Reading – Isaiah 7.10-16

¹⁰Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. ¹³Then Isaiah said: ‘Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

2nd Reading – Romans 1.1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,
⁷To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel – Matthew 1.18-25

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ ²²All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel’, which means, ‘God is with us.’ ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.’

Post Communion prayer

Heavenly Father,
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of the promised saviour:
fill us your servants with your grace,
that in all things we may embrace your holy will
and with her rejoice in your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Our publicity for our **Christmas services** is now available. Please do pick up some postcards and deliver to you neighbours – and a bit further afield if you can! We’ve got lots and it would be good if most of the houses in our villages could get one through the front door. It’s a wonderful time of the year to invite people – and we’ve a good range of accessible Christmas services for people to choose from which will be welcoming and accessible to all. It’s at this time of the year that people are likely to say ‘yes’ to an invitation!

Sunday, 21st December:

11.00am Holy Communion, Coltishall
4.00pm Carol Service, Hainford
6.30pm Carols by Candlelight, Horstead

Christmas Eve

3.00pm Crib Service, Coltishall
9.00pm Bethlehem Midnight Mass, Stratton Strawless

Christmas Day

9.30am Family Holy Communion, Hainford
11.00am Family Holy Communion, Horstead

Advance notice for 2026!

We will be having an ‘Away Day’ as a benefice on **Saturday, 24th January, 10am-3pm** at the St Lawrence Arts Centre in South Walsham. We will think about how we can grow God’s mission and ministry in our benefice as we consider what he is already doing here. Come along and help us to work out the best way forward. All are welcome, whether you hold a ‘role’ in the church or not. We are all part of Christ’s body here in this part of the world, and we’d like to hear from all of you. There is no cost involved. Lifts available. Please put this in your diary. Any questions? Ask Rev’d Joanna.... Full details after Christmas.