

Together

Benefice Magazine

Cheddar, Draycott and Rodney Stoke



December 2025/January 2026

£1

BENEFICE INFORMATION



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(St. Peter's & St. Leonard's information on inside back cover)

Pastoral Letter – Stuart Burns



Writing on Remembrance Day, we've been in St Leonard's Church with the oldest class from Draycott and Rodney Stoke School enriching our service. We looked at a poppy and a christingle (pre-Christmas Christingle services happening in St Andrew's and St Leonard's on 7th and 14th December respectively - consider yourself invited!).

The children said that the red of the poppy spoke of blood in the war; then they said, *"the colour of the heart too"*, and *"love in our hearts"*. Thank God for the spiritual perceptivity of children. We agreed that God's love holds the fallen soldiers even now in a safe and peaceful place, and that we don't therefore have to fear for them.



Then we looked at the christingle and they told me that the thing it had in common with the poppy was the red part - the ribbon wrapped around the orange. The conversation went like this ..

VICAR: *"What does the red ribbon mean?"*

CHILDREN: *"The blood of Jesus"*

V: *"Why does it go round the whole orange?"*

C: *"Because Jesus died for us all"*

V: *"What do you mean?"*

C: *"The orange is the whole world"*

V: *"What else does the red of the ribbon tell us?"*

C: *"That God's love goes all around"*

V: *"So why was Jesus willing to give his life for us all?"*

C: *"Because of his love"*

This is a genuine transcript. I'm not making it up. As I said, thank God for how he speaks to and through our children. The great privilege of this experience drove home the truth that poppy and christingle need each other. If Jesus lives in our hearts we can hope to love in his way, so that the evil and ghastliness of war is driven back and God's light can come into the world. Be an instrument of **HIS** peace this Christmas and in the next new year.

Stuart

Bishop's Letter

Christmas joy for all people



We fear that we live in a world of increasing polarisation. Conflicts between and within nations play their part. The amplification of division and hostility by social media algorithms doesn't help. Culture wars exacerbate matters further. Sometimes it feels like common ground is disappearing from underneath our feet like a sandbar being overwhelmed by the tide.

In such a climate, it's good to return to the message that heralded the arrival of Jesus. *'I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be for all people'* says that angel who announces the saviour's birth (Luke 2:10). Jesus' story quickly includes all types and sorts of humanity. From local shepherds to exotic visitors from afar. I wonder what the conversation was like as they all crammed into the stable to see the newborn child?

Jesus's story quickly shows that not only is he for all people but that he needs all people. His family must have needed assistance when they fled as refugees to Egypt. Jesus must have needed help when his parents left him behind on a family outing to Jerusalem aged twelve. Jesus was constantly calling on and engaging with others as he went about his teaching and ministry.

What might counter the polarisation of our day? Amongst our greatest resource is to seek out the emotion that accompanied the news of the saviour's birth – joy. When we encounter joy – from that cup winning goal to the marriage of much loved friends – such moments are never the time for division and enmity.

We're all far too busy shouting and hugging each other! The invitation of Christmas is to experience such joy afresh. Often, we see joy most obviously in children's experience of the season. Might we seek it for ourselves too? For joy breaks down divisions, overcomes barriers, reminds us that we are one.

'I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be for all people' says the angel. A very merry and joyful Christmas to you all.

Bishop Michael

READINGS AND SERVICES

	Cheddar	Draycott	Rodney Stoke
7th December Advent 2	9am Patronal Breakfast Service 4.30pm Christingle	9.30am Holy Communion	11.15am Holy Communion
14th December Advent 3	10am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer 6.30pm Carols at The Strawberry Special Pub	11.15am Christingle
21st December Advent 4	8am BCP Communion 10am Holy Communion 6pm Candlelit Carols	4pm Carol Service	11.15am Holy Communion
24th December Christmas Eve	4pm Crib Service 11.30pm Christmas Communion	9pm Christmas Communion	6pm Carols by Candlelight
25th December Christmas Day	8am BCP Christmas Communion 10am Family Christmas Communion	10am Family Christmas Communion	9am Christmas Communion
28th December Christmas 1	10am Benefice Service St Andrew's		

	Cheddar	Draycott	Rodney Stoke
4th January Epiphany	10am Together Service	9.30am Holy Communion	11.15am Holy Communion
11th January Baptism of Christ	10am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	11.15am Holy Communion
18th January Epiphany 2	8am BCP Communion 10am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	3pm Plough Service St Lawrence, Priddy
25th January Epiphany 3	9am Breakfast Service	9.30am Holy Communion	11.15am Matins

	Psalms	First Reading	Second Reading
7th December Advent 2 Andrew the Apostle St Andrew's only	72: 1-7 19: 1-6 146: 4-10	Romans 15: 4-13 Romans 10:12-18 James 5: 7-10	Matthew 3: 1-12 Matthew 4: 18-22 Matthew 11: 2-11
14th December Advent 3	80: 1-8 96	Romans 1: 1-7 Isaiah 9: 2-7	Matthew 1: 18-end Luke 2: 1-20
21st December Advent 4 Christmas Eve Christmas Day	148: 7-end	Hebrews 2: 10-end	Matthew 2: 13-end
28th December Christmas 1			

	Psalms	First Reading	Second Reading
4th January Epiphany	72: 10-15	Isaiah 60: 1-6	Matthew 2: 1-12
11th January Baptism of Christ	29	Isaiah 42: 1-9	Matthew 3: 13-end
18th January Epiphany 2	40: 1-12	Isaiah 49: 1-7	John 1: 29-42
25th January Epiphany 3	27: 1-11	Isaiah 9: 1-4	Matthew 4: 12-23

FROM THE REGISTERS:

Funerals:

Our prayers are with those who mourn the death of Shirley Tillett, Michael Massey and Roy Arnold Wills RIP.





Nine Lessons and Carols

For Christmas Eve in 1880, the Bishop of Truro devised a new sort of church service, of Bible readings and music. It was held not in the cathedral, which was still under construction at the time, but in a great wooden structure built temporarily on the site, and it is said that Bishop Benson's motive was to give the Cornish men something to keep them out of the pubs. This carol service is still very popular.

When I lived in Truro, so many people wanted to come to the service that they had to provide a video relay for the overflow congregation in the huge Methodist Church next door.

On Christmas Eve in 1918, just as the war ended, the service of Nine Lessons and Carols was held for the first time in the chapel of King's College Cambridge. There is no need to relay the service to the church next door because millions of people all over the world can join in the worship every year by radio.

The nine lessons never vary from year to year; they start with a boy chorister reading about the garden of Eden and man's need for salvation, and end with the Christmas Day gospel from St John – *In the beginning was the Word*. The congregation's hymns never vary: *Once In Royal, O Little Town, While Shepherds, O Come All Ye Faithful, Hark The Herald*.

Even the organ voluntary is always the same: Bach's *In Dulci Jubilo*. Most of the music of the service is sung by the choir however, and there are new carols every year, always including one or two first performances of newly commissioned pieces.

In our benefice, we shall be holding variations on this carol service pattern in each church: on Sunday 21st December in Cheddar and in Draycott and on Christmas Eve in Rodney Stoke. They are a vital way for us to keep in touch with hundreds of people who no longer come to conventional church services but who still want to take part in the spiritual dimension of the Christmas festivities.

Do come and join the Celebration.

David Cheetham



CHEDDAR SCHOOLS TOGETHER

PRESENT

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



We will be holding a Christmas Tree event in St. Andrew's Church in December.

The Cheddar schools will each have trees they will decorate and these will then be displayed in the church from **13th December until 4th January 2026**.

Anyone is welcome to come and view the trees throughout the festive season. The church is open from 10.00 AM – 4.00 PM, unless there are services in progress.

We would also like to invite you to our morning of celebration on **13th December, from 10.00 AM – 12.00 midday**. There will be a small launching of the trees, refreshments and Christmas-themed activities for children of all ages to participate in.

Any donations on the day will be given to the **St. Andrew's Reordering scheme**, to introduce modern facilities in part of the church whilst maintaining its Gothic beauty.



Now, more than ever, people need your help.

Information/donations: ELAINE REYNOLDS 07794 356228

CHURCH ROTAS	DECEMBER	JANUARY
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CHEDDAR (St. Andrew's)	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28
	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25
Sidesperson (8.00)	Break S. /Marie	na/na	Marie/Marie	na/na
Sidesperson Team Leader	Break S. /Fiona	Rich. S./Rich. S.	Ken/Ken	Fiona/Ade
Sidesperson 1	Break S. /Rose'y	Gill/Gill	Marg'te/Marg'te	Iris/Iris
Sidesperson 2	Break S. /Anne L.	Dawn	Adrian/Adrian	Anne L./Frankie
Sidesperson 3	Break S./na	Peter B./Peter B.	Jo C./Jo C.	Ann H./Ann H.
Sidesperson 4	na /na	Ellen/Ellen	na /na	na /na
Cleaning 1	Rosemary/tba	Walsh fam/tba	Mo/tba	Marg't B/tba
Cleaning 2	Paul/tba	Walsh fam/tba	David/tba	Peter/tba
St. Nectan Chapel Flowers	tba /tba	tba /tba	tba /tba	tba /tba
Brass cleaning	na /na	Marion/na	na /Jean D.	Eileen/Ade
Church Flowers - Altar	Advent /tba	Advent /tba	C'mas /tba	C'mas /tba
Church Flowers - Table	Advent /tba	Advent /tba	C'mas /tba	C'mas /tba
Coffee/Tea 1	Break S. /Ann B.	Roger/Rosemary	Jim/Ann D.	Deborah/Gerry
Coffee/Tea 2	Break S. /Ann H.	Jane/Fiona	Mary/Walsh fam .	Hale fam. /Sylvia

DRAYCOTT (St. Peter's)				
	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28
	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25
Organist/Music	David/David	Ian/Ian	Barry/Barry	n/a /David
Reader 1	Roger/Roger	Tricia/Tricia	tba /Martyn	n/a /John
Reader 2	Sue/Sue	Jeff/Jeff	tba /Lynda	n/a /Iain
Sidesperson	Roger/Roger	Tricia/Tricia	Gill/Gill	n/a /Gill
Coffee	Roger + Sue /Roger + Sue	Tricia + Jeff/Tricia + Jeff	Gill + helpers /Gill + Chris	n/a /Gill + Chris
Cleaning	Karen + Chris /Karen + Chris	n/a	Heather/Heather	n/a
Flowers	Nataliya*/Lynda	Nataliya*/Lynda	all hands /tba	tba
	* Foliage			

RODNEY STROKE (St. Leonard's)				
	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28
	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25
Sidesperson	Alan/Alan	Steve/Sue	Sue/Plough Serv.	Sue/Megan
Reader 1	Jo S/Alan	tba /Heather	Sue/Plough Serv.	tba /Megan
Reader 2	Alan/Angela	tba /Sue	Jo S/Plough Serv.	tba /Jo S
Organist	tba / Joanne	Joanne/Joanne	Joanne/Plough S.	Joanne/Barry
Cleaning	Val + Megan/Jane + Sue W			
Flowers A	Advent /tba	Advent /tba	Advent /tba	C'mas Team/tba
Flowers P	Advent /tba	Advent /tba	Advent /tba	tba /tba

Remembrance Day Service at St. Leonard's

The church was full on Tuesday 11th November as the wider community and Oak Class from Draycott & Rodney Stoke First School came together to remember those who gave their lives and served in both World Wars and past and present conflicts.

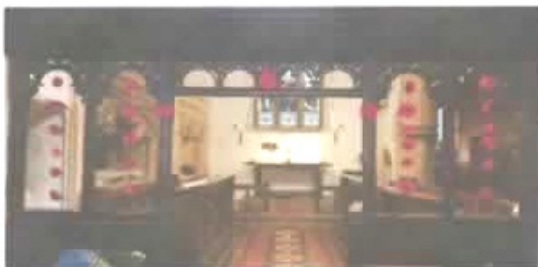
Stuart led the service and combined his reflection on the themes of Christingle and how this can be linked to Remembrance Day. Megan read out the list of those who had fallen in WW2.

As many know, Rodney Stoke is a 'Thankful Village', and Oak Class read the *Ever Thankful* poem by Rod Morris, an ex-Rodney Stoke resident. His poem was published in the last *Together* magazine.

We were very fortunate that Charlotte once again played *The Last Post* and the *Reveille* on her bugle, which sounded beautiful. Before and after the service a few movements from Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man* were performed on the organ.

It was lovely to see the church full for this special service. We will remember them.

Joanne Turner



For All The Saints...

Saint Anthony (circa 251 - 17th January 356)



The Order of Hospitallers of St Anthony was founded in Grenoble c.1100, St Anthony, from whom the order takes its name, was a hermit who dwelt in the desert regions of Egypt where he was befriended by a wild pig which he had healed. A pig, either being carried by the Saint or seated at his feet is used as a symbol in many pictures of him.

This being so, the monks were granted permission by the papacy to keep pigs, the local population donated one pig from each of their litters, usually the smallest! These pigs were allowed to roam the streets to be fed by the people of the town.

They were readily recognised by a small bell which was attached to their collars; thus they became known as St. Anthony (Tantony) pigs. The monks of the order rang small bells as they begged for alms and these became known as Tantony bells. The expressions are still in use in parts of Britain for the runt of the litter and the smallest of a peal of bells.

Feeding the pigs was counted as a 'virtuous' act; the pigs rapidly fattened and were retrieved by the monks to be slaughtered or sold to provide food for the poor. The fat was used with herbs to treat a condition known as St Anthony's Fire, which is now thought to be ergotism, which is caused by a fungus which infects such cereal grains as rye, barley and wheat etc.

In Britain there are records from c.1264 of the Antonine monks at St Benet Fink (St Benedict Finch) receiving pigs from the London Livestock market that were too small to be slaughtered. These too wore collars and bells and were fed by residents in and around Threadneedle St. until they were reclaimed by the monks. In La Berca in Spain the tradition continues of the community raising a pig which is then raffled on St Anthony's Day to raise money for the Church, a similarity to our skittling for a pig at fetes and fairs.

St Anthony is known as Father Of All Monks as he is credited with forming the first religious community in 305 AD. His feast day is 17th January and is celebrated in many countries with the lighting of huge bonfires and 'pigging' out on sausages and spare ribs. This may be why we have pork or ham on New Years Day.

Whether you 'pig out' at New Year or on 17th, may the coming year be a Happy One!

Pat Groves

DON AND MARY'S PLATINUM WEDDING

On Sunday 15th November, family and friends of Don and Mary Banks were privileged to be at St. Leonard's to participate in their 70th Wedding Anniversary celebrations. A very special Communion service, led by Rev. Thea, included hymns chosen by Mary, renewing of wedding vows (conducted by Vicar Stuart) and food and drink afterwards in the hall.



It was an honour to be part of at such a wonderful occasion and, on behalf of everybody in the benefice, **CONGRATULATIONS, Don and Mary!**

DON AND MARY'S PLATINUM WEDDING



The words of Rev. Thea's introductory address beautifully sum up the event:

"Today we have the joy of celebrating a remarkable milestone in our church family. Don and Mary are celebrating 70 years of marriage.

Seventy years of commitment, laughter, perseverance and grace.

Their life together is a living testimony of God's faithfulness and the beauty of covenant love.

We give thanks to God for them, and we rejoice in this extraordinary anniversary.

Congratulations, Don and Mary, and may God continue to bless you with many more years of love and peace".

A WEDDING BLESSING

Earlier the same morning, St. Andrew's members, Ify and Henry – who had travelled back to Nigeria for their wedding in September*) had their marriage blessed by Stuart in St. Andrew's church.

Their friends from other parts of England also attended. After the blessing, everybody enjoyed their cooking: a delicious snack from home which they had prepared for everyone.

Our blessings and congratulations – ya maa mma/ekele/imere ofumo/ekele - to them!



*see October's *Together* magazine

Coffee Morning at Hannah More Cottage



Saturday 6th December

10 AM – 12.30 PM



**CAKES! TEA &
COFFEE!
RAFFLE! FINE
COMPANY!**

Supporters of St Peter's (SoSP) – December & January News

We hope everyone's Advent journey is as stress-free as possible, and that as Christmas approaches, we all find joy, peace, and time to celebrate together. As always, the SoSP diary is jam-packed starting with:

✦ Advent Festival – Saturday 6th December ✦

Our 2025 Advent Festival opens with our **Coffee & Cake morning at 10.30am**, followed by a **warming Soup Lunch from 12 noon to 1.30pm**.

This year's theme is "**Christmas Bells.**"

🎵 Carol Singing Sunday – 14th December 🎵

- **4pm:** Visiting **The Laurels** to sing carols with the residents. Please let Thea know if you would like to join us.
- **6.30pm:** Leading the **Carol Singing at the Strawberry Special Pub**. Don't forget to bring cash to support **The Children's Society!**

🍷 Mulled Wine & Mince Pies – Sunday 21st December 🍷

After the **4pm Carol Service** in St Peter's, join us for **mulled wine and mince pies**. A lovely chance to linger, chat, and enjoy the warmth of the season together.

🎉 Happy New Year 2026! 🎉

Kick off the New Year with our first **Coffee & Cake morning of 2026** on **Saturday 3rd January from 10.30am to 12 noon**. All are welcome!

We will also hold a **SoSP team meeting early in January** to plan our exciting agenda for 2026... watch this space!

The Bristol Mission Sisters

Dear Friends,

After a very busy year, we are once again planning for Christmas. As in previous years, this Christmas time we will be giving gift bags along with our special Christmas food parcels to each of our callers, to share the joy of the season and to help families with the costs.

We would so appreciate any donations to make this possible. The items we need are as follows:-

Hats, gloves, scarves and socks (for men and women)

Toiletry sets (men and women)

£15 One4All gift cards for children – we would be delighted with either donations towards the cards or the gift cards themselves.

Our bank details are: Name: Sisters Of The Church

Account: 65075960 Sort Code: 08-92-99

Please let us know if you are donating directly so that we can acknowledge receipt.

We are able to take delivery of donations Monday-Wednesday 9 AM- 12.30 PM. The deadline for donations is 10th December. We are so grateful for the support of each and every one of you – thank you. With all blessings for the coming season,

Rev. Sr. Teresa Mary CSC (Sister In Charge)

AMAZING GRACE

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found
Was blind but now I see*

Most people will be familiar with John Newton's famous hymn, *Amazing Grace* but perhaps fewer will know much about its antecedents. Often misinterpreted as a slave's paean to freedom, it is a redemptorist text: an apologia for, and joyful renunciation of, a hitherto wicked life.

Newton, born in Wapping in 1725, went to sea aged 11 and was pressed into joining the Royal Navy aged 18 or 19 in 1744. He tried to desert, receiving a flogging for his attempts and was transferred to *Pegasus*, a slave ship.

Unpopular with the crew, Newton was himself sold as a slave to a trader in West Africa,. He gave Newton as a gift to his wife, Princess Peye of the Sherbro people, whose domain is now the present-day Sierra Leone. Rescued three years later, his journey back to Britain was interrupted by a storm off the coast of Donegal, which holed the ship. Newton prayed to be spared and arriving safely back, he became an evangelical Christian.

Quite how he squared this with subsequently owning and running several slave ships of his own is beyond anybody but Newton's comprehension. When ill-health forced him to cease sailing himself in 1754, he remained an enthusiastic investor in the slave trade.

Ordained priest in circa 1764, he published a pamphlet in 1788, supporting Wilberforce's campaign to abolish slavery. Having plenty to repent of himself, Newton published a poem in 1779, entitled *Faith's Review And Expectation*. Before being almost universally sung to the tune of the folk song *New Britain* in 1835, *Faith's Review* had been married to over twenty other melodies.

It soon became known by the first two words of the opening line: *Amazing grace, how sweet the sound*. Newton contributed a preface to a 1776 annotated version of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and two more of his most popular hymns are *Glorious Things Of Thee Are Spoken* and *How Sweet The Name Of Jesus Sounds*.

Amazing Grace was initially far better-received in America but has long been a staple of churches worldwide. Before his death in 1807, aged 82, John Newton lived long enough to experience the British implementation of The Slave Trade Act, passed into law earlier that same year.

One of the most oft-recalled modern versions of Grace was recorded by American folk singer Judy Collins, who said she'd recorded it to celebrate her successful battle to beat alcoholism.

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH CHRISTMAS CARD

So that church members can share Christmas greetings with each other without the need to write and distribute numerous individual cards, there will be a unique large Christmas card in St. Andrew's in December.

Sign this to send good wishes to your friends in St. Andrew's.

A Children's Society donation box will be alongside if you wish to give a little. *(Thanks to Marion Clegg for the suggestion).*

Sue Bathe



(St. Andrew's At Lunch Time)

Get your 2026 diaries out and note the following dates for our free soup lunch in the Village Hall:-

26 January	23 February	23 March	27 April
18 May	22 June	27 July	17 August
28 Sept.*	26 Oct.	23 Nov.	14 Dec.

All enquiries: Deborah Hale 0780 5434 194

*Provisional date for outing

CHURCH CURIOSITIES

Many churches incorporate effigies in their architecture, both external and internal but those in the Church of St. Michael in Rudbaxton, Wales are a little different. Above the altar on the east wall is a row of effigies from the 17th century, strikingly made in such a lifelike way. Their lifeless eyes engage all those who enter the church.

The eerie figures are part of a monument belonging to the Howards (or Haywards) of Fletherhill. Their enormous, Renaissance-style tomb takes up the entirety of the Lady Chapel in the south part of the church.



The effigies are half-sized people with deeply detailed faces. Their lifelike appearances and their setting high up on the wall, tucked into in their own niches, really gives an unsettling vibe. This is not helped by the fact that many of them are holding skulls in their hands, as a reminder of our mortality in this world.

On the left of the tomb is George Howard (died 1665), standing alone. In the centre is James (died 1668) dressed as a clergyman, and Joanna Howard, dressed in mourning clothes and holding a black orb in her hand. Joanna isn't holding a skull because she paid for the memorial in her lifetime.

To the right are Thomas and Mary Howard (died 1682 and 1685, respectively). There's an unusual bloodstain on Thomas' chest, which symbolizes how he was defeated in a duel. Historical sources do not specify whether this duel was by sword or by pistol, nor the reason for it. Either way, he still perished as a result.

Times of Change

We were born before television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, plastic, contact lenses, videos and the Pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens.

Before dishwashers, tumble dryers, electric blankets, conditioners, drip-dry clothes and before man walked on the moon. We got married first and then lived together. We thought fast food was what you had in Lent. A Big Mac was an oversize raincoat, and crumpet was what we had for tea.

We existed before house-husbands, computer dating, and dual careers. A meaningful relationship meant getting on with cousins, and sheltered accommodation was where you waited for a bus. Before 1940, "Made in Japan" meant junk and 'making out' referred to how you did in exams.

Stud was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double-decker bus to the depot. In our day, cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was mown, coke was kept in the coalhouse, a joint was a piece of meat you had on Sundays, and pot was something you cooked in.

We who were born pre-war must be a hardy bunch when you think of the ways in which our world has changed, and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder we old 'uns are confused and that there is a generation gap.

But, with the Grace of God, and without social security, we have survived!

Found among the papers of George Parker (1917-1997), father of Gill Dury



'STOKE MOOR'

This year's delightful Christmas card drawn by Honor, is available in packs of 8 cards for just £5. Available from the Draycott Community Shop or from Honor herself (Honor Neave 01749 870053).

Proceeds in aid of St. Leonard's church funds.

St Leonard's Patronal and Thanksgiving Service

Wooden statue
of St. Leonard



On Sunday 2nd November, Ruth led our Patronal and Thanksgiving Service. This was a combination of celebrating St. Leonard, the patron saint of imprisoned people and prisoners of war and also a time to reflect and thank the wider community, who in their various roles help and support St. Leonard's and ensure it continues to flourish.

Ruth led three reflections based on these themes. The hymns were a mixture relating to the saints and thankfulness. The last hymn, *Ring Out The Bells*, was linked to the restoration and repair of the bells that will be happening.

At the end of the service a piece of music that was composed by Michael Taylor in 2009 for the Patronal Festival was performed. Afterwards, lots of lovely treats with tea and coffee was distributed to the congregation. It was wonderful to see so many enjoying the service.

Joanne Turner



PLOUGH SERVICE 3.00 PM
with afternoon tea to follow.

St. Lawrence's Church, Priddy
Sunday 18th January

Apparently, in the forthcoming New Year's Honours list, the man who invented gravy will have the highest honour in the kingdom Bistowed upon him.



2026 SAVE THE DATES

MORE INFORMATION :

🕒 3pm - 4.30pm

📍 Cheddar Village Hall

17th January

7th March

25th April (in St Andrew's)

13th June

12th September

17th October


6th December

All are welcome at these informal, all age, sessions which include art, craft, science, cooking, games, bible story and lots of fun, followed by everyone enjoying tea together and a chat with friends

 www.beneficecdrs.org

 [beneficecdrs](https://www.facebook.com/beneficecdrs)

 [beneficecdrs](https://www.instagram.com/beneficecdrs)

 01934 742535



Paul & Simon in CONCERT

SATURDAY
24TH
JANUARY
2026

St Andrew's
Church
Cheddar

Paul & Simon bring the
classic songs of *SIMON
& GARFUNKEL* to the
wonderful medieval
setting of St Andrew's
Church
7pm Sat 24/01/2026

Tickets
£12.50

Bar from 6pm in
the Village Hall

tickets online from
ticketsource.co.uk/st-andrews-cheddar

or from the Church Office (cash only)

Mon 2-3pm, Thurs 10-3pm
(excl. Mon 22/12/25 to Mon 5/1/2026)

FUN FACTS

HIPPOPOTOMONSTROSESQUIPPEDALIOPHOBIA is the fear of long words. First used in the 1st century BC.

CHAINSAWS were invented for childbirth, to speed up widening of pubic cartilage and remove diseased bone.

THE EIFFEL TOWER gains 3" in height each summer, due to heat expansion of the iron.

HUMAN TEETH are the only body part that cannot heal itself, as the enamel coating isn't living tissue.

A SHRIMP'S HEART is located in its head.

"RAISE A TOAST" is derived from the Roman habit of dropping a piece of toast into their wine, to ensure good health.

VENUS is the only planet to spin clockwise.

A BLUE WHALE'S HEARTBEAT can be heard two miles away.

'J' WAS THE LAST LETTER added to the English alphabet, in 1524. The letter 'I' was previously used to represent both.

In the course of an average lifetime, you'll inadvertently eat at least 70 different insects and 10 spiders.

MORE FUN FACTS

ULTRACREPIDARIAN describes a person opining on a subject they know nothing about.

JAPAN HAS OVER 200 KIT-KAT FLAVOURS. These are often created exclusively for certain regions in the country.

PIGS CANNOT SEE THE SKY, as their spine and neck anatomy prevents looking upwards.

‘SAY ‘PRUNES’’ was the common pre-1840 instruction when posing for a photograph, as saying ‘cheese’ was considered childish.

CROCODILES cannot stick their tongue out. A membrane holds it in place, in the roof of their mouth. *(Their teeth are pretty dangerous, though)*

A JIFFY is a real measure of time. It’s 1/100th of a second.

AN OSTRICH’S EYE is larger than its brain. *(Probably explains a lot...)*

IN SWITZERLAND, IT IS ILLEGAL TO OWN JUST ONE GUINEA PIG. They are considered social animals and having just one constitutes animal abuse.

SPREADING THE JOY

The sight of a Salvation Army brass band in a town or city, particularly around Christmastime has long been a familiar one. In 1963, it was decided that a 'poppier' approach would appeal to youngsters, as an alternative to the brass and timbrels of the many Citadel bands and thus the Joystings were born.

Formed around the organ-playing skills of Captain Joy Webb, the group originally comprised eight members but soon settled to the core five of Webb, Wycliffe Noble, Peter Dalziel, Sylvia Gair (later Dalziel) and Bill Davidson. As with much Salvationist output, a record label was sought and Regal Zonophone, which had long published Army recordings on many 78s and LPs, added the 'Strings to its artist roster; record labels being dark blue and silver, with a 'RZ 5xx' numbering system.

Unlike most of the Salvation Army bands, all the Joystings members composed original material in addition to traditional fare and the recordings mixed together this new material with the old. Captain Webb hated the group name, thinking it gave undue prominence to her



presence but was reluctantly persuaded that the title was very apt, in terms not just of the obvious allusion-cum-pun but also in the SA's mission to spread the word and joy of a life lived in God.



It was a curious anomaly that Regal Zonophone always credited the group as 'The Joy Strings', rather than the intended 'The Joystings'.

Never meant as an aggregation that would stay together forever, the first single was the Webb-penned *It's An Open Secret*, in February 1964. This reached the lower reaches of the chart, attaining a number 32 position.

Such invaluable exposure led to many tours and appearances on light entertainment and religious radio and television programmes worldwide. The group even appeared at The Playboy Club, London and The Blue Angel Night Club in Manchester. *A Starry Night* charted just lower, than *It's An Open Secret*, at #34, but the six singles, five EPs (extended players – four tracks instead of two) and two LPs all attest to the success of the message-spreading group.

In July 1967, as intended, the individual members of the Joystings were despatched to various SA bases, both home and abroad. Three members of the five still remain.

Anybody assuming the Joystings were solely proffering standard run-of-the-mill Christian pop was mistaken, as there was also a wide variety of musical styles were to be heard within their canon. Should anybody need convincing of this, listen to the rendition of *O Little Town Of Bethlehem* on Youtube. Bill Davidson sings it to the tune of *The House Of The Rising Sun*. An amazing amalgam.



The five British EPs (Extended Players) in release order, reading L-R, beginning at the top row.

The two LPs (Long Players) L-R

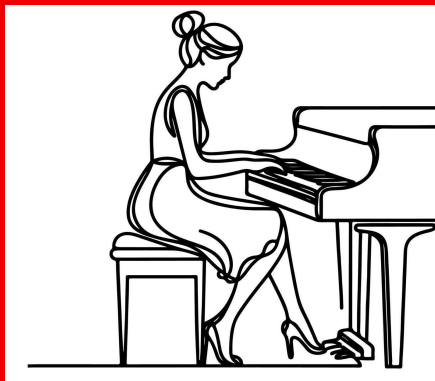


Christmas anagrams

- (1) CONGRESS LIAR (5,7)
- (2) CAN ASSAULT (5,5)
- (3) REFRESHED ERUDITE LONDONER (6,3,3,4,8)
- (4) DRASTIC CHARMS (9,4)
- (5) IN THE GLINTS (6,5)
- (6) ENJOY MAD SHARP (4,3,6)
- (7) UNREADY CABS (6,5)
- (8) GAP PAWN RIPPER (8,5)
- (9) I'M A POET, MADMEN (9,4)
- (10) SMART HERETICS (9,4)
- (11) OFF THE SANE PEST (5,2,7)
- (12) SLASH IN ACTION (5,8)
- (13) VICAR'S THEMES (9,3)
- (14) HONESTY WARMS FONT (6,3,7)
- (15) TINY PAY VITAL (8,4)
- (16) ROBUST SPURLESS (7,7)
- (17) STREAKY ROUT (5,6)
- (18) MUDDLING PUP (4,7)
- (19) WITH FT. LENGTH (6,5)
- (20) BE THE HELM (9)
- (21) ROBS TRUANTS (5,5)
- (22) A.I. RHYTHM SOLA (6,6)
- (23) DOTH JURIES? (6,4)
- (24) HI, ELEVATOR (4,6)
- (25) IL JESSI MU (5,4)
- (26) HUT MONITOR (4,6)

Answers on next page

THE ROSES' 20TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT



**Chase away those post-
Christmas blues at St. Peter's
Church, Draycott!**

**Come and enjoy a feast of music
for all tastes – plus a few
surprises – as Nicola and Barry
welcome their youthful guest
artistes**

BEATRICE POOLEY (14)

and

WILLIAM McCONNELL (9)

SUNDAY 28TH DECEMBER

4.00 PM

**Tickets: £10 per person (under 14s –
FREE)**

**Tickets available from 1st December
from Draycott Community Shop or the
Roses at Level Crossing (744838)**

*All proceeds go towards the
maintenance of St. Peter's Church*



CHRISTMAS ANAGRAM ANSWERS

(1) CAROL SINGERS (2) SANTA CLAUS (3) RUDOLF THE RED-NOSE REINDEER
(4) CHRISTMAS CARDS (5) SILENT NIGHT (6) MARY AND JOSEPH (7) BRANDY
SAUCE (8) WRAPPING PAPER (9) PANTOMIME DAME (10) CHRISTMAS TREE
(11) FEAST OF STEPHEN (12) SAINT NICHOLAS (13) CHRISTMAS EVE (14)
FROSTY THE SNOWMAN (15) NATIVITY PLAY (16) BRUSSEL SPROUTS (17)
ROAST TURKEY (18) PLUM PUDDING (19) TWELFTH NIGHT (20) BETHLEHEM
(21) STUART BURNS (22) HILARY THOMAS (23) JUDITH ROSE (24) THEA OLIVER
(25) JULIE SIMS (26) RUTH MOTION.

BENEFICE CHRISTMAS SERVICES

St. Andrew's, Cheddar

December 7th 9.00 AM Breakfast Service
December 7th 4.30 PM Christingle
December 14th 10.00 AM Holy Communion
December 21st 10.00 AM Holy Communion
December 21st 6.00 PM Candlelit Carols
December 24th 4.00 PM Crib Service
December 24th 11.30 PM Christmas Communion
December 25th 8.00 AM Christmas Comm. (BCP)
December 25th 10.00 AM Family Communion
December 28th 10.00 AM Holy Communion

St. Peter's, Draycott

December 7th 9.30 AM Holy Communion
December 14th 9.30 AM Morning Prayer
December 14th 4.00 PM Carols at The Laurels
December 14th 6.00 PM Carols at The Strawberry
Special
December 21st 9.30 AM Holy Communion
December 21st 4.00 PM Carol Service



December 24th 9.00 PM Christmas Eve Communion
December 25th 9.30 AM Christmas Morning Family
Worship
December 28th 9.30 AM Holy Communion

St. Leonard's, Rodney Stoke

December 7th 11.15 AM Holy Communion
December 14th 11.15 AM Christingle Service
December 21st 11.15 AM Holy Communion
December 24th 6.00 PM Candlelit Carols
December 25th 9.00 AM Christmas Communion
December 28th 11.15 AM BCP Communion

ALSO:-

December 15th 7.00 PM Ecumenical Carol
Singing Around The
Churches

This list excludes most midweek services and/or early Sunday services. Please check the relevant Pew Notes for same.

A BIG THANK YOU' TO EVERYONE

I once again thank everyone who has contributed to *Together's* success: writers, readers, those with suggestions,— you are all appreciated. As always, I extend very especial thanks to **Samm Richards**.

A very joyful, spiritual and peaceful Christmas and New Year to you all.

Ade Macrow - Editor



LETTER FROM AMERICA

Hello there, Cheddar!

It's nearly my 13th Christmas here in Colorado (no, I can't believe it either) and, as usual, I'm thinking of all those special Somerset memories. The star up on the hill; Festive Night; singing along with STARR; carols in four parts with Wayne and the rest of the choir; candlelight carols; walking to church for the Midnight Service and all the Christmas greetings on the way home – even spotting Father Christmas leaving Parson's Pen (or so we always told Philip!).

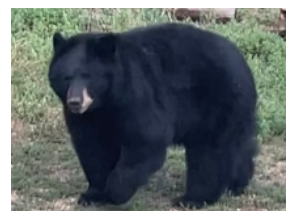
I had a brief trip to Cheddar in May, to commemorate 20 years since Denis died and I managed to catch up with a few old friends while I was there, thanks to MV Corporate Communion and a pub lunch.

It's been a quiet, if very rapid, year here in Colorado. We were a little disappointed in the summer: monsoon rains for an hour in the afternoon which washed out our driveway threshold but the "Fall" has been stunning with sunny days, postcard-perfect leaf displays and no snow as I write (beginning of November).

The wildlife is still around of course. We get our regular deer visitors and a few elk but had fewer hummingbirds this year. We did have a mountain lion racing past our living room window a few months ago and a young black bear visited twice in daylight, determined to find what we'd thrown in the garbage. It stayed quite a while – only feet from the house – while I filmed and the dogs went crazy!

We're both keeping pretty healthy in our little corner of the world, except for those nasties associated with age. We're both hoping to visit next June to attend another grandson's wedding. I hope we'll make it to Cheddar. I'll let you know.

*My very best wishes for Christmas and New Year,
Sue Paul*



NEW YEAR QUIZ

- (1) Which race added the month of January to the calendar?
- (2) Who added an extra day to January?
- (3) The earlier calendar consisted of only ten months. Where in the order did the newly-added January originally come?
- (4) The word 'January' derives from Janus. What was he considered god of?

(Answers below)



Given the lachrymose nature of many traditional country songs, it's said that the best way to play them is from the end to the beginning.

That way, your dog lives, your wife stays with you and you don't develop a drinking problem.

Q. What is green, prickly and flies through the air?

A. A hollycopter

Q: Why are Christmas trees bad at sewing?

A: They always drop their needles.

(1) The Romans. Around 700 BC, it is thought that Numa Pompilius added the month. (2) Julius Caesar in 46 BC. It thus became known as the Julian calendar. (3) Ten. Aforesaid Pompilius also added February. (4) Janus was considered the god of doors and gates. He was chosen for January, to signify the start of something new, by symbolically passing through a door.

St Andrew's Church Reordering project

The congregation will by now be aware of the plans for reordering St Andrew's Church which are shown in the St. Nectan Chapel.

In order to respect the integrity of the building and yet provide the necessary facilities for the future has taken many years of planning, design, debate and rethinking to arrive at a solution which is acceptable to the Diocesan Advisory Committee. That approval has now been given and we now await the final round of consultations before permission to proceed (a faculty) can be given from the Diocesan Chancellor. Once we have the faculty we will then be able to approach grant making bodies for financial help.

In the meantime, money has already been raised and more will be raised through future events (see further details elsewhere in these pages). When the project was launched in June many of St Andrew's people took Smartie tubes to fill with £1 or 20p coins. These were returned at the Harvest Service and I am delighted to report that a wonderful £1,376 was raised in this way. Thank you for all who contributed. This shows your commitment to this project. Your ongoing support both financially and with future events will be much appreciated.

Judith Rose (Chairman – Reordering Group)



**Messy Church
Christingle**

Sunday 7th December
3pm - 4.30pm
Cheddar Village Hall

Come and join in the Christingle crafts, and more followed by a yummy tea.

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

To help with an idea of numbers, please let Samm know if you hope to come:
beneficecdrs@gmail.com

MORE INFORMATION :

- Benefice of Cheddar, Draycott and Rodney Stoke
- Cheddar Village Hall
- www.beneficecdrs.org

Followed by Messy Church Christingle Service, where we will be making our Christingles, at 4.30pm in St Andrew's Church, Cheddar

 The Children's Society

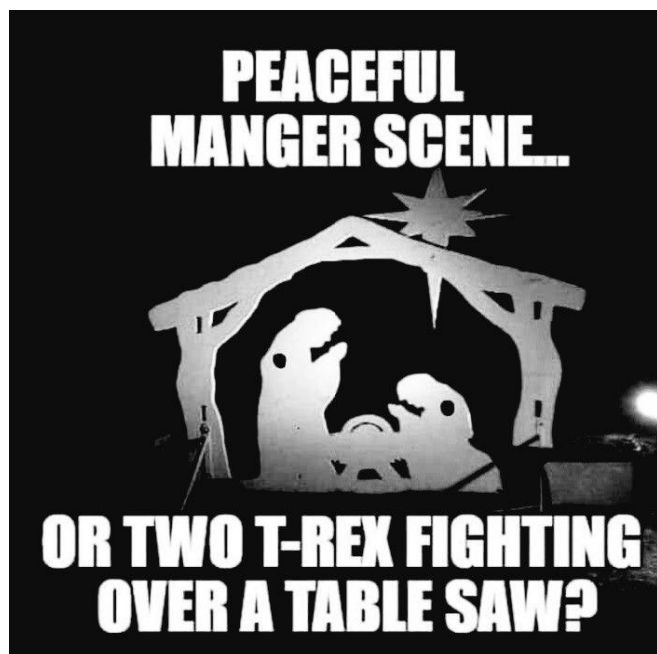


St. Leonard's Church
CHRISTINGLE

Sunday 11.15 AM
14 Dec.

Join us and learn how to make your Christingle orange, to take home and discover its meaning.

JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS!



Q: What do you call blind reindeer?
A: No-eye deer.

Q: How do snowmen shop?
A: They use the winternet.

Q: Who hides in a Christmas bakery?
A: A mince spy.



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Churchwarden: **Megan James** (01749) 870555

Treasurer: **Sue Walker**

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Dawn Hill	[C]	John English	[D]
Margaret Gelder	[C]	Honor Neave	[RS]
		Ann Percival	[RS]



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(NB: inclusion cannot be guaranteed in next edition if deadline has passed)

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www.beneficecdrs.org

St. Peter's, Draycott:

www.beneficecdrs.org

St. Leonard's, Rodney Stoke:

www.beneficecdrs.org

Cheddar Village Hall:

cvhbooking@gmail.com (John Sammut)

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walker.owlsnest@gmail.co.uk (Sue Walker)

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St. Peter's: **07828 150 807** (John English)

St. Leonard's: **(01749) 870 555** (Megan James)

