Issue 74 November 2026

The Quarterly

St Mary's Church, Ware Community News & Views

Light Fantastic?

I really don't like dark mornings. Even though I think of myself as a "morning person", it's difficult to accept that morning has even begun when I can't see the colour of my clothes without putting on the light. I notice this particularly when starting the day early enough to catch a commuter train – and it's still only October, we'll see much more darkness yet!



The season of Autumn, turning inexorably into chilly winter, brings many festivals where darkness **and** light are prominent. These include both religious and secular occasions.





Right at the beginning of November, we celebrate All Saints – all the beloved people who, by virtue of their faith and steadfastness, now exist in the light of the divine presence. This major festival shows us that we are all potentially Saints, all invited to that "one equal light".

Bonfire Night brings lots of colour and excitement, rockets and bright sparklers.....

Remembrance Day reminds us that the fury and tragedy of war mirrors a symbolic darkness, with peace bringing the light of life and recovery. The bleakness of the battlefields of World War I, the unimaginable horror of the concentration camps and the millions of their victims, blitzes and jungle conflicts, live long in the memory, even for those of us who hadn't been born when those conflicts happened.



We seem to slide down into the darkest days of the year, going to work in the dark and coming home in the dark too. No wonder the squirrels and hedgehogs hibernate!



So roll on December! Dickensian Evening, when everyone braves the cold and wet to come out with lanterns and light candles; fairy lights and illuminations in and outside our houses; the Christingle with its candle in the beribboned orange; St Lucy's Day, celebrated in Scandinavian countries where, let's face it, their midwinter darkness is rather more significant than ours!



All these festivals point us, year by year, to the one True Light who came into the world. The baby in the manger is depicted with an internal glow; the shepherds awake to a blazing light in the sky; the Wise Men follow a shimmering star. We too can turn to that dawn, that Emmanuel – God With Us, light in the darkness.

Ysmena's letter



This edition of Quarterly goes to press shortly after the installation of Bishop Andrew Rumsey as Bishop of St Albans *(see p3 for an account of that service)*. When new bishops arrive, they come ready to see and hear new things, and to bring new things. Our first Diocesan Synod with Bp Andrew present was on Saturday 17th October. What follows are a few sections from his first Presidential Address, which show some of what he is listening for and bringing to us. You can read the whole address on the diocesan website https://www.stalbansdiocese.org

'Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it.'
1 Cor. 12v27

From October it is possible to see in the fields those remarkable flocks ('murmurations') of starlings that are sometimes visible over the fields – great swirling congregations that arrange into beautiful geometric patterns, like a typhoon or some great, whirling spirit. By plotting clusters of dots on a computer screen and giving them various commands, scientists have discovered each starling finds its own way amid the flock by following three simple precepts: fly fast, follow another bird, don't crash!



Three starling commandments. These commands allow for a beautiful balance between individual expression, random interpretation and group formation – what we would call community. Fly fast, follow another bird, don't crash.

Rules or morals for common life are essential for people attempting to live together… In our unsettled and increasingly frantic political discourse, in our gathered and online conversations, we are urgently in need of a new kind of consensus – a new way to fly in formation.

Friends, in these early weeks of my time with you, I have been so grateful for the signs of common life and hopeful imagination that I've already witnessed: in murmurations large and small… If I may say so (borrowing from George Harrison) there's something in the way you move.

It is not our task to save the world by our own immense activity, but by the Holy Spirit's power, to live and move in such a way that others will see God has already done so in the Lord Jesus. The three starling commandments I have begun to commend… are these: charity, locality, integrity. Our discussion, and perhaps especially our disagreement must have as its keynote that generous, adventurous love and charitable posture which is the character of the body of Christ. For no body just has parts: it has personality. And love is the Christian personality.

Ysmena



Bishop Andrew, Bishop of St Albans

Bonnie writes: Our new Diocesan bishop, the Rt Rev Dr Andrew Rumsey (*left)*, was installed on 19 September. Mike and I were fortunate to take Ysmena's tickets (she had a wedding blessing at St Mary's). So, all dressed up, off we went to St Albans Cathedral, and experienced a most joyous, moving and thought-provoking service.

The cathedral was packed with a supportive crowd from every parish in the Diocese, and from further afield. The Archbishop of Canterbury's representatives, bishops from linked overseas dioceses, ecumenical and interfaith dignitaries, civic officials including Mayors from Bedfordshire and St Albans, High Sheriffs, Lords-Lieutenant…a very grand procession……came slowly through the Cathedral and took their places so that the service could begin. With the Cathedral choir, the music was of course splendid; the congregation also sang the hymns with joy and vigour.

Before a bishop can be installed, he first has to come in to the Cathedral…… so, striking the West door with his pastoral staff (from his time as Bishop of Ramsbury), Bishop Andrew entered to a fanfare and was greeted by lay people from various organisations, before being given his mandate and swearing oaths of allegiance, obedience and fidelity. The Bishops of Bedford and Hertford anointed him; he was vested in the Diocesan cope, seated in the Cathedra (bishop's seat) in the Quire, and presented to the whole congregation of about 1500 people.

After an anthem and a Bible reading, José read the parable of the sower and the seed as the Gospel for the day.

Bishop Andrew preached a memorable sermon: partly drawing on his own experiences of taking part in the Easter Monday youth pilgrimage (he had discovered an envelope full of pilgrimage badges while he prepared to move to St Albans), and referring to the Gospel, he warmly taught that however small we feel our faith to be, it is nurtured by the soil of our church communities and the encouragement of our brother and sister Christians. In times of change and uncertainty we must also be that fertile soil, so that the eternal message of love and life will not be lost.



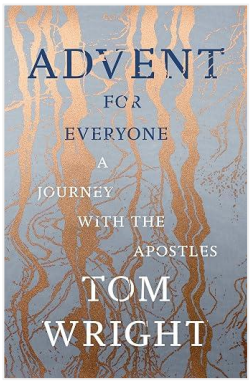
(A full transcript of the sermon can be found on the diocesan website at https://www.stalbansdiocese.org/news/were-on-our-way-bishop-st-albans-installation-sermon/)

Then prayers of intercession, the blessing of the Bishop, the presentation of the Crozier, the blessing of the congregation, the city and the Diocese, and we gradually made our way outside where much merriment took place! Elderflower fizz, little cakes, many photographs and of course meetings and greetings of old friends, families, clergy from far and near.

This picture of Bishop Andrew with his family (right) was taken just after the service.



Advent and Christmas



A few things.....and there will be more! **Advent Sunday** is on 29 November, not even a month away, and will be marked by an evening service with Advent music and readings at 5.00pm.

During Advent, we have the opportunity to engage in personal study day by day – one suggestion is a readable and accessible book by Tom Wright, *Advent for everybody – a Journey with the Apostles* (*pictured left*), and there may be a get-together nearer Christmas for us to share our experience of the book and what we have found in our study. More information to come!

St Mary's Christmas card – a message of God's love to the parish

Each December, we deliver to every home in the Parish a Christmas card with greetings from the church and details of all the Christmas services.

We like to get the card delivered in plenty of time as there are special services fairly early in the month.

This is our opportunity to bring Christmas greetings to everyone in the Parish.

Due to age and accident, some of our deliverers are now either unable to help, or need to have a simpler route, avoiding stairs, or closer to their home.

If everyone who is able can take part, it makes the job easier for everyone.

Please consider whether you can help with this and let Celia know either by email: **celia.higson@talk21.com**, phone: **01920 461376** or speak to her on Sunday mornings!

Christmas Together

This Christmas Day (yes, actually on 25th December), Ware Christmas Together will once again open its doors. If you are looking for a welcoming place to spend Christmas Day, you're invited to join us. The meal is provided free of charge, although donations are always appreciated to help keep things going.

We welcome anyone who might be without company on Christmas day to the Age Concern Riverside Hall in Ware. You can come as a guest, or a volunteer-guest where you can assist with serving and join in the meal, ensuring our older guests have friendly conversations and support.

Transport can be arranged for those who need it and, for people who are unable to attend in person, a Christmas lunch can be delivered to their home. To sign up, simply call 01992 531833 or visit our website https://waretogether.org.uk/

Together, we can make this Christmas another wonderful celebration of friendship, kindness and community.

Christmas Flowers



The St Mary's Flower group will be decorating our beautiful church for Christmas as usual.

I know many of you like to make a donation towards the flowers, perhaps in memory of a loved one or a special occasion.

If you would like to do this, please give the money to Margaret Meldrum or one of the flower group members. Many thanks.

Reverse advent calendar

A brilliant suggestion from Jackie Turner - for the Ware Foodbank

St Mary's congregation have always been faithful supporters of Ware Foodbank since our opening in 2019. We are so encouraged and grateful for all the help you give.

Here's a great way to help those without even basic food during our coldest months. While we are doing shopping for ourselves during Advent, we put an item a day into a bag or box for the foodbank. You could do this as you open your advent calendar window.

At the end of Advent we will arrange times and places where the food can be dropped off, or we can arrange a collection from your home if you need one.

Your gifts will be so valuable in January and February. These are usually our busiest months with desperate families seeking help.

It's really surprising how much food poverty there actually is in Ware, not evident in our day to day lives.

Once you see the delight and relief of families receiving food parcels you realise how valuable every donation is.



Thank you so much St Mary's! I do hope this idea will be taken up.

We would be most grateful for tins of: meat, potatoes, fruit, custard, rice pudding, vegetables. Or long-life milk, washing-up liquid, bars of soap.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Twelve Days of Christmas



The Archbishop of Canterbury has compiled a book for everyone to use from Christmas Day to Epiphany. 12 daily comments and reflections from different Christians, to give us space to think about what Christmas means in many situations. It costs just £1.00 and can be ordered easily from Julia in the BookNook.

Fairtrade in Ware

Liz Finch

In this year's recent Fairtrade Fortnight (this now takes place in September), the Ware group highlighted awareness of Fairtrade goods available in Ware with poster displays and Fairtrade drinks and refreshments.

2 pages of signatures were sent to our MP Josh Dean, asking for the Government to take action to ensure that Fairtrade goods, farmers and workers get a fairer deal through better prices and decent working conditions.

By choosing Fairtrade you are supporting: Fair prices and decent working conditions; environmentally-friendly farming practices; a strong voice for farmers and workers; gender equality and a better future for young people.

Over 30,000 Fairtrade products are sold every year. This supports a network of 1.9m farmers and workers in 68 countries through a unique pricing model which sets rigorous standards across the supply chain and fosters strong producer communities through local and regional networks.

They are the only certification system to set minimum prices for all major commodities - an essential safety net for producers.

Where to buy Fairtrade in Ware

Tesco's: Bananas; Kleine Zalze red and white wine; Clipper teas; Tesco's and Machu Pichu ground coffee; Cadbury's, Nestle, Green and Blacks and Toney's chocolate; Green and Blacks cocoa

Sainsbury's: Bananas; Red Label teas; various sugars; Cadbury's and Toney's chocolate; wine

Costcutter/ Co-op: Tea; coffee (ground and instant); cut flowers; chocolate; Co-op own brand biscuits; wine;

Asda: Tea; coffee; chocolate

Cafes and pubs: Sfizio: Fairtrade sugar

Churches and Schools: All churches supply Fairtrade refreshments, and several schools ran Fairtrade events in last year's Fairtrade Fortnight.



Nearly magic!

José tells us a magician's secret.....

I mentioned when I introduced myself in the previous Quarterly issue that "Ah! I nearly forgot. I was an amateur magician in a "previous life". So, it's possible that a sermon might be delivered with a bit of magic. I'm not promising anything!" Many of you have approached me to ask about this, but as I said, that was in a 'previous life' and most of it is now in boxes. That said, I will try to do something. It won't be magic, but as the famous Paul Daniels used to say, 'You'll like this – not a lot, but you'll like it.'

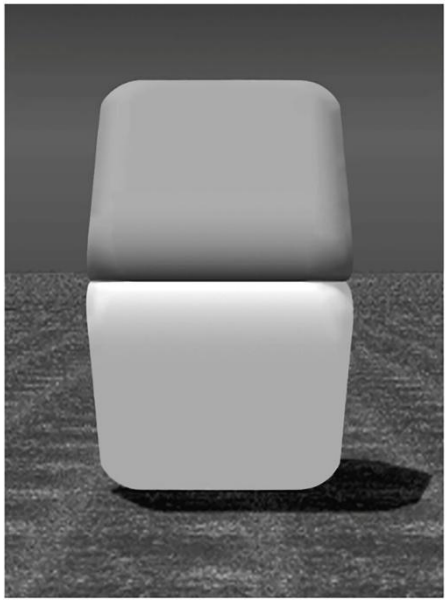
Magicians use a legacy of informal experience stretching back thousands of years to cheat the audience's brain. They know exactly how our grey matter works and exploit every shortcut it uses. They get you to look at places where nothing happens while important things are happening somewhere else. They make you remember things that never actually happened. They know what you are going to see, even when it is not there. This optical illusion that I present to you below will impact you, unless you already know about it.

Which lozenge is darker: The one on top or the one on the bottom?

Do you think the top half is darker than the bottom? Cover the central area with your finger and see what happens.

They are identical, aren't they?

This is known as the Cornsweet illusion, the Craik–O'Brien–Cornsweet illusion, or the Craik–Cornsweet illusion, and was first described by Tom Cornsweet in the late 1960s. Because the object casts a shadow, our brain 'sees' a source of light at the top. Therefore, the only way to interpret the image is that the top half is illuminated and darker than the bottom half, which is in the shadowed area but appears clearer. The brain is quite bad at interpreting shades in two dimensions, as it tries to interpret them as three-dimensional objects. This means that the shade colour is processed as light rather than colour, which confuses the brain.



However, when you put your finger along the edge, your brain loses the ability to process where the light is coming from, and processes the image completely differently. It looks as if the colour of the image changes in front of your eyes (which is impossible).

As I said, you'll like this, not a lot, but you'll like it. If you hadn't seen this optical illusion before, it would look almost magical. It still takes me by surprise every time I see it.

Image Source:
https://journals.openedition.org/estetica/1799#tocfrom1n2

Illustration by Purves, D., Shimpi, A., Lotto, R.B., "The Journal of Neuroscience", 19, 1999

If you want to know all the science behind this, you can read the American Scientist, *Why We See What We Do,*

https://www.americanscientist.org/sites/americanscientist.org/files/20051220143043_306.pdf

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – 18 to 25 January 2027

The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2027 is: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

The prayers and reflections for 2027 were prepared by the Irish Council of Churches and the Council for Ecumenism and Dialogue of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. *Please turn the page*



Drawing on Luke 12:22-34 and the image of Christ as the Good Shepherd, the materials invite Christians to move beyond fear towards radical trust, vigilant hope, and responsible service. They encourage churches to consider how letting go of fear and keeping watchful hearts can become catalysts for reconciliation, cooperation, and shared Christian witness.

There will be a service on Sunday 17 January. Look out for details!

God With Us

A prayer installation inspired by Orthodox iconography.

Georgina Hall, a student at All Nations Christian College, created an installation which filled our Lady Chapel in mid-October. Three aspects – God With Us, God Around Us, and God in our Journey - were depicted by pictures, images from icons, prayers, and words to make us think carefully about our faith and how it affects our journey through life.



You could make a short but deep pilgrimage through the themes: the photos here show only a hint of the whole.

Left: God With Us, many languages, a map, somewhere to pray. The words say *"God is not distant, He is a close God"* in many languages.

Right: God Around Us, a pause on the journey, it is God's voice we long to hear.





Left: God in Our Journey, the journey continues as long as we live. The image shows Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

This icon of the Virgin and child, right, reminds us that even the Holy Family had to pause in their journey, finding refuge in a distant place, before returning to their home in Nazareth.



Recycle, re-use, repair – St Mary's banners as a new creation

"The Fabric Folk is a textile reuse studio on a mission to empower creatives by offering reclaimed materials that inspire innovation and local circular economy." They work locally and with several organisations including Hertfordshire University, East Herts Council, Veolia, the Co-op; their website (see below) offers bundles of fabrics for sale, and workshops (both themed and more general) to help people repair and re-use fabric which might otherwise go to landfill.

When Marina Buswell was thinking of a Rogation Walk round the parish boundary, she was keen to create some "wearable" banners which the Rogation walkers could carry/wear on their backs to give prominence to our Christian values and identity:
Love, Peace, Joy, Growth, Faith and Hope .



Using scraps and pieces of reclaimed fabric, she worked with Fabric Folk to design and make simple but clear banners – and Children's Church also made some, using fabric and glue rather than intricate stitching.

These were "tidied up" by kind and skilful sewing angels!

You might have seen the "St Mary's Ware" banner lying beneath the Central Altar, or elsewhere in church.



All these items have been created using discarded, previously used material, so the banners are sustainable, repurposed and still beautiful. They open us to the idea of rebirth and redemption – for ourselves as well as the fabric!

Look at their website https://www.thefabricfolk.com/ for more details of Fabric Folk.

Montgomery Heights

This is a Christian orphanage and place of care for children in Zimbabwe, which we have supported for many years. We continue to hold Fiona, the staff and children in our prayers.

The All Saints' "Sausage Sizzle" is held in aid of their work in Zimbabwe, and the need never decreases as the political situation in that country drives inflation higher and higher.

Food, clothes, education are all cripplingly expensive, but their faith is strong and so far God has always supplied their wants.
When a new letter comes from Fiona we'll be sure to pin it up in church, for all to see and share.



Lunchtime Concerts for the rest of 2026.

There are three more concerts this year for us all to enjoy. Please note the dates in your diary!

Monday 2nd November:

How great it is to welcome "home grown" talent!

Celia Higson clarinet and Edward Dodge piano will perform an interesting and varied forty minute programme.

Thursday 19th November:

Last year we were all amazed at the quality of performances from students at **Haileybury College.** I am delighted to welcome members of the music department to St. Mary's once again.

Monday 7th December:

Our final offering for this year will be from **Mr David and Mrs Margaret Silkoff** playing forty minutes of **piano duets**. Four hands on one piano!

All these concerts will begin at 12.30 at St. Mary's Ware. No tickets are needed, and there will be a retiring collection in aid of church funds.

The Concert Café will be available in St. Mary's Hall from 11.30.

So please make an effort to come, and if you can, bring a friend.

2027 No concert on Bank Holiday Monday (4 January), so make a note that:

Thursday 21st January will be the first Lunchtime Concert of 2027.

I look forward to meeting you again at these events. Best wishes. Mark.

Few reviews from previous concerts – look out for the Dawn to Dusk section, p11 & 12! But we warmly welcome the "live comments" from some of our younger visitors, below:



St Catherine's School music comments

Students from St Catherine's School often visit St Mary's for a concert, and are quite discerning critics. They heard Rebekah Tan's piano recital in October. Here are some quotes from Year 5 sent to us by their teacher:

I enjoyed the second piece of music because it was very high pitched and I was surprised by how she had memorised the music and played it all correctly. I was impressed that she played at such a fast tempo. *Arthur*.

It was impressive that she was able to play so many keys at once. *Harry*

It made me imagine there was a ballet dancer in front of me, twirling around. *Evie*

I noticed that she suddenly changed the music from subtle and calm to loud and exciting. I enjoyed it because just as it was calming me down, it made me jump because it went upbeat! *Ivy*

I noticed how the lady's facial expressions changed constantly during playing, showing that she was working hard to play the music. I was so impressed that she could remember it all and do so many things at once. *Sonya*

[Photo of Rebekah from her website]

Music and Fellowship: our Concert Café

An appreciation of the warmth of the "St Mary's welcome" by Phyllis Ballam

We at St. Mary's appreciate how fortunate we are to have our wonderful series of lunchtime concerts, started years ago by Marion Smith.

What some of us may not realise is that their fame has spread far and wide outside our parish – and town – boundaries. This has resulted in a different fellowship mainly among those who attend, not only the concerts, but take refreshment beforehand in our "Concert Café". Thanks to Derek Day the café has become a regular feature of concert days, 11.30 before every concert. When I was there recently everyone had missed Derek; they were enquiring about him and were extremely sorry to hear about his incapacity and expressed warm wishes for his recovery.



Most noticeable is the fact that people do not, generally, sit at a table alone but join someone nearby. People chat about where they have come from, one regular visitor comes by public transport from Highgate. Others speak of friends they are expecting to join them. Sometimes there are newcomers to the area who come to the café. This seems to me an example of our church being friendly and welcoming. I feel there may be benefits for anyone who is feeling lonely and unhappy in joining this friendly group in the time before the concert starts - and then they will also feel uplifted by the wonderful music!

Dawn to Dusk, 3rd October

Linn Parker writes: The idea of an all-day event was first suggested as part of this year's fund-raising, way back in the spring, and gradually evolved into a full-day performing arts event.

When I launched this at the end of July, I had no idea that, with the exception of the Sheering Brass Quintet, all the performers would come from St Mary's, and with such a variety of talent to showcase. Music was obviously to be expected, but we also had poetry, drama and comedy in the mix. There was also plenty going on off-stage. The flower arrangers had dressed the church with some wonderful Harvest displays. The cake-bakers produced a fabulous variety of lovely things to eat, which were sold with hot drinks in the Churchyard Café by a hard-working team of servers and baristas.

Stewards kept the area for the artistes to assemble clean and welcoming. The tech team made sure that the right equipment was in the right place at the right time. I hope that everyone who contributed in any way to the day is aware of how much their efforts were appreciated - not forgetting everyone who came to listen and show their support.

We finished with the Hymnathon, twelve hymns which got the most votes in the ballot, plus *Jerusalem* and the *National Anthem*. If your particular favourite did not make the cut, there is still hope. Ysmena has the list of all the hymns requested, so any of them may turn up in a service.

We overran by 10 minutes. Not bad for an 11-hour event. My thanks again to all involved.

Please turn the page for a brief review



Noah *(right)* played exciting and tricky trombone pieces; then he sang popular songs from classic music shows (including *Les Misérables, West Side Story*). Talent, enthusiasm, youth – what's not to like!



Lizzie *(left)* accompanied Noah, and also read *Arundel Tomb* by Philip Larkin as part of another act.



Carol read some of Derek's poetry from the lectern *(left)*, and one poem was recorded for him to hear. These were reflective and nostalgic pieces, written from the heart.



Helena *(right and left)* came on in a Victorian bustle to sing beautiful English and Irish folk songs. Beginning with *Waly, Waly* with its romantic and rueful verses, it was then great fun to see Helena performing *Polly Oliver*, such a well-known narrative song, with a costume change mid-verse as young Polly appears "as a soldier" in frogged uniform.





Mat Wilson *(right)* sang some popular songs which were accompanied on his guitar, well-known classics such as *Leaving on a Jet Plane,* and *Scarborough Fair*. The audience was encouraged to join in with Ralph McTell's famous *Streets of London*, and did so with enthusiasm!

There isn't space for everyone's acts – and some we haven't photographed – but of note was the duo of John Higson and Robert Evans *(left)*, friends and musical colleagues for many years, who played organ, trumpet, piano compositions they had written for each other, as well as more classical pieces. Emily *(right)* brought both bassoon and flute, playing classics and light-hearted music.





In addition – our choristers, beautifully composed in their performance with Mr Crookes; Ian Little with a comedy set including PG Wodehouse and Mark Twain; Celia with Edward playing organ, piano, clarinet; Steve in his Danny La Rue persona with lots of favourite music hall songs; Bonnie and Mike as a 600-year-old couple (effigy on a tomb!) reminiscing over their life and the years after……thanks to Michael Frayn for that! Marion and Linn had started the day with a reading of the Bible's longest Psalm, no. 119, all 176 verses! Don't forget Ysmena on piano, Mark's recording of himself, and the stunning St Mary's Brass Quintet from Sheering – a rousing set full of familiar music. Apologies if I have forgotten anyone……



Musings of a Church Mouse **"***dictated" to Ian Little*

I, and generation upon generation of my ancestors, have been scuttling around amongst you pious bipeds since the time of the Fair Maid of Kent. Mostly unobserved, a few 'near misses', people started bringing dogs into church. Great lolloping creatures too slow in every sense to catch us. Thank goodness they leave their cats at home.

However I could meander along for ever. The changes that have fluttered by like our destructive cousins in the belfry. There were colourful spectacles and clouds of wonderfully scented smoke. My Uncle Augustus explained that this was because most of the congregation were, even to a rodent, less than fragrant. Market Stalls came into the church, no pews then so it was a lot easier. They even had something called Church Ales which meant the church became a tavern. What times for us mice. Beer (as every fool knows) requires food to soak it up. Copious amounts fell to the floor, giving rich pickings for our tribe.

There has been a revival of sorts but mainly in the Church Hall. Most Sundays, coffee and biscuits, but there are outbreaks of wine and savouries. Need I add my favourite is cheese straws and they're made from millet or did I mishear something? Humans are more decorous now and less reaches the carpet. That which does is gobbled up by the monstrous Henry.

Now I'm reaching the central point of my tale. The Modern Church is unfair to mice! Early this Autumn you held a celebration of harvest. A travesty of what some of us remember.

For the week preceding the festival – every ledge and sill was filled with a rich bounty of orchard, garden and allotment. Piles of apples and pears jostled for attention with bunches of carrots, firm hearted cabbages were bookended by mighty marrows. Cucumbers lurked among carefully stacked pyramids of tomatoes; sheaves of corn bedecked the high altar and, best of all, a beautiful handcrafted loaf in the form of a sheaf stood by the font. We were careful only to nibble at the back of the loaf so our depredations were hardly noticed.



What do we get now? Much more Variety – tropical fruits, exotic vegetables, fish and meat, all securely packaged in tins and plastic and glass, with illustrations mouth-wateringly depicting the delights within. So frustrating! To add insult to injury, all is gathered from St Mary's and taken to a Food Bank. No mouse can draw on account there.

One final complaint. Communion used to be based on bread. Servers carved a crusty loaf at the altar. Some servers were a little inept and there were plenty of crumbs for all. Now it's little white discs compounded of some sort of soluble polystyrene. No taste whatsoever. Humans seem to like them. They queue patiently to receive them from the lady with a crazy dog and sometimes they extol its virtues by singing *Bread of Heaven* or even *Panis Angelicus*.

Must scurry! heard rumours of a Sausage Sizzle in the Hall. Tootle Pip.

Fundraising to fix the Hall and the South Porch – Roger's update

Our fundraising campaign and activities continue. Your generosity with financial donations and gifts of time, efforts and talents has been terrific. Thank you everyone.
What has been happening since the last Quarterly?

- The Organ Festival in July was a great success raising just over £1,500.

Please turn the page

- The tremendous efforts of the Wild Four on their cycle challenge to Walsingham in the heat of the July summer brought in the tremendous sum of £2,660.
- At the time of writing, the final donations for the day-long *Dawn to Dusk* of performances from talented people are still coming in but the funds raised will be £2000+ !



- The *Whose Wine is it?* evening *(left)* was a splendid and hilarious affair, raising in the region of £1300.
- The St Mary's merchandise range now includes tea towels and Christmas cards. We have covered all the procurement costs and now show a surplus of £300. There will be a stall at the Christmas Fair and Dickensian Evening. Thank you to everyone who has placed Christmas orders.

Thank you for your great efforts with respect to fundraising activities. The fundraising appeal with events and donations has raised in excess of £46,000 and together with some small legacies, an expected grant from the Friends of St Mary's and historical balances which the PCC have set aside, the current funds available for works are in the region of £65,000.
A New Year's Day Viennese concert in the afternoon is now confirmed and tickets will be on sale shortly (see below).
The fundraising position seems always to be 'on the move' - do they call it dynamic!? I hope this update is helping to keep you in the picture.
The final sentence is the same as in the last Quarterly - the message remains the same.
Thank you for all you have done, and encouraged, and said, and given, to get us to where we are now. So many have given so much in so many ways. Roger

A Viennese New Year's Day Concert – on New Year's Day!

Friday 1 January at 4.30pm

You don't have to travel to Vienna for the traditional New Year's Day Concert this forthcoming New Year. The Maltings Sinfonia under the baton of Chris Tilbury will be returning to St Mary's on the afternoon of New Year's Day with a programme of Viennese music. Yes - Strauss et al. A real treat is in store!! Tickets will be on sale towards the end of November. Chris and the musicians are supporting St Mary's to raise funds to fix the Hall and the South Porch (thank you to them).
What a way to start 2027!! Put it in your diary now.

What's on (not an exhaustive list – do keep looking out for any additional events).

November

Sun 1	**All Saints Day** 8.00am Eucharist 10.00am Eucharist with Children's church 5.00pm Choral Evensong followed by Sausage Sizzle at 6.30pm
Mon 2	11.30am churchyard café 12.30pm Lunchtime concert: Celia Higson and Edward Dodge, clarinet and piano 2.00pm Board Games café 7.30pm PCC meeting
Wed 4	11.00am Eucharist
Thu 5	8.00pm "Space"
Sat 7	9.30am Maintenance morning 12.30pm chamber concert: the Priory Singers from Royston,

	singing on themes of Remembrance
Sun 8	**Remembrance Sunday** 8.00am & 10.00 Eucharist 2.30pm Remembrance Service, St Mary's, followed by wreath laying at the War Memorial
Mon 9	7.30pm Study group, 15 Warner Rd: Marie South on Bible translation and her work with Wycliffe Bible Translators
Wed 11	11.00am Wreath laying at the War Memorial 11.30am Eucharist
Thu 12	8.00pm "Space"
Sat 14	**7.00pm Friends of St Mary's Quiz Night**
Sun 15	**Safeguarding Sunday** 8.00 Eucharist 10.00am Eucharist with Children's church 5.00pm Evensong
Wed 18	11.00am Eucharist
Thu 19	11.30am churchyard café 12.30pm lunchtime concert: Haileybury musicians 8.00pm "Space"
Sat 21	10.00 – 12.30 Christmas Fayre
Sun 22	8.00 and 10.00am Eucharist
Mon 23	3.00pm Faith Development committee
Wed 25	11.00am Eucharist
Thu 26	All day **–** Organ tuning 8.00pm "Space"
Sun 29	**Advent Sunday** Launch of the Travelling Crib 8.00am and 10.00am Eucharist 5.00pm Evening Advent service

December

Wed 2	11.00am Eucharist 3.30pm Rota meeting
Thu 3	8.00pm "Space"
Fri 4	**Dickensian Evening –** helpers and volunteers please
Sun 6	8.00am Eucharist
	10.00am Eucharist with Children's church 4.00pm Christingle service
Mon 7	11.30am churchyard café 12.30pm Lunchtime concert: David Silkoff and Margaret Macham, piano duets 2.00pm Board Games café 7.30pm Study group, 15 Warner Rd: Christmas event
Wed 9	11.00am Eucharist
Thu 10	pm Pinewood School Christmas service 8.00pm "Space"
Sun 13	8.00 & 10.00am Eucharist
Mon 14	10.00am St Catherine's School end of term service
Wed 16	11.00am Eucharist
Thu 17	10.00am St Mary's School end of term service 8.00pm "Space"
Sun 20	8.00am Eucharist 10.00am Eucharist with Children's church pm Choir practice
Mon 21	3.00pm Ashwood Home carol service: come along and sing!
Tue 22	7.00pm Carol Service
Wed 23	11.00am Eucharist and carols at Snowdrop Care Home
Thu 24	**Christmas Eve** 4.00pm Crib Service 11.00pm Midnight Mass
Fri 25	**Christmas Day** No 8.00am service 10.00am Eucharist
Sun 27	**John the Apostle** 8.00 & 10.00am Eucharist
Wed 30	11.00am Eucharist tbc

January 2027

Fri 1	4.30pm A Viennese New Year's Day concert, Maltings Sinfonia
Sun 3	8.00am Eucharist 10.00am Eucharist with Children's church

Mon 4	**(**No concert) 2.00pm Board Games café
Wed 6	**Epiphany** 11.00am Eucharist with hymns
Thu 7	8.00pm "Space"
Sun 10	**Baptism of Christ** 8.00am & 10.00am Eucharist
Mon 11	7.30pm Study group 15 Warner Road: José will talk about his life and the changes which led him to ministry
Wed 13	11.00am Eucharist
Thu 14	8.00pm "Space"
Sun 17	8.00 am Eucharist; 10.00am Eucharist with Children's church 5.00pm Evening service
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	
Wed 20	11.00am Eucharist
****Quarterly deadline****	
Thu 21	11.30am churchyard café 12.30pm Lunchtime concert 8.00pm "Space"
Sun 24	8.00 & 10.00am Eucharist 12.00 Wedding preparation session
Wed 27	11.00am Eucharist
Thu 28	8.00pm "Space"

Get in touch…

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Usual services at St Mary's

Sunday: 8.00am Eucharist (live on facebook)
10.00am Eucharist, also on Zoom, with children's church offered on 1st and 3rd Sundays
5.00pm Choral evensong once a month
Wednesday: 11.00am Eucharist
Monday – Thursday, in Lady Chapel:
9.15am Morning Prayer (also on facebook)
5.00pm Evening Prayer
Tuesdays: Sung Evensong, from the Book of Common Prayer, in choir stalls

Regular services in care homes:

Hillview	2.30pm, first Monday in the month
Ashwood	3.00pm, last Monday in the month
Snowdrop	11.00am every Thursday (all are welcome to this eucharist)

We also hold a regular Eucharist at **Hartfield Court,** usually 11.30am on the first Tuesday

Regular practices

Wednesday	8.00pm Tower bells
Friday	3.45pm – 6.00pm Hand bells

Choir practices

Tuesday:	15.45-17.45 chorister rehearsals/service
Friday	15.45-17.45 chorister rehearsals 18.30 senior chorister/scholar rehearsal 19.00-20.30 Parish Choir rehearsal