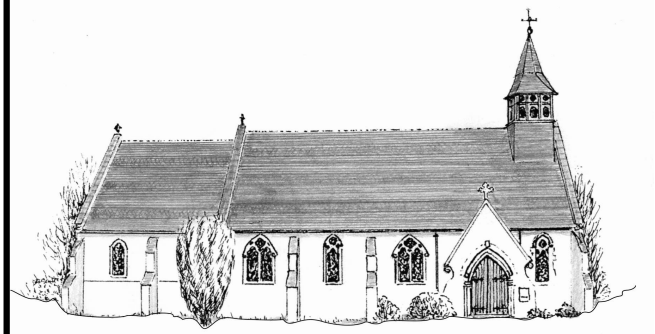
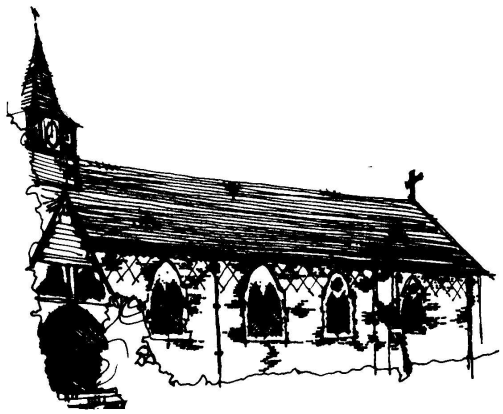








Five Alive!





A Monthly Magazine

for the parishes of Michelmersh, Awbridge, Braishfield, Timsbury and Farley Chamberlayne

Dec 2026/Jan 2027

THE UNITED BENEFICE OF BRAISHFIELD

including the parishes of Michelmersh, Awbridge, Braishfield, Timsbury and Farley Chamberlayne *[grouped with Somborne with Ashley]*

Rector: Revd Tom Benson 01794 368335 tbenson09@aol.com

Associate Priest: Revd Canon Jane Thompson 01794 502035 jane.thompson@me.com

Curate: Revd Anthony Cross 07728 671302 curate.braishfield@gmail.com

Curate: *King's Somborne: Revd Ann Devereux 01794 328860 revadev316@gmail.com*

Church Wardens – Braishfield Benefice

Awbridge	Mr Fred Tucker	01794 340709
	Mrs. Mary Savage	07516 010794
Braishfield	Mr. Andrew Brooks	01794 523928
	Miss Sarah Boothman	01794 368143
Farley Chamberlayne	Mr. Iain Chisholm	01794 368250
	Miss Hannah Boothman	01794 368143
Michelmersh	Mrs. Clare Harvey	01794 368789
	Mrs. Franny Hornblow	07881 821513
Timsbury	Mrs. Catherine Baker	01794 368364
	Mr Paul Newman	07833 220295

Websites: http://www.asbchurch.org *(Braishfield)*
www.awbridge.church *(Awbridge)*

Benefice Office Tel: 01794 878020

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Braishfield
Romsey
SO51 0QG

Benefice Administrator: Kate Marshall

Items for 5 Alive
may be sent to Kate at the Benefice Office by post or email.

Deadline for February edition

Mon 18th January

This edition will be available by Sunday 24th January

From Rev'd Tom Benson

December is always a special time of year in our villages. The lights begin to twinkle in windows, Christmas trees appear in homes, and there is a familiar sense of excitement and anticipation in the air.

There is something rather wonderful about Christmas in the countryside. The familiar lanes, perhaps muddy underfoot, the sound of church bells, carol singing and the sight of candlelight shining through the church windows all remind us of the traditions that have been part of village life for generations.

Yet, amidst all the busyness of Christmas preparations, it is worth remembering what we are actually celebrating. The Christmas story is a remarkably simple one. A child is born in humble surroundings, in a stable in Bethlehem. There is no great ceremony, no grand palace and no royal procession. Instead, God comes among us quietly, bringing a message of love, hope and peace.

That message is just as important today as it was over two thousand years ago. For some, Christmas will be a happy time spent with family and friends. For others, it may be a difficult season, particularly those who are lonely, grieving or facing uncertainty. The message of Christmas reminds us that nobody is forgotten and that God's love is there for everyone.

As we gather for our Christmas services, carol services and celebrations, I hope you will find time to come and join us. Whether you come to church regularly or only at Christmas, you will be most welcome. There is something special about singing familiar carols together and hearing once again the story that lies at the heart of Christmas. It is a story that never gets old and for many of us gets better for the retelling!

On behalf of the whole ministry team, I want to thank you all for the effort and care for each other that makes these communities such a privilege to be a part of.

So, as the year draws to a close, may I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas. May the light of Christ bring warmth to our homes, hope to our communities and peace to our troubled world. So do have a very Happy Christmas and let's look forward to a new year together.

God bless, Tom

New Benefice Administrator – Mrs Kate Marshall

Since the summer, Kate has been working in the Braishfield Benefice Office alongside Sarah Boothman, and has now taken on all the organisational tasks involved with keeping our five parishes running smoothly, including the editing and production of Five Alive.

Sarah took over as Benefice Secretary from Pat Garrett in 2007, and the role widened into that of Administrator when Canon Bruce Kington retired in 2010. The Benefice Office has been at Elm Grove Farm in Braishfield since 2011; before that Sarah worked at the Rectory.

Kate knows the parishes well having been an active member of Braishfield church all her life. She is also Clerk to the Michelmersh and Timsbury Parish Council. The office will continue to be staffed on a Monday and Friday and our valued volunteer Sally Tomlin will continue to provide support on a Friday morning.

Sarah will of course continue as church warden and choir leader at All Saints' Braishfield!



Come and Sing!



The Somborne Singers are planning to sing the musical 'Pharaoh to Freedom', on 14th March 2027 at 3pm.

Would you like to join in?

There are 10 easy songs which we'll be singing, starting on Tuesday 5th Jan 2027 from 7.45-9.00pm in King's Somborne parish church. There are no auditions, and anybody who enjoys singing will be welcome.

What a great idea for the New Year!
Contact Howard Rowe on 01794 388400 or howard_rowe@btopenworld.com for more info.

Dear Villagers,

We would like to thank everyone in Braishfield who sponsored us on the Hampshire and the Islands Historic Churches Trust (HIHCT) Ride & Stride Day on 12 September.

We visited 23 churches between Romsey and Andover raising £230 for All Saints Church and £245 for the United Reformed Church. A great result from both churches. Half the money raised is returned to the nominated church for their own use.

There are nearly 400 churches in Hampshire and the Islands, many of which have historic and architectural significance, that are open on the day with some offering refreshments.

The money raised for the Trust, including gift aid, is given out in grants for the restoration of a church's fabric or to provide new facilities (toilet/kitchenette etc..) to make churches fit for the community in the 21st century. These buildings are a part of our community for baptisms, weddings and funerals as well as offering a warm welcome at all times.

It is vital that the community continues to support our built heritage.
All Saints benefited in 2024 from a grant of £5,000 to restore the tower clock, the clock faces and the weather vane.

Chris & Meryl Balchin

Prayer request for South Rwenzori Diocese

The South Rwenzori Youth Convention is scheduled for 4th - 9th January 2027 in Kasese. Around 30,000 young people are anticipated to attend!

We are requested to pray that God will open a door for them to have all the necessary resources.



All Saints Church Braishfield invite you to ...

Celebrate Christmas with Carols on the Recreation Ground

accompanied by Chandlers Ford BB Band

Friday 18th December 6.30pm – 7.15pm

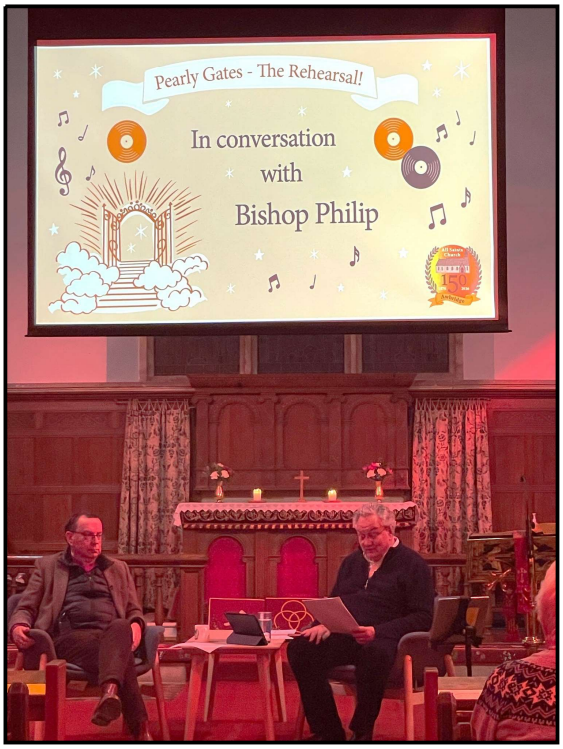
[Bring light to read your carol sheet!]

Mulled wine available to purchase

Pantry open for shopping, hot drinks and refreshments from 5.30pm

Cash Donations in Aid of Action for Children

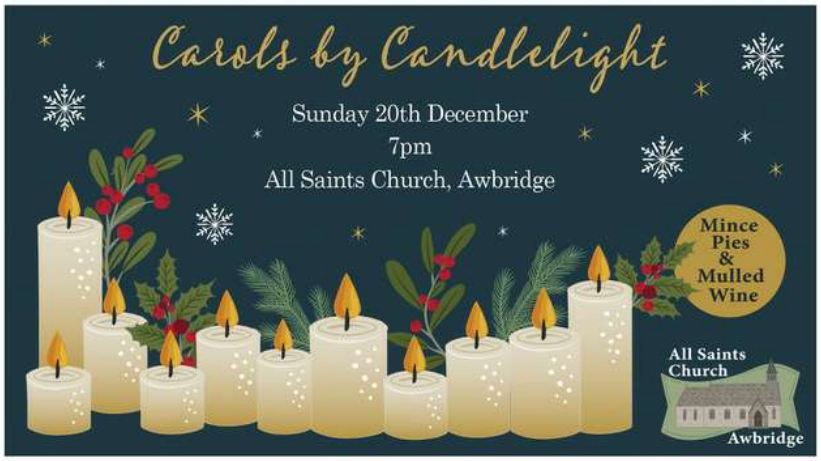
Our Bishop of Winchester at Awbridge – the Right Reverend Philip Mounstephen



It was fascinating to hear about Bishop Philip's life and to become more acquainted with him, his wife Ruth – and Noggin their dog too - at the 'Pearly Gates' interview at Awbridge church recently. Chris Thompson's excellent questions drew out interesting reflections and stories. After gaining a degree in English from Southampton University Bishop Philip taught for a few years before training for ordination at Wycliffe College in Oxford, whilst also studying for a degree in theology. His curacy was followed by six years as a vicar in Gerard's Cross. He also spent six years working at the Head Office of CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society) during which he travelled extensively all over the UK and Ireland, six years as a chaplain to the English Anglican Church in Paris, when he had to learn to speak fluently and preach in French – and six years as head of CMS (Church Mission Society) based in England, but with much travelling all over the world. Before becoming Bishop of Winchester in 2024 he served as Bishop of Truro.

Despite his high level career Bishop Philip came over as a man with his feet firmly on the ground and a good sense of humour, who said that our calling as Christians and local churches is to be the best that we can be, and that the way to encourage people to enter the kingdom of God is to show love to them. He said you can't force people into becoming Christians. His best advice to new clergy was to get to know the people of the parish where they were to serve.

One member of the audience said "It must have taken Chris much research to source all the photos which were shown – and as for the tracks, complete with videos – I had not expected that!" Bishop Philip's music choices were mainly pop songs, with a strong beat! His favourite comedy sketch was the Andre Preview/Previn sequence from the Morecombe and Wise Show, and his favourite film clip the Queen and Paddington Bear having tea to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee. It was great fun to enjoy watching both of them with him, and a good end to a very enjoyable evening.









The 2026 Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market is open from

Friday 20th November to Tuesday 22nd December 2026. Daily opening times are listed below:

Sunday - Thursday:
10.00am – 6.00pm

Friday and Saturday:
10.00am – 8.00pm

Please note: Weekends at the market can be very busy. If you're bringing a dog, pushchair, wheelchair, or simply prefer more space to move around, we recommend visiting on a quieter weekday.



Coffee, Mince Pie and a Chat



with our mystery speaker's subject:

"It wouldn't be Christmas without them"

Tuesday 8th December 2026

10.30am



at St Andrew's Church, Timsbury

Pop the date in your diary. Every second Tuesday of the month to come along to meet friends and neighbours, enjoy refreshments and be entertained!

These events, though organised by members of St Andrew's Church ***for the community****, are not religious in nature*

There is no charge, but donations appreciated towards the running and maintenance of our lovely village Church.











Buying Christmas cards and gifts?

Remember to call into OASIS bookshop just by the Post Office in Romsey for a wide range of cards and gift ideas! The charity cards previously in the Tourist Office are at the back of the shop!

OASIS
ROMSEY
More than a Bookshop

Advent Sunday 29th November 6pm

Advent Carol Service with Braishfield Church Choir

St John's
Farley Chamberlayne

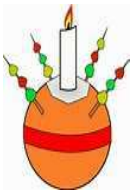


Christmas Services at All Saints Braishfield



Candle-lit Carol Service 5.30pm Sunday 20th Dec

- stay for a seasonal hot drink and warm mincepies afterwards!



Christingle Service 4.00pm Christmas Eve

- receive a lighted Christingle.

Cash donations for the Children's Society welcomed.



Christmas Day Service at 10.00am

a service of celebration for everyone!

The Michelmersh Monthly Draw

Congratulations to the winners of the Michelmersh Monthly Draw

November winners

1st prize	£67.20	Liz Hill
2nd prize	£33.60	Franny Hornblow
3rd prize	£19.20	Anonymous

As a reminder…. The draw was set up in October 2015 as a way of contributing to the running costs of St Mary's Church, Michelmersh. It is also a bit of fun as 50% of the income is included in a monthly draw with 3 prizes. 1st prize wins 56%, 2nd prize wins 28% and 3rd prize wins 16%. Winners are announced on or before the 15th of the month and advised by email and bank transfer or letter and accompanying cheque.

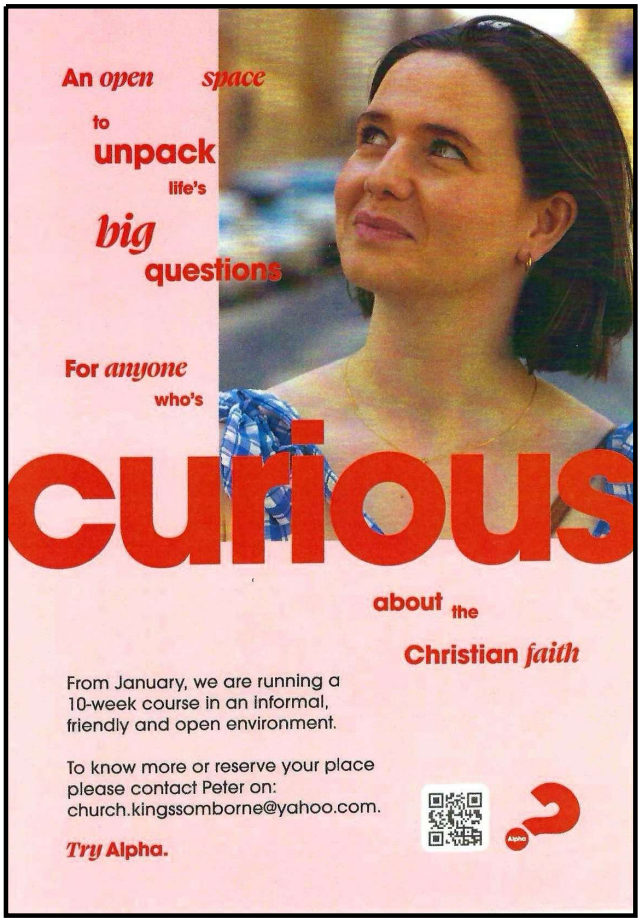
If you haven't joined yet please use the link to the application form below
https://forms.gle/rm5bUL3Kxg1BJKsD7
or contact either of us for a hard copy.
Franny Hornblow: franny@prmotors.biz, 07881821513
Hannah Hunt: hannah.hunt@outlook.com, 07914338560

*Un*pack the Christian *faith* together.

Starts 14th January 2027

What is it?

A series of interactive sessions over 10 weeks that explore the basics of the Christian faith, often know as an "*alpha course*".



Who's it for?

Across the Benefice and King's Somborne, it's for anyone who's curious to explore the big questions of life, faith and meaning. The talks are designed to encourage conversation and explore Christian faith in a friendly, open and informal environment. You can say anything you like or nothing at all.

How does it work?

Each week we will have three key things: food, a short talk and a discussion where you can share your thoughts. There's no pressure and no follow-up.

How much is it?

There is no charge.

If you'd like to know more e-mail church.kingssomborne@yahoo.com



What's on? An over view of events in the Benefice in December/January

General

Messy Church Saturday 2nd January 11am Braishfield Church Room see p.12

Awbridge

Coffee Hub Every Tuesday 9.15-11.30 am Church Rooms. All welcome

Prayer Meeting Tuesday 1st & 15th December, 5 & 19 January from 9.00 am in the church

Awbridge Housegroup Tuesday 8th December, 12 & 26 January 7.30 pm Chanwel House Contact Lynda Tucker

Craft & Chat Group 4th December, 8 & 22nd January From 10.30 - 12.30 Contact Sue Franklin 01794 322185

Cinema Club Wednesday 25th November 2pm in the church

Awbridge Lunch Club Christmas lunch Wednesday 2nd December 12 noon, Church Room Contact Sarah Keith

The Ark All Saints Church Baby and Toddler group, every Friday during term time Village Hall 9.15 - 11.00 am (restarts 8th January)

Christmas Fayre Friday 27th November Awbridge Village Hall 2.30 pm See p.10

Advent Carol Concert with the Eldon Singers Sunday 29th November See p.6

Star of Bethlehem Friday 4th December 7pm in the church See p.10

New Year's Day Walk Friday 1 January 11am from Butts Green Lockerley

Braishfield

Singalong for All Monday 21st December, Monday 18th January 2.30 - 4 pm, Church Room

Village Voices Monday 14th December and 25th January 2-4 pm, Church Room

Carols on the Rec Friday 18th December Recreation Ground. See p.6

Farley Chamberlayne

Coffee and Chat Thursday 10th December and 14th January in the Church 10.30am

Michelmersh

Michelmersh and Timsbury Christmas Lunch Jubilee Hall Thurs 17th Dec 1pm

Timsbury

Coffee, Croissant and Chat with speaker Tues 8th December, 12 January 10.30am. See p.9

Celtic Prayer Tuesday 24th November, 22nd December and 26th January 11.00 am at the Church

Bible readings for December

SUNDAY 6th DECEMBER
2nd SUNDAY of ADVENT
Old Testament Isaiah 40.1-11
Epistle 2 Peter 3. 8-15a
Gospel Mark 1.1-8
Psalm 85. 8-end

SUNDAY 13th DECEMBER
3rd SUNDAY of ADVENT
Old Testament Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-end
Epistle 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24
Gospel John 1 6-8, 19-28
Psalm 126 *or* Magnificat

SUNDAY 20th DECEMBER
4th SUNDAY of ADVENT
Old Testament 2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16
Epistle Romans 16.25-end
Gospel Luke 1.26-38
Psalm 89.1-8 *or* Magnificat

THURSDAY 25th DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS DAY
Epistle Hebrews 1.1-12
Gospel John 1.1-14

SUNDAY 28th DECEMBER
1st SUNDAY of CHRISTMAS
Epistle Galatians 4.1-7
Gospel Luke 2.15-21

Bible readings for January

SUNDAY 3rd JANUARY
THE EPIPHANY
Old Testament Jeremiah 31.7-14
Epistle Ephesians 1.3-14
Gospel John 1 [1-9] 10-18
Psalm 147. 13-end

SUNDAY 10th JANUARY
1st SUNDAY of EPIPHANY
Old Testament Genesis 1.1-5
Epistle Acts 19.1-9
Gospel Mark 1.4-11
Psalm 29

SUNDAY 17th JANUARY
2nd SUNDAY of EPIPHANY
Old Testament 1 Samuel 3.1-10 [11-20]
Epistle Revelation 5.1-10
Gospel John 1.43-end
Psalm 139.1-5, 12-18 (or 1-9)

SUNDAY 24th JANUARY
3rd SUNDAY of EPIPHANY
Old Testament Genesis 14.17-20
Epistle Revelation 19.6-10
Gospel John 2.1-11
Psalm 128

SUNDAY 1st FEBRUARY
PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE/CANDLEMAS
Old Testament Malachi 3.1-5
Epistle Hebrews 2.14-end
Gospel Luke 2.22-40
Psalm 24.7-end



Crib services are a great way for families to get involved with the Christmas story. Come to the one which suits you best - see last page for details.

SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2027

SUNDAY 3rd JANUARY - THE EPIPHANY - 2ND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

8.00am	King's Somborne	**HOLY COMMUNION** BCP
9.30am	Awbridge	**HOLY COMMUNION**
9.30am	Braishfield	**FAMILY WORSHIP**
10.00am	Michelmersh (& Timsbury)	**MORNING WORSHIP**
10.00am	King's Somborne	**MORNING WORSHIP**
6.00pm	Farley Chamberlayne	**EVENING PRAYER** BCP

SUNDAY 10TH JANUARY - 1ST SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY - BAPTISM OF CHRIST

8.00am	Farley Chamberlayne	**HOLY COMMUNION** BCP
9.00am	Awbridge Village Hall	**FAMILY BREAKFAST SERVICE**
9.30am	Braishfield	**MORNING WORSHIP**
10.00am	King's Somborne	**HOLY COMMUNION**
11.00am	Timsbury	**FAMILY SERVICE**
6.00pm	Michelmersh	**HOLY COMMUNION**
6.30pm	Awbridge	**DEANERY CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP**

SUNDAY 17TH JANUARY - 2ND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

9.30am	Awbridge	**HOLY COMMUNION**
10.00am	King's Somborne	**HOLY COMMUNION**
10.00am	Timsbury	**HOLY COMMUNION**
11.15am	Farley Chamberlayne	**FAMILY SERVICE**
6.00pm	Braishfield	**EVENING PRAYER** BCP
6.00pm	Michelmersh	**EVENING PRAYER** BCP

SUNDAY 24TH JANUARY - 3RD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

8.00am	Michelmersh	**HOLY COMMUNION** BCP
9.30am	Awbridge	**FAMILY WORSHIP**
9.30am	Braishfield	**HOLY COMMUNION**
10.00am	King's Somborne	**HOLY COMMUNION**
11.15am	Farley Chamberlayne	**MORNING PRAYER** BCP
6.00pm	Timsbury	**EVENING PRAYER** BCP

SUNDAY 31ST JANUARY - 4TH SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY - PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE/CANDLEMAS

10.00am	Braishfield	**UNITED BENEFICE HOLY COMMUNION**

BCP = Book of Common Prayer - traditional language

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 2026

SUNDAY 6TH DECEMBER - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8.00am	King's Somborne	**HOLY COMMUNION** BCP	A.Devereux
9.30am	Awbridge	**HOLY COMMUNION**	T.Benson
9.30am	Braishfield	**FAMILY WORSHIP**	A.Cross
10.00am	Timsbury(& Michelmersh)	**MORNING WORSHIP**	J. Thompson
10.00am	King's Somborne	**MORNING WORSHIP**	A.Devereux
6.00pm	Farley Chamberlayne	**EVENING PRAYER** BCP	T.Benson

SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER - THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8.00am	Farley Chamberlayne	**HOLY COMMUNION** BCP	A.Cross
9.00am	Awbridge Village Hall	**FAMILY BREAKFAST SERVICE**	T.Benson
9.30am	Braishfield	**MORNING WORSHIP**	A.Cross
10.00am	King's Somborne	**HOLY COMMUNION**	A.Devereux
11.00am	Timsbury	**FAMILY SERVICE**	A.Cross
4.00pm	King's Somborne	**COMMUNITY CAROLS**	A.Devereux
6.00pm	Michelmersh	**HOLY COMMUNION**	T.Benson
6.30pm	Awbridge	**DEANERY CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP**	J.Thompson

SUNDAY 20TH DECEMBER - FORTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10.30am	Braishfield	**HOLY COMMUNION**-said	T.Benson
10.00am	King's Somborne	**HOLY COMMUNION**	A.Devereux
4.00pm	Farley Chamberlayne	**CAROL SERVICE**	T.Benson
4.00pm	Michelmersh	**CAROL SERVICE & CHRISTINGLE + MSB**	A.Cross
5.30pm	Braishfield	**CAROL SERVICE**	T.Benson
6.00pm	King's Somborne	**CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT**	A.Devereux/T.Benson
7.00pm	Awbridge	**CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT**	J.Thompson/T.Benson

MONDAY 21ST DECEMBER

4.00pm	Timsbury	**CRIB SERVICE**	T.Benson

TUESDAY 22ND DECEMBER

4.00pm	Michelmersh	**CRIB SERVICE**	J.Thompson
4.00pm	Awbridge	**CRIB SERVICE**	K.Walton/T.Benson

WEDNESDAY 23RD DECEMBER

4.00pm	Farley Chamberlayne	**CRIB SERVICE**	T.Benson

THURSDAY 24TH DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS EVE

4.00pm	Braishfield	**CHRISTINGLE SERVICE**	T.Benson/A.Cross
4.00pm	Kings's Somborne	**CHRISTINGLE SERVICE**	Team
6.00pm	Timsbury	**CAROL SERVICE**	T.Benson
9.30pm	Michelmersh	**HOLY COMMUNION**	T.Benson/A.Cross
11.15pm	Awbridge	**MIDNIGHT HOLY COMMUNION**	T.Benson/A.Cross
11.15pm	King's Somborne	**HOLY COMMUNION**	A.Devereux & J.Thompson

FRIDAY 25TH DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS DAY

9.00am	Timsbury	**HOLY COMMUNION** BCP	A.Cross
10.00am	King's Somborne	**CHRISTMAS DAY HOLY COMMUNION**	A.Devereux
10.00am	Braishfield	**FAMILY WORSHIP**	T.Benson
10.00am	Awbridge	**CHRISTMAS DAY FAMILY CELEBRATION**	J.Thompson
11.15am	Ashley	**CHRISTMAS DAY FAMILY WORSHIP**	A.Devereux
11.15am	Farley Chamberlayne	**HOLY COMMUNION** BCP	T.Benson

SUNDAY 27TH DECEMBER - 1ST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

10.30am	Michelmersh	**UNITED BENEFICE HOLY COMMUNION**	T.Benson & J.Appleyard