

# ST PAUL'S NEWS

December 2025  
and January 2026



ONE POUND

## SERVICES

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December** **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)  
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Eucharist (CW)  
President & Preacher: The Vicar  
Minister: Daphne Pilcher
- 10.00 am Family Service with Christingle at the Church Centre + Zoom  
Lead: Susan Powley, Link: Rosemary Romano
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)  
President & Preacher: The Vicar

### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December** **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)  
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Eucharist with Baptism (CW)  
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Family Service Carols & Readings at the Church Centre + Zoom  
Lead: Jean Kerr  
Link: Karen Millar
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)  
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December** **4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 10.00 am Joint Crib Service  
Followed by Shortened Eucharist (CW)  
President : The Vicar
- 6.30 pm Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight  
Minister: The Vicar

### **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December**

- 11.30 pm Midnight Mass for Christmas  
President : The Vicar  
Minister & Preacher: Tim Harrold

### **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December** **Christmas Day**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)  
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Joint Family Carol Service  
Followed by shortened Holy Communion (CW)  
President & Preacher: The Vicar

### **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December** **1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)  
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Eucharist (CW)  
President & Preacher: TBC
- 10.00 am Family Service with Communion at the Church Centre + Zoom  
President Link: Karen Miller

### **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January** **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas** **Epiphany**

- 10.00 am Eucharist (CW)  
President & Preacher: Rev. Nicholas Burton
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom  
Lead: Daphne Pollard, Link Rosemary Romano
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)  
Minister : Tim Harrold,  
Preacher: Daphne Pilcher

### **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January** **1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Epiphany** **The Baptism of Christ**

- 10.00 am Eucharist (CW)  
President & Preacher: Rev. Nicholas Burton
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom  
Lead: Wendy Anderson, Link: Viv Littlechild
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)  
Minister and Preacher: Tim Harrold

### **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January** **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany**

- 10.00 am Eucharist (CW)  
President : Rev. Nicholas Burton,  
Preacher: Tim Harrold
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom  
Lead: Liz Goddard, Link: Jean Kerr
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)  
Minister: Tim Harrold, Preacher: Daphne Pilcher

### **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January** **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany** **PATRONAL FESTIVAL**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)  
President and Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Joint Eucharist (CW)  
President & Preacher: The Vicar  
Ministers: Rev Nicholas Burton,  
Daphne Pilcher, Tim Harrold
- 4.00 pm Taizé Service at the Church Centre  
Tim Harrold
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)  
Minister: The Vicar

### **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January** **Holocaust Memorial Day**

- 8.00 pm Service at the Parish Church  
Ministers: The Vicar, Tim Harrold

## DIARY

### Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December

All day Police Surgery in the Lodge

### Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December

11.30 am Communion to Mount Ephraim House  
– May Graves

6.00 pm Youth Council meet in the Lodge

### Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December

7.30 pm Worship Committee in the Lodge

### Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December

Holmewood House rehearsals – Parish Church

3.00 pm Communion to Chamberlain Court  
– The Vicar

### Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December

4.00 pm Holmewood House Junior Carol Service  
With Choristers Café

### Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December

11.00 am Holmewood House Senior Carol Service  
With Choristers Café

### Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December

6.30 pm Quiz Night with 100 mega draw  
– Church Centre

### Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December

11.30 am Communion to Mount Ephraim

### Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December

9.00 am Flower Team decorate the Parish Church

### Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January

8.00 pm PCC meeting in the Lodge

### Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January

8.00 pm Family Service Meeting

### Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January

All day RSCM exams at the Parish Church and Lodge

### Wednesdays throughout the month

9am-11am Playtime at the Church Centre

### Thursdays throughout the month

12 for 12.30 Rusthall Lunch Club  
at the Church Centre



### Fridays throughout the month

12.30 pm Community Larder at the Church Centre

## Magazine Deadlines

Please submit articles for the 2026 magazines in accordance with the following deadlines.

February by Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January

March by Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February

April by Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March

May by Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April

June by Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May

The time between the deadline and magazine issue is to allow for typing, formatting, proofreading, and compiling the magazine. These all take time and have to be fitted around the volunteer editorial team's other commitments. We would therefore be very grateful if you would keep to the deadlines set. Please send items for publication to [magazine@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk](mailto:magazine@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk) or to the Parish Office.

Magazines are posted on the Parish website by the 1st of the month. Photocopies of the magazine will also be made available in our churches on the Sunday on or before the first Sunday of the month for those who cannot access the magazine online. Please contact Helen Reynolds at the Church Office (TW 521447) if you are finding it difficult to access a copy.

## From the Registers



### Baptism - we welcome as newly baptised members of the Church

Ricardo Ricketts-Bailey

### Marriages – we ask God to bless the marriage of

Venetia Casely and Roger Ellison

### At rest – the sympathy of the Parish is extended to the family and friends of:

Frances (Frankie) Elizabeth Simmonds



## From the Vicarage

December 2025

Dear Friends

Thank you very much for your continued support and hard work. Special thanks to Jean Kerr and her team for organising the Parish Autumn Fayre in aid of Church Funds. A big thank you to stallholders, including the choir, the Scouts, members of the 175 anniversary committee and to everyone who supported it in various ways, such as donating items, helping with setting and clearing up, attending, purchasing goods/items on sale, or praying for its success. I would also like to thank Fiona and the choir for organising the bimonthly concerts throughout 2025 as part of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. If you are yet to get your copy, please remember that the *St Paul's Church & Rusthall Village Cookbook* is now on sale at £7.00 a copy. It would make a brilliant present – and being spiral bound makes it easy to flip from one recipe to the other.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported the work and ministry of St. Paul's over the past year either financially or in other ways. Your contributions and support have helped to sustain the ministry of the parish and enabled us to enrich the lives and work of others.

I am however aware that the cost of living continues to rise, and we all have to make adjustments in order to make ends meet. Some of you might be thinking of reducing your financial giving to St Paul's. This is understandable, but may I encourage you to ensure that whatever amount you give go even farther by joining the Planned Giving Scheme. This is an efficient way to give, especially if you pay tax. Another way to 'stretch the pennies' is through online shopping. If you shop online, please do so via [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) because each time you shop using this site a percentage of what you spend will be donated to St Paul's – or another charity of your choice. You can access the easyfundraising website via our Parish website. I trust that we can count on your unremitting support in the year ahead in whatever way you feel able, as we live out the good news in our communities and appropriately share God's grace in its various forms.

It would be remiss of me if I don't thank my ministerial colleagues of the parish for their support, especially during this year when I've had to attend the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cathédrale Toussaint in Conakry, Guinea, where we worked as Church Mission Society (CMS) Mission Partners, and be absent for our Joint Parade Service of Remembrance due to Mayoral Chaplaincy duties at the Remembrance service at the War Memorial in town. As Mayor's Chaplain, I also say prayers at the start of Council meetings. This year, it will be a special privilege to welcome the Mayor and the Mayoress to our service of Nine Lessons and Carols at 6:30 On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December. I hope you will be there.



The activities around the Anglican Church this year, especially the opportunity for me to attend the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Anglican Cathedral in Guinea has reminded me afresh of our interconnectedness, but also of our differences. Although we have so much in common and many things that connect us, we sometimes tend to accentuate our differences, not in order to promote diversity but rather to undermine our unity.



As Disciples of Christ, we belong together and we all have a part to play in nurturing that sense of belonging. Advent season gives us a unique opportunity to wait together for Jesus' incarnation, and look ahead to 'his final advent as judge at the end of time.' We all need to wait on God to not just visit us but to hear and receive his message to us. God's message to Mary via the angel Gabriel was that Mary was 'favoured' and special. We are all special to God – and favoured by God (Act 10:34, Romans 2:11) and, like Mary, you might be perplexed by this especially in the light of what you might be going through, or your opinion of others. I pray that you may experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the overshadowing of God's power just as Mary did and, like her, be able to allow God to work in, with and through you and through others for the benefit of humanity and for God's glory.

So in the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany may we not only allow the Christ child to be born in us afresh but also recognise him in each other and let him grow within us and bring us to maturity in every way. May he fill our lives with peace, our decision-making with discerned wisdom and our actions with graciousness. May we experience his strength in times of trial and adversity and may he fill us with a sense of purpose in all that we do, to God's praise and glory. Amen.

I wish you all a peace-filled Christmas and a New Year full of goodwill for and from everyone.

Ronnie





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### *Blackham Village Hall* **Christmas Market**



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bird food, honey, handmade craft items perfect for  
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treats.*

*Enjoy a glass of mulled wine & a mince pie  
or a  
cup of delicious coffee/tea and homemade cakes*

*We look forward to seeing you!!*



## Editorial for December 2025 and January 2026

Advent has been celebrated and December is upon us. Our wonderful year celebrating the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church is almost over. Almost but not quite! There will be a Quiz Night and Supper on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December, including the 100 Club Big Draw. The Flower Team have enlisted the help of various organisations within the church family to create fabulous Christmas Tree themed decorations all around the church and the choir have already started work on their clicks and stomps for the exciting (but fiendishly difficult) carol Nova Nova for Nine Lessons

and Carols on 21<sup>st</sup> December then there's Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and back for Family Carols on Christmas Morning.

I shall be with my son and his family this Christmas, the first in a new house. His boys (aged 3 and 5) are getting used to going "up the wooden hill to Bedfordshire" for the first time. The only complication is where to hang the boys' stockings as all the fireplaces have been removed. How will St Nicholas get the presents in?

There are two birthdays of note in December. On 13<sup>th</sup> December Dick van Dyke will celebrate his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, now looking very much like 'old Mr Grace' in Mary Poppins but more sprightly – how is that possible? Then on 16<sup>th</sup> December fans of Jane Austen will celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of her birth. Considering that she left us only 6 novels she has a remarkable legacy. I came to her books via Northanger Abbey for O level English and studied so earnestly that it took me ages to realise how much humour was there. Now Bridget Jones still yearns for Mr Darcy!

In January 2026 we'll be celebrating Epiphany on 11<sup>th</sup> January and then our Patronal Festival on 25<sup>th</sup> January. On Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 8pm there is the annual Holocaust Memorial Service.

Sport continues over Christmas and the New Year, with rugby, football, darts and the Australian Open Tennis to enjoy. Looking ahead to later in the year there will be both men's and women's Football World Cups (held in North America and Poland respectively), Winter Olympics and Paralympics in Milan/Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy and Commonwealth Games in Glasgow – lots to see and cheer on.

Sue and I have been trying to put this magazine into its final order ready for printing but the technology has been letting us down. The office computers are refusing to communicate with the photocopier. We have spent hours trying to resolve these problems without any success so far and are now well behind with our typing and formatting. We will put the magazine on the Church website ([www.stpaulsrusthall.org.uk](http://www.stpaulsrusthall.org.uk)) as soon as we can and make copies available in the churches as soon as possible thereafter. This will hopefully be resolved before the information from the Pew leaflet runs out.

Until then we would like to thank those faithful contributors who have provided contributions every month – the magazine wouldn't be the same without you. Thanks also to those brave souls who provided an article for the first time – these are always welcome. We wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We are taking our winter break and will look forward to greeting you again in February. The deadline for that magazine is Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January. The image on the front cover is a tiny section of the Portinari Altarpiece triptych by Hugo van der Goes in about 1475 showing Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem.

Deborah Bruce and Sue Hare





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## Becoming human

Once again the year seems to have passed with extraordinary speed brought into perspective by the Editor's quite understandable deadline as I write on 12<sup>th</sup> November.

I could write a book on forty years of commuting to London but one particular year stands out in my memory. It was I think in January 1987 that there was heavy snowfall and although I boarded a train at London Bridge the snow was falling heavily and we managed to get just beyond St. Johns when the train stopped. At first it was thought that it was the usual signal check but an hour passed and the lights and the heat had gone. The guard could not make any announcements but managed to walk through the train bringing us all the news which was bleak. The ice had frozen on the conductor rail and we could get no power, but we would be rescued. As it got colder we reached for our coats from the rack in an effort to keep warm. However, the bull dog spirit broke out and we began to speak to each other mostly 'non u' on a commuter train. One of the chaps had a hip flask which was passed around. A lady had bought some bananas and they were rationed around. Yet another had chocolate and another lady fearing the worst had bought some candles and soon we were dining by candlelight. To cut a long story short we were stuck for four hours until rescued by a diesel and again taxing my memory I think we were home by 11.30 pm. This was a year after the Hastings line had been electrified and there were several comments that this would not have happened in the steam and diesel era. However the message was clear the travellers became human.

I remember that the snow was so bad nothing moved for a couple of days and during that time people began to reconnect. The Evening Standard called it a day of innocence as we frolicked in the snow. Just for a short time we could reconnect with our childhood to play in nature at its most enthralling. The snow had enabled us to reset and we all became human. There is something of this in most peoples idea of Christmas. We even associate the feast with snow dreaming of a 'White Christmas' when the world is wrapped in innocence and wonder. We know the reality of course but Christmas is an opportunity to reset. Each year we hope and try to re-connect with what is most important and most precious in our lives. Each year we hope that things will be better, we hope that we will be better and be what God intended.

The reading from the Book of Isaiah, written seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, speaks of the same hope for better things. A child has been born, an important child, presumably a prince or the son of a powerful family. Because of this birth everything will be different. The peoples joy is

described in the simplest of terms and it is the joy of people in a precarious, dangerous world, who know that they will be safe and well after conflict. As we know the reality is different but we hold on to that hope as we pass from one year to the next. We don't know who this child is who brings such relief and happiness but the earliest Christians, reading Isaiah hundreds of years later, identified him immediately. They saw this as a prophecy of Christ, and the difference Christ makes. In the second recommended reading, Paul writes to Titus that Christ wishes 'to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.'

'Eager to do what is good!' I think that the Trinity Theatre are putting on a performance of Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol* and if you cannot see that the TV schedules will, for sure, be putting on the classic film where, well you know the story, but Ebenezer Scrooge is transformed from a money obsessed hater of people to someone who comes to recognise through Marley's Ghost that 'mankind is my business'. Through the Christmas message Scrooge discovers his humanity, he becomes human. At the heart of the Christmas story God in Christ becomes human. God declares if you like that 'mankind is my business'. This really is a reset.

Once again we hear the Christmas story and perhaps if we take it to heart each of us will become a little more generous, a little more human; more like the second version of Scrooge, with all his child-like enthusiasm. There is more in giving his son to us - God is inviting us to be with him, and share his life, not just for one day of innocence but forever.

One of my favourite Christmas Carols is 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' and I am struck by the line 'The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight'. We should take this with us as we finish 2025 and move into 2026. That last verse tells us all:-

O holy child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas Angels  
The great glad tidings tell:  
Come to us, abide with us.  
Our Lord Emmanuel.

May I wish you all a very Happy and Christmas and a peaceful, joyful and healthy New Year.

**Tim Cripps**

Recommended Readings:-

Isaiah 9: 2-7, Titus 2: 11-14, Luke 2: 1-14.



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# RUSTHALL'S COMMUNITY LARDER

## What is it?

A community larder receives surplus short date food from supermarkets to offer to people in our community.

## When and where is it?

Our community larder will be in the St Paul's Church Centre every Friday between 12:30pm and 2:15pm.

## Who can use it?

Anyone can come and visit the community larder. There are no restrictions, no booking necessary, just turn up with a carrier bag to fill.

## How much does it cost?

We suggest a small cash donation of £2, or as much as you can afford. For this, you can take away a bag full of quality food.

Please help us all stay safe by wearing a face mask, respecting social distancing and using the hand sanitiser provided.



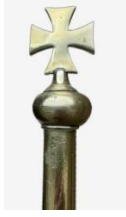
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or telephone 07805 475397



## Churchwardens' Notes



Well, as we come to the busiest time of the church year we really are all systems go. In the past month we have experienced excitement on various fronts. The churchyard work is ongoing and a good start has been made, however we are still looking for volunteers to help and maybe take ownership of segments of the churchyard plan. If you are interested please contact either Ginette or the wardens, May or Chris.

Our armistice services were very well organised and received. The joint service in the Parish Church was particularly well attended. It is always a great spectacle when the poppy petals fall from the belfry. Poignant as ever.

We are still looking for a churchwarden to take over May's duties in April and join the church team, helping us to carry the church's mission forward. Please speak to either warden if you feel this is a role you might enjoy. We would be very happy to chat through what we actually do!

Our Autumn Fayre was a great success and our sincere thanks go to Jean and the team for all their hard work organising this event. Also, our thanks go to the catering team who supplied a very tasty meal. Hopefully you all had a good time and found it fun. An incredible £2,800 + was raised.

Thank you for your continued support. We are very lucky to be part of such a warm and supportive community.

### Chris and May



There will be a Christingle Service at the Church Centre at 10 am on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December. Please come along, make a Christingle and hear about the work of the Children's Society.

This service is always a lot of fun, so why not bring along your friends and family.

**Susan Powley**

## A Musical Note



Well, we have nearly done it! I decided that for the 175th Anniversary celebrations, the choir would either put on a concert or sing for a big service each month this year, and we are so close to the end now. It's remarkable to look back on the year as a whole and reflect on all the anthems we have sung, the new repertoire we have learned, and how much time we have all spent together!

We began the year by singing excerpts from Mendelssohn's Oratorio, St Paul, to mark our Patronal Festival. The choir learned this music in just three rehearsals, an impressive achievement that set a great tone for the year.

In February, we had the Sing-a-thon, singing all 100 anthems in the New Church Anthem Book in a single day. It was such fun—completely exhausting, but the sense of community coming together and rooting for us to succeed made it one of the standout days of this year for me.

In March, we had a concert of 'French Music for Lent' with music by Vierne, Nadia Boulanger, and Duruflé, culminating with Fauré's beautiful Requiem with our wonderful soloists, Eleanor and Roland.

April was a fairly standard month, as our main service was the annual Readings and Music for Passiontide and Easter. I didn't hold back on the music choices, and the choir tackled some challenging repertoire in a very short rehearsal period. It was lovely to see so many people at this service, which is sometimes not very well attended.

In May, we enjoyed our traditional summer concert, with the children entertaining us on their instruments and the choir singing some wonderful light-hearted arrangements.

In June, we had our very first 'Jazz Eucharist' during the spectacular Flower Festival. It was a fantastic morning service, truly uplifting and joyful. I will never forget the atmosphere when the band started playing 'Shine, Jesus, shine'—it was simply wonderful.

In July, we started with Hymns and Pimms—great fun, but lots of singing, which was luckily followed by plenty of Pimms. Just a week later, we gave a concert at church featuring some of our repertoire for our upcoming tour to Normandy. This took place on one of the hottest days of the year, but the choir are amazing, they gave it absolutely everything. It was so beneficial to have a run-through before the tour itself.

In August, we had three days of 'Choir Camp' as normal and then headed to Normandy for our choir tour. This was the absolute highlight of my year—spending time with these wonderful people and performing to a full church and Cathedral in France, where we received standing ovations at both concerts. The atmosphere, especially at the end of our first concert, was very emotional and quite overwhelming; I don't believe I've ever experienced anything like it.

Returning from France, there was no time to relax; we went straight back into rehearsals for the Son et Lumière concert in September. We learned a number of new pieces for this concert as I wanted to include pieces that would be interesting for Nic to light. This concert was unbelievable; the choir performed brilliantly, and the effects Nic achieved were simply stunning. The lights shining through the windows from outside made the stained glass look incredibly beautiful, and it was an incredibly powerful evening.

In October, we had a musical soirée after choral evensong. Featuring solos, duets, ensembles, and a memorable 'Pink Panther' performance by the orchestra, it was incredibly enjoyable, and making music with friends truly is the best thing.

And now, we just have our usual Music and Readings for Advent and Nine Lessons and Carols services left! These are wonderful evenings, and I am really looking forward to both of them.

This year has been fantastic, and as well as all the things I mentioned above, the choir has sung at two services every week, including six choral evensongs. The amount of music performed by this group during the year has been staggering, and despite having so few rehearsals for each event, it is remarkable that the standard has stayed so high throughout the year. The year would not have been possible without the support of our wonderful organists, Alasdair Friend, Paul Jeffery, and Chris Bass, especially Alasdair, who played for us on tour and for all the major concerts and services this year. Thanks also to our pianists, Dom Haslam and Anthony Hughes, who accompanied us on tour, at Jazz Eucharist, and during other concerts. My

thanks goes to the entire choir for their commitment and dedication throughout this year, particularly to the nine singers who, I believe, attended every single event - that is an incredible achievement. Thank you also to our audience, the congregation, for all your support during this year; I know there have been a lot of things to come and watch, but we truly appreciate you coming along so frequently to hear us sing.

**Fiona Johnson**

## Posh Pudding

Diners at the top table of Cambridge University receive the menu in French and were intrigued that under Dessert was *Le Confiture a la Anglaise*.

They were somewhat relieved, not to say delighted, that what was served up was in fact *Jam RolyPoly with Custard*. Perhaps not a literal translation but very well received.

## Calendar for 2026

The winner of the most dullest and most boring calendar for 2026 has been announced. It is *Wheelie Bins of Greater Manchester*. The calendar gives photos of 40 bins across the city's ten boroughs and the close runner up was *12 views of Birmingham's bin strike*. The judges said the calendars were perfect gifts for nerdy or difficult to buy for relatives or simply perfect for someone you don't like.

**Tim Cripps**

[*Not one I shall be choosing to replace this year's wonderful St Paul's Anniversary Calendar! Ed.*]



# Carols by Candlelight 2025

St Paul's Church Rusthall Langton Rd TN4 8XD

Sunday 30 Nov 6.30pm

Advent Carols

Sunday 21 Dec 6.30pm

Nine Lessons & Carols

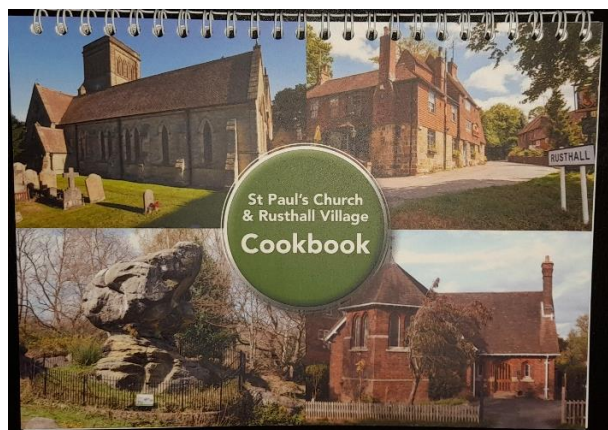
Wednesday 24 Dec 11.30pm

Midnight Mass





## St Paul's Church and Rusthall Village Cookbook



St Paul's Church Rusthall is grateful to the community for helping them put together a 175<sup>th</sup> celebratory collection of recipes.

Village residents and businesses provided a good range of family favourites to make up the book, on sale now, to raise funds for St Paul's to help maintain its community facilities and relationships in the village.

Part of the attraction of the book is those who contributed recipes also shared lovely insights into their memories and connections to the village. We really hope you enjoy seeing the names of your friends and local community members in print. It makes a great gift and a lovely reminder of home for those who once called Rusthall Village their home. Please do order one – or two, or more! – and send to those who now live around the world!

We are grateful to local Rusthall company, Air Corps Air Conditioning Ltd for generously sponsoring the book and to Tunbridge Wells based Greenhippo for the artwork and printing. Rusthall and Speldhurst Councillor, and well-known local restaurateur, Matthew Sankey, helped lead the way with a goodwill message and the use of his popular recipe, "Sankey's Smokie".

Copies cost £7 and are available at services at both the Parish Church and the Church Centre and from the Parish Office (Open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday between 10am – 1pm. Or you can drop into our Choristers' Café on Saturdays and Sundays (10am -4pm) where you never know, you may get to taste one of the cake recipes!

Our friends at The Venture in Rusthall High Street will also be stocking copies – and their recipe is fabulous!

If you'd like to reserve a copy, please email [office@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk](mailto:office@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk) or drop in to see us!

**Elaine Bruce**

One of the recipes that arrived too late for the Cookbook was from Barbara and Tony Bourne. Sadly Tony, who sang tenor with St Paul's Choir, died in April this year, shortly after his choir master, John Francis. Tony also sang with the other choirs founded by John, The TW Mixed Voice Choir, the Orpheus Male Voice Choir, the Oriana Singers and the Chancel Singers, for many years. Good tenors are always in demand!



Also in demand was Barbara's recipe for Chocolate Whisky Gateau, which sounds perfect for cold winter evenings.

### Chocolate Whisky Gateau

Serves 6

#### Ingredients

13 to 16 Sponge fingers  
115 g of butter  
115g of caster sugar  
3 eggs  
Quarter packet of milk cooking chocolate  
2 tablespoons of whisky  
Whipped double cream

#### Method

Grease a 7-inch, loose bottom cake tin and line round the sides with halved sponge fingers. A little soft butter smeared along the edges helps them to stand up before the filling goes in.

Cream butter and sugar. Separate the eggs and whisk the yolks until creamy. Beat yolks into the butter and sugar.

Break the chocolate into small pieces with 1 dessert spoon of water and melt in a bowl over hot water. Pour the melted chocolate into the egg, butter and sugar mix and add the whisky.

Whisk the egg whites until stiff and lightly fold into the mixture. Pour into the tin lined with the sponge fingers and chill overnight in fridge.

To serve. Push out of the tin, decorate with whipped cream and top with grated chocolate, glace cherries or anything else you fancy!

[Remember to use fresh, pasteurised eggs for this recipe as the egg will not be cooked. Separate the eggs using a separator rather than the egg shell halves to reduce the risk of contamination from the outside of the shell. Ed.]



# St. Paul's Parish, Rusthall

Celebrating 175 years



# QUIZ NIGHT

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# ST PAUL'S

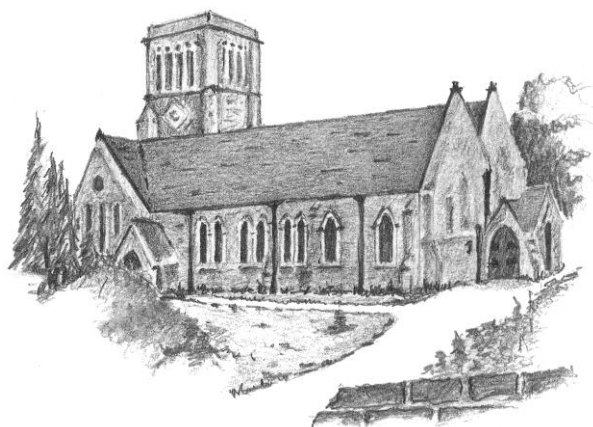
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MONTH

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## Rusthall Community Cinema



### **The Roses (2025) Cert 15**

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday  
6<sup>th</sup> December 2025  
Director: Jay Roach  
Genre: Comedy, Drama  
Runtime: 1h 45 mins  
Starring: Olivia Colman,  
Kate McKinnon  
Benedict Cumberbatch



### **The Ballad of Wallis Island (2025) Cert 12**

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday  
17<sup>th</sup> January 2026  
Director: James Griffiths  
Genre: Comedy, Drama,  
Music  
Runtime: 1h 40 mins  
Starring: Tim Key, Tom Basden,  
Carey Mulligan



### **NT Live – The Fifth Step Cert 15**

Doors open: 2pm Sunday  
7<sup>th</sup> December 2025  
Written by: David Ireland  
Director: Finn den Hertog  
Genre: Recorded Live Theatre  
Runtime: 1h 27 mins plus  
interval  
Starring: Jack Lowden,  
Martin Freeman



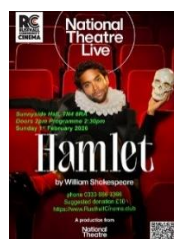
### **Black Bag (2025) Cert 15**

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday  
31<sup>st</sup> January 2026  
Director: Steven Soderbergh  
Genre: Drama, Mystery,  
Romance  
Runtime: 1h 30 mins  
Starring: Cate Blanchette,  
Tom Burke  
Michael Fassbender,



### **White Christmas (1954) Cert U**

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday  
20<sup>th</sup> December 2025  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Genre: Comedy, Musical,  
Romance  
Runtime: 1h 59 mins  
Starring: Bing Crosby,  
Danny Kaye,  
Rosemary Clooney



### **NT Live – Hamlet Cert 12**

Doors open: 2pm Sunday  
1<sup>st</sup> February 2026  
Written by: William Shakespeare  
Director: Robert Hastie  
Genre: Recorded Live Theatre  
Runtime: 2h plus interval  
Starring: Hiran Abeysekera



### **Freud's Last Session (2023) Cert 12**

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday  
3<sup>rd</sup> January 2026  
Director: Matt Brown  
Genre: Drama  
Runtime: 1h 49 mins  
Starring: Anthony Hopkins,  
Matthew Goode,  
Liv Lisa Fries

## Poems for December into January

These poems reflect our winter faith journey: through the preparation and longing of Advent, to the wonder of Christmas Eve and Day, following on to the turning of the year with its reckonings and loss, its hope and promise.

*Susan Barber*

Have you not heard his silent steps?  
He comes, comes, ever comes.  
Every moment and every age,  
every day and every night  
he comes, comes, ever comes.  
Many a song have I sung  
in many a mood of mind,  
but all their notes have always proclaimed,  
“He comes, comes, ever comes.”

*Rabindranath Tagore*

### Midnight, Christmas Eve

So simple, on a night like this, to lose  
all fear and lean too far out on the bridge  
in admiration of the stars that throw  
themselves into black water

and disappear, From the river's edge  
a song begins, flung up from the cathedral,  
lifted through its ribs of stone  
past its candled arches and its domes

to icy sky, a sound that feels  
as pure, unreal as snow falling upward.  
The portal is thrown open with the force  
of something that wants to be alive.

Song like this could spark a fire  
from hopeless wood, or give birth  
out of stricken earth to forests  
of branch and leaf and bud.

Across the city, a girl's hair swings  
against her cheek, her hands feel  
kicking feet, a heartbeat.  
The great vault with all its singing

swoops down to look, to where she looks,  
a cathedral turned to cradle, the cradle  
a gently ribbed cathedral, deep as the sky,  
starlit, ready to be filled.

*Imtiaz Dharker*

### The Christmas Rose

What is the flower that blooms each year  
In flowerless days,  
Making a little blaze  
On the bleak earth, giving my heart some  
cheer?

Harsh the sky and hard the ground  
When the Christmas rose is found.  
Look! Its white star, low on earth,  
Rays a vision of rebirth.

Who is the child that's born each year –  
His bedding, straw:  
His grace, enough to thaw  
My wintering life, and melt a world's despair?

Harsh the sky and hard the earth  
When the Christmas child comes forth.  
Look! Around a stable throne  
Beasts and wise men are at one.

What men are we that, year on year,  
We Herod-wise  
In our cold wits devise  
A death of innocents, a rule of fear?

Hushed your earth, full starred your sky  
For a new nativity:  
Be born in us, relieve our plight,  
Christmas child, you rose of light!

*Cecil Day-Lewis*





## The Year's Midnight

The flown, the fallen,  
the golden ones,  
the deciduous dead, all gone  
to ground, to dust, to sand,  
borne on the shoulders of the wind.

Listen! They are whispering  
now while the world talks,  
and the idea melts,  
and the seas rise,  
Look at the trees!

Every leaf-scar is a bud  
expecting a future.  
The earth speaks in parables.  
The burning bush. The rainbow.  
Promises. Promises.

*Gillian Clarke*



## The January Bee

Who comes to the winter-flowering shrub,  
grief in his empty pouches, who sups  
alone in the stilled garden this dusk.

I would have missed him only I stopped  
mid-argument to watch the moonrise  
over the wet roofs of the suburb

and caught him at work deep in the musk,  
shaking the bells of the scarce blossoms,  
tolling our angers, ringing in peace.

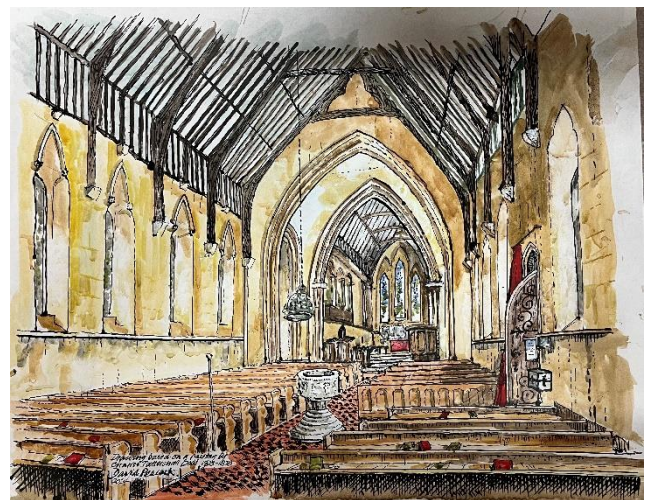
*Paula Meehan*



## The Witness of the Church

As our anniversary year comes to a close, I started to wonder what it had witnessed. Not as much as some of the churches we visited on our London Pilgrimage, to be sure. All Hallows by The Tower proudly displayed boards giving details of its history since its foundation in 675AD, when it was a chapel of the great Abbey of Barking. However, St Paul's has still witnessed an amazing span of history where the *pace* of change has been greater than at any previous time.

At its foundation in 1850 times were definitely in the Victorian Era. Queen Victoria had been on the throne for 13 years, though the building started in 1833 when William IV was still king. The industrial revolution was in full flow, with mechanised factories causing a move from the countryside into urban centres. The railway was extended to Tunbridge Wells and commuting to London became possible. The rapid movement of goods and people enabled the creation of national markets, national newspapers, Nevill Park was developed, with the building of large villas which would have employed many staff. It was a time of social change, with legislation introduced to improve public health and working conditions.



The Great Exhibition of 1851 for which the Crystal Palace was built, was opened by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (accompanied by my ancestor who was Lord Mayor at the time) to showcase Britain as



the world's leading industrial power. The use of electricity for light and power was making huge changes to the way we worked and in social habits, eg street lighting made it safer to go out after dark.

As the century turned King Edward inherited his mother's throne. The internal combustion engine was invented, leading to a further wave of change to logistics, farming, emergency services and mobility. The Liberal party introduced welfare reforms, most significantly an old age pension scheme and National Insurance to pay for it. Parliament voted to reduce the power of the House of Lords and suddenly the Prime Ministers were less likely to be an earl or viscount.

Then came the shock of World War I from 1914 – 1918. On Remembrance Sunday we heard how many men of the parish died during this conflict but many more were affected by their military experiences and society had to cope with the sudden loss of thousands of young men being removed from the domestic workforce. Women filled in where they could of course, turning their hands to jobs which would never before have been considered suitable for women. For some the change was permanent as the country lost 2% of its population to the war.

The participation of women in the workforce led to calls for further reform to democracy. Before 1832 less than 5% of adults could vote, all men aged 21 or over and owners of significant property. Reform Acts in 1832, 1867 and 1884 improved this gradually, but it was the Representation of the People Act of 1918 which extended the vote to all men over 21 and to women over 30 who met the property criteria. Suddenly the electorate grew to 21.4 million.

Spending on WW1 had naturally disrupted the economy, especially in the important coal mining industry where cheaper coal was suddenly available from a reparation-funded Germany. Mine owners demanded longer hours and lower wages to cut costs. The pound returned to the Gold Standard at its pre-war value, making British exports overpriced and less desirable, leading to redundancies and unemployment. After prolonged negotiations the miners finally called a strike and the Trades Union Congress called all unions out in their support. The General Strike lasted just 9 days before the TUC called it off without securing any of the miners demands. It had a profound impact on labour relations, they had lost huge amounts of their money supporting strikers, but as nothing had been gained they lost disaffected members in the aftermath. It damaged relations between the unions and the Labour Party while strengthening the position of the Conservative Party. The coal industry continued to decline. Attitudes were

affected by the strike, there was a fear that Britain had come close to a revolutionary crisis, as Russia had done in the revolution of 1917 when Tzar Nicholas II was overthrown by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Laws were introduced to curb the power of the unions, even though there had been no revolutionary intent.

The times were not all bad though. Partly because of the war, there had been huge advances in medicine and public health. Vaccines and antibiotics had a huge impact on health and life expectancy. Better understanding of the mechanisms of infection meant that the reasons for improved sanitation were understood and acted upon. The BBC was created in 1922 with radio broadcasts to inform, educate and entertain. These expanded to broadcasts to the Empire in 1927. In 1936 the world's first television service from Alexandra Palace was started, but unfortunately these transmissions were suspended as World War II began.

The second World War (1939-1945) again brought a whole new way of life to the country. Parishioners from Rusthall were again 'called up' but this war also affected the whole population. Aeroplanes, which were only in their infancy during WWI, were now able to travel to enemy territory to drop bombs, so the number of civilian casualties was greater and the major targets of cities, ports and infrastructure received regular damage from bombing raids. Bombs not dropped on their targets were sometimes jettisoned over Kent as bombers returned to their home bases in Germany. Fortunately few deaths resulted from these, though Rusthall added a further tally of military deaths to its parish records. Many elderly parishioners can remember watching dog-fights overhead during the Battle of Britain.

As an island nation which had grown dependent on imports of food and manufacturing resources everything would have become scarce. Women, the elderly and young were all expected to do their best to make up the loss of so many men away on active service. Those left behind grew vegetables and fruit and acted as Air Raid Wardens and Home Guard in addition to working in shops, offices and factories. Boy Scouts ran messages on their bicycles. Everyone was expected to obey the blackout and food was rationed. A large bomb shelter was built on Tunbridge Wells Common and smaller shelters were erected in schools and private gardens. Nationally deaths during WW2 were 260,000 military deaths and 60,500 civilian deaths, a much larger number than during WW1, but a smaller proportion of the larger population.

Although there was a time of relief and joy at the end of the war, there was also prolonged hardship.

Rationing did not end completely until 1954, by which time the country had a new, young and glamorous Queen Elizabeth II on the throne. Perhaps surprisingly scientists are now saying that the period of rationing produced the healthiest population ever, because the fair share of food reduced food poverty and the foods that were most severely rationed were those like sugar, butter and red meat which we now know should only be consumed in moderation, while healthy seasonal vegetables were unrationed.

Politically the greatest change was the transition of the British Empire into the Commonwealth. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were granted full legislative independence after WW1, but the second war had drained Britain financially and militarily, making the old imperial system impossible to maintain. India and Pakistan became independent in 1947, Burma, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Ghana followed in the next couple of years. In the sixties 17 African colonies became independent, along with Malta and Mauritius.

Wartime casualties had produced a shortage of workers and members of these new Commonwealth countries were actively encouraged to come to Britain to work. Sadly they did not always receive the warmest welcome, something still suffered by migrants to the current day.

The technological advances during WW2 led to the development of new industries. The development of the nuclear bomb meant that the UK was a nuclear power, driving defence strategies but also leading to nuclear power. The codebreaking of Alan Turing and his colleagues at Bletchley Park is now well known. The Colossus machine that he designed with Tommy Flowers was the first programmable electronic computer and laid the theoretical groundwork for the automation of data processing and industry. Unfortunately the extreme secrecy imposed during and after the war meant that these innovators were not able to benefit from their work, indeed Americans believe that their ENIAC machine should be considered the first computer. The computing sector has transformed daily life, to the extent that we now all use several computer based devices every day, mobile phones, smartphones, laptops, programmable washing machines and dishwashers, the list seems endless.

Tim Berners-Lee's development of the World Wide Web at the end of the 1980s allowed computers to communicate with each other, multiplying their powers and transforming our ability to communicate quickly. From initial hard wired links, to satellite communications, there has been a major shift away from manufacturing to a digital and service based economy, including online

banking and financial services, shopping, media, healthcare, education and even social relationships.

For a while the horrors of world war led to a desire to ensure that such conflict could not happen again. NATO was set up in 1949 to deter the threat posed by the Soviet Union as the 'cold war' set in. Countries formed economic alliances. Britain's early attempts to join the European Economic Community were blocked by French President Charles de Gaulle, but after his resignation a third application to join was successful and the UK, along with Ireland and Denmark became members in 1973. Relations with our European neighbours have often been rocky and in 2016 the UK voted to leave the EU, which it did in 2020. However, as the Soviet Union devolved into its constituent countries, many of them have sought membership of both NATO and the EU for the added protection and assistance this provides.

The UK has been involved in conflicts since WW2. Between 1950-53 the UK fought as part of a United Nations coalition in support of South Korea. There was a short lived Suez Crisis in 1956 and Mau Mau uprising in Kenya between 1952-1960. In 1982 The UK task force took back control of the Falkland Islands after an invasion by Argentinian forces. In 1990 the UK joined the USA in the Gulf War which sought to liberate Kuwait after Iraqi invasion. As part of NATO the UK sent troops to the Bosnian War (1992-96) and Kosovo (1998-99), there has been the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan (2000-2021), the Iraq war (2003-2011) and more recently in operations against Islamic State, also in Iraq.

However, the dispute which had most impact on the country's civilian population has been 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland (1969-1999), where British troops were sent to support civilian authorities as armed conflict broke out between those wanting Northern Ireland to become part of the Irish Republic and those wishing to remain part of the UK. Bombing of civilians to affect the outcome of the conflict was initially confined to Northern Ireland, but later spread to the British mainland. Some attacks were targeted, but others were completely indiscriminate. The use of car and truck bombs led to increased security at government and military sites which can still be seen today. Bombs in major cities caused a period of constant fear and the need to be alert. A negotiated settlement known as the Good Friday Agreement brought the troubles to an end in 1999 although tensions remain and devolved government has been suspended for periods.

St Paul's joined in the project to ring in the new Millennium in 2000, which coincided with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church. Tony Blair was Prime Minister and the dawn of the new millennium was

celebrated in the Millennium Dome (now the O2 Arena). The yearlong Millennium Experience exhibition was not a wild success and is perhaps now most famous for the attempted theft of 'the Millennium Jewels', diamonds owned by de Beers which were on display. Fortunately the combined forces of the Metropolitan and Kent Police forces foiled the heist and 7 men were eventually tried and convicted. The greatly feared 'Millennium Bug', predicted to bring computers to a standstill when old systems were unable to cope with date calculations from the year 2000, also proved to be a damp squib.

The first decade of the millennium was hit marred by terror attacks by Islamic organisations, first in New York on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2002 and later in London on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005. The world was then rocked by a financial crisis in 2008 caused by excessive speculation on property prices. Starting in the USA we learned the downside of global markets as global banking and investment institutions ran into difficulties or failed completely. This hit the UK economy hard and the country entered a period of austerity while trying to recover. This led to some political instability, with a referendum on Scottish Independence in 2014 only narrowly resulting in continued union.

Technology continued to advance, however. British research in biotech and genomics since 2010 has had global significance. Medicine has advanced, and become more personalised. The sequencing of DNA has also led to development in forensic science. Improved imaging techniques enabled faster diagnosis and greater understanding of the mechanisms of a variety of illnesses, leading to improved treatments and cures. More vaccines have been developed at greater speed, which has reduced deaths around the world.

In recent years the greatest impact has been from the Covid-19 virus, which spread from an outbreak of illness in China in the autumn of 2019, becoming the first pandemic to sweep the planet since the Influenza pandemic of 1918 which led to about 50 million deaths. Countries around the world brought in measures to reduce the spread of the disease, closing international borders and requiring citizens to remain at home or to wear face masks. Severe restrictions remained in place for 2020 – 21. It is now calculated that there have been 25 million cases of Covid in the UK since 2020, causing 232,112 deaths. A fast production of vaccines to combat the virus saved many more from serious illness.

We were fortunate that this pandemic occurred at a time when communication is so much easier than it used to be. Although churches were closed, services continued via Zoom and YouTube, including at St Paul's, with readers and choir recording their contributions at home. While schools were closed

teaching was provided on television and online. There were many examples of improved community mindfulness, people looked out for their neighbours and found ingenious ways to hold social events with family and friends online. However, even now we are still recovering from the impact of these periods of isolation, with young people in particular finding it difficult to regain good mental health and happiness. It has resulted in much more flexible work practices however, with many people working from home at least a day or two each week.

The disruption to the observance of life events at church during the pandemic caused additional sorrow to those unable to have a 'normal' funeral for their loved ones, including the funeral for the Duke of Edinburgh, who died in April 2021. Television coverage showing Queen Elizabeth sitting apart from her family while mourning her spouse of over 73 years was heartbreaking, and such a contrast to the funerals of Diana, Princess of Wales in September 1997 or Elizabeth the Queen Mother in April 2002. Fortunately restrictions were lifted in time for Queen Elizabeth's own funeral following her death on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022, aged 96. She had the longest reign of any British monarch, outdoing her predecessor Queen Victoria by 7 years, achieving a reign of 70 years and 214 days.

King Charles III succeeded her, becoming the 7<sup>th</sup> monarch known to the church. St Paul's joined in celebrations of his coronation in 2023. St Paul's has also known 15 Archbishops of Canterbury plus one Archbishop elect – Dame Sarah Mullally. There have been 13 Bishops of Rochester in this time – I wonder if all of them visited St Paul's during their time in office? During our Harvest Festival we learned that St Paul's has only had 8 vicars so far – what a testament to their stamina and perhaps a celebration of a church which is obviously a joy to belong to! Long may this continue – but will I be there to witness the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary?



**Deborah Bruce**





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Rusthall in your will.**

**Thank you**

### **Tamarix Holiday Bungalow Winchelsea Beach**



Tamarix is a 2 bedroom bungalow situated in a no-through road, and set in a large fenced shingle and grassed garden. It is ideal for those looking for a quiet and comfortable self-catering accommodation to enjoy a tranquil break along the stunning Sussex coast. Sleeping four, the cottage can be used for a wonderful family holiday or just a cosy break for two. Pets are welcome by arrangement and Tamarix is perfectly situated for walking, bird watching, cycling, and the beach.

Holidays are on a weekly basis only in high season, but short breaks may be possible at other times.

**Weeks for 2026 (April to October) are available  
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karen\_miller\_2@hotmail.co.uk  
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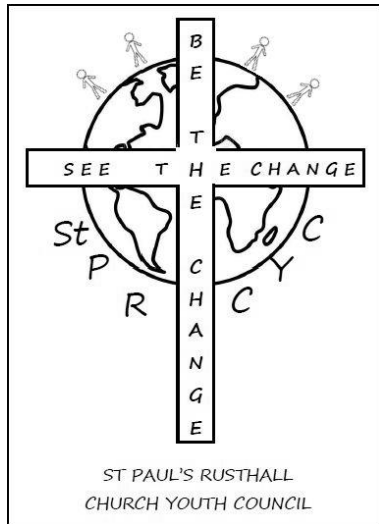
## **Magazine Easy Payment Methods**

Income from magazine sales is important to us at St Paul's. If everyone paid the £1 cover charge we would raise over £900 a year, which would not only cover the cost of producing the magazine but also contribute to other costs such as leasing the photocopier.

If you often find yourself fumbling for the right change, perhaps you might like to pay in advance for a year's "subscription", 10 issues for the sum of £10, (you might even feel tempted to be more generous!) Please make cheques payable to St Paul's Church, Rusthall and send them to the Parish Office.

Alternatively you can use the card payment machines – just choose the £1 donation option.

Your contributions are much appreciated.



The Youth Council have enjoyed a particularly busy and important few days . Our November meeting focussed on Remembrance and its significance both historically and for us and society today. Our guests of honour were leaders from The Tunbridge Wells Air Cadets, father and son, Gareth and Danny Jones who



were fantastic and totally inspirational. Danny joined the cadets, reluctantly apparently, aged 13 and shared his six incredible years with us, the opportunities experienced including camps, a 3 week fully paid trip to Australia and the chance to fly and gain his wings, the lifelong

friendships made, the fun and the skills gained. He is now training to be a leader. Many of the CYC were very enthusiastic to explore further and visit the unit. Everyone also enjoyed making the wreaths which adorned the church gates.



Sunday saw the CYC parading the Union Flag for the first time at the poignant and meaningful Service of Remembrance held in the Parish Church. This was a huge honour and our three volunteers certainly did us and themselves proud.



Finally we were responsible for the Choristers Cafe. We were extremely busy particularly on the



Saturday and our volunteer teenagers were fantastic, mastering bacon baps, serving soup, greeting customers and washing up - masses of washing up. Inevitably the Sum Up was the favourite and the speed of their mental arithmetic quickly proved to be impressive! Some 10 children were trained and worked really hard, particularly when a rambling group of 15 arrived for lunch! They worked very happily as a team, with some people returning for a second shift!



All in all we are incredibly proud of all the CYC are achieving. Well done everyone!

Next meetings:

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December – The Samaritans plus Christmas Tree decorating for church

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> January – CYC New Year Party!

6 to 7.30 pm in The Lodge. All children of secondary school age welcome.

CYC are also running the Chorister's Café on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> January between 10 am and 4 pm.

## Taizé Services are back at St Paul's



After a break of a few years, Taizé services have started being held once more in the Church Centre on a Sunday afternoon. The service restarted in October and going forward will be held on the fourth Sunday of every month (except December) at 4pm in the Church Centre. To get people into the mood for exploring Taizé worship in the St Paul's way, what follows is a short history of how Taizé came to be and an explanation behind the elements that go into our Taizé services.



The community at Taizé was very much a product of the second world war. Taizé itself sits in Burgundy, near the demarcation line that split France in two. In 1940, Roger Schutz-Marsauche, the 25-year-old son of a Reformed pastor, leaves Switzerland to help people in tricky situations in France. A particular focus was helping the Jewish refugees fleeing the war. At the same time, he develops the project of creating a community, conceived by him during a long period of pulmonary tuberculosis.

Fast forward to today, and there are about 80 brothers from different church backgrounds – Catholic, Anglican, Protestant – from nearly thirty countries. By its very existence, it is a *“parable of community”*: a tangible sign of reconciliation between divided Christians and separated peoples.



Throughout the year, the community welcomes tens of thousands of young adults from Europe and other continents. They come for week-long meetings, during which they experience prayer and life together with time for biblical reflection and



sharing, in an environment where they can ask questions about their lives and their future.

*From the depths of the human condition a secret aspiration rises up. Caught up in the anonymous rhythms of schedules and timetables, men and women of today are implicitly thirsting for the one essential reality: an inner life, signs of the invisible.*

*Nothing is more conducive to a communion with the Living God than a meditative common prayer with, as its high point, singing that never ends and that continues in the silence of one's heart when one is alone again. When the mystery of God becomes tangible through the simple beauty of symbols, when it is not smothered by too many words, then a common prayer, far from exuding monotony and boredom, awakens us to heaven's joy on earth.*

*In a technological society, there is a clear separation between prayer and work. When inner life and human solidarity appear to be in competition with one another, as if people had to choose between them, that competition tears apart the very depths of the soul.*

*Prayer is a serene force at work within human beings, stirring them up, transforming them, never allowing them to close their eyes in the face of evil, or wars, of all that threatens the weak of the world. From it, we draw the energy to wage other struggles - to enable our loved one to survive, to transform the human condition, to make the earth a place fit to live in.*

*All who walk in the footsteps of Christ, while being in the presence of God, remain alongside other people as well. They do not separate prayer and commitment.*

### **Brother Roger of Taizé**

There is no prescribed format or order for a Taizé service. However, there are several elements that could be used. Taizé services are perhaps most readily identified by the nature of the songs they sing and their style of chanting as well as the long period of silence. It is recommended that there should be one extended period of silence rather than many shorter ones and this is the format we have adopted for our services. The other identifying factor is the lack of any sermon! There can be one or two readings, the psalms can be read or sung, sometimes an alleluia can be included, and there can be almost any number of songs. In Asia, they started to include a song celebrating the light of Christ during which candles may be lit. It's a symbol reminding us that even when we are shrouded in darkness, in our personal life or in the life of humanity, Christ's love is a fire that never dies out. It is a symbol we will also include in our services from time to time.

**Psalms** - Jesus prayed these age-old prayers of his people. Christians have always found a wellspring

of life in them. The psalms place us in the great communion of all believers. Our joys and sorrows, our trust in God, our thirst and even our anguish find expression in the psalms.

**Reading Scripture** - is a way of going to "the inexhaustible wellspring by which God gives himself to thirsting human beings" (Origen, 3rd century). The Bible is a "letter from God to creatures" that enables them "to discover God's heart in God's words" (Gregory the Great, 6th century).

**Silence** – When we try to express communion with God in words, our minds quickly come up short. But, in the depths of our being, through the Holy Spirit, Christ is praying far more than we imagine. That is why silence is so essential in discovering the heart of prayer. Although God never stops trying to communicate with us, God never wants to impose anything on us. Often God's voice comes in a whisper, in a breath of silence. Remaining in silence in God's presence, open to the spirit, is already prayer. It is not a matter of trying to obtain inner silence at all costs by following some method that creates a kind of emptiness within. The important thing is a childlike attitude of trust by which we allow Christ to pray within us silently, and then one day, we will discover that the depths of our being are inhabited by a Presence.

**Prayers** - A prayer composed of short petitions or acclamations, sometimes sustained by humming, with each petition followed by a response said or sung by all, can form a kind of "pillar of fire" at the heart of the prayer. Praying for others widens our prayer to the dimensions of the entire human family; we entrust to God the joys and the hopes, the sorrows and the sufferings of all people, particularly those who are forgotten. A prayer of praise enables us to celebrate all that God is for us.

**Songs** – Taizé songs are instantly recognisable. They involve a line, maybe two, of scripture structured round a simple chant that is then repeated several times. It makes Taizé songs easy to remember and the monotony of the chants provides a meditative space that helps clear our heads from any intrusive thoughts and allows our minds to focus on God.

I hope to see you at one of our Taizé services in the near future. The feedback from our first service in October was extremely positive. Whether you are just dipping your toe into Taizé for the first time, or you are a regular Taizé goer, I can promise you will get a very warm welcome.

**Tim Harrold**

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## Exchange of Ideas

Correspondence and the exchange of ideas is an excellent new ingredient in our magazine, so may I join in as a third voice alongside the 'Anonymous Parishioner' and James Woodhouse in their recent articles regarding the interpretation of how we read the Bible.

One of the most exciting discoveries in my personal pilgrimage of faith has been learning a little about Aramaic, the language that Jesus, or Yeshua as he would have been called, would have actually spoken. Of course, the words we read today in our Bibles have been through several language transitions since they were first uttered, with all the ensuing hazards of meaning and nuance which that entails.

The work of Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz has been an eye-opener. He is a scholar who has studied the complexities of Aramaic over many years and has written a number of fascinating books on the subject.

I thought it might be of interest if I quote some of the teaching about this ancient language, which is still spoken in a very few pockets in the Middle East right up to our modern times.

*Aramaic language is rich in layers of meaning, often allowing for multiple interpretations of a single word or phrase. This linguistic richness is a result of the triliteral roots, which convey a core semantic idea and can be modified into various forms through prefixes, suffixes, infixes, vowels, and binyanim (verb stems).*

**Literal Meaning:** *The first layer is the literal or practical meaning, which is often the most straightforward translation.*

**Metaphorical Meaning:** *The second layer involves metaphorical interpretations, where the word may carry additional meanings that are not immediately apparent.*

**Spiritual Meaning:** *The third layer often relates to spiritual or mystical interpretations, where the word may carry deeper meanings that are not found in the literal or metaphorical meanings.*

*For example, the word "earth" in Aramaic can mean "Earthiness", "the natural abundance of nature" and "everything that appears in particular forms". This complexity allows for a deeper understanding of the text and the message. Aramaic is a language that has some unique characteristics that makes it an especially rich vehicle for expressing spiritual wisdom and mystic vision.*

Below are three more examples of words that in Aramaic carry more than one meaning.

*taba:* Usually translated as *good* but more accurately *ripe: ready in the fullness of ripeness: in the right place and the right time.*

*rukha:* *spirit* (as in Holy Spirit) Also *breath; air; atmosphere.*

*B'shemi:* *In my name* (as in *pray or ask in my name*). Also: *in my nature; with my experience; (pray or ask) as I do.*

*"Those who have ears to hear" - In other words, the people listening would, Yeshua hoped, not only have heard the literal meaning of his words but would also have understood and responded to the many rich additional nuances and shadings that were enfolded into them.*

I suppose that through most of my adult life I have assumed "he who has ears to hear" referred to either responding to the Gospel or not, but now having my eyes opened to this teaching about the language Jesus spoke, it somehow makes it all the more meaningful - though it's very tantalising not to be able to recognise those nuances that his hearers in First Century Galilee would have understood.

May the correspondence flow – is anyone else going to join in?

**Jenny Beaumont**

Three Wise Women  
would have asked directions,  
arrived on time, delivered the baby,  
cleaned the stable, made a casserole...



and there would have been  
Peace on Earth



## Home Life in Old Testament Times

### Part 7

Death was a more familiar part of daily life in Israel than it is with us, for the simple reason that families were larger and lived together under one roof. Infant mortality appears to have been exceptionally heavy since excavations have revealed the skeletons of many children buried in earthenware jars. Despite the remarkable claims for the longevity of the Patriarchs, few people lived to a ripe old age. The psalmist thought – three score years and ten – the average limit of a man's life. It is probably that war, malnutrition and disease accounted for many much earlier deaths.

A death in a household set in motion a remarkably elaborate and stylized ceremony of mourning which lasted for a week or more. The members of the family and their friends gathered round the dead person and carried out lamentations which bordered on hysteria. They tore their clothes, put on coarse hair garments - sackcloth - and disfigured themselves with dust and ashes. They shaved off their hair and their beards and even brought blood by scratching themselves in paroxysms of grief.

Such rites however went beyond the natural expression of grief – even allowing for the Israelites' highly emotional temperament – and clearly had their origin and probably their continued vitality in the fear of the spirits of the departed. This explains why professional mourners were called in to assist the family with their dirges.

The hot climate necessitated immediate burial. The Israelites did not practise either embalming or cremation, but they attached the highest importance to decent burial. The body – fully clothed – but without a coffin – was taken by the funeral party to its grave. Sometimes this was inside the city walls and sometimes in the courtyard of the house, but usually it was made in or near the city mound. The ideal was for a man to be 'gathered to his fathers' in the most literal sense of being laid in a family vault, but this was a luxury that only the wealthy could afford. The poor were buried in common graves or hillside caves. Inevitably it is about the more elaborate tombs which archaeology has supplied most information.

The mourners left a variety of everyday objects with the body - weapons, lamps, jewellery and kitchen equipment such as jars, jugs and dishes. It is from tombs that models of Israelite furniture has been recovered. Originally it was thought that the purpose of this was intended to equip the dead person for life beyond the grave. However as time went on the articles became less realistic and it seems that the somewhat crude notion of fitting out

the dead with material for their new life had been abandoned and the deposits were no more than a symbolic survival of an old custom.

However even today there lingers some of these customs. Not to very long ago a headmaster was buried with his academic dress on top of his coffin. There was also the fatal temptation for the unscrupulous – when tomb deposits included jewellery - although care was taken to seal or hide the door or entrance to the tomb. This unfortunately was not always proof against the professional grave robber.

During the period of mourning fasting was broken only by the funeral feast held at the tomb itself on the day of burial. This may have been a survival of some former religious significance. When some groups had abandoned the practice of making offerings to the dead, monuments began to be erected and this is referred to in II Samuel chapter 18. But for the average Israelite not rich enough to erect a monument, his only memorial and hope for the future rested with the family. Throughout the Old Testament time there did not really exist any great differences between the townsman and the countryman.

**Daphne Pilcher**



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## Activity Pages

Answer the clues and in Grid 1 re-sort the letters in the fifth vertical column to get the name of a Scottish Festival. In Grid 2 re-sort the letters in the fourth vertical column to get the name of a Church festival. References for Grid 2 are from the Good News version of the Bible.

Grid 1

1									Town located in the Isle of Purbeck
2									Capital of Northern Ireland
3									City on the river Clyde
4									Town of North Wales near the border of Cheshire
5									Before the Industrial Revolution one of the largest towns in Somerset
6									Known for its Park which is the home of the New Barn model railway
7									Major university city
8									City in the East Midlands renowned for its pottery

Grid 2

1								He was a Hittite (2 Samuel 11)
2								To whom did they take Jesus (Luke 23)
3								He saw a staircase reaching up to heaven (Genesis 28 v 10)
4								To which land did Moses flee (Exodus 2 v 15)
5								Father of James and John (Matthew 4)
6								Where the temple was situated to where Hannah took Samuel (1 Samuel 1)
7								Daughter of David (1 Chronicles 3 v 9)
8								He asked her to ask her father for a field on her wedding (Judges 1 v 14)
9								Where Cyrus was Emperor

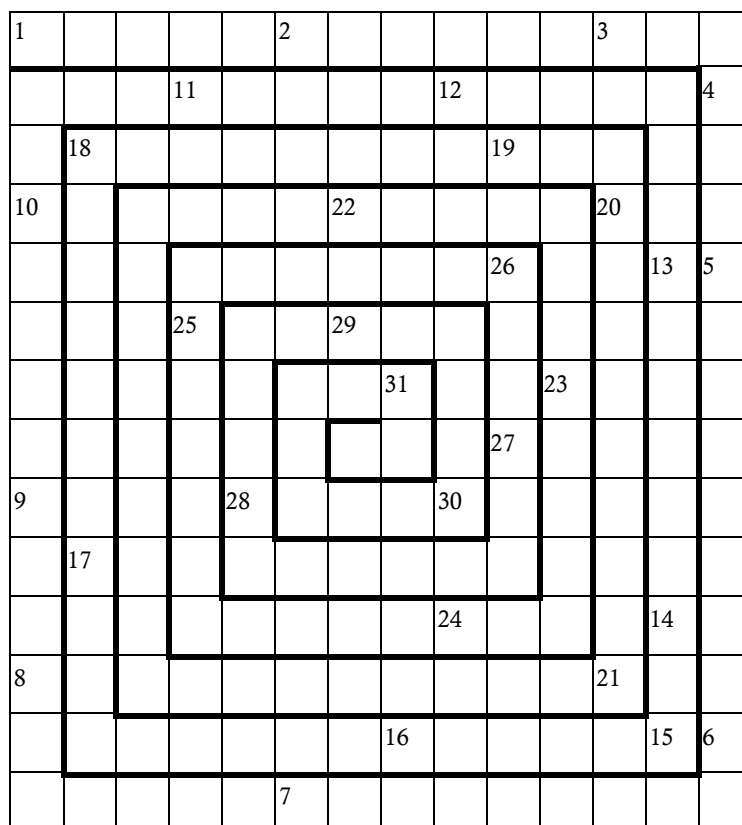
## A Crossword with a Difference

The last letter of each answer is the first letter of the next. All the answers have links with the months of December or January

## Clues

- |    |                                           |    |                                                         |
|----|-------------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Christmas hymns                           | 14 | ___ rest ye merry gentlemen                             |
| 2  | We remember him on Boxing Day             | 15 | Important Christmas meal                                |
| 3  | Collective name for Almonds or Brazils    | 16 | You might make a new one on 1 <sup>st</sup> January     |
| 4  | December/January weather                  | 17 | The original Father Christmas                           |
| 5  | Good King _ _ _ _ _ looked out            | 18 | His special day is 25 <sup>th</sup> January             |
| 6  | Another name for Father Christmas         | 19 | A gift the shepherds might have taken to the baby Jesus |
| 7  | Some people hang this up on Christmas Eve | 20 | O little town of _ _ _ _ _                              |
| 8  | You might give someone this at Christmas  | 21 | Said to have been performed by Herod                    |
| 9  | Sparkling Christmas garland               | 22 | Describe the length of day on 21 <sup>st</sup> December |
| 10 | Needed during the dark nights             | 23 | In the Christmas song drummers performed on this day    |
| 11 | Where Jesus was born                      | 24 | What is remembered on 10 <sup>th</sup> December         |
| 12 | Feast remembering the Wise Men            |    |                                                         |
| 13 | Chocolate Christmas cake                  |    |                                                         |

- 25 Which country celebrates Hogmanay  
 26 Another word for winter weather  
 27 Christmas Show  
 28 Christmas beverage  
 29 Possible name and spelling of one of the Wise Men  
 30 Around at Christmas for sledge pulling  
 31 A winter colour



Try this Crossword where all the words are the names of Countries, Cities, Towns and Villages across the Globe. These words are written forwards, backwards and diagonally. At the end you will be left with fourteen unused letters which will give you the names of three well known British rivers.

N	T	O	C	S	A	D	R	A	G	E	K	A	K
O	O	A	L	A	B	W	E	L	S	C	E	A	K
R	G	T	D	L	I	N	Z	H	I	S	G	R	R
W	O	E	E	R	N	R	S	W	T	U	O	E	A
A	R	S	Y	I	E	T	O	O	T	Y	Z	V	M
Y	Y	A	L	E	A	V	T	R	H	E	H	O	N
R	E	R	N	E	E	U	O	X	F	O	R	D	E
U	E	O	H	S	K	P	S	C	R	E	W	E	D
B	C	O	T	N	O	R	O	T	N	E	D	Y	R
S	A	T	O	I	H	O	T	E	R	A	W	E	O
I	N	N	S	B	R	U	C	K	A	A	V	N	F
L	H	A	T	U	N	H	R	R	S	O	L	Y	H
A	M	A	L	I	A	E	U	M	H	U	L	I	S
S	A	P	S	D	A	N	I	T	N	E	G	R	A

ANS  
 ARUN  
 ASHFORD  
 AYR  
 BERLIN  
 CHAD  
 DENMARK  
 ELY  
 FEZ  
 HYTHE  
 KELSO  
 LINZ  
 NORWAY  
 OXFORD  
 RYDE  
 SALISBURY  
 SOHO  
 TOGO  
 TUNIS  
 UTAH  
 WARE  
 WICK  
 ARGENTINA  
 ASCOT  
 AUSTRALIA  
 BALA  
 CAIRO  
 CREWE  
 DOVER  
 ETON  
 HOVE  
 INNSBRUCK  
 LAKEGARDA  
 MALI  
 OHIO  
 PORTUGAL  
 RYE  
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 SPA  
 TORONTO  
 USK  
 VANCOVER  
 WELS  
 YORK

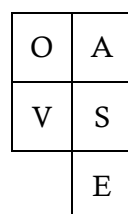
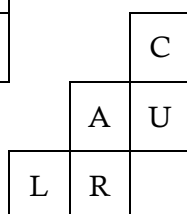
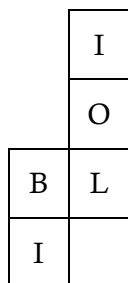
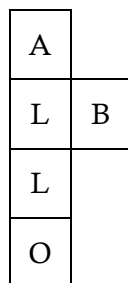
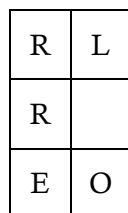
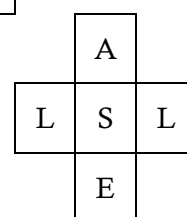
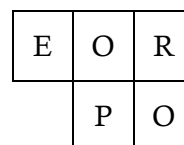
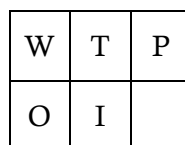
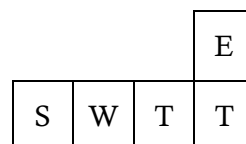
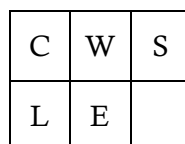
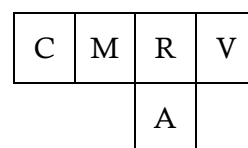
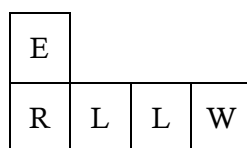
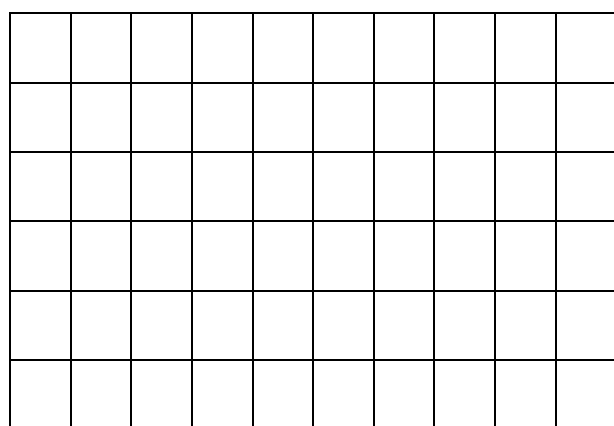


## Twenty Questions to Test You

- Welsh name for Wales
- Complete the phrase – Chew the \_\_\_\_\_ with animal connections
- Number of lives a cat is supposed to have
- What is golf scoring standard
- What are the two main exports of Qatar
- What was Archimedes' famous cry of discovery
- What is the name for a mountain lake
- What sort of fruit is a Golden Delicious
- What does En Masse mean
- Which bird is associated with wisdom
- With which sport do you associate Ellen MacArthur
- Who was India's first prime minister
- To which country do you associate the dance – the Gay Gordons
- Who was the Mamma Mia pop group
- What is known as Caesar's fateful river
- In which sport is the Webb Ellis cup competed for
- Another name for the Mountain Ash tree
- Name the gander's mate
- To which royal house did Elizabeth I belong
- What name is sometimes given to mercury

## Try your hand at this Nature Cross-jig

Fit the five letter shapes into the grid to find the names of flowers, trees or animals found in this country.



## ANSWERS

### Grid 1

1 Swanage 2 Belfast 3 Glasgow 4 Wrexham 5 Frome 6 Swanley  
7 Oxford 8 Derby  
The Scottish Festival 5<sup>th</sup> vertical column Hogmanay

### Grid 2

1 Uriah 2 Pilate 3 Jacob 4 Midian 5 Shiloh 6 Zebedee  
7 Tamar 8 Othniel 9 Persia  
The Church Festival 4<sup>th</sup> vertical column Candlemas

### Crossword with a Difference

1 Carols	2 Stephne	3 Nuts	4 Snow	5 Wenceslas	6 Santa Claus
7 Stocking	8 Gift	9 Tinsel	10 Lights	11 Stable	12 Epiphany
13 Yule Log	14 God	15 Dinner	16 Resolution	17 Nicholas	18 Saint Paul
19 Lamb	20 Bethlehem	21 Massacre of the Innocents	22 Shortest	23 Twelfth	
24 Human Rights	25 Scotland	26 Damp	27 Pantomime	28 Eggnog	29 Gasper
30 Reindeer	31 Red				

### Word search

The three rivers are Thames, Trent, Dee

### Twenty Questions to Test You

1 Cymru	2 Cud	3 Nine	4 Par	5 Gas and Petroleum
6 Eureka	7 Tarn	8 Apple	9 All at once/All together	10 Owl
11 Sailing	12 Nehru	13 Scotland	14 Abba	15 Rubicon
16 Rugby	17 Rowan	18 Goose	19 Tudor	20 Quick Silver

### Nature Cross Jig

Reading from left to right the vertical columns are Clover, Weasel, Sorrel, Willow, Teasel, Poplar, Crocus, Mallow, Rabbit, Violet

**Daphne Pilcher**



## General Information

<b>Vicar</b>	
Rev. Ronnie Williams,	521357
The Vicarage, Bretland Road, Rusthall	
<b>Associate Priest</b>	
Rev. Nicholas Burton (c/o Parish Office)	521447
<b>Reader</b>	
Daphne Pilcher	521691
<b>Licenced Lay Minister</b>	
Tim Harrold	07413805814
<b>Churchwardens</b>	
May Graves	gravesmay7@gmail.com
Chris Dobson	539539
<b>Deputy Churchwarden</b>	
Graeme Anderson	532922
<b>Parochial Church Council Secretary</b>	
Mione Palmer	667951
<b>Youth Council</b>	
Angela Culley	07779 098026
<b>Treasury and Planned Giving</b>	
PCC Finance subcommittee	
c/o the Parish Office	521447
<b>Safeguarding Officers</b>	
Daphne Pilcher	521691
<b>DBS Officer</b>	
Clive Brown	
c/o the Parish Office	521447
<b>Bible Reading Fellowship Secretary</b>	
Vivienne Sharp	543263
<b>Choir Leader</b>	
Fiona Johnson	07540 273303
<b>Magazine Editors</b>	
Deborah Bruce and Sue Hare	
c/o the Parish Office	
email – magazine@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk	
<b>Flower Team</b>	
Jill McAllister	532817
<b>Parish Hall Bookings</b>	
<b>Churchyards</b>	
Enquiries to Parish Office	521447
<b>Rusthall St Paul's Primary School</b>	
Executive Headteacher – Mrs Liz Mitchell	520582
Head of School – Mrs Lyndsay Smurthwaite	520582

## CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL

All worshippers who are baptised members of the Church of England, and aged over 16, should have their names entered on the Electoral Roll. This entitles them to attend and vote at the Annual Parochial Meeting. Forms for enrolment will be found in the Parish Church or the Parish Office and should be sent to the Vicar.

## Organisations

<b>Julian Group</b>	
Pat Stevens	529187
<b>Group Scout Leader</b>	
Gavin Cons	
Email – rusthallscoutgroup@gmail.com	
<b>Scout Membership Secretary</b>	
Juliet Waller	
Email – <a href="mailto:rusthallscoutgroupwaitinglist@yahoo.co.uk">rusthallscoutgroupwaitinglist@yahoo.co.uk</a>	
Squirrels:	rusthallsquirrels@gmail.com
Beavers:	beaversrusthall@gmail.com
Cubs:	rusthallcubs@hotmail.co.uk
Scouts:	rusthallscouts@gmail.com
<b>Ranger Guides</b>	
Gemma Bradley	07377 061398
<b>Guides</b>	
Gemma Bradley	07377 061398
<b>Brownie Guides</b>	
Karen Miller (Thurs)	
rusthallbrownies@btinternet.com	
Tina Francis (Mon)	545877
<b>Rainbows</b>	
Mary Saunders	319872
Email – saundii@aol.com	
<b>Playtime at St Paul's</b>	
Liz Mankelow	07840 837968
<b>Rusthall Lunch Club</b>	
Helen Foster	01892 535159
Richard Brook	01892 862677
<b>Rusthall Community Larder</b>	
Bjorn Simpole	07900 906294
<b>Rusthall Community &amp; Youth Project</b>	
Barry Edwards	680296
<b>Rusthall Village Association</b>	
Alex Britcher	07967 011467
<b>Rusthall Parish Council</b>	
Council Clerk: Alison Stevens	520161
<b>Rusthall Bonfire and Fete Committee</b>	
Annie Softley	548366
<b>Friends of TW and Rusthall Common</b>	
Joy Podbury	315549
chairman@fotcs.org.uk	





## **The Parish Office**

Parish Administrator - **Mrs Helen Reynolds**

St Paul's Parish Office, Church Centre, Rusthall Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 8RE

Telephone (01892) 521447

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**The Office is open on weekday mornings (except Tuesdays) between 10 am and 1 pm.**