

# The Messenger

## January 2026

### The Parish Of Dursley



The Steps to the Broadwell, Dursley, picture by Clare White

70p each or £7 annually



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**The parish of Dursley  
and**

**the parish of Uley with Owlpen and Nympsfield**

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## **RECTOR**

Revd Dr Juliet Jensen

**Tel: 01453 350810**

**E-mail: [ewelmerector@gmail.com](mailto:ewelmerector@gmail.com)**

**077769 10890**

## **SAFEGUARDING OFFICER FOR DURSLEY PARISH**

Mrs Heather Arnold

**Tel: 07757 468371**

**E-mail: [arnoldheather@icloud.com](mailto:arnoldheather@icloud.com)**

## **CHURCHWARDENS.**

Mr Danny Parker

**Tel: 0781 8878620**

**E-mail: [d7parker@hotmail.com](mailto:d7parker@hotmail.com)**

Mr Chris Tyler

**Tel: 01453 299162**

**E-mail: [cjtbrocco@gmail.com](mailto:cjtbrocco@gmail.com)**

## **BENEFICE ADMINISTRATOR – Mrs Clare White**

**Address letters to:**

**St James Parish Centre, Silver Street, Dursley, Glos, GL11 4NA**

**E-mail: [ewelmeeparishoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ewelmeeparishoffice@gmail.com)**

**Tel: 01453 549280**

## **DIRECTOR OF MUSIC.**

Mr Nigel Davies, M.A., B Mus., F.R.C.O.,

**Tel: 01454 416867**

## **PCC: CHAIRMAN**

Revd Dr Juliet Jensen (as above)

## **VICE CHAIRMAN**

Mr Chris Tyler (as above)

## **PCC SECRETARY**

Mrs Clare White

**E-mail: [ewelmeeparishoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ewelmeeparishoffice@gmail.com)**

**Tel: 01453 549280**

## **PCC TREASURER**

Dr Sally Pearson

**Tel: 01453 542106**

**E-mail: [v6sep@aol.com](mailto:v6sep@aol.com)**



## A Message from the Editors

Dear Readers

Welcome to our New Year edition, of the Messenger. It is slightly more expensive this year but we hope you think it is still good value for money. So a gentle reminder that payment is due. Also the final 100 Club results are in.

There is a new theme for the front cover as we step into 2026 hoping for Peace and Good Health.

We have the answers to David Vonberg's Christmas Quiz and we hope for plenty of entries in the Word of the Month competition.

From Valerie and Judith (editors)

**Front Cover:** theme for 2026

'In and around Dursley Parish'

*Photo this month by Clare White*

## JANUARY 2026 A HAPPY NEW YEAR

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### Editors:

**Valerie Meares Tel: 01453 544677**

**Judith Staddon Tel: 01453 544312**

Advertising please contact

**Philip Staddon Tel: 01453 544312**

### **PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:**

**Judith Staddon**  
**and copy in Valerie Meares**

e.mail [dursley.messenger@gmail.com](mailto:dursley.messenger@gmail.com)

e.mail: [v.meares@btinternet.com](mailto:v.meares@btinternet.com)

**DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE  
IS SUNDAY 15th 2025**



## Canon Richard writes...

---

Dear Friends

January 6th is the Feast of Epiphany, which meant a showing, a manifestation, especially of a god. So it is about Jesus shown as Divine. There are three events in the life of Jesus which are traditionally remembered at Epiphany.

The visit of the three wise men with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, is most linked with the Feast – it shows Jesus comes for all people, as the wise men were gentiles, non-Jews.

The Baptism of Christ is next. It is the most important event, as:

- ♥ it shows Jesus as God the Son when the God the Father hails him as Son,
- ♥ it points to his death and resurrection as he goes under the water and rises again,
- ♥ it shows he comes to wash us from sin,
- ♥ and it is a pattern for our baptism and for our whole Christian life, including receiving the Holy Spirit.

But the third event may be less well known and less linked in our minds with Epiphany. It is Jesus turning water into wine at a wedding in Cana of Galilee [John 2.1-11]. When I was training clergy in Kenya, many students found this a difficult story, as the Protestant churches in Kenya tend to disapprove of alcohol. [Methodist Churches in England do not allow alcohol on the premises.] We had a Reformed Church tutor from Holland who enjoyed a drink in moderation, and he rubbed this story into the students in a sermon! It's pretty extreme – Jesus makes over a hundred gallons of quality wine. It's true the whole village probably attended the wedding, but even so, that's a lot, especially as Jesus made it when they had already run out of wine! In a way, it's an odd story to include under Epiphany, showing, as Jesus does it secretly, and only his mother and the servants who drew the wine know he has done it.

I had sympathy with our students – wine and beer, etc. are a good thing for most who enjoy them, but if one gets addicted, it's a terrible thing. It's good to pray for people who suffer from addiction, and to avoid putting temptation in their way. The wine Jesus made was unusual – maybe we can think it wasn't actually alcoholic!

The story about Jesus is not just about making wine, but turning water into wine. It's made in jars for water of purification, and it's at a wedding.

The wedding was a metaphor for God's coming reign, God's final salvation – it emphasises that God unites Godself to us in love, and that the completion of this will be a wonderfully joyful thing. Jesus turning the water into wine shows he is the one who will bring this fully about; he is Messiah and Son of God come to unite us with God. God's uniting Godself with us must include the removal, washing away, of sins, of our evils. Judaism had rituals of purification. Jesus' miracle shows that he brings purification for all who will accept it – hence the huge quantity of the water / wine, and that his forgiveness is not just a washing but something that will enrich our lives with great joy.

This miracle only points to the salvation, pardon, and fullness of life and joy Jesus brings. In our account, he says to Mary, 'My time has not yet come.' That is no doubt part of why the miracle is secret – that and Jesus' determination not to compel belief by miracles and force. That time to come was Jesus' death and resurrection, which we especially celebrate at Easter. And the water into wine may point to this. For, at the last supper, Jesus used wine as a symbol of his blood, his life poured out for us on the cross. We receive that life at the Holy Communion. It is at the cross that Jesus came out publicly as claiming to be God the Son, and come to bring God's final salvation and reign. There he took on the effects of sin to forgive us and reunite us to God. So as we pass through Christmas to a new year, may we trust him and live by his love, and find in it, now or in eternity, the fullness of joy.

## **A PRAYER**

Jesus,  
fill our lives with the richness of your love and presence.  
May we trust in your self-giving and forgiving love for us on the cross.  
So bring us at last to the fullness of God's loving rescue and reign,  
a better thing than wine. Amen.

God bless you all.

Yours

Richard

## January Thoughts from The Benefice Office.... by Clare White

---

A very Happy New year to you all.

Our daughter Eliza was born on New Year's Eve 1993, it was nearly Easter before we remembered we were in 1994! What a start to a new year with a new life to be responsible for. We always thought it would be a great day to party but it never was as everyone is always so busy. Eliza does love to party though!

This year we visited her with cake and presents on our way into London to enjoy a show with our best pals. We saw Live Aid the musical, memories from our past, set in 1985 at the Live Aid concert to raise money for famine in Africa. I remember the day so well, my brother, Andrew, Mum and I watched it all on TV. Andrew recorded the whole event on our video recorder, which was still very new at the time.

Live Aid brought the famine and war to everyone's mind because of the very poignant BBC news report by Michael Buerk back in 1984. It was heart wrenching and seemed to make the world sit up and notice. But famine and war it still a problem throughout the continents. Why does history not teach us for the future so we learn from our mistakes?

Famine is a recurring theme in the Bible. It is the times of scarcity, desperation, and uncertainty — moments when survival seems difficult, and hope feels distant. Yet, even in these trying times, the Bible consistently points to God's unwavering provision. In the bible, we are reminded that God's provision exceeds the physical world. It touches every aspect of our lives, offering sustenance, hope, and assurance when we seem lost.

Let us try in 2026 to bring hope to each other, abundance in our faith and food to those who hunger. Let us remember events in history and what they should have taught us and let us be compassionate to all in need.

*"Heavenly Father, I pray that you would provide every household with their bread. Lord, thank you for using Compassion to be a beacon of hope for those who are in desperate need of help and hope."*

(Tigist Gizachew, Compassion Photojournalist, Ethiopia.)



George Michael  
at Live Aid



# St James the Great, Dursley

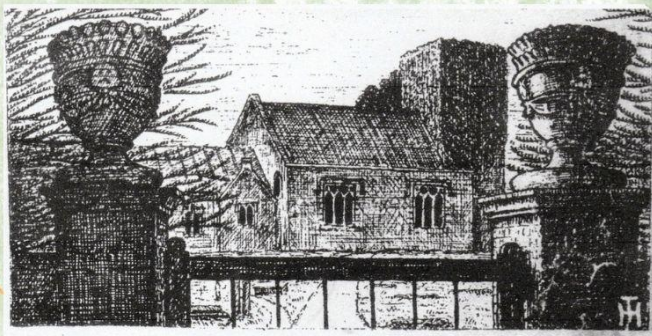
## Presents...

### Twelfth Night with Thomas Hardy

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026  
7.30pm

Christmas scenes from Thomas Hardy  
brought to life with singing and  
dancing to a folk band; diary readings  
and poems; and the Waterley Bottom  
Mummers.

Tickets are  
£10 each and £8 for concessions.



Contact Clare [ewelmeeparishoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ewelmeeparishoffice@gmail.com)  
for tickets.



## Thomas Hardy

Dorset through and through, Thomas Hardy was born on 2 June 1840 in Higher Bockhampton, a hamlet in the parish of Stinsford to the east of Dorchester in Dorset. His mother, Jemima, was well read, and she educated Thomas until he went to his first school at Bockhampton at the age of eight. For several years he attended Mr. Last's Academy for Young Gentlemen in Dorchester, where he learned Latin and demonstrated academic potential. Thomas had the good fortune to be born into a family where the simple music of the church and of country merrymaking was practised to an unusual extent.

Of all the great English novelists, with the possible exception of Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy was fondest of music. Throughout his early life local jigs, songs, hymns chants and anthems became as much of his being as did the local legends and turns of speech. He was a good dancer, and it is said that few English writers have described the joy of dancing so vividly.

From around 1801 his father and grandfather played stringed instruments in the church band at Stinsford (called "Mellstock" in the novels). Music makes appearances in many of his novels and other writings but particularly in his early novel *Under the Greenwood Tree*, subtitled "The Mellstock Quire", a title Hardy himself preferred.

Although it was first published in 1871 it is set perhaps a generation earlier than that and one of its principal plot strands is the replacement of the "Mellstock" church band instruments (here, violins and bass viol, though other bands included flutes, oboes, clarinets, serpents and even brass instruments) and singers - by an organ.

*Under the Greenwood Tree* includes many titles of popular music, secular as well as sacred, for the bandsmen play for dances, in church and as accompaniment to singing Christmas carols around their own village. This evening's performance will include several of the mentioned carols including "Remember O Thou Man", dated 1611, and written by Thomas Ravenscroft, and "Behold the Morning Star".

With no chance of having a university education, aged sixteen Hardy was apprenticed to a local architect after which, in 1862 he moved to London to continue his studies in an architect's office. He enrolled at Kings College London and won prizes from the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architectural Association for his work with the celebrated architect Arthur Blomfield. During this time his love of music developed further with singing and playing the violin, but he was never at ease with city life.

In 1870 when he was working on the restoration of St Juliot's church in Cornwall he met Emma Gifford (a writer and suffragist) and four years later they were married. In 1885 they moved to Max Gate, a



rather curious looking hose designed by Hardy himself. It proved not to be a particularly happy marriage. Christine Wood Homer, a friend of the Hardys, said Emma "had the fixed idea that she was the superior of her husband in birth, education, talents, and manners. She could not, and never did, recognise his greatness..." Eventually, the Hardys became estranged, but Emma's death in 1912 had a profound effect on Thomas and he made a trip to Cornwall to revisit places linked with their courtship.

In 1914, Hardy married his secretary Florence Emily Dugdale, who was 39 years his junior. Florence was a teacher, and first met Hardy in 1905 aged 26 and she became his passionate friend and helper. She gave up teaching in 1908; both to assist Hardy and to concentrate on her own writing career. From all accounts, theirs was a happy relationship.

Max Gate is now in the hands of the National Trust and in his later years, Hardy kept a Wire Fox Terrier named Wessex, who was notoriously ill-tempered, and Wessex's gravestone can still be found in Max Gate's grounds.

In December 1928, Hardy became ill with pleurisy and died at Max Gate just after 9 pm on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1928, having dictated his final poem to his wife on his deathbed; the cause of death was given as "cardiac syncope with old age". He was 87. Florence continued to live at Max Gate until her own death from cancer at the age of 58.

In latter years Hardy continued to ride his bicycle and tend his garden. He was also one of the first members of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and did much to prevent the "modernisation" of what he regarded as priceless. He was appointed a Member of the Order of Merit and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize on 25 occasions, but never won! However, his writings live on, and in today's frenetic atmosphere they provide a welcome and realistic look at the lives of everyday folk of long ago.





## MUSIC NOTES FOR JANUARY

---

The 22nd November seems a long time ago, but it was the day when we opened the organ in St James' to let anyone "have a go". This was all part of the Royal School of Church Music and Royal College of Organists' venture called "Play the Organ Year". At 2.00pm those hosting the event across the country were asked to play Handel's "Largo"; a curious choice as, in my youth,



it was popular at funerals! Having absolutely no idea if any or how many would turn up, we were amazed to find some 23 adults and 8 children! After a brief introduction and demonstration (which included a bit of *the D minor Toccata*) we were entertained to a variety of sounds from our visitors. The very young were intrigued by the sight of three keyboards and, naturally, had to use them all! Amongst the adults there was an elderly lady who had always wanted to play a church organ and gave us "All things Bright and Beautiful". A gentleman suffering from Alzheimer's with the help of his wife braved the stairs and played very well, proving once again how music remains a part of us, and there was a splendid version of "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" from a player who was obviously well used to theatre organs.

Have we recruited any players? Very hard to tell, but my own (well documented, I shan't repeat it!) experience of "playing" the mighty Willis organ in St John's Blackpool aged three certainly helped!

Hugh Whittaker was formerly a member of St Giles choir, but for the last eight years he has been singing with us. Sadly, he was involved in a road accident on his way home from a Friday choir rehearsal and his car was written off. He has decided that he no longer wishes to drive and so will not be able to continue singing with us. We wish him well for the future and thank him for his fine contribution to the music at St James'. We will miss his wry observations!



Hugh's departure means that we have a vacancy for a bass singer. If you know of anyone who may be interested please speak to one of the choristers during coffee after any morning service. No previous experience necessary, but the ability to sing low notes an advantage!

### Music for January

4th	am	Nativity Carol – Rutter	Mass of St Mary – Davies
11th	am	Jubilate Deo – Sanders	Mass of the Creator – Sanders
	pm	Epiphany Carols	
18th	am	Informal Worship	
25th	am	Let all mortal flesh – Bairstow	Bairstow in Eb
	pm	Senex Puerum – Byrd	Reading Responses
		As with Gladness – Sumsion	Sumsion in G



Churches

Together

### Churches Together in Dursley and Cam

*by David Vonberg Convenor*

This year I have the honour of being the Convenor of Churches Together in Cam, Dursley and District again.

We are planning the usual events.

By the time you read this, "**Friends at Christmas**" will have served 60 meals from the Methodist Church to those who would otherwise be on their own on Christmas Day.

### Into 2026

#### The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

There will be a lively service at St George's on **25th January at 6.00pm**. This will be hosted by Rev Fiona Crocker and I will be preaching. There will be a new departure this year in that the music leader at St George's is gathering together an Ecumenical Scratch Choir for the service to lead the singing of the hymns and songs and simple anthem. **We would be delighted if you would like to come and sing.**

There will be a short practice on the afternoon of **25th January at 4.15pm** to run through what has been chosen. All you need to do is to come to George's Church Cam for the rehearsal. Here is your opportunity to sing with other Christians from the different churches. (I have heard hints of tea and homemade cake provided for those who come and sing between the rehearsal and the service)

Even if you don't want to be in the choir, come at 6.00pm anyway for this will be a marvellous opportunity to join with others to offer praise to God as we pray for unity and begin the new year.

### **Convenor's Charity**

Each year the Convenor chooses a charity to support during the year. I have chosen GARAS (Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.) it seeks to offer support for those who are in our communities to help them to integrate and keep safe and out of trouble.

I believe that the purpose of naming a charity is to enable people to learn a little about their work as well as raise funds for the support they offer. During the year there will be opportunities to hear more about their work. Further details will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead. (Somebody reminded me that when I was convenor before, three of us visited each of the churches in group on a 13 mile walk. We prayed at each church for the community. It raised a lot of interest and money. I haven't decided whether to do the same during next summer.) I will keep you posted!!

There will be more news coming out in February including the Lent Evening Service series. So keep your eyes peeled.

If you want any more information, do feel free to speak to me on a Sunday morning at St James.



### **ST JAMES FREE BOOK STALL**

Clive says: 'What a day the final bookstall of 2025 turned out to be. It was a very quiet morning as could have been expected with the poor weather and it being close to Christmas but what couldn't be predicted was the generosity of our supporters. With the donation from Freegle, who had a table in the church, we are able to send £200 to the Horses 4 Wellbeing charity.

I believe we may have one more contribution from Joy for the online sales but so far this year we have raised £6,670 and £35,999.12 since we started'.

A New Year and the Saturday Book Stall will be starting again soon'.





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## Answers to David Vonberg's Christmas Quiz 2025

Yate	Mandy ate inclusively (4)
Framilode	Dial for me causes a rebellion (9)
Wotton	Now tot was a bit confused (6)
Cirencester	Crescent with Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh initially causes tumult (11)
Cheltenham	Clean them "H" by putting them in order (10)
Slimbridge	The narrow pont, as the French would say gives you an answer (10)
Nupend	The town upended the result when it was inside (6)
Stroud	Holy person precedes a poleless circle (6)
Brockworth	The badger's nickname chases Harry, the old TV star(10)
Tredington	Treading heavy weight but don't forget to extract what sounds like cockney hay (10)
Woodmancote	Outer garment owned by a forester or so we say (11)
Broadway	Definitely not a narrow path (8)
Berkeley	A London square and a disused power station are strange bedfellows here (8)
Chalford	Plastic half ordered conceals the answer (8)
Lydney	Australian city losing a pole and gaining a litre (6)
Wickwar	A candle battle? (7)
Tetbury	Buttery gently stirred (7)
Nailsworth	Carpenter's joining instrument comes before value (10)
Kemble	King Edward may bring live eels to start with (6)
Painswick	It hurts the centre of a candle (9)
Woodchester	A small forest meets a cathedral city on the Dee (11)
Stonehouse	Stronger than a home made of straw (9)
Frampton	MP of Tarn is very upset (8)
Charfield	A cup of tea colloquially came just before a piece of agricultural land (9)
Thornbury	Dig a hole for a prickle (9)

The winner was Kathryn White, her quiz sent from Sydney, Australia!



# **Chris Pengelly**

## **Gardening Services**

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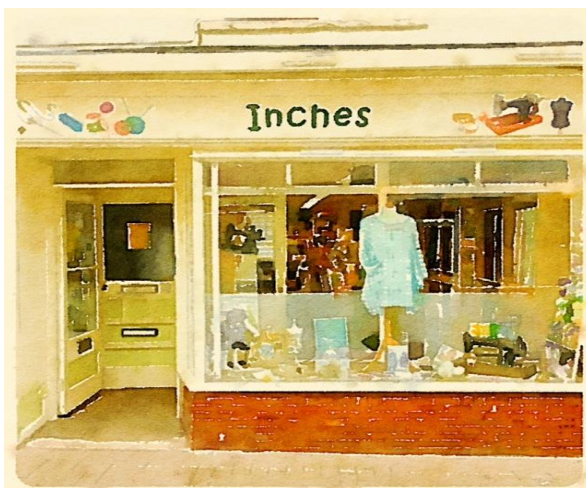
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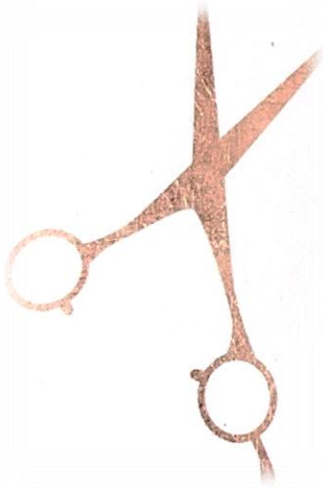


## LAST MONTH

All dressed up ready for the Shine service on 21<sup>st</sup> December.

Below the assembled scene.





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# January 2026

(Joining Zoom details on Ewelme Benefice website)

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## **Sunday 4th January – Epiphany**

10am Parish Holy Communion at St James

## **Tuesday 6th January**

7.30pm 12th Night, Thomas Hardy Performance

## **Wednesday 7th January**

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

## **Thursday 8th January**

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

## **Sunday 11th January – Baptism of Christ**

10am Parish Holy Communion

6.30pm Epiphany Carols

## **Tuesday 13th January**

2pm Communion at Holly Oak Care Home

## **Wednesday 14th January**

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

## **Thursday 15th January**

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

11.15am Communion at Henlow Court

## **Sunday 18th January – Epiphany 2**

8am Said Holy Communion

10am Shine! Family Service at Dursley Academy School

## **Wednesday 21st January**

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

## **Thursday 22nd January**

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

## **Sunday 25th January – Epiphany 3**

10am Benefice Holy Communion at St James, Dursley

6pm Churches Together service for Christian Unity at  
St George's, Upper Cam

## **Tuesday 27th January**

2pm Communion at The Hollies Care Home

## **Wednesday 28th January**

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

## **Thursday 29th January**

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

**Sunday January 25th 6pm**  
**SERVICE FOR**  
**THE WEEK OF PRAYER**  
**FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**  
**St George's Upper Cam GL11 5PQ**  
**Led By Revd Fiona Crocker**  
**Preacher: Revd David Vonberg**  
**All Welcome**



**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2026**  
**18TH - 25TH JANUARY**



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### Jan Vonberg is On the Lookout for Garden Visitors



For the past few years I have set aside some time in late January to do something which is unusual for me - I have sat myself down in a chair next to the lounge window and gazed at my garden. For exactly one hour. If this scenario seems familiar to you, it may be that you too are in the habit of taking part in the RSPB's Big Garden

Birdwatch, which in 2026 is happening from 23-25 January. Anyone can do this (I am far from being an expert birdwatcher) and you don't even need your own garden - you can choose to spend your hour at any time over the above weekend in a local park.

The idea is that you count the birds that land in your patch, according to their species (a handy identification chart is provided), for example: two robins, six starlings, one magpie, and note the highest number of each type of bird you see at any one time during your vigil. Using well-stocked bird feeders to attract feathered friends to your garden is warmly encouraged! Afterwards, you can send your results in either online or by post. Over half a million people took part last year and counted over 9 million birds. This survey is of enormous help to the RSPB in understanding how our garden birds are faring in the face of habitat loss and our changing climate. There are an estimated 38 million fewer birds in UK skies compared to sixty years ago. The number of house sparrows spotted is down 60%, and that of song thrushes is down 83% since 1979, when the first Birdwatch was held. The more information the RSPB can gather, the better it can concentrate its conservation efforts where most needed.

If you would like further information, go online at [www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch), where there is a link to sign up for this year's event and details of how to take part.

I have found that sitting quietly and watching for a whole hour, focused solely on my garden and the birds that appear, is a calming, meditative experience. As W H Davies wrote, in his poem

'Leisure',

"What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare?"

# Join in with the RSPB's annual Big Garden Bird Watch



## **SPIRITUAL LANDMARKS** .....by Jennifer Kendrick

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Life in the slow lane, for me, is gradually taking shape. Time passes more quickly as even basic chores take so long, but I also find myself sitting quietly and taking note of some of the new beginnings I have experienced over my 88years!

In 1958 I qualified as a State Registered Nurse after years of committed study. Shortly afterwards, after much deliberation and some reluctance I agreed to go on a blind date, arranged between my parents and their friends and I fell in love! At our engagement party a few weeks later, my father asked the band to play 'This is Our Lovely Day"! We danced all night and I felt like Cinderella! Then, only two short years after that my devoted father, aged 53, collapsed without warning and died instantly as that tune played on the radio! I remember, in the immediate aftermath and days of disbelief that he was not there to join in planning my wedding, the overwhelming feeling of spiritual comfort that no human being could possibly achieve. Life went on, but very differently!

Suddenly and again, without warning, after 26 years of an idyllic marriage, adventures and three children, I was faced with devastating divorce! Somehow my faith strengthened and prevailed and I knew I had to survive! So it proved and Phoenix eventually rose from the ashes as I carved out a new and successful career for 10 years as a Regional Adviser and Clinician specialising in Enuresis in children and young adults in the West Midlands. Not glamorous or inviting, but so fulfilling and crossing all creeds, colours and classes! Such a privileged position.

Then I was floored by galloping cancer that took charge and changed everything again.

Somehow it seemed a natural sequence of events!

I vividly remember calmly lying in the hospital bed all carved up post-op, plugged in to machines, my arms held fast by stabilising splints for various drips, feeling I was being crucified, only to hear the Lord's voice calling. This was not the end, but a fresh start: another spiritual landmark that, in the end has made me truly thankful! Over the following years, I travelled independently, but was never lonely or in any doubt, as if guided by intuition and absolute certainty.

Then in 1997 I landed, a total stranger in Dursley, hitherto an unknown town to me, with no idea of any future, but, almost immediately discovered St. Mark's Church on the edge of town, and I



felt welcome and at home with people who quietly cared and generously shared all they had. Recently closed, the building stands, a testament to hope, an empty shell bursting with possibility and an unforeseen future!

Now at the end of 2025, I am at another spiritual crossroads, withdrawing from being regularly involved in public service, but sensing real visions of streams of living water, empty ploughed fields of rich brown earth ready for planting and, maybe, sometime a Spring Harvest.

I am content that I am safe in His hands being equipped for the future, to have more fun here on earth or to happily retire and rest in heaven in peace! My faith has never been stronger. Praise the Lord! I am ready and waiting.



Recent visit to relatives in rural churchyard, Publow with Pensford Somerset.  
My final resting place one day.

**End of Leckhampton parish magazine marks 200 issues for David and 137 years for St Peter's.**

**A quiet but significant moment took place at St Peter's Leckhampton, as the final edition of its church magazine, in its current form, was published. The reason was the retirement of long-serving editor and churchwarden David Webber, who produced 200 consecutive issues over more than 16 years of volunteer service.**



"I've got mixed feelings about stopping," David said. "No one has come forward to take it over, so the magazine, as such, will have died, 137 years after the first issue was printed."

St Peter's parish magazine began in 1888 – a fact recently rediscovered when a parish historian found the original letter in which the church rector first proposed creating a magazine.

David stepped into the editor's role in 2009, shortly after retiring from a career in teaching at Leckhampton School.

"As soon as one month's magazine is finished, it goes off to be printed. I gave myself a week before starting the next one," he said. Contributions often came from regular contributors, such as the parish's Director of Music and the eco-group, but material rarely ran short.

Historical articles, eco-news, notes on forthcoming music, extracts from the parish register, and diocesan news all found a regular place in its pages.

"People are and have always been very good at contributing to St Peter's magazine. Even when an issue seemed a bit thin early in the month, it was always full by deadline day," David said. "I always included things like the death of the Queen and the Coronation, even though they weren't strictly parochial. I thought they were important to have in the archives."

Many subscribers were not churchgoers but valued the magazine as a link to the community around them. Several local businesses also advertised faithfully in the magazine for years.

David said: "Every edition was also sent to the British Library, to ensure that the parish's story would be preserved permanently.

"I think it's important to keep the magazine's history intact. Each year's issues have been bound, first by a monk at Prinknash Abbey, then by a local craftsman, but the pandemic brought that arrangement to an end. So, I taught myself bookbinding.

"Copies of all 200 magazines sit together on my shelf at home. They take up about eighteen inches.

"I think parish magazines are an important part of church life. Parish magazines matter. They connect people, share ministry, and they preserve stories and history."

### **Grandparents and grandchildren exploring faith together: Faithful Generations returns**

Faithful Generations will return in February at Saint John Baptist Church, Cirencester, following the success of last year's gathering at Gloucester Cathedral.

Jo Wetherall, Senior Children and Families Connector, said: "It will be similar to the Cathedral event, but it's going to be contextual to Saint John Baptist Church – it's being shaped by the team and the clergy there."

The theme for the day will be 'pass it on', focusing on how God's unconditional love is shared between generations and lived out through everyday acts of faithfulness and presence.

Families can enjoy creative activities, including a silent disco and a scavenger hunt exploring the church building and discovering what its features reveal about God's character. The day begins with an intergenerational communion service and ends with gathered worship.

"We want talking about God to feel normal... God is in everyday life, and we want people to feel comfortable noticing Him and sharing that across generations," Jo said.

Read the full article and find full event details at <https://gloucester.anglican.org/2025/grandparents-and-grandchildren-exploring-faith-together/>

### **Events and training**

More details for all these events at [\*\*gloucester.anglican.org/events\*\*](https://gloucester.anglican.org/events)

### **Britten's Ceremony of Carols,**

Gloucester Cathedral, 11 January

Experience the beauty of Britten's Ceremony of Carols, sung by the Cathedral choristers.

<https://gloucestercathedral.org.uk/whats-on/britten-s-ceremony-of-carols-25-2>



**Thriving church – Shaping mission for a new generation**  
**All Saints' Academy, Blaisdon Way, Cheltenham GL51 0WH**  
**Saturday 10 January, 9.30am to 4pm**

The day will focus on understanding better those under the age of 35 (Millennials, Gen Z, and Generation Alpha), hearing directly from them, and exploring how our churches can meet them where they are.

<https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/thriving-church-shaping-mission/>

**Run the race retreat**

**Prinknash Abbey, Gloucester, GL4 8EX, 17 January**

A space to rethink priorities, make healthier choices, and rediscover rest, joy, and balance in daily life.

<https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/run-the-race-2-2/>

**Classical guitar concert with Nicholas Morrow Brown**

**St Philip and St James Hucclecote, 31 January**

A free guitar concert with refreshments from 2.30pm, with any donations raising money for the church's OMF mission partners.

<https://media.acny.uk/media/events/attachment/2025/11/a39cfd93-0811-46e1-a539-669f9dedabbf.png>



**WORD OF THE MONTH COMPETITION**



Each Month there will be a new word which we need you to fit into a sentence. The sentence, which best conveys the meaning of the word and will be judged by the editors and Benefice Administrator, will be the winner. There could be a small prize.

The word for February is **axiom**.

Send entries to the Office, Valerie or Judith  
by 20th

## **REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2025** *by Judith Staddon*

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As usual in January I like to just reminisce about the previous year, sometimes because January magazine is hard to fill, and believe me, this year it's hard to fill. Most of the contributors are busy still with Christmas events, so I do understand. Anyway let's not get crotchety Bah humbug. It is good to reflect on what we have been up to in 2025.

The year started with a very cold snap and St James was like stepping into the fridge, and in fact we were all so cold that services were moved into the Parish Centre, which in fact still has no central heating, but was soon heated up for the services with electric heaters. Seating was a bit tight but we were very cosy and importantly we were warm. Eventually, after many hiccups, heating was restored to St James, after it was ascertained that one boiler could be run and that keeps us much warmer but we still wait for the second boiler to be fired up.

Barbie Davies again staged the Live Nativity on twelfth night and we all wore our thermals.

In February Sheila Gardner ran a Quiz, the Revd Jane Wood left us to join a new parish, and the Revd Juliet ran an Away Day for the Benefice, trying to see the way forward in Dursley, Uley, Nympsfield and Owlpen.

In March Rev Juliet and Caroline Marrow took part in the Pancake race in Dursley and Bishop Rachel came to St James on Ash Wednesday to conduct the service. Simple Light Lent Lunches were served on Fridays during Lent, organised by Ann King with a team of helpers.

In April the Electoral Roll was completely renewed and for the first time people were able to enrol online via a QR Code.

In May, at the APCM we welcomed another new churchwarden, Danny Parker to join Chris Tyler, and we all celebrated 80 years since VE Day.

On June 1st we opened our garden again at 52 Woodmancote. I asked for people to pray for sunshine and so we had lovely weather. So many people came and were able to enjoy the garden and the Cream Teas served by Clare, Steve and Moya.

In July Canon Richard held a Pet service. Many pets were brought along, mostly dogs, although I think I saw a reindeer in one of the photographs printed in the magazine.

August was hot and we all had a month off, (but not the magazine)!!

September was a month of celebrating. First David Wood's 80 years in the choir, and Maureen and David's 65 years of marriage. Then Nigel's 75th birthday, with his organ recital and lunch kindly provided by Barbie which we were all asked to join. Nigel said to Barbie 'perhaps we could have a few nibbles', but was somewhat shocked to find that

his dear wife had gone all out providing a lovely buffet lunch. It was a really lovely morning. Also in September a big step was taken in Dursley. On the third Sunday, alongside the usual reflective service in St James, the 'Shine' group was formed and with Revd Juliet and Sportily, a service was held at 10am at Dursley Academy, with the aim (in the long term) of bringing the church to children and their parents. This has continued into October and November and we all came together in St James on 21st December. 'Shine' group also helped out at Dursley Academy Christmas Fair.

In October we celebrated the Harvest with a Lunch, and Christine Morgan again staged a quiz evening in aid of Julius and Dora centre supporting homeless children in Northern Kenya. November was a month of Remembering first our loved ones and then members of our armed forces who gave their lives in two World Wars.



We ended the year with the Christmas Market and the Christmas Carvery, both very successful as usual. Thanks go to Clive Orchard, Anne Shipton and Clare White for organising the Market and Ann and Clive Orchard and Team for the Carvery.



The usual Groups continue, Eco Church, Open the Book visit Dursley Academy weekly during term time to act out the Bible Stories with the children, Book Stalls on Saturdays often

includes music, Organ Recitals, with Coffee, Cake and Music. Thank you Nigel for organising this and Barbie and Team for the lovely refreshments.

And of course, with the good times we also have to have some sad days and we have said goodbye to many notable friends during 2025, the biggest gap was left by Tony King our Reader for many years, leader of Open The Book, our IT consultant, and so much more. We miss you Tony. Having celebrated Lionel Jones 100th in November 2024 we then celebrated his life when he died in 2025, our oldest church member, Nora Powell, who had been for many years in the Holly's died aged 104, our previous Reader Jackie Strange and many people will remember Revd Sue Houghton who came to Dursley first as a Reader and then became our Associate priest also died.

So what will 2026 bring?

(Pictured celebration cakes we have enjoyed. See above)



The word for January was explicit

We really thought they all deserved to win, but we chose Richard's poem.

It isn't very easy, is it,  
to find a good rhyme for explicit?  
- And if you do, you mustn't miss it!  
Explicit makes the meaning plain;  
you shouldn't need to say again  
a statement that is clearly made  
by calling every spade a spade:  
not mealy mouthed or just allusive,  
but literal, exact - conclusive.

Can Richard Morgan

Jean Gardiner -

The 'flat pack' arrived but in spite of explicit instructions, which should have left no room for misinterpretation or confusion, frustration and chaos reigned before assembly was completed.

Paul Prodger -

I gave my son explicit instruction not to cross the playing field on the way home from school. Needless to say he came home covered in mud.

Thank you for your entries, keep sending them in.

PS No-one has wanted a prize so far!! It is a bit of fun.

## **PASTORAL CARE**

If people are in need, unwell, at home or in hospital

Please contact the Revd Dr Juliet Jensen.

Tel: 01453 350810 or 07776 910890



# **Dursley & Cam** **Royal British Legion**



***RBL hosting a fundraiser for the Chantry Centre's  
2026 Hall Floor Appeal***

**Afternoon Refreshments Available**

**@ Chantry Centre**

**Friday 30th January 2026**

**2.30pm – 4.30pm**

**Free Entry**

Reg. Charity No 219279. RBL, is the registered trade mark of the Royal British Legion



If the mountain seems too big today  
then climb a hill instead  
if the morning brings you sadness  
it's ok to stay in bed  
if the day ahead weighs heavy  
and your plans feel like a curse  
there's no shame in rearranging  
don't make yourself feel worse  
if a shower stings like needles  
and a bath feels like you'll drown  
if you haven't washed your hair for days  
don't throw away your crown  
a day is not a lifetime  
a rest is not defeat  
don't think of it as failure  
just a quiet, kind retreat  
it's ok to take a moment  
from an anxious, fractured mind  
the world will not stop turning  
while you get realigned  
the mountain will still be there  
when you want to try again  
you can climb it in your own time  
just love yourself til then



[www.silversurfers.com](http://www.silversurfers.com)



### **SAFEGUARDING**

Heather Arnold is the Safeguarding Officer  
for the Parish of Dursley

Tel: 07757 468371

Email: [arnoldheather@icloud.com](mailto:arnoldheather@icloud.com)



## Year's Mind January

2nd Derek Taylor 2018  
4th George Henry James Fry 2006  
5th Norman Gardner 2002, Lawrence Lewis 2023  
6th Edgar Pope 2012; Derek Manning 2012  
7th Gordon McKillop 2024  
8th Daisy Lane 1982; Peter Gubb 2016;  
Robert (Bob) Grover 2023  
9th Bernard Siveyer 2015  
11th Anne Ireland 2019  
13th Norman Orchard 1997  
15th Greta Keep 2019; Patricia Pinker; Valerie Mitchell 2025  
16th Olive May James 2010; Marjory Skrine 2016; Allan Wiggall 2020  
17th Len Spencer  
18th Romala Vaisey 2024  
19th Edith Esther Woollams 2006  
20th Joan Edom; Michael Peachey 2021; Gerald Field 2022  
21st Anne Staight 1989; Helen Halliday 2004; Tom Wheeler 2011  
Margaret Preater 2017; James Kennedy 2021  
22nd Leonard Victor Parry 2003  
24th Shirley Roberts 2020  
25th Charles James 1981  
27th Vera Moon  
28th Ralph Darby 2025  
29th Kay Trump 2001; Jean Parnham 2016; Harry Mather;  
Paul Jenkins 2023  
30th Herbert Iles 2021  
31st Stephen Cook 2019; Nora Powell 2025



## FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS.



**THERE IS NOTHING TO REPORT THIS MONTH.**

## FLOWER ROTA

Jan 11th & 18th

**High Altar** Marian Paisey

**Tanner Chapel** Steph Say

**Lady Chapel** Kim Pugh

Jan 25th & Feb 1st

**High Altar** Clare White

**Tanner Chapel** Sandra Longstreth

**Lady Chapel** Margaret Lloyd



## 100 CLUB

**This is the last result for the Club!!**

**Results for December is as follows:-**

1st - 195 - Rev David Vonburg

2nd - 113 - Liz Byrne

3rd - 149 - Joy Pepper

*Many thanks for your support over the years.*

*Sarah*



Mrs Gregory – Principal

Dursley CofE Academy,  
School Road,  
Dursley,  
GL11 4NZ

t: 01453 542304 e: [admin@dursley.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@dursley.gloucs.sch.uk)

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**THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JAMES THE GREAT  
DURSLEY**

**St James Church is open each day  
between 9.00am and 5.00pm.**

**Useful Telephone Numbers**

**TO BOOK THE PARISH CENTRE.**

Clare White      Tel: 549280

E-mail: [ewelmebenefice@gmail.com](mailto:ewelmebenefice@gmail.com)

**BELLRINGERS**

Elizabeth Byrne      Tel: 07788 800849

**CHOIR**

Anne Shipton      Tel: 07557 784858

David Wood      Tel: 545073



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