

For he shall give his angels charge over thee:
to keep thee in all thy ways. **PSALM 91:11**

WORTH PARISH magazine

£1.00 December 2025 – January 2026

ST BARNABAS', POUND HILL
ST NICHOLAS', WORTH

Reg. Charity No. 1131090

CONTACTS AND REGULAR SERVICES

BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND GENERAL ENQUIRIES



worthparish.org



office@worthparish.org



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CLERGY



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CHURCHWARDENS



St Barnabas' Churchwarden
David Anderson
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Colin Smith
01293 889894

SOCIAL MEDIA



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ST NICHOLAS' SERVICES



Sundays

8:15am

Holy Communion (BCP, 1662)

10am Sung Eucharist

Thursdays

10:30am

Eucharist

ST BARNABAS' SERVICES



Sundays

10am 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays
Eucharist

10am 4th Sundays

Child Friendly Eucharist

Tuesdays

10:30am

Eucharist

CAFE



Wednesdays

10 - 13:00

Coffee Shop

Thursdays

14-16:00

Knit and Natter

Fridays

10 - 12:30

Coffee Shop

12:30-14:00

Friday Lunches

Saturdays

10 - 13:00

Coffee Shop

CLERGY CONTEMPLATION



In a previous run-up to Christmas, I recall sitting in the 'Stables' café at Wakehurst Place, having some wonderful soup, bread and cheese and, for the first time that Christmas season, drawing back from the frantic preparations that seem at this time to enmesh us all, and drinking in the peace of that wonderful garden. The trees, sentinels of the seasons, stood tall against a grey sky as, beneath, people of all ages walked, ran, were wheeled or simply meandered along the path that took them through the delights of Wakehurst. The soup wasn't the only thing that warmed me there. All of a sudden, a group of children, energetic and playful, converged on the café. Some of the children were very needy and had other children to look after them. Their adult leaders arrived and they all found a seat. The love and trust that radiated from each of them filled the café and provided for me the most simple yet powerful affirmation of the inner meaning of Christmas. I know that, often, mischief lurks behind the angelic faces of children but this really did look as if God had sent little angels to remind us of the deeper meaning of the season. We are told that during Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness when he was 'with the wild beasts', the mental anguish that so frightens us today, 'the angels waited on him'. The time at Wakehurst cut through the frenzy of consumption, the sea of plenty with which our society surrounds itself during Christmas and gave a simple reminder of how important it is to remain aware of human need, of the bad hand seemingly dealt to some, in our fractured world. God, through Christ, entered into this world and through unconditional love, leads us through it now, gives us courage, feeds our impulse to put right what is wrong and radiates the inextinguishable light of his everlasting kingdom.

There is a Christmas hymn, written by John Bell, one of the moving spirits behind the Iona Community in Scotland. It's called 'God's surprise'. There are a couple of lines in it which read as follows.

*Centuries of skill and science span the past from which we move,
yet experience questions whether with such progress we've improved.*

I remember a seasonal newspaper headline: Religion does more harm than good. I suspect that Christ, whose birth we celebrate as the focus of Christmas, would have agreed. Religion is created by people and often used by people for their own ends, as Christ's own encounters with religious authorities revealed all too plainly. Christ did not live his earthly life to establish a religion. Rather, he showed throughout his ministry that we are all loved by God, whatever our condition on earth. He asked that we love God, our creator, in return and that we also deal lovingly with all those around us. That is not the teaching and example of anyone involved in earthly power-politics and it's not in any way guaranteed by technological sophistication. We may be surrounded by cars, washing machines, enormous TVs and mobile phones but have these things made the human condition any happier, any more stable globally than before?

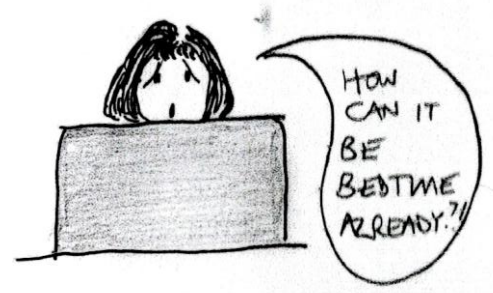
Christ's example to us should reach us through our relationships. Christmas should be a time when, just briefly, the relentless pressures that see us hurrying through our daily lives are set to one side so that we can contemplate the love that created us in the first place, that sent the Son of God to live a life on earth and to teach us that the giving of ourselves to others in love not only improves the lot of human life on earth but also reflects the glory of God's heavenly kingdom. We are easily captivated with things alternative – alternative medicines, alternative food, alternative lifestyles and so on. Christ's birth was decidedly alternative – in very inauspicious circumstances, at a most difficult time for his mother Mary who, with her husband, Joseph, had been forced by the Roman authorities to come to Bethlehem.

May the love of God, revealed in the sending of his Son to live an earthly life, flood through our lives, not only this Christmas-tide, but also in the times that follow. May we all have a peaceful, blessed Christmas and move forward in love and optimism to the New Year.

Revd Gordon

NOTE FROM THE ED

I am writing this down in a small village outside Bournemouth. My mother is now bedbound. I know that she is in a reasonably good place if, when I ask her, 'Are you all right?' she whispers that she is half left. Whilst she sleeps I go round tidying up numerous piles of papers and invariably a scrap of paper drops out with a saying or a quote of something that has taken her fancy – you will find several of these in the mag this time (and in the future – there are many!) My parents have always been 'strong Christians' – is that the right way to put it? Baptised, confirmed, Bible-reading and church-going, but much more than that – throughout their lives they have thought and cared about other people and have tried their best to be 'good citizens'. I couldn't have asked for better role models.



Adela

There are many living 'angels' in our community. Those who are inspired and organise fantastic events as we had this summer (thank you, Adela and your team), those who praise God with music, regularly and occasionally (too numerous to mention), those who keep the parish on track (thank you David & Colin) and all those who cook, clean and cultivate (the latter, literally and metaphorically).

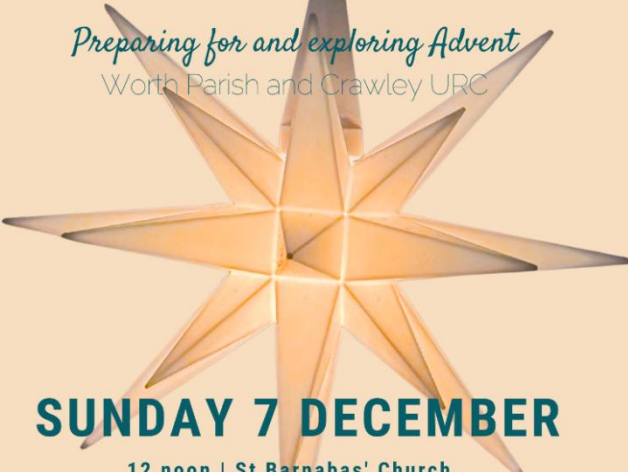
My mother would love to be one of the Heavenly Angels – but in her own words – it will be when God decrees.

As Christmas approaches may God bless all of you Angels – past, present and future!

Sue X

ADVENT
STUDY


Preparing for and exploring Advent
Worth Parish and Crawley URC



SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER
12 noon | St Barnabas' Church
Worth Road Pound Hill Crawley RH10 7DY

SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER
12 noon | United Reform Church
Worth Park Avenue Crawley RH10 3DF
bring your own lunch

English Arts Chorale
EACA is a Registered Charity



ONCE AS I REMEMBER
Memories of a childhood Christmas

Leslie Olive *Conductor*
Jonathan Lilley *Accompanists*
Ian le Grice

St Mary's Church, Chart Lane, Reigate RH2 7RN
6pm Saturday 6 December 2025 Tickets £12, £16, £20

St Nicholas' Church, Church Road, Worth, RH10 7RT
6pm Saturday 13 December 2025 Tickets £15

Tickets from www.englisharts.org
or tel 07901 604905

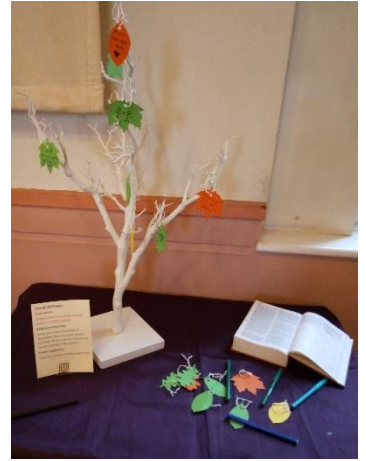
Mulled wine and mince pies available



PARISH ROUNDUP - ST BARNABAS'



Throughout October and November we have been running "The Prayer Course" by Pete Greig, where we've been studying why we pray and how we pray. It is an excellent course, with a video, group discussion and supporting material to help us in our prayer life. It has also tied in with our Messy Church theme for October - different ways to pray - aimed at younger people but relevant to any of us. For example, creating a quiet space (the prayer tent), a prayer tree, or candles to focus on.



This year is the 70th anniversary of St Barnabas' church and we celebrated this at our Harvest service at the start of October. In this wonderful service, we collected harvest gifts that were then given to Crawley Open House. For the anniversary, VIP guests cut the ribbon on our new church entrance - our very own Bob and Carol, who have been attending St Barnabas' longer than anyone, having met here in the 1960s. We then had a parish bring and share lunch to celebrate the past 70 years and to look forward to many more! It was wonderful that our access project was effectively completed in this anniversary year,

with the new entrance having been blessed by Bishop Ruth at the Deanery Confirmation service back in May.





Following the storms at the start of autumn, we had two fairly major leaks in the north side of the church roof. This was mainly due to horsehair felt, used in the original construction, disintegrating. This has resulted in two sections, one at the east end and one at the west end having to be re-felted; fortunately the original tiles were reusable.

Towards the end of October, Louise, Deborah, Bev and I joined ninety other Readers and ALMs at Holy Trinity Church, Hurstpierpoint, for this year's Lay Ministry Day – an



opportunity to learn, share, and reconnect. The day featured talks from Gerry Howitt, who shared the remarkable work of the Beachy Head Chaplaincy; Fr Felix Smith, who shared about Focal Ministry; and Jenny Brown, who explored the richness of the Gospel of Matthew. There was such a sense of fellowship and encouragement as lay ministers from across the diocese came together to celebrate and renew their shared calling. Michael, Assistant Warden for Lay Ministry, said: *"Days like this help us to reconnect, not just with one another, but with the joy and purpose of our ministry. The day reminded us how God is working in our communities in so many different ways."* It was a joyful celebration of lay ministry across the diocese.



Our Autumn Fair was both enjoyable and a great success (over £1000 raised), thanks to the planning and organisation by Jane and her team – well done everyone! It was a lovely community event, with games, stalls and refreshments as well as an appearance by

the fabulous Songbirds choir and a "best dressed scarecrow" competition, the winners being....



As part of our 5 year maintenance plan we've recently had our five mature trees inspected and pollarded/trimmed by our local Tree Surgeons. You may be able to spot the difference!

David Anderson, Churchwarden



ST NICHOLAS'

In the last edition of our magazine (October/November) my article mentioned that our lighting needed some serious attention. We have long term plans to upgrade our lighting to include lighting our chandeliers, spot-lighting our remarkable Saxon arches and much more. However, plans require extensive funding and although we do have a restricted fund for lighting, we don't yet have enough for the full lighting project to go ahead. Something needed to be done now to get us through the next few years. Fr Francis recommended an electrician, Stephen (SMC Electrical), with whom he has great confidence and justifiably so. The repairs and replacement lighting has been



completed. The congregation enjoys a much brighter Chancel and Nave, the choir can see their music, the intercessors and readers no longer need candles and our clergy can now see how parishioners react to the sermon. What joy! Not that the new lighting, mostly LED, was without some teething troubles. It soon transpired that with the lighting on full, the capacity was too much and the fuses blew. We now have to restrict the lighting to a lower intensity but it is still bright and perfect, even for our meticulous cleaners.

Further work on our churchyard fencing has been carried out. The fence on the boundary with Bishop's Lodge needed additional supporting posts and to the fencing by the Lychgate needed an extra bay erected. To complete

the project, I would like to see the Notice Board cleaned, sanded, repaired and re-stained.

Additionally, I hope to tidy up and maybe widen the parking spaces sufficient for two vehicles to park without obstructing the Lychgate entrance. I am still awaiting a detailed inspection of the Lychgate for an estimate to repair areas where there is water damage. In the New Year, the church drains and gutters will be inspected and cleared of debris and any areas of roofing which are in need repair and are accessible will be made good.

Our services and concerts this year have been exceptional. For me, the concert on Sunday 26 October with concert pianist Warren Mailley-Smith and his wife, the soprano Susan Parkes, was outstanding. The choice of music – Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart, Puccini, Bizet and Gershwin – was perfect and powerful, and the acoustics at St Nicholas' were well suited. A really generous amount of much-needed money was raised for our churchyard fund. So, a very big thank you to our celebrated artists and to those of you who contributed to this event. On 9 November, we held the Remembrance Day Service with 4th Worth Scouts leading the procession with their flags. This tradition goes back more than 100 years and long may it continue. We were joined by Councillor Atif Nawaz, Deputy Leader of the Council and Councillor Thomas Bidwell, Pound Hill South and Worth. Gerald and I laid wreaths on behalf of the Parish, Councillors Nawaz and Bidwell each laid a wreath on behalf of the Council and wreaths were laid on behalf of 4th Worth Scouts. Mark and the wonderful choir provided a fitting musical accompaniment to this very moving ceremony. As you all know our Church Organ needs a massive overhaul and repair and the Organ Fund is steadily raising the money required to pay for this specialist restoration. However, in the meantime, we still need the instrument to work well enough. There are several non-functioning keys and your PCC has approved an immediate repair. As with the lighting, this is a short-term solution which will hopefully work until we raise enough money for the full restoration.

The magnificent Christmas Trees now displayed have again been provided by the Paddockhurst Estate. Our parish is blessed with this annual gift which demonstrates to our parishioners and visitors that a very special time of Christian worship is here – Advent, a time of expectation, preparation and reflection. I wish you all a very Happy Christmas.

Colin Smith, Churchwarden

FROM THE BELL TOWER

Our oldest ringer celebrated his 90th birthday – he has been ringing for 77 years – age is no barrier!

Neil Dobson

Dear St Nicholas',

The cubs had a great time at Worth Church, from learning the history of the church, going up to see the bell ringers and doing loads of brass rubbings. Please find attached some photos.

Thank you all again from 4th Worth Milton Cubs



DEFIBRILLATORS

We've had updated usage figures for the defibrillators hosted by our Parish.

- The defibrillator next to the garage block at St. Nicholas, has been "accessed" three times.
- The defibrillator at St. Barnabas' has now been "accessed" six times.

Accessed, of course, doesn't mean it definitely saved a life, but does mean that a medical professional has approved its use. We know this as there is an "anti-vandalism" step which means that a medical professional has to enable it remotely (the details on how to call that team are printed on the defibrillators).

Mark Harrison



THE CIRCLE

It's great to have a full schedule of events for the Circle for 2026. I hope you'll all like the programme that we have put together. The Circle is for anyone and everyone who is interested, so please spread the word and encourage your friends and theirs to come along.



3 DECEMBER 2025 **SOCIAL**
Cheese and wine (or soft drinks), mince pies, and a short, light-hearted Christmas quiz.



7 JANUARY 2026 **TALK**
Graham Beaumont gives notes on some modern British churches.



4 FEBRUARY 2026 **TALK**
Music from a Sandy Island - Max Perry talks to Revd Sarah.



4 MARCH 2026 **TALK**
Francis Pole discusses the Amish.



15 APRIL 2026 **TALK**
Stewart Lock on the history of Ifield Barn Theatre.



13 MAY 2026 **TALK**
Issues affecting the national traffic safety and planning by Graham Feest.



10 JUNE 2026 **TALK**
Ryan Greaves from the **Sussex Bat Society** - with bats!



8 JULY 2026 **SOCIAL**
Cheese, wine (or soft drinks), strawberries and a short, light-hearted summer quiz.



23 SEPTEMBER 2026 **DEMO**
Cooking Greek - Mary Pollatos demonstrates some family favourites - watch and taste!



21 OCTOBER 2026 **TALK AND TRY**
An easy introduction to improv comedy ! Ed Pithie, the founder of Dingbats Improv on why you should try this.



18 NOVEMBER 2026 **TALK**
Andy Thomas on Christmas - A Festive History.



2 DECEMBER 2026 **SOCIAL**
Cheese and wine (or soft drinks), mince pies, and a short, light-hearted Christmas quiz

ACTIVITIES

Refreshments from 7pm
Activities start 7:30pm
unless otherwise stated

ST BARNABAS' CAFE
POUND HILL
CRAWLEY
RH10 7DY

In October Liz and Fr Michael gave a presentation on the trips across the years to Walsingham. The Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk is a national centre of Christian pilgrimage and spiritual renewal. In 1061, an Anglo-Saxon noblewoman, Richeldis de Faverches, had a vision of the Virgin Mary in which she was instructed to build a replica of the Holy House as a place of pilgrimage where people could honour the Virgin Mary.

The experience of our pilgrims reflected that of many others who find peace and reflection in every corner of the complex. Going out on Monday and returning on Thursday one has plenty of time to enjoy both the grounds and the company of the group on site as well as trips further afield.

Please see Liz Gallagher to register your interest for 2026.

In November, Beth from Rommie Rescue joined us to talk about the charity she works with to rescue dogs from Romania. She talked through the dogs' background, their journey to the UK, rehabilitation and then finding them a new home. She is a superb and entertaining speaker and we were delighted to raise £65 for them. Thank you Beth.

Max Perry

max.perry@datamax.co.uk

FROM THE ORGAN LOFT

I'm writing this on the 16 November, with a sense of excitement, and not just about the music plans for Advent and Christmas.

I'd like to thank the PCC (and Colin and David in particular), for approving the first tranche of repair work to the St Nicholas' Organ.

If all goes to plan, two things will happen this Tuesday (18 November.)

Firstly, the failing magnets /relays on the swell [1] should be replaced, so for the first time since well before I moved to the organ stool, the bottom C will work, as will the F above middle C. The St Nicholas' congregation have got used to some notes being suspiciously missing from hymn introductions if the pieces are in a key that needs that F.

Secondly, two of the pipes that are currently lying, detached and broken, at the bottom of the Great enclosure, will be taken off to the workshop of Sheppard and Cross in Crowborough. These are the two that had gradually leaned over so badly that they had pulled apart (in both cases, along the lines of previous repairs.)



Clearly, there will still be much work to do, and the full restoration is planned to include things like replacing the pipe supports so no further pipes fall over, but my Christmas Present is (deus vult), to be able to play an organ on which all the notes work.

So, a massive thank you, not just to the PCC, but to all those who donated time or money (or both!) to help make this happen.

[1] Don't know what a swell is? See the last but one issue of the magazine.

Mark Harrison, Director of Music



September – November 2025

In September we had a very interesting and enjoyable talk by the Revd Sarah, Chaplain to the Army Cadets. She came in uniform, explained different parts and talked about what she was allowed to do; how she enjoyed getting involved with some of the army equipment like tanks and helicopters. She explained about her hot chocolate & chat. Some of the cadets do not come with a lot of money to spend in the evenings, so she supplies hot chocolate and just lets them talk.

Afterwards, we enjoyed tea and biscuits followed by Compline.

October was Songs of Praise when we sang our hearts out with some of our favourite hymns and reading of praise psalms. We had a birthday cake to celebrate (38 years) of Worth and Pound Hill Mothers' Union Branch; lots of chatter and memories. Brenda Booker was given a prayer shawl made by a member of the Knit & Natter Group for her 67 years of being a member of the Mothers' Union.

November will see us having a service preparing for Advent. Then it will be packing 100 pairs of socks for Gatwick Detainees. The Diocese will supply over 500 pairs this year. Crawley District will be doing the packing, Gossops Green branch then take them to Brook & Tinsley House. We are invited to their Carol Concert, which some of us hope to attend.

Mary Fry on behalf of the committee

YOUR PCC

The members of the PCC (voted for at the APCM in May) are responsible for the overall wellbeing of the churches in our parish. Its main duties include promoting the church's mission, managing finances and property, and contributing to decision-making on matters like the forms of service and pastoral care. At the latest meeting, at the beginning of November the main topics were:



- **Safeguarding** – Highlighting the Face to Face training course later in the month and the need to encourage as many people as possible to understand why it is important to be aware.
- **Health & Safety** – Looking at potential hazards and dealing with them.
- **Treasury** – The parish is little different from councils and governments. Money is needed for repairs and mission and this has to be found. There has not been a stewardship campaign for two years. Ideas were discussed.
- **Warden Updates** – This included the recent Prayer Course, Messy Church and requests for money for repairs.
- **Events** – The Autumn Fair, Concerts, Remembrance and Christmas all featured.
- **Net-Zero** – Two of the PCC are attending meetings arranged in the Diocese to see how energy can be saved and build our own plan for Creation Care.
- **AOB** included thanks to Paddockhurst Estate for their annual gift of Christmas Trees, parish fees for weddings (no change) and the possibility of Life Saving courses in the new year.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 21 January 2026 at 19.00 at St Barnabas' so speak to a warden or member if you want to have anything brought to our attention.



ST BARNABAS' CHURCH, POUND HILL, RH10 7DY

SATURDAY 31 JANUARY

DOORS 19.00 FOOD 19.15 QUIZ 20.00

Food: jacket potatoes, baked beans, cheese and coleslaw, plus ice-cream



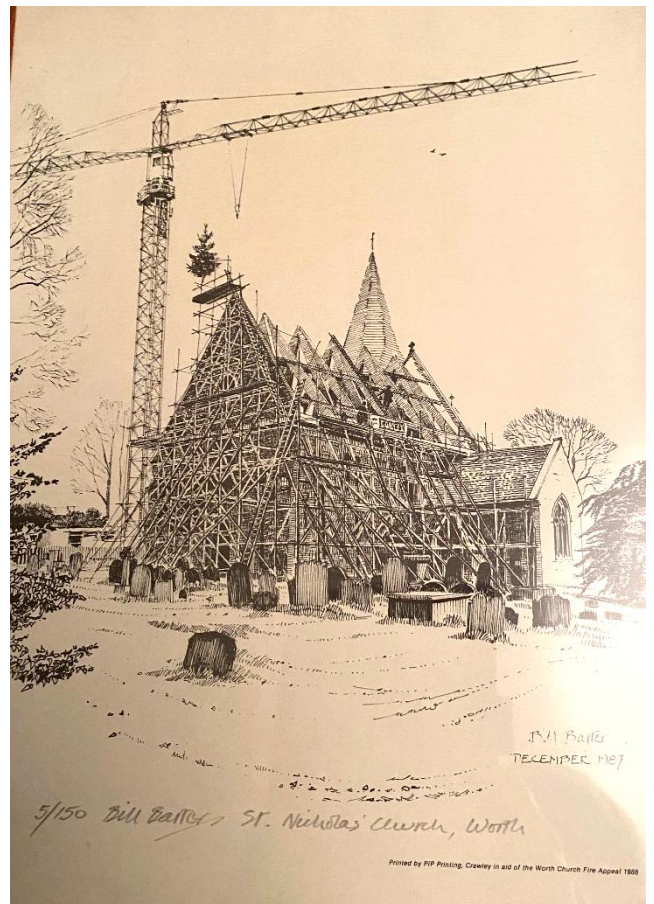
- **TEAMS OF UP TO 6**
- **£12 PER HEAD WITH FOOD, £7 WITHOUT**

1. Gather your friends and choose a team name.
2. Email office@worthparish.org stating how many for food
3. Turn up and pay on the night (cash or card)

In aid of Worth Parish

OUT OF THE ARCHIVES

Recently we had a visit from Steve Bailey. Aged 17 he worked on the restoration of the roof after the fire & signed the cross that Joyce & Jason found at the back of the garage. He also sent us some photos taken at the time of restoration.



The above is one of four limited edition prints of drawings made in 1987 by Bill Barter who was one of our ringers.

Heaven

I dreamt of Heaven the other night,
The pearly gates swung wide
An Angel with a halo bright
Ushered me inside

And there to my astonishment
Stood folk I'd judged and labelled
As quite 'unfit', of little worth,
And spiritually disabled

Indignant words rose to my lips
But never were set free
For every face showed stunned surprise
Not one expected me!

Author unknown



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CHRISTMAS KITCHEN

Pistachio and Cranberry Biscuits

These make excellent homemade gifts and freeze well.



Ingredients

- 175 g butter, softened
- 85 g golden caster sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 225 g plain flour
- 75 g pistachios
- 75 g dried cranberries

Method

1. Cream butter, sugar and vanilla.
2. Stir in the flour, pistachios and cranberries to form dough.
3. Shape into two 5 cm logs, wrap and chill for one hour.
4. Preheat oven 180°C (160°C fan)/Gas 4.
5. Slice the log into 1 cm thick rounds and place on a lined tray.
6. Bake 12-15 min until golden then cool before freezing or eating.



Danish Christmas Goose with Prunes and Apples

This is a traditional Christmas Eve dish and serves 6.

Ingredients

- 8 ounces prunes (soaked overnight)
- 9lbs goose
- Half a lemon
- Salt and pepper
- 4 medium apples, peeled, cored and sliced
- 5 cups chicken stock

Method

1. Trim any excess fat from the goose but reserve it for gravy.
2. Rub the goose inside and out with lemon, salt and pepper.
3. Stuff the goose with prunes and apples and tie it together.
4. Preheat oven to 190°C
5. Place the goose on its side on a roasting rack in the oven for 30 minutes.
6. Now put the goose in a roasting pan filled with the chicken stock for 2.5 hours, turning it over halfway.
7. Pour off the juices into a pan and put the goose back in for 15 minutes.
8. For a final 15 minutes of cooking, lay the goose on its back and with the oven door ajar, baste with several tablespoons of cold water. (This makes the skin crisp)
9. Use the pan juices and the removed fat to make gravy.
10. Serve with caramelised potatoes, sweet and sour red cabbage and carrots.



Sunday 30 November 4pm

A Candlelit Advent

A reflective service beginning in darkness, the church becomes ever brighter with candles, symbolising the light of love and hope dispelling fear and despair.

ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH
WORTH CRAWLEY RH10 7RT

www.worthparish.org



worthparish.org/christmas

Sunday 14 December 2025 4pm



Carols for All

Sing familiar carols with refreshments after

An unwrapped gift for a child or a person suffering from homelessness will be collected for local charities.

ST BARNABAS' CHURCH
POUND HILL RH10 7DY

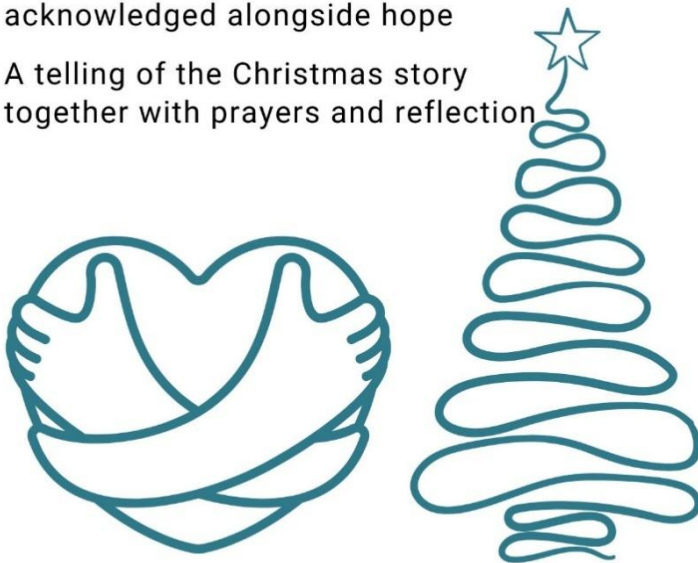
blue christmas

WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER 6PM

A quiet service for those who may find this Christmas difficult

A space for sadness to be acknowledged alongside hope

A telling of the Christmas story together with prayers and reflection



St Barnabas' Church Pound Hill RH10 7DY
worthparish.org/christmas

ADVENT SPACE

THURSDAY 18 DECEMBER 6PM

An evening of quiet meditation and relaxation in the week before Christmas



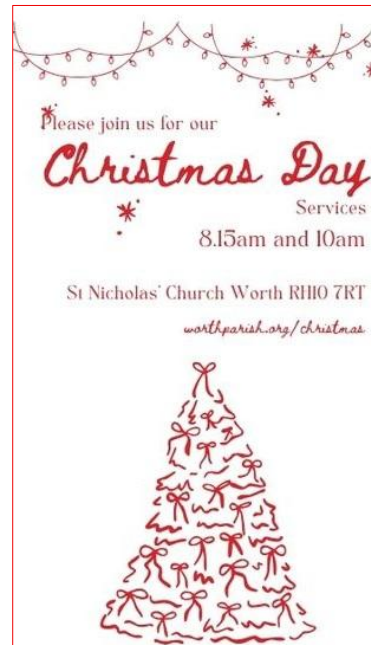
St Barnabas' Church Pound Hill RH10 7DY
WORTHPARISH.ORG/CHRISTMAS

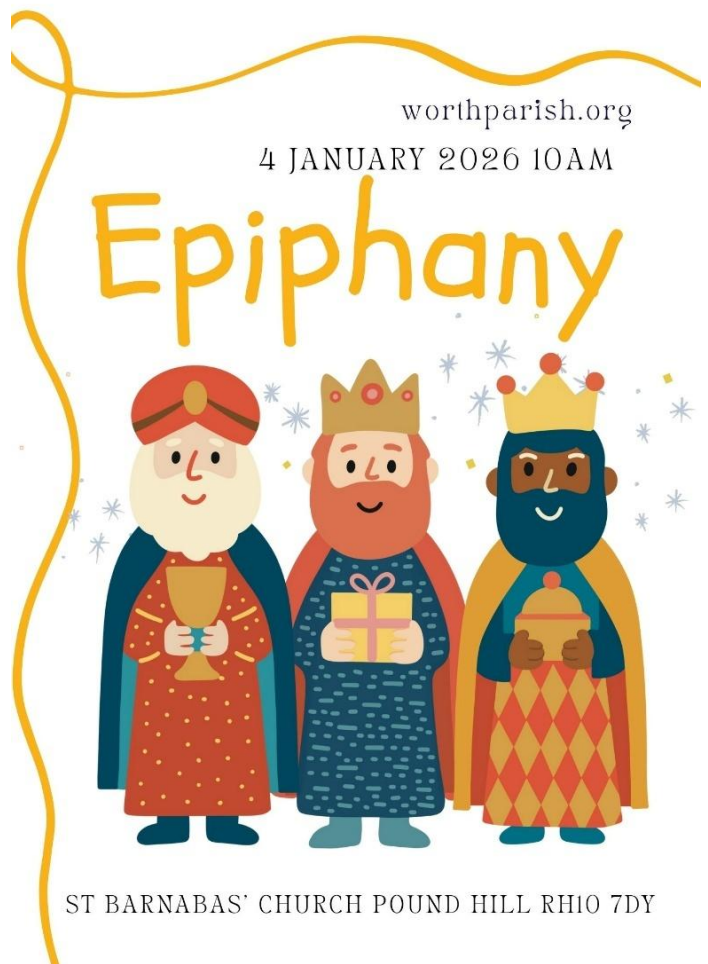
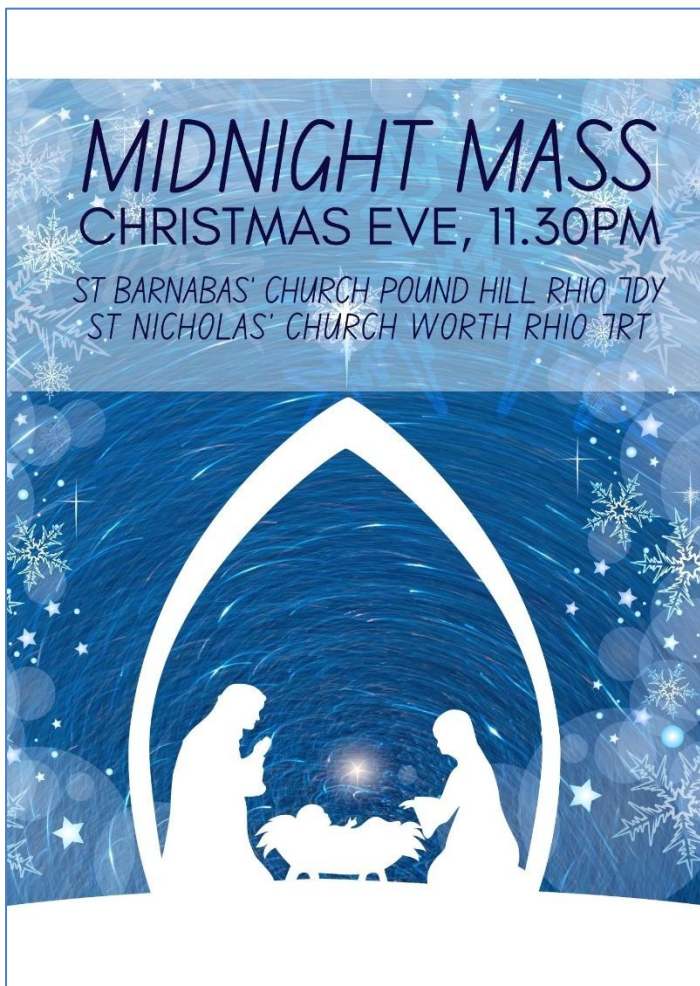
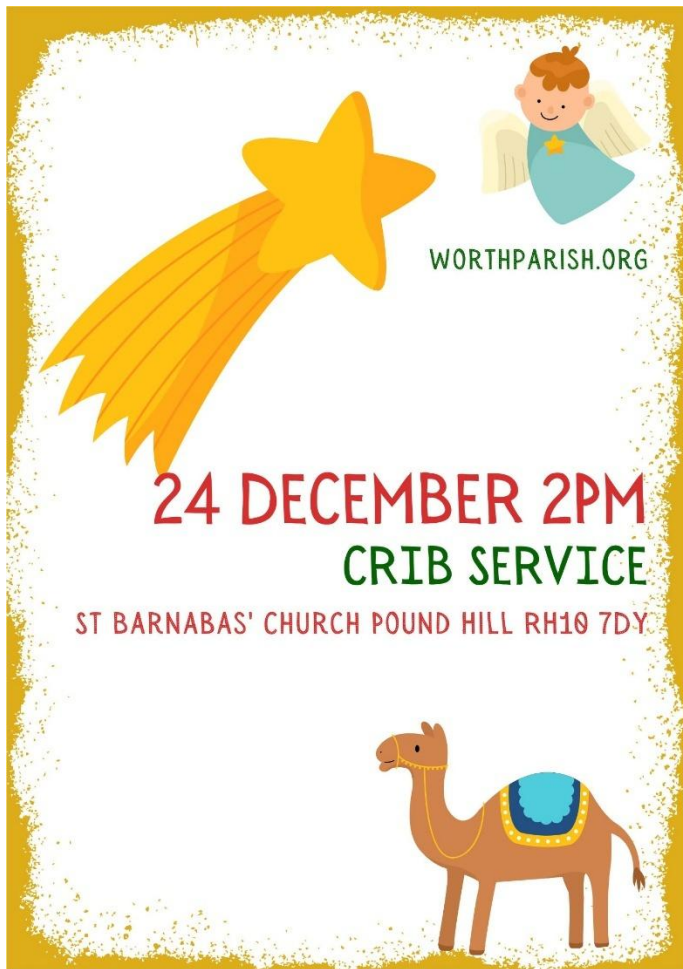
Sunday 21 December 4pm

Nine Lessons and Carols

followed by wine and mince pies

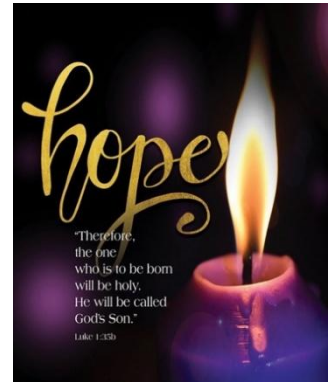
ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH RH10 7RT
www.worthparish.org/christmas





LIFE IN THE FAST(ING) LANE

When does Advent begin? Don't rely on your Advent Calendar! Originally, Christmas was just a one- or two-day festival. But fairly soon it began to expand. In 567, the Council of Tours made the decision to join the days between Christmas and Epiphany into a single holiday, creating the 'twelve days of Christmas'. But some time before that, the festival had been extended the other way, as it were, into the weeks leading up to Christmas. And this became known as Advent. The twelve days were a time of jollity and feasting. Advent, on the other hand, er ... wasn't.



Advent means 'arrival'. And that's what is supposed to happen: Christians are supposed to prepare for Christ's coming. We don't quite know how it started. As the liturgical historian Philip Pfatteicher writes: 'Each hypothesis concerning the origins of Advent is of continuing interest, none is entirely credible.' It probably began in the East as a preparation for Epiphany on 6 January. Epiphany was a time when many new Christians were baptised, so they needed to prepare for the big day. How did they do that? By fasting. Advent was a fast before the feast.

Fasting was common practice in the early church. Not only did Christians fast twice a week, but major festivals were accompanied by a period of fasting to prepare yourself spiritually for the feast. The big fast, of course, was Lent, which led up to Easter, and even today this season has kept its emphasis on self-denial, even if people do see it more as a chance to diet than to spiritually prepare. But Advent was also a period of fasting.

Eastern Christians often refer to Advent as 'Little Lent' or 'Christmas Lent', and, like Lent, originally it was a forty-day fast. Perpetuus, Bishop of Tours (d. 490) decreed a fast in preparation for Christmas, which was known as the Quadragesima (i.e. 'forty days') of St Martin, or St Martin's Fast because it began on 11 November - St Martin's Day. (That's technically eight weeks before Christmas - fifty-six days - but you could take the weekends off, leaving forty days of actual fasting.)

Martinmas on 11 November was the time when livestock were slaughtered and the meat prepared for winter. It was especially bad news for geese, since roast goose was the traditional meal. St Martin is also reputed to have introduced Chenin blanc to France, which is probably why he was canonised. So, after a big meal of roast goose washed down with Chenin blanc, it was thought that a time of fasting might be appropriate.

But it differed from place to place. There seems to have been a six-week fast in Rome. In some places it was three weeks, in others six, or even eight. It was Pope Gregory the Great (Pope from 590 to 604) who standardised the length at four weeks. (At least, he did in the West; for Eastern Christians, Advent is still a six-week affair, beginning on 15 November.) This was supposed to symbolise the four thousand years that creation had waited for the coming of Jesus, assuming, as many did (and some still do), that the world was only around five thousand years old. Given that no one was supposed to fast on a Sunday, that meant twenty-four days of fasting. Nowadays, it has to include the four Sundays before Christmas, beginning with the Sunday closest to 30 November. So, depending on the calendar, Advent could last for anything between twenty-two and twenty-eight days.

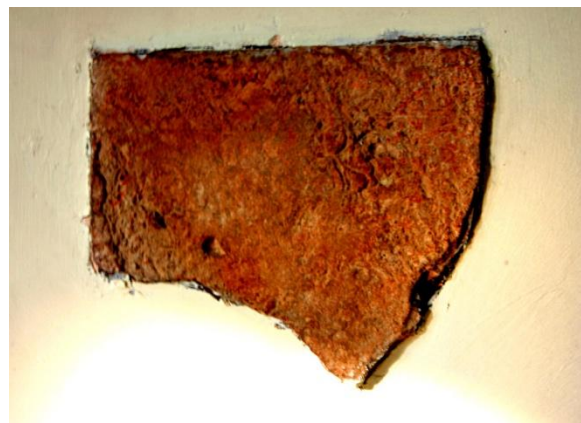
In medieval Britain, fasting meant different things to different classes. For the well-off it might mean replacing roast meats or pies with soups, stews and fish. But for the poor, it meant that even the occasional glimmer of culinary hope was denied them. In the fifteenth century, one James Ryman complained of eating 'no puddings nor sauce, but stinking fish not worth a louse'. He was probably even more grumpy on Christmas Eve, which was a strict fast, meaning that not only meat, but also cheese and eggs were all forbidden. Happy Advent to you.

Church Mouse

with full acknowledgement to Nick Page (2020): *Christmas: Tradition, Truth and Total Baubles*

GOSSIP FROM GOSSOP'S GREEN

When I first started writing for the Parish Magazine it was as the Ordinand's blog, where my dog Shadow would muse on life with an Ordinand in the house. After ordination we allowed Shadow to have his own blog where he mused on life in general which usually included the mischief that he got up to. Now that I am writing as Priest in Charge of St Alban's Church (and currently pet less) we need a new tag line. Suggestions to the Editor please.



St Alban's Church is of a similar age to St Barnabas'. It is a modern building which, at first glance, may seem rather plain when compared to the rich history visible in the 1,050-year-old structure of St Nicholas'. The Saxon arches at St Nicholas' never fail to inspire awe, especially during school visits.

But history matters, no matter the age of the building, so I'm currently on a bit of an investigative spree, trying to uncover the stories behind the various items in St Alban's Church. If anyone has any information or memories to share, I'd love to hear from you!

St Alban's Christmas Services

Christingle 4pm 30th November
Advent Meditation 2pm and 7pm 2nd December
Carols in the Barn Church 6pm 7th December
Nine Lessons and Carols 6pm 14th December
Midnight Mass Bethlehem Time 9.30pm Christmas Eve
Christmas Day Family Service 9.45am



★ **Christmas Tree Festival and Café** ★
Saturday 6th December 10 am to 2 pm

Christmas Blessings from all of us at St Alban's
stalbangossopsgreen.co.uk

During my exploration, I stumbled upon a rather unremarkable piece of brown stone, cemented into the wall and tucked away in a quiet corner. Imagine my surprise when our historian revealed that this stone is actually a fragment of the Roman Wall from Verulamium – the Roman name for St Albans City, where St Alban was martyred in 304 CE – and was incorporated into the church during its construction.

So, there you have it: although St Alban's may be a modern church, it contains stonework that predates even the Saxon arches of St Nicholas'. A wonderful reminder that history can be found in the most unexpected places!

Revd Greta



FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

Questions about Angels

Of all the questions you might want to ask
about angels, the only one you ever hear
is how many can dance on the head of a pin.

No curiosity about how they pass the eternal time
besides circling the Throne chanting in Latin
or delivering a crust of bread to a hermit on earth
or guiding a boy and girl across a rickety wooden bridge.

Do they fly through God's body and come out singing?
Do they swing like children from the hinges
of the spirit world saying their names backwards and forwards?
Do they sit alone in little gardens changing colors?

What about their sleeping habits, the fabric of their robes,
their diet of unfiltered divine light?
What goes on inside their luminous heads? Is there a wall
these tall presences can look over and see hell?

If an angel fell off a cloud, would he leave a hole
in a river and would the hole float along endlessly
filled with the silent letters of every angelic word?

If an angel delivered the mail, would he arrive
in a blinding rush of wings or would he just assume
the appearance of the regular mailman and
whistle up the driveway reading the postcards?

No, the medieval theologians control the court.
The only question you ever hear is about
the little dance floor on the head of a pin
where halos are meant to converge and drift invisibly.

It is designed to make us think in millions,
billions, to make us run out of numbers and collapse
into infinity, but perhaps the answer is simply one:
one female angel dancing alone in her stocking feet,
a small jazz combo working in the background.

She sways like a branch in the wind, her beautiful
eyes closed, and the tall thin bassist leans over
to glance at his watch because she has been dancing
forever, and now it is very late, even for musicians.

Billy Collins

I saw an angel in the marble and carved until I set him
free.

Michelangelo

Just a reminder:

There are nine Orders of
Angels, in ascending
order –

Angels
Archangels
Principalities

Powers
Virtues
Dominions

Thrones
Cherubim
Seraphim

These might be familiar from
the Hymn -

*Ye Watchers and ye
Holy Ones.*

The five archangels
named in the Bible are:

Michael (Who is like God?)
Gabriel (God is my Strength)
Raphael (Healing of God)
Uriel (God is my Light)
Raguel (Friend of God)

Church Mouse



*Orthodox icon of the
Orders of Angels*

TARIRO

I have just returned from a visit to Zimbabwe, where I spent time with many of the young people and projects supported by Tariro. It was a journey filled with both sorrow and joy – sorrow at the hardship so many still face, but great joy in seeing the courage, humour, and hope of the young people whose lives are being changed through your support.

Hope in Tsvingwe

Tsvingwe is a township near St Augustine's, Penhalonga, in eastern Zimbabwe. Once a peaceful valley dotted with small settlements, it has now become a sprawling area of homes, shacks, and illegal gold-mining activity. The land has been stripped of vegetation, rivers polluted, and the young face many risks and temptations.

Tariro recently began supporting ten young people from Tsvingwe. They are a lively, motivated group of teenagers who are determined to build a better life despite the challenges around them. Many come from families who have lost a parent and struggle to afford food, school fees, and clothing – yet their laughter and spirit are remarkable.

Thanks to Tariro, their school fees, uniforms, and some extra food are now covered. They also run a small pig project which Tariro helped their school to establish, giving them practical skills and a sense of responsibility. All ten were recently baptised and have found a home in the Anglican Church.

One evening, we gathered them together at St Augustine's for what was, for many, one of the biggest meals of their lives. Watching them eat their fill, laugh, and share stories was deeply moving.

From boys to men

Another highlight of my trip was visiting Joram and Arnold at their vocational training school. I have known them since they were small boys, and it is a joy to see them grow into fine young men. Joram is now training in carpentry and Arnold in auto-electrics – both working hard and making the most of every opportunity.

Celebrations in Harare

On October 4th, we celebrated the Eucharist at the Tariro Youth Project House in Harare. It was a joyful occasion: one young woman, Nokutenda, was baptised, and Byron Mashora and his wife Lydia marked ten years of marriage. Byron was one of the first two boys supported by Tariro back in 2009, and seeing how far he has come was deeply rewarding.

After the service, the music started, and the young people soon took over – a wonderful reminder that Tariro is, above all, a community full of life and hope.

Healing at Shearly Cripps Children's Home

Tariro has also continued supporting the Shearly Cripps Children's Home, an Anglican institution that had fallen on hard times. With Tariro's help, conditions have improved – the buildings, food, and daily care are better – and now we are focusing on the children's emotional wellbeing.

Two counsellors visit every week to help the children work through trauma, sadness, and behavioural challenges. It's a slow process, but already we can see change: small steps towards healing, confidence, and hope.

Home Looking ahead

Despite all its challenges, Zimbabwe remains a country of great beauty, courage, and faith. My trip was filled with encounters with remarkable young people, devoted Sisters, and loyal friends. I returned encouraged by the progress I saw and grateful for the steadfast support that makes it all possible.

With thanks and blessings,

Nicolas CR

100 CLUB

The 100 Club has 32 members, using 36 of the original 50 allocated numbers. As some members have more than one number their odds of winning are increased! The list of winners so far this year is:

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Shirley Sidaway								2		3
Rose Wells		3								
Mary Harrison		1		2						
Pam Marson					2		1	1	1	
Sheila Sellar						1	4			
Sue Perry					3					
Joan Pallet					4					4
Rosemary Cordan		4				3				
Roger & Phyl Pennell		2		1						
Bill Puttick			1							
Chris Butcher								3		
Malcolm Booker	2		2							
Ann Phillipson									3	
Richard Sidaway	1						3			
Brenda Booker	4							4		
Helen Puttick										2
Trevor Stokes	3			4			2		2	1
Judy Stokes										
Ian Pallett			4						4	
Don Hewerdine						4				
Jill Freeborn			3		1	2				

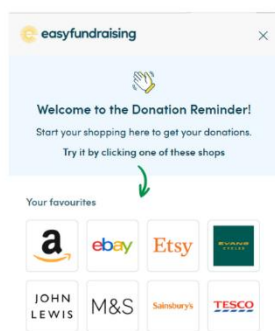


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SPECIAL SERVICES

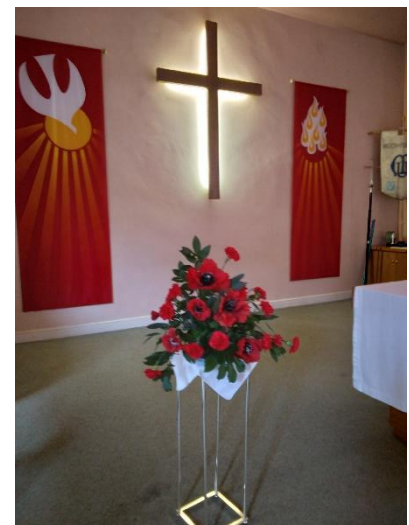
All our services are great, but some are extra special. So in this edition of the mag we are featuring our annual Pet Service – very popular, especially with dog owners! And our wonderful Remembrance Day Services. At St Nicholas’ there were 139 in the congregation

92 over the age of 16 and 47 under (how do we know? It is a requirement by the CofE that we record these numbers in our Service Registers). 4th Worth Scouts were formed in 1908 for the boys living near Worth Church and in have been closely Nicholas’ ever since.

Three Bridges and associated with St



The Remembrance service at St Barnabas' was as poignant as always, as we gathered to remember all those who had given their lives to protect our country. The 2nd Pound Hill Brownies, who meet in our hall made wreaths and tea light holders which featured in our remembrance displays – thank you Brownies. Ethan, pictured below who is with the Crawley Sea Cadets (along with other military and police cadet groups and the scouts) took part in the Crawley Remembrance Service held at St John's.



HUNT THE MAG



What material, used in the original construction of St Barnabas', disintegrated and caused leaks in the north side of the church roof?

Who has provided the magnificent Christmas Trees for St Nicholas' again this year?

The repair work on the organ aims to fix two failing notes. Which musical note, which had been suspiciously missing from hymns, will work again?

Which Pope standardised the length of Advent at four weeks in the West?

What is the Roman name for St Albans City, from where a fragment of wall was incorporated into St Alban's Church?

What are the names of the two volunteer leaders who run Sunday School?

Super Difficult: What was Bill Barter's hobby in 1987?

KIDS AND YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School, run by Nicky and Emily (as well as help by other members of the congregation); it provides a fun learning environment to get to know Jesus. There are always activities linked to the readings of the day and it is fabulous to see and hear what the children have been doing – and to hear the prayer that they have written – when they come back into church towards the end of the service. On the fourth Sunday they stay and take part in the service.



TODDLERS



The calm before the storm! Approx 50 children and 25 adults on a Thursday morn.

Toddlers continues to thrive, every Tuesday (1-3pm) and Thursday (9-11am) during termtime.

Lots of fun had by all with activities to keep all the toddlers (and carers!) entertained. We have a break

in the middle for refreshments followed by singing and more fun activities. The Tuesday session is quieter, but growing and the Thursday session remains as popular as ever! Why not come along!



THE HANGOUT

The Hangout is a group for school years 7 to 11 and meets every Friday in term time from 7:00 to 8:30pm. The group is thriving with a regular group of 15 to 20 young people. All are welcome, why not come along, we're always on the lookout for new members. If you would like more information please get in touch, email youth@worthparish.org



Hunt the Mag Answers
Horsehair felt The Paddockhurst Estate Verulamium
Pope Gregory the Great Nicky and Emily Bellinging
The F above middle C



In October
we explored
many forms
of Prayer.

In November,
it was The
Kingdom of Heaven.



BAPTISMS AND WEDDINGS

Baptisms

28 September 2025

Mario Ortyl-Cullen

18 October 2025

Everlyna Amarä Willow Couronne

Everleigh Zya Wrylie Couronne

Kheelana Marie Alexis Bertrand

19 October 2025

Benjamin Oliver Jones

2 November 2025

Lyra Philippa Jones



Above shows the 'Ortyl' grandchildren who have been baptized at St Nicholas' during the last few years. A wonderful photo for the memory box!



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12-12:30, second Wednesday of the month
St Nicholas' Church
Crawley, West Sussex
RH10 7RT

worthparish.org/julian-groups

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See also page 1 for Clergy, Office and Churchwarden contact details.

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Altar Servers (St Nicholas')	Jenny Dobson Colin Smith	
Bellringers	Neil Dobson	
Bookings (Hall, Meeting Rooms, Café, Church)	Revd Sarah	
Children's Society	Ann Lane	
Children - Messy Church	Office	
Children - Toddlers	Jenny Dobson	
Children - Sunday School	Nicky Anderson	
Choirs	Mark Harrison	
Church Cleaning (St Barnabas')	Jane Stanford	
Church Cleaning (St Nicholas')	Jill Freeborn	
Electoral Roll Officer	Jane Stanford	
Events	Jane Stanford	
Flower Arranging (St Barnabas')	Jane Stanford	
Flower Arranging (St Nicholas')	Adela Hawley	
Friends of St Nicholas'	Colin Smith	
Giving	David Fry	
Julian Group (St Barnabas')	Don Hewerdine	
Knit and Natter	Val Rudd	
magazine	Sue Perry	
Mothers' Union	Mary Fry	
Music at St Barnabas'	Ann Phillipson	
PCC Secretary	Available	
PCC Treasurer	Churchwarden	
Prayer Group - Parish / Julian (St Nicholas')	Linda Eells	
Prayer Group - Julian (St Barnabas')	Don Hewerdine	
Social Media / Website	Elizabeth Whyman	
The Circle	Max Perry	

Old Clothes

A little boy opened an old family Bible and looked with fascination as he turned the old pages. Suddenly something fell out of the Bible. He picked it up and looked at it closely; it was an old leaf which had been pressed between the pages. 'Mum, look what I've found'. His mother asked what it was and with astonishment in his voice he answered, 'I think it's Adam's suit!'

DECEMBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026 CALENDAR

Before travelling far, check pewsheet/website or with the Office.

When?		What?	Where?
Sun 30 Nov	16.00	Candlelit Advent Service	St Nicholas'
Wed 3 Dec	19.30	The Circle – Wine, Cheese & Mince Pies	St Barnabas'
Sat 6 Dec	10.00	Saturday Market	St Barnabas'
Sat 6 Dec	15.00	Messy Church	St Barnabas'
Sun 7 Dec	12.00	Advent Study	St Barnabas'
Mon 8 Dec	14.00	St B Julian Group	St Barnabas'
Wed 10 Dec	12.30	St N Julian Group	St Nicholas'
Wed 10 Dec	15.00	Messy Church	St Barnabas'
Sun 14 Dec	16.00	Carols for All	St Barnabas'
Wed 17 Dec	14.30	Scrabble & Cake	St Barnabas'
Wed 17 Dec	18.00	Blue Christmas	St Barnabas'
Thur 18 Dec	11.30	Church Mouse's Christmas	St Nicholas'
Thur 18 Dec	18.00	Advent Space	St Barnabas'
Sun 21 Dec	12.00	Advent Study	URC
Sun 21 Dec	16.00	9 Lessons & Carols	St Nicholas'
Wed 24 Dec	14.00	Crib Service	St Barnabas'
Wed 24 Dec	16.00	Christingle	St Barnabas'
Wed 24 Dec	16.00	St N Nativity (costume collection Fri 19 at 17.00) (read through + staging Sat 20 at 09.00)	St Nicholas'
Wed 24 Dec	23.30	Midnight Mass at St B & St N	Both
Thur 25 Dec	As Sundays	Christmas Day Services	Both
Sun 4 Jan	10.00	The Epiphany	Both
Sat 10 Jan	15.00	Messy Church	St Barnabas'
Mon 12 Jan	14.00	St B Julian Group	St Barnabas'
Wed 14 Jan	12.30	St N Julian Group	St Nicholas'
Wed 14 Jan	15.00	Messy Church	St Barnabas'
Wed 14 Jan	19.00	Crawley Community Cinema (CCC)- 'Diva'	St Peter's
Wed 21 Jan	14.30	Scrabble & Cake	St Barnabas'
Sat 24 Jan	10.00	Saturday Market	St Barnabas'
Wed 28 Jan	17.00	Mothers' Union New Year Supper	St Barnabas'
Wed 28 Jan	12.30	Prayer Group	St Nicholas'
Wed 28 Jan	19.00	CCC – 'The Ballad of Wallis Island'	St Peter's
Sat 31 Jan	19.00 for 20.00	Parish Quiz preceded by food	St Barnabas'

Right from Wrong

Right we know is written right when we see it written right, but when we see it written rite we know it isn't written right for right to have it written right should not be written rite nor write nor yet should it be written wright for then it is not written right

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