



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



The Parish Magazine

St John-in-Bedwardine

St Michael's



February 2026

50p



Information

WORCESTER CITY WEST TEAM CLERGY (clergy@wcw.church)

Phil Bradford (Team Rector) (01905 423794)

Day off: Friday

Sarah Cottrill (Team Vicar) (01905 426257)

Saturday

Gilly Maxim (Assistant Curate) (gilly.maxim@wcw.church)

Monday

TEAM OFFICE

The office is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9am-12noon.	
1a Bromyard Road St John's, WR2 5BS	Tel: (01905) 420490 e-mail: office@wcw.church

ON THE WEB

St John's	Parish Website: www.stjohninbedwardine.co.uk A church near you: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/18634 Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohninbedwardine
St Michael's	Parish Website and A church near you: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/19689 Facebook: www.facebook.com/stmichaelsdinesgreen

SERVICES

Please check our websites and Facebook pages, or the notices published on the church noticeboards and printed in the magazine and weekly pew sheets.

SAFEGUARDING

If you have any concerns about possible abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, contact one of the Safeguarding Officers, Fiona Templeton, Elizabeth Forman in person or via safeguarding@wcw.church, or any member of the clergy.

Churchwardens: stjohns.churchwardens@wcw.church Gordon Templeton (749025), Joy Job (423051).	St John's
Pastoral care: The church's Pastoral Care Group offers support if you are lonely, bereaved, or unable to attend church. Please contact one of the clergy (as above or email clergy@wcw.church).	
Churchwardens: Mike Dowling (dowlingm28@sky.com / 424539) Val Mason (val.mason@yahoo.com /428948).	St Michael's
On Site Safeguarding Officer: Mike Dowling (details above).	

Worcester St John-in-Bedwardine and St Michael's Joint Council is a charity with the Registered Charity Number 1205354.

A word from the editors

Welcome to our February 2026 edition. As a church, we are thinking about what our outreach should look like in 2026 and beyond. In her letter, Gilly discusses what we might think of as a specialist ministry, but shows us that “The question is not whether every congregation can run a prison-based ministry, but whether every church is willing to be shaped by what prison chaplaincy reveals.”

The church nationally and locally had two new senior leaders in January. We hope you will be interested to read something about Hugh Nelson, the new Bishop of Worcester and Sarah Mullally, the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

We leave you with the Collect for the fifth Sunday before Lent (which won't be heard in church this year as, Easter being fairly early, there isn't such a Sunday this year).

*Almighty God,
by whose grace alone we are accepted
and called to your service:
strengthen us by your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

Graham and Sue Evans

Important information

Email address: parishmagazine@wcv.church

Next edition (March): Deadline is Sunday 8th February.

Distribution – magazines available by Sunday 22nd February.

Subscription form: Page 50.

Cover picture: Organ repairs under way (Colin Nash).

Pictures in this magazine: Thanks to those who have provided pictures for this magazine, including Graham Evans, Philip Evans, Sue Fairman, Joy Job, Colin Nash and Tom Staiger.

The magazine

We publish a Parish Magazine each month, except August.

Articles on all aspects of Christian and parish life, letters, jokes and anecdotes are welcome - do contribute if you can. If you have a story to tell, please make contact. Do include your name as anonymous contributions will not be considered. If you can, please use e-mail (address below left). The editors will always acknowledge items sent by email; please try again if you do not receive a response. Please send all written correspondence for the magazine to the Parish Office.

The magazine costs 50p to purchase and can be obtained from the back of church. Subscriptions are available at the discounted price of £5 per year; by subscribing you make things easier for our printing team as we know more closely how many copies to print.

You can subscribe by filling in the form near the back of the magazine or by taking a subscription form from the rack (where the magazines are) at the back of the church. Please return the form and your payment to the parish office.

Opinions!

Opinions expressed in this magazine are personal opinions of the authors concerned and may not represent the views of the editors, our Joint Council or The Church of England. Such material is offered as a source of debate or reflection.

To advertise

Please see page 14.



From Gilly Maxim
*Why chaplaincy in prison
matters to the Church*

Prison chaplaincy is often spoken of as a specialist ministry, delegated to a few while the wider Church offers goodwill from a distance. Yet the reality is that prison chaplaincy raises questions that go to the heart of Christian theology, discipleship, and our public witness. It does not simply serve prisons; it reveals something essential about the Church itself.

Prison chaplaincy is not about “fixing” people, nor is it a religious add-on to punishment. At its best, it is a ministry of presence within a system shaped by control, risk management, and suspicion. It seeks to hold human dignity in places where society has decided that dignity can be suspended.

The work of a chaplain is marked by listening without an agenda, in environments where most interactions are transactional and conditional. It proclaims hope without denying harm: harm done to victims, to communities, and to offenders themselves. Crucially, prison chaplaincy lives in the unresolved tension between justice and mercy. It refuses to collapse one into the other, and that refusal alone should matter deeply to the Church.

Prisons concentrate realities that are easier to ignore elsewhere. They reveal how often trauma reproduces trauma, how poverty, addiction, mental illness, and neglect are criminalised, and how many people who offend were failed long before they committed a crime.

Engagement with prisons forces us as a Church to confront an uncomfortable truth: sin is rarely neat, individual, or abstract. It is entangled with systems, histories, and social failure. This sits uneasily with forms of church life that prefer moral clarity without moral complexity.

Jesus’ identification with those in prison is stark. He does not say, “I was innocent and you visited me.” He says, “I was in prison and you came to me” (Matthew 25). Scripture consistently insists that God is present in places of shame and exclusion, that redemption does not wait for respectability, and that restoration is relational rather than transactional.

Prison chaplaincy keeps the Church close to the Jesus who is found behind locked doors. It resists any theology that locates Christ solely among the morally secure or socially acceptable.

If we are honest, prison exposes several tensions within our Church life.

First, it reveals our discomfort with mess. Church often welcomes “brokenness” when it is tidy, brief, and grateful. Prison chaplaincy deals with long stories, repeated failures, slow change, and unresolved endings.

Second, it tests our theology of grace. Forgiveness is easily preached in the abstract, but far harder when extended to people whose crimes provoke fear or revulsion. Chaplaincy presses the Church to ask whether grace is something we truly believe in, or merely something we speak about symbolically.

Third, it exposes our silence about justice. Churches may speak confidently about personal morality while remaining hesitant to engage with sentencing inequality, racial disparity, or the revolving door between care systems and prisons. Prison chaplaincy refuses to allow faith to remain comfortably apolitical when human dignity is at stake.

This is not a one-way ministry. Prison chaplaincy offers the Church a sharper, less sentimental theology of grace; one that is costly rather than comfortable. It offers a deeper understanding of repentance as ongoing, fragile, and relational, rather than a single decisive moment. It also offers a truer picture of resurrection: often partial, slow, and hard-won.

Many people in prison understand dependence on God with a clarity that challenges the self-sufficiency often assumed outside prison walls.

If prison chaplaincy matters, churches cannot simply affirm it in principle and then leave it at arm’s length. The question is not whether every congregation can run a prison-based ministry, but whether every church is willing to be shaped by what prison chaplaincy reveals.

What can we do?

1. Primarily, we can move beyond vague intercessions by praying intentionally for prisoners, victims of crime, prison staff, probation services, and chaplains. This includes praying for those experiencing fear, moral injury, burnout, and isolation within the prison system. Such prayer forms congregations to see prisons not as distant institutions but as places where God is already at work.

2. We can model careful, humane language when speaking about crime and punishment. This means resisting phrases that reduce people to offences, refusing casual stereotyping, and gently challenging narratives that frame certain lives as disposable. How we speak as a Church shapes how we think and how we act.

3. Prison chaplains are not peripheral specialists; they are engaged daily in pastoral, ethical, and theological work at the sharpest edges of human experience. Churches can support chaplains through informed oversight, regular contact, practical encouragement, and advocacy.

4. As a Church we could think about providing opportunities to learn about the criminal justice system, trauma, addiction, and restorative approaches to justice. Bible study groups, clergy training days, and lay education programmes could engage scripture through the lens of incarceration, forgiveness, accountability, and hope. This deepens discipleship rather than distracting from it.

5. For many people leaving prison, churches are among the few places where community might be possible but only if congregations are prepared. This means thinking carefully about safeguarding, boundaries, welcome, and accompaniment. Reintegration is not charity; it is shared life, and it requires honesty, patience, and support.

6. Without becoming partisan, churches can refuse silence in the face of systemic harm. This may include engaging with issues such as sentencing practices, racial disparities, mental health provision, and the pipeline from care systems into custody. Faithfulness sometimes requires asking difficult public questions, grounded in theology rather than ideology.

7. Perhaps most importantly we, as a Church, can reflect honestly on our own practices of inclusion and exclusion. Who feels welcome? Who is quietly screened out? What kinds of stories make us uncomfortable?

As a church we are unlikely to be able to engage in all of these ways. But we can consider whether the work in prisons remains a marginal concern, or whether it will be allowed to challenge and shape our understanding of mercy, justice, and hope.

Reflecting on the stories of those in prison reminds us that the line between “us” and “them” is thinner than we like to admit. Grace is not demonstrated by who we exclude, but by who we refuse to give up on. That, ultimately, is not a prison issue. It is a Church issue.

Gilly

In Memoriam

Olive Mary Peggy Outram	2 February 1992
William John Davies	3 February 1999
Charles Gordon Burnett	7 February 2021
Rosanna Walker	14 February 1990
Eileen Bennett	17 February 2009
Maurice Charles Pearson	24 February 1999
William Joseph Probyn	28 February 1987
Doris Betty Dear	28 February 1989
Doreen Iavarone	28 February 1998

Additions to In Memoriam are not automatic but must be specifically requested via the clergy.

Inclusion only needs to be requested once; entries are then included until the fortieth anniversary.

An extension may be requested by family or friends of those named.

From the Registers, December 2025

St John's

BAPTISMS: *We welcome you into the Lord's family*

14th December 2025 Jaxon John Clark

SERVICES: Communicants 312. Total attendance at all services 1483 including 185 at a school carol service.

St Michael's

SERVICES: Communicants 52. Total attendance at all services 83.

Sundays and Principal Feasts in February

Sunday 1st February: The fourth Sunday of Epiphany

Monday 2nd February: The presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)
(to be celebrated on 1st February)

Sunday 8th February: The second Sunday before Lent

Sunday 15th February: The Sunday next before Lent

Wednesday 18th February: Ash Wednesday

Palm crosses to ashes

Children's Church will be burning last year's palm crosses to make the ash for Ash Wednesday.

People are invited to bring their palm crosses from last year to be burnt on Sunday 15th February.

Dates for your diary

Location key	(J) St John's Church	(M) St Michael's Church
	(V) The Vicarage, 7 Manor Road	

(J) Mondays in term time, 10am: Little Lambs, see pages 9 and 24. No meeting on 16th February (half term week).

--- 000 ---

(J) Saturday 7th February 4pm: Messy Church, see pages 10 and 30. Doors open and drinks available from 3:30pm.

--- 000 ---

(J) Thursday 12th February, 1pm: The Good Old Days present Discover History, "Saxon Life in Worcester", see page 9.

--- 000 ---

(J) Saturday 14th February, 9am: Women's Breakfast, see page 9.

--- 000 ---

(M) Monday 16th February, 2.30pm: Mothers' Union.

--- 000 ---

(J) Wednesday 18th February, 2.45pm: Tea/Coffee & Cake, see page 9.

--- 000 ---

(M) Thursday 19th February, 2pm - 4pm: West Worcester Friendship Group.

--- 000 ---

(V) Thursday 26th February, 7.30pm: Mothers' Union.

--- 000 ---

(V) Friday 27th February: Fourth Friday Friendship Group. Look out for sign-up sheets in church or contact Sarah Cottrill for details.

--- 000 ---

(J) Saturday 28th February, 10.45am: Cafe@10.45, see pages 10 and 13.

--- 000 ---

(J) Saturday 21st March, 8.30am - 11am: Community Breakfast, see pages 11 and 13.

Evening Prayer with Bible Study

The theme for Sunday Evening Prayer with Bible Study on 8th February will be "A Jailer", Acts 16:6-40.

These services are held on the second Sunday of each month at 5.30pm at St John's Church with hot drinks and sweet treats (cakes or cookies) available.

During the cooler months the sessions will be held in the Blakefield Room, otherwise they will continue in the font chapel. Wherever it is being held, please gather in the church beforehand.

Philip Evans

All event information should be regarded as provisional and checked near the time

Events at St John's

Little Lambs



**Mondays in Term Time at
St John's Church
10:00am to 11.30am**

FREE!

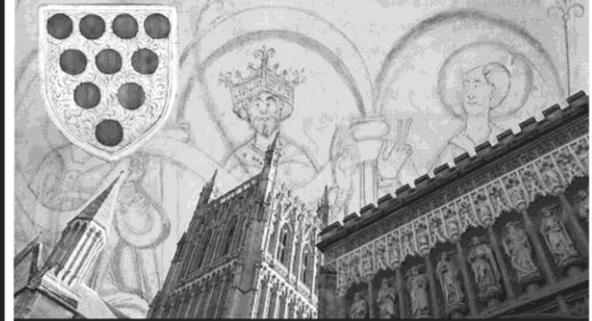
Toys and Games, Art & Craft, Messy Play,
Snacks and Stories, Singing

Birth to 4 years old and carers

More volunteers needed! For more
details contact the Team Office - details
on the inside front cover.

No meeting on 16th February
(half term week).

THE GOOD OLD DAYS
PRESENTS
DISCOVER HISTORY



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WORCESTER**

**THURSDAY 12TH FEBRUARY
1.00PM**

**ADMISSION £4
INCLUDES REFRESHMENTS**



**Women's Breakfast Meetings
for Friendship and
Christian Fellowship**

Why not join us?
Everyone is welcome!

Our next meeting is on

**Saturday 14th February
9.00am until 11.00am**

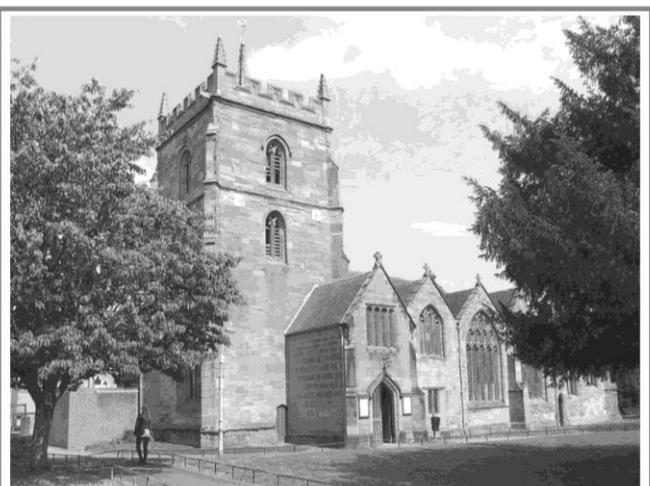
St John-in-Bedwardine
in The Blakefield Room

Contact Margaret Rutter (425396)



ST JOHN-IN-BEDWARDINE

**Join us for Tea,
Coffee & Cake**



Wednesday 18th February

2.45pm

Everyone Welcome!

Suggested donation £2.00

Events at St John's

St John in Bedwardine



**Join us for
Fresh Coffee and Danish
'Friendship and Thoughts'**

**At 10.45am on
Saturday 28th February
Guest speaker Jenny English**

ALL WELCOME



Saturday 7th February, 4pm.
(doors open 3.30pm with
drinks and biscuits).

February's theme will be
" A New Start"

Join us the first Saturday of each
month!

Please do come along,
you'll be sure of a warm welcome!

Weekday services

The following mid-week Eucharists and Daily Offices are scheduled in February, with the exception of the week commencing Monday 16th February:

Tuesday St John's 10am (Holy Communion - Book of Common Prayer)
Thursday St Michael's 10.30am (Eucharist - Common Worship) **

** On the second Thursday of each month (12th February) this is a Eucharist for Wholeness and Healing.

Week commencing Monday 16th February:

Tuesday 17th St John's 10am (Holy Communion - BCP)
Wednesday 18th St Michael's 10.30am (Ash Wednesday Eucharist)
Wednesday 18th St John's 7.30pm (Ash Wednesday Eucharist)
Thursday 19th No service at St Michael's

Daily offices take place in St John's Church from Monday to Thursday. Morning Prayer is at 8.30am. Evening Prayer is at 4pm during GMT and at 5pm during British Summer Time. Occasionally other commitments will prevent a service happening; the schedule for each week will be published in the pew sheet.

All event information should be regarded as provisional and checked near the time

FREE COMMUNITY BREAKFAST



**All are welcome
to come and
share a full
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with unlimited
supplies of tea,
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**Saturday 21st March
8.30am to 11.00am
St John's Church**



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Children's Church – February 2026

It has been lovely to welcome the children back into Children's Church after the Christmas break. There are some pictures from the Community Nativity on page 25.

This term has started by learning about Epiphany and why Jesus was such a special baby. Over the next few weeks we will be finding out more about his childhood.

On 15th February, we will prepare the ashes for our church's Ash Wednesday service and begin learning about Lent in preparation for Easter.

We continue to have two groups running at St John's.

Our **Scramblers** group is for pre-school and Key Stage 1 children. We follow a programme called 'Diddy Disciples' which uses familiar songs to retell the Bible stories in an age-appropriate way. There is often a simple craft activity to do, and toys to play with for the youngest children. Adults who stay in to support their young children can listen to the service through a speaker in the Blakefield Room.

Our older children are in our **Explorers** group. This allows them to consider Bible stories in a little more detail, followed by an activity or craft. There is always an opportunity for children to share what they've done in the main service if they would like to.

We always welcome new members. Come along on the 1st, 3rd or 4th Sunday of the month if you would like to give it a try!

Fiona Templeton and Amy Rees

Date Alerts

The next Community Breakfast is on Saturday March 21st at St John's Church, from 8.30 to 11.00am. Everyone is welcome to come to this event, to share a full English Breakfast, tea or coffee and toast. Do come and share in our fellowship.

Cafe Church (Cafe@1045) is on Saturday 28th February from 10.45 am at St John's Church. Thought for the day will be by Jenny English. Come and have a coffee and Danish with us. Give yourself a treat on a Saturday morning.

Jenny English



Worcester Festival Choral Society

WFCS's next concert, Mendelssohn's "Elijah", is in the Cathedral on 21st March at 7.30pm.

Tickets (£10 - £29) are available to buy from www.WFCS.online or 0333 666 3366.

Edward Reeves

Would you like to advertise in this magazine?

An advert can be full-page, half-page or quarter-page in size.

The booking can be from one month to one year.

The Parish Magazine is published A5 in size, in black and white.

There are eleven issues each year,
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Prayers for our world - Prisons

We pray for the needs of, and for awareness of the needs of, those affected by the criminal justice system, including prisoners, their families, victims of crime, and prison staff and chaplains.

*Lord, you offer freedom to all people.
We pray for those in prison.
Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist.
Support with your love all prisoners,
their families and friends,
prison staff, and all who care.
Heal those who have been wounded
by the activities of others,
especially the victims of crime.
Help us to forgive one another,
and to act justly, love mercy
and walk humbly together with Christ
in his strength and in his Spirit,
now and every day.
Amen.*

Church of England

Worcester Diocesan Criminal Justice Affairs group

Looking for prayers about prisons, I came across information about this group within Worcester Diocese. The group sets out two main aims:

- Internally within the Diocese to offer a Christian perspective and provide expert advice on criminal justice matters;
- Externally to raise public awareness and be catalysts of criminal justice-related social action.

You can find out more about the group, at <https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/growing-kingdom-people/social-justice/criminal-justice/>

Group member, Diana Fulbrook publishes an update on criminal justice issues ahead of each meeting of the Criminal Justice Affairs Group. These can be found at the address given above. There are about five a year. One I looked at was 11 pages, so lots of information!

Graham Evans

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Thank you from Maggs

Maggs has passed on a message of heartfelt thanks for our continuing support throughout 2025. Christmas is often a time when support is most visible, but our commitment over the entire year, including two very generous donations from our Joint Church Council, has helped Maggs to continue to go from strength to strength.

John Prangnell

St David's News

During the Christmas period we had some lovely Services. We started with our Advent Carol Service which was very well received. Christmas Eve saw us celebrate the first Eucharist of Christmas and this was, as usual, well attended. After Christmas we had our 'Carols round the tree' which was a great success. Thanks must go to the clergy and Peter Yates for preparing these services and taking them for us.

The coffee morning in January was down a little in numbers due to the weather but we hope to see everyone at our next one on the 4th February at 10.30am.

We are planning a social afternoon for the end of March and details of this will be in the next magazine.

Can anyone help us by giving a vacuum cleaner which they no longer require?

Ours no longer functions. If you can please let Sarah or myself know. *Carole Stone*
Deputy Church Warden.

Sudoku Puzzle

© 2013

KrazyDad.com

*The solution
is on the
inside back
cover.*

							7	2
					9	5		3
6	7			3	2	9		
9				1				
4	1	6				7	9	5
				6				1
		3	1	8			4	6
2		7	4					
8	4							

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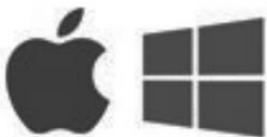
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JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A RICH MAN WHO DECIDED TO HAVE A PARTY

HE SENT OUT LOTS OF INVITATIONS



OH!
NO!!

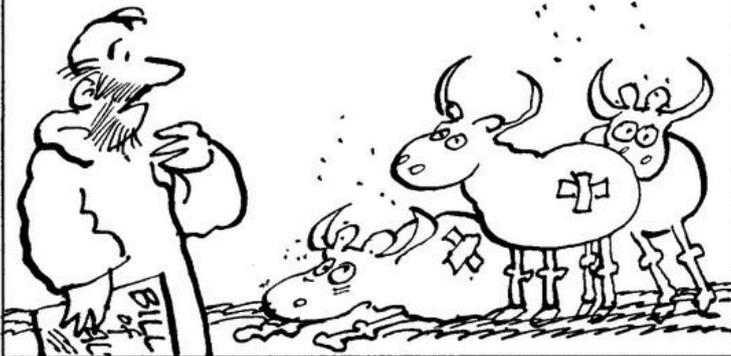


BUT PEOPLE STARTED MAKING EXCUSES

ONE MAN SAID HE HAD BOUGHT A FIELD, BUT NEEDED TO MEASURE IT



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE NEEDED TO TEST DRIVE THE OXEN HE HAS JUST PAID FOR



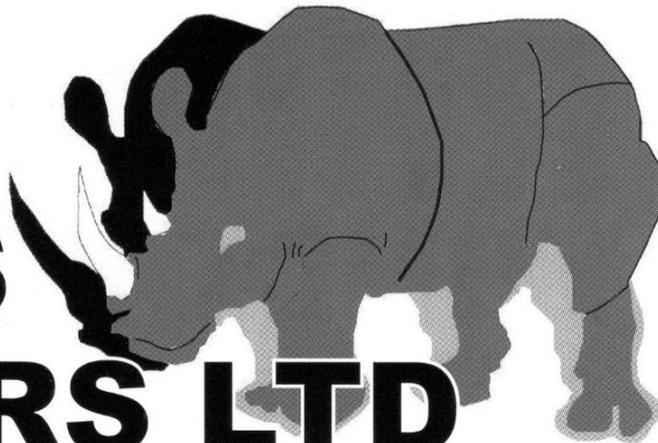
ANOTHER MAN SAID HE HAD JUST GOT MARRIED - AND HIS WIFE WOULDN'T LET HIM OUT!

SO THE RICH MAN INVITED ALL THE POOR AND NEEDY INSTEAD.



THE PARABLE MEANS WE SHOULDN'T MAKE EXCUSES FOR NOT FOLLOWING JESUS.

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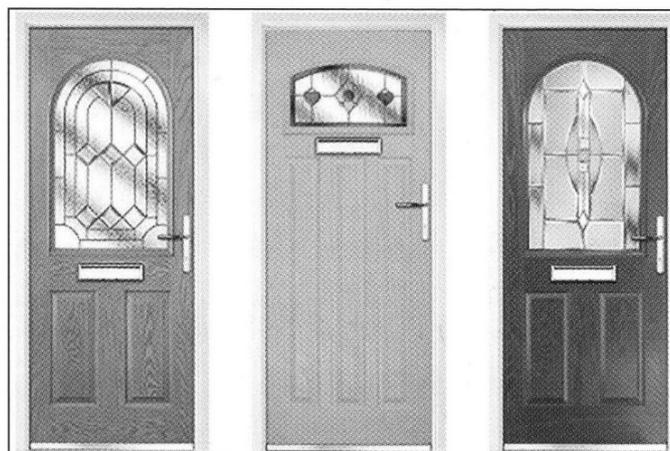
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Bishop Hugh arrives in the Diocese

On 17th January, we will officially welcome Hugh Nelson as the next Bishop of Worcester. As he joins us, he will be spending time getting to know Worcestershire and Dudley and its people as well as finding out more about what's happening in our churches.



Bishop Hugh said:

“Our diocesan vision is to be Kingdom People, who are part of a network of flourishing churches of all kinds, sizes and styles, with a particular focus on children, young people and their families. To be Kingdom People is to look for the signs of God at work in the world around us, to be of service to our communities – especially those most in need - and to constantly point people towards the goodness and love of Jesus. What a great vision that is!”

“I am so looking forward to getting out and about, visiting churches, schools and communities and meeting God’s Kingdom People in every part of the Diocese.”

As Hugh arrives, a programme is being planned for him to visit as much of the Diocese as possible, meeting clergy and lay leaders as well as congregation members. He will be looking particularly for places where he can hear from children and young people through schools, youth groups and other church-run activities. “Jesus told us that the Kingdom is like a community with a child at the centre, so I want to find out what children and young people think of God and what they’d like from church, regardless of whether they currently attend, or even consider themselves Christians.”

Alongside being Bishop of Worcester, Hugh will continue to be Bishop to the Armed Forces. His youngest daughter is in the final year of her A-levels, so in the first few months, he will be travelling back to Truro for a couple of days each week until his wife Lizzie and daughter can join him in Worcester after the exams are over.

Hugh continued: “It is an exciting time to be joining the Diocese of Worcester. God is doing something in our culture at the moment, and there is a new openness to faith. I already know that there are so many people dedicated to serving their community faithfully within and beyond our church buildings. I am looking

forward to working, praying, serving and worshipping with you, so that together we can become, even more fully, God's Kingdom People across Worcestershire and Dudley."

Bishop Hugh is going to be recording simple videos every week or two, sharing what he is discovering as he gets to know the Diocese. Look out for them on the diocese's social media pages and website.

Diocese of Worcester (Published: 6th January 2026)

Dame Sarah Mullally

The 106th Archbishop of Canterbury



The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE officially becomes Archbishop of Canterbury on 28th January 2026, when she is legally confirmed at St Paul's Cathedral. Most people know that she had been Bishop of London for several years, and that she is the first woman to ever become Archbishop of Canterbury. But what else do you know about her?

- She was born in Woking in 1962, and is one of four children, with two sisters and one brother.
- She attended Winston Churchill Comprehensive School and Woking Sixth Form College. She went on to South Bank Polytechnic and Heythrop College, University of London
- She worked as a nurse in the National Health Service, which she has described as "an opportunity to reflect the love of God". She specialised as a cancer nurse and became a ward sister at Westminster Hospital, before being made Director of Nursing at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.
- In 1999, at the age of 37, she was appointed the Government's Chief Nursing Officer for England. She was the youngest person ever to be appointed to the post. Bishop Sarah was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire in 2005 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to nursing.

- She became a Christian at the age of 16. While working as the Chief Nursing Officer for England, she discerned a call to ordination and entered training ministry at the South East Institute for Theological Education.
- She was ordained in 2001 and served her curacy in St Saviour's Battersea Fields, initially as a self-supporting minister, before leaving her government post in 2004, which she has described at the time as "the biggest decision I have ever made".
- In 2012 she was installed as Canon Treasurer at Salisbury Cathedral and three years later took the role as Suffragan Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter, the fourth woman to become a Bishop in the Church of England.
- On 12th May 2018, Bishop Sarah was installed as the 133rd Bishop of London at St Paul's Cathedral, the first woman to hold the role.
- Bishop Sarah sits in the House of Lords as one of the Lords Spirituals.
- As Bishop of London, she led the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith process from 2020 to 2023. This included the formative stages of discernment and decision making which saw the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith for same-sex couples.
- She has served on the Church's National Safeguarding Steering Group and is also Lead Bishop for Health and Social Care issues.
- As a Lord Spiritual, she has drawn from both her pastoral experience and her background in nursing and healthcare and has played a key role in the ongoing debates on assisted dying.
- Archbishop Sarah is married to Eamonn, an Irish-born IT and Enterprise Architect who enjoys beekeeping and volunteering as a London tourist guide. The couple have two grown-up children, Liam and Grace.
- Archbishop Sarah has continued her interest in the health service having been a non-executive director at the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust then at Salisbury NHS Foundation Hospital.
- She is Chair of Christian Aid.
- She has spoken openly about her dyslexia, describing her difficulties with writing and reading.
- In her spare time, she loves cooking, walking and pottery.

Parish Pump

Little Lambs

Welcome to 2026! Little Lambs said goodbye to 2025 when Father Christmas visited us in December. Thank you to Phil as well, as he was Santa's little helper and distributed our Christmas books.



Huge thanks to all our volunteers who are mostly in the photo, although sadly Margaret was poorly then.

Our lovely families enjoyed our Christmas crafts. Thank you to Gail for organising our Christmas cards. We were also pleased to have a special visit from Elsa from Frozen who helped us with our Christmas songs. The children's faces were a real treat for us all!

Now we are enjoying 2026 and we are busy and having fun as usual.

Please note that we do not meet on Monday 16th February, as that is half-term.

Blessings from us all.

Sue Fairman



Christmas pictures

The timing of the production of the January magazine means that Christmas 2025 pictures cannot be included until this February 2026 edition. We still like to publish the Christmas pictures though!

The Editors

Here are some pictures from the Community Nativity on 20th December 2025.



An industrious group assembled after the morning service on 21st December to make the Christingles for the service on Christmas Eve.

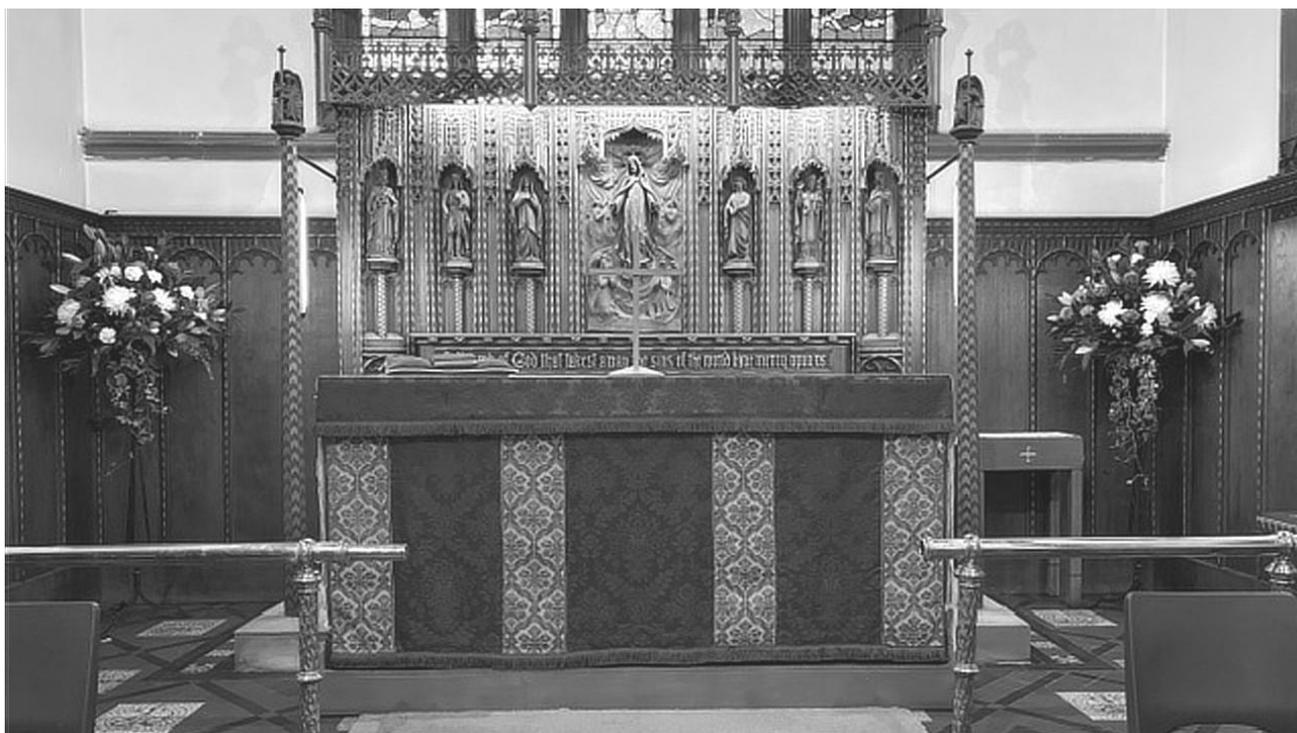


The Flower Ladies spent a very enjoyable morning on Monday 22nd December 2025 arranging the Christmas flowers. It was lovely to meet up again after the break of Advent and we were grateful to Margaret and Poppy for their help on such a busy morning. We enjoyed a well-deserved coffee break and were joined by Phil.

Thank you for your generous donations in memory of loved ones and also for contributions of greenery. We hope you enjoyed our arrangements.

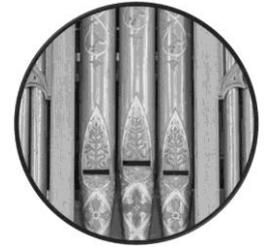
Also thank you to Liz and her Guides for decorating our Christmas tree so beautifully.

Joy Job

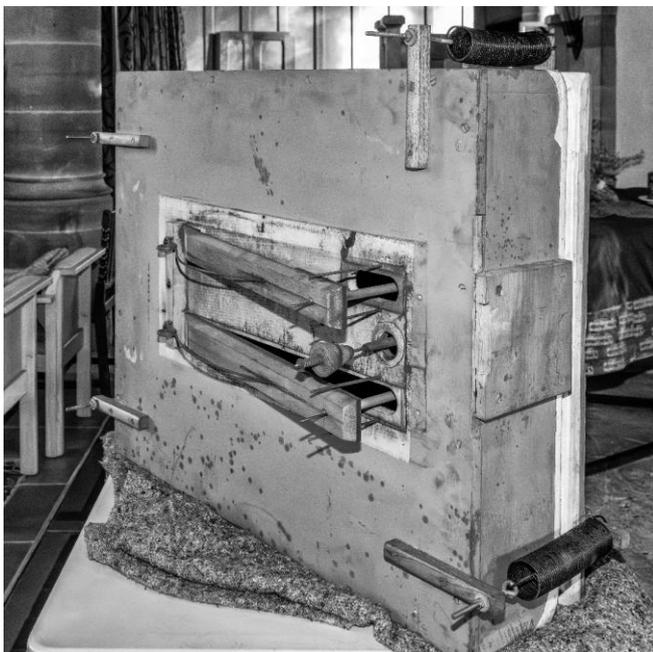


Organ Update

Work on the organ started at the beginning of January. The front of the organ was stripped back (see the front cover) to give access to the innards of the organ.



Then the parts (the wind reservoirs) which needed to be removed for repair could be extracted to be taken to the repairer's workshop.





Finances: There's still a funding gap! Please tell everyone you can about the organ appeal and make a donation if you can.

- Donate via the **card machine** at the back of St John's Church or **online** at <https://givealittle.co/c/Organ2025>
- Donate **by cheque** by sending it to the Team Office (1a Bromyard Road, St John's, Worcester, WR2 5BS)
- Donate by **bank transfer** to:

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If you need to make a Gift Aid declaration, please contact the office (details on the inside front cover).

For sale - in support of the organ fund

I have some twenty percussion et al items that I am looking to sell. Money raised will go to the St John's Organ Fund. Please email meunier.46210@gmail.com or phone 07948 274342 if you would like further information. Thank you.

Arthur Miller



Who is Jesus?

The first Messy Church of 2026, and we were delighted by the wonderful turn out for it! This month, we took the chance to explore the man whose birth we just celebrated, with the theme of “Who is Jesus?”

The first activity that we all did together was to come up with words to describe Jesus. It was amazing the variety and depth of words which were suggested. These are all on the Messy Church board in St John’s Church until next month. Please do pop down and have a look at them. Maybe you’ll come up with a few more yourself.

The activities took inspiration from ideas of the roles Jesus had and his actions in the Bible.

Jesus the Healer, was reflected through making Get Well Soon cards.

The story in Mark 4:35, where Jesus calms the storm, led to us making origami boats to float in water.

Jesus’ reassurance in Matthew 6 and Luke 12 that God will care for us, for he loves us more than the birds and nature he provides for, was told by making chocolate cornflake nests with icing birds on top.



Colouring in pages highlighted key moments in Jesus’ life, such as turning water into wine at Cana’s wedding and The Last Supper. These could then be made into a book of our favourite stories about Jesus. We also thought about the stories that Jesus himself told his followers, making finger and stick puppets of characters from the parables.



Our worship began by focusing on what we had been doing during the crafts, thinking about why we had done them and exploring our thoughts a bit more on the question Who is Jesus?

Worship was followed up by a dinner of sandwiches and chips, and we had fruit for dessert.

The next Messy Church is on Saturday 7th February, where our theme will be “A New Start.” Doors open at 3.30pm and Messy Church starts at 4pm. Please do join us.

Advance notice: In April, Messy Church will take place in the morning on Good Friday (3rd April), rather than in the afternoon on Saturday 4th.

Beth Broadway

Events Team News

Our first event of 2026, the Burns Night Ceilidh on 24th January, is still to come at the time of writing. There will probably be a report in the next edition of the magazine 😊.

There will be a choir concert of light music from TFO (The Film Orchestra) on 9th May. Tickets will be available for £15.

The community summer fayre will be on 21st June.

Beth Broadway

The Festive Story

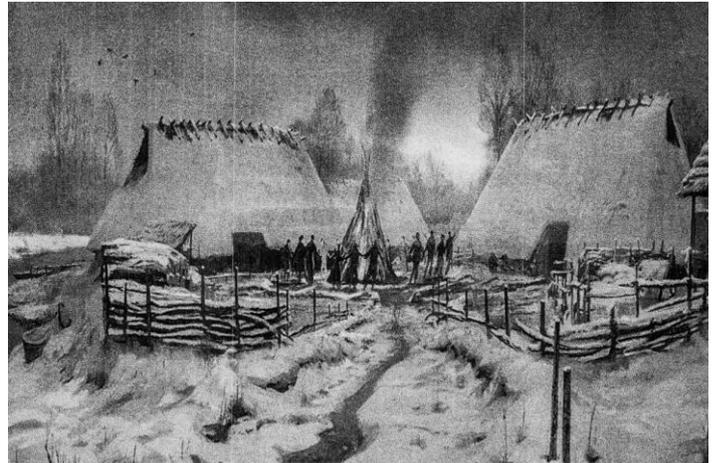
This month's talk is based on one of the Discover History tours of Worcester. The walk is in two parts. The first part looks at the medieval festive season, and the second looks at the specific year 1892. This is linked to the Worcestershire Chronicle, which did a double page spread on the festive season and so gives us a wonderful snapshot of Christmas in 1892.



The first part starts in the oldest part of Worcester, which is College Green by the Cathedral. Here, pre-Christian festivals would have taken place. Around the winter solstice people would have danced around a bonfire, or bone fire, as this was where they would have carried out a human sacrifice.



Around 350AD, Pope Julius I decided that December 25th would be the date of Christ's birthday and that is when Christ's Mass or Christmas started. He created a Christian festival as an alternative to the Pagan festivals of Sol Invictus and Saturnalia. There was a lot of drinking involved in early Christmases, especially among the monks in the Monastery. Christmas would start on Christmas Day and lasted 12 nights with the main parties taking place on 12th night, January 5th.



The monks used to eat vast amounts of food during the parties, however, they did get rather bored with the fasting during Advent, when they could only eat fish. They decided that the Barnacle Goose would be classed as fish as they believed the geese came from the Goose Barnacle as they were both black and white, or at least that was their way of getting round the meat fast.

One of the biggest Christmas feasts was in 1215 when King John was here, he spent a lot of time in Worcester. He spent the time in Worcester Castle as he felt this was the safest place that he could stay, especially after he had just signed the Magna Carta and was worried that he was no longer needed as King and he tried to keep his head down.



There is still a piece of wall in College Green which was part of the Great Chamber of Worcester Castle. Every year King John complained that the linen was not of good enough quality for him to eat his meal off. So, the monks had to buy yards of linen for the next year and again he would complain. He never complained about the heating or the quality of food and wine, just the linen!



In the early 1800s we had plenty of places for entertainment, including the early forms of pantomime at Christmas. In 1867 Charles Dickens came to Worcester on the launch tour of his new book, 'A Christmas Carol'. He read excerpts from the book to an audience in the Public Hall, also known as the Music Hall, which was located on the site of the current Cornmarket carpark.

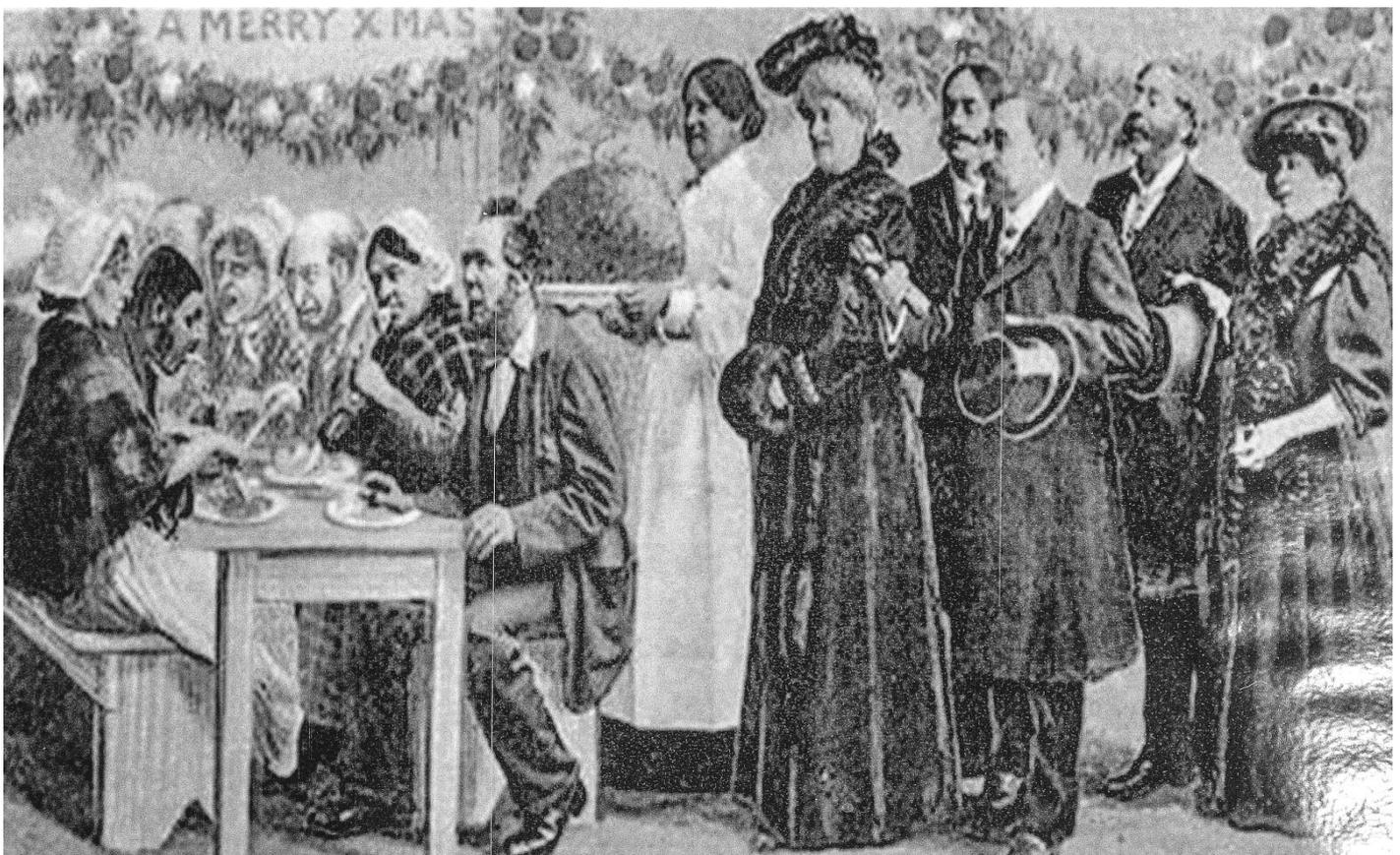
After the interval, Paul started the second half of his talk with a letter sent to the editor of the Berrows Journal about the great evil which occurs: 'As soon as the bells of the parish churches, by their joyous peels, announced the anniversary of the birth of our saviour, the low public houses, beer shops, and brothels, vomit

forth their scum. Gangs of disorderly men, women, boys and girls, many in a state of inebriation, perambulate the streets; shoutings, yellings, and the most discordant sounds, emanate from these reprobate bands, etc.’ How things change, or don’t as the case may be!

As mentioned, an article in the Worcestershire Chronicle of 1892 gives a wonderful snapshot of life at Christmas and the following is all condensed from that article.

Christmas Eve was the main day of preparation for Christmas, as Christmas only started on Christmas Day, not August Bank Holiday, as it does now! The Shambles would be packed on Christmas Eve with everyone buying their meat for the Christmas meal/parties. The shop fronts would be covered from floor upwards with various cuts of meat and poultry. The rich would send their servants down to buy their meat, whereas the poor would wait until the last minute to get a bargain, as the butchers would not be able to store the meat until the next shopping day.

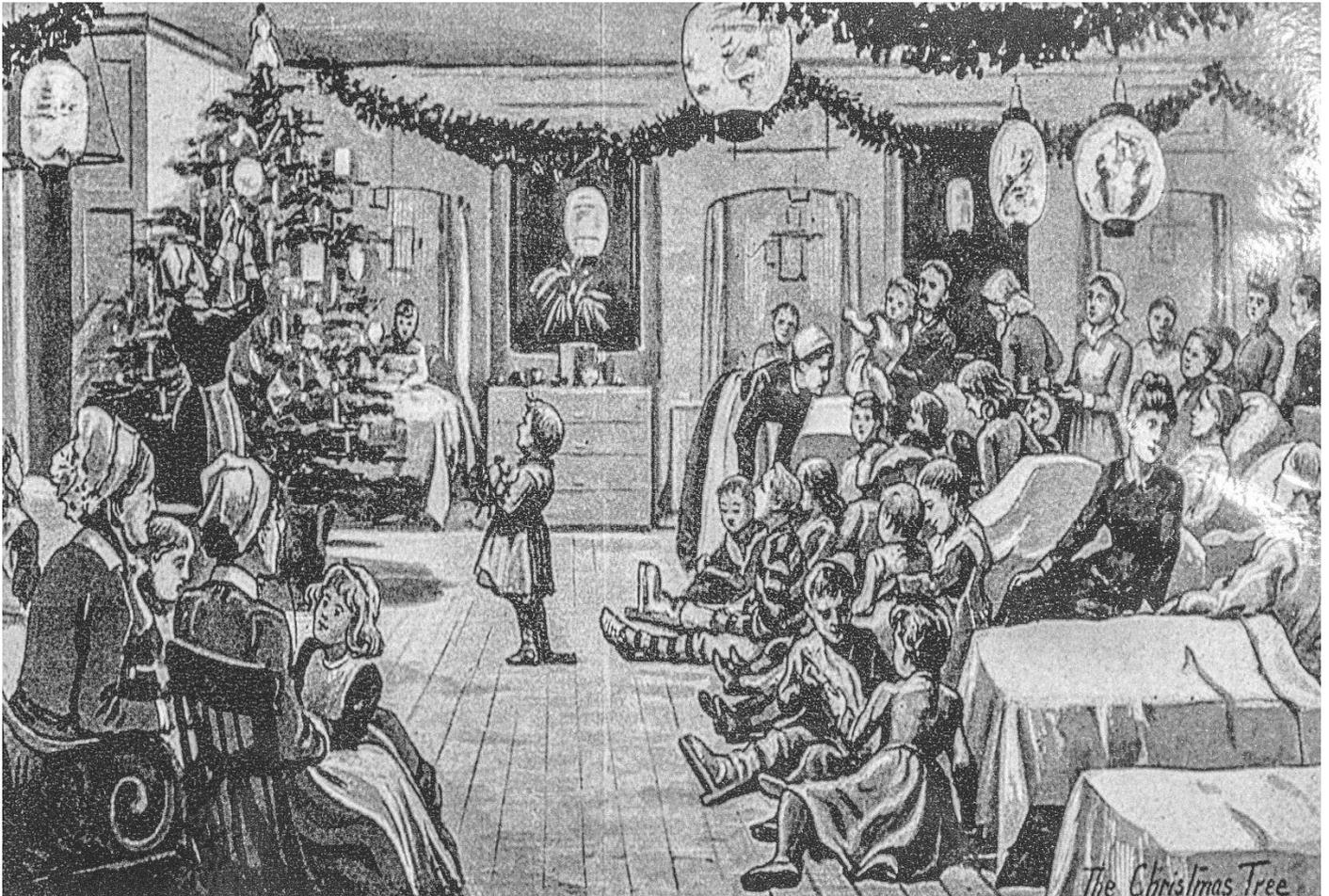
The Chronicle also talks about how all the churches, and the cathedral were packed Christmas Eve and Christmas morning.



Even the prisoners in the debtors’ prison were given a Christmas meal of beef and various charities collected many presents to give out to the poor children. The Children’s Mission held an outdoor carol service for all the children. It was a very large event. It is believed that it was held on Pitchcroft but the location

does not seem to have been recorded. The Salvation Army fed 400 old people with a roast beef dinner and plum pudding, although, again, it was not recorded where they managed to get 400 people in one place to feed them.

There was a big write up on the Infirmary and the 79 patients who were in the hospital over the Christmas period. The Infirmary was decorated throughout with special attention on the Children's ward. A large Christmas Tree was decorated and there were presents for each of the children. The toy area of the hospital had a large doll's house which had been covered with snow (cotton wool). In the evening there was a magic lantern show for the children.



In the Workhouse, on Tallow Hill, the Chronicle says that every single person had loads of roast beef and all the vegetables with gravy, along with a pint of beer. They were all given a gift of a small packet of snuff for the ladies, a small packet of tobacco for the men and every child was given an orange, all paid for by the city.

There was no roast beef available for us during the interval, but the audience were treated to some very fine cakes, and even a Tiramisu, to eat with their tea or coffee.

Colin Nash

Peter

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Wow Japan! – Beautiful Gardens

Thank you for reading my article about religion in Japan in the January magazine. When we were on holiday in Japan we also enjoyed visiting three very beautiful gardens and seeing the natural world all around us.

Traditional Japanese gardens are landscapes designed to create sanctuaries for reflection and meditation influenced by the Shinto and Buddhist religions. Shinto emphasises the sacredness of nature, while Buddhism promotes mindfulness and meditation. The gardens emphasise simplicity and natural beauty to create a sense of peace and contemplation, encouraging visitors to connect with nature. They feature natural elements such as water, rocks and carefully selected plants to create a harmonious and serene layout.

Japanese gardens are very carefully designed landscapes. Common features include:
Water – Ponds, streams and waterfalls to symbolise life and tranquillity.

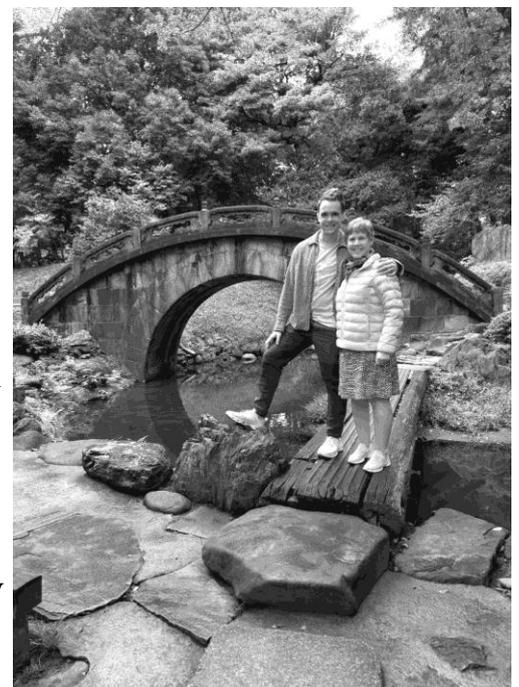
Bridges. These have practical and symbolic purposes and symbolise the journey from the earthly world to the spiritual realm. Arched bridges (soribashi), represent a difficult journey. Flat bridges emphasise harmony with nature. Stepping stone bridges slow visitors down so they can take in the beauty of nature around them.

Rocks and gravel. Used to represent mountains and rivers and arranged to create a naturalistic appearance. In the gravel gardens we saw the gravel was neatly raked to show lines and waves patterns.

Plants. Evergreen plants are used for their year-round beauty with some seasonal flowering plants for subtle and seasonal colour. Plum and cherry trees blossom in spring while maple and acer trees provide lovely autumn colours.

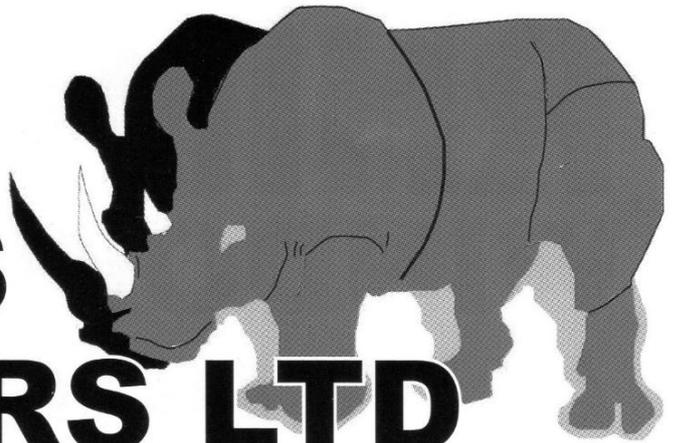
The three lovely gardens we visited were strolling gardens designed for leisurely walks. They were such a pleasure to visit and featured winding paths which led us through scenic views, ponds and bridges and so much more.

The first garden we visited, pictured on the right, was Koishikawa Korakuen Garden in Tokyo, known as the most beautiful Japanese garden in Tokyo. We visited it on a damp and cool day and it was very quiet there with only a few visitors. It was surrounded by a busy area of Tokyo but it was very peaceful there.



Continued on page 39

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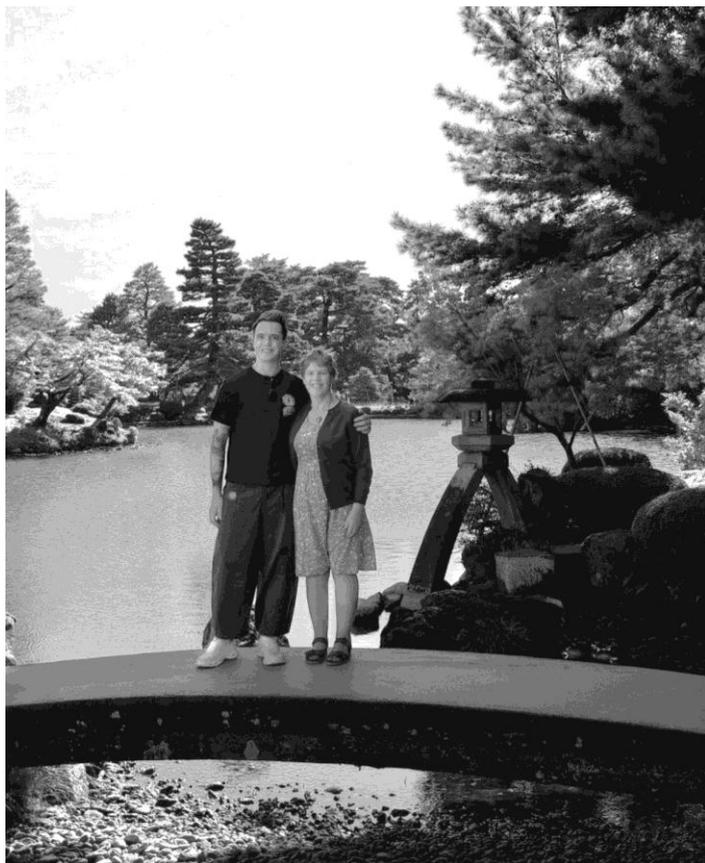
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We walked along the circular path around the pond to see different views and admired the Full Moon bridge with rocks around it and Koi carp in the stream.



The second garden we enjoyed (pictured on the left) was the beautiful and famous Kenrokuen Garden in Kanazawa. This garden was on my list of places to visit particularly after Monty Don's programmes about Japanese gardens in 2019. The garden was just as I remembered from the series and we saw the gardeners working there to support the trees and carefully tend to the plants. We visited on a lovely sunny day and enjoyed the many bridges, ponds, plants and everything.

The third garden we visited (pictured on the right) was Koko-en Garden at Himeji Castle near Osaka. This was a traditional walking garden too but was opened in 1993 and it re-created the older 17th – 19th century Edo periods of the other two gardens we visited.

The garden consisted of nine individual gardens such as the bamboo garden and the pine garden. Each one showed different Japanese landscaping, and they all flowed into each other. We enjoyed the tea ceremony garden for a traditional matcha green tea experience.

Thank you for reading my article and sharing these lovely gardens with me.

Sue Fairman





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Joint Council (JC) meeting 14th January 2026

Gilly Maxim welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were 10 members present, with apologies from 4 members.

Finance

The organ works are now in progress. Two invoices have now been paid and the VAT is being reclaimed. The organ appeal is about £10,000 short of the total required. This will have to come out of general funds. John Brierley is lining up organists to do some recitals once the organ has been fixed, the proceeds of which will go towards the fund. A temporary organ is in place.

The role of the treasurer was discussed at length. The lack of a treasurer gives significant problems in budgeting and financial management.

The position of the card machine was discussed.

There has previously been a discussion about whether the collection plate could be circulated during the service. A majority of people agreed to give this a try starting the following Sunday.

The financial reports show a £20k deficit for the year, but this does not reflect the £11k that was returned for the work on Heron Close. This is a deficit of £9,000 and we have reserves of about £58,000. This type of deficit cannot continue as we are using our reserves in a way that is not sustainable. There is the probability that about £10,000 for the organ will have to come from the total amount in our reserves.

There is no budget set for the 2026 financial year as there is no treasurer to prepare one. Without a budget being set it is not possible to allocate permissions for expenditure in the next year.

It was agreed that for this month we pay reasonably what is needed. When Phil is back we need to have a meeting where a budget is set, even if it is only for the first half of the year. Gilly will also try and source some support from the diocese.

Microsoft are now going to be charging for premium licences, which can only be paid by credit or debit cards. JC agreed use of the church debit card to automate monthly payments.

CCLI (music) license at St Michael's are due for renewal in February. It was decided that it was not necessary to renew this license.

Continued on page 43

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Accommodation

There is a need to switch to an upgraded broadband.

Following police advice, Tom Amies will assess where CCTV might be located.

The new photocopier is being installed on 23rd January.

Charlotte Tidder is taking on the cleaning under a separate contract of employment.

There has been some work done on the main church roof. There is no certainty that the leak has been fixed because the roofers can only fix what they can see.

Considerable repair and maintenance work on the flat is required. The rent has not been changed for some time. JC agreed for Tom to negotiate a rent increase.

Gilly raised the issue of a microphone being needed at St Michael's. Different possibilities for this were discussed.

Special Services

Philip Evans shared a review of Advent and Christmas services. At St John's the total number of people who attended was the highest since 2016. At St Michael's, a lot has changed over time so data is not directly comparable. People are submitting feedback which Philip will collate when the response period has closed.

Philip was thanked for his hard work in advertising the services which has been a contributory factor in the increase in attendance. Gilly also voiced thanks and added that there has been a rise in younger people coming to faith and so perhaps for the future we need to look at which platforms we are using to advertise our events.

Philip shared the list of services for Lent and Easter. A discipleship course will run following the Easter period.

Events

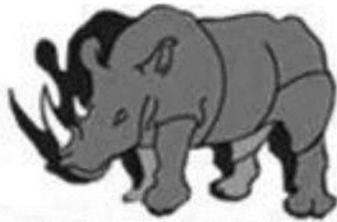
The next community breakfast is on 21st March.

Jenny English said that there have been two community breakfasts a year since 2013. These cover their costs. Jenny has said that she would like some help with running it, as this has been harder since Ellen moved away.

There will be a choir concert of light music from TFO (The Film Orchestra) on 9th May, tickets will be available for £15.

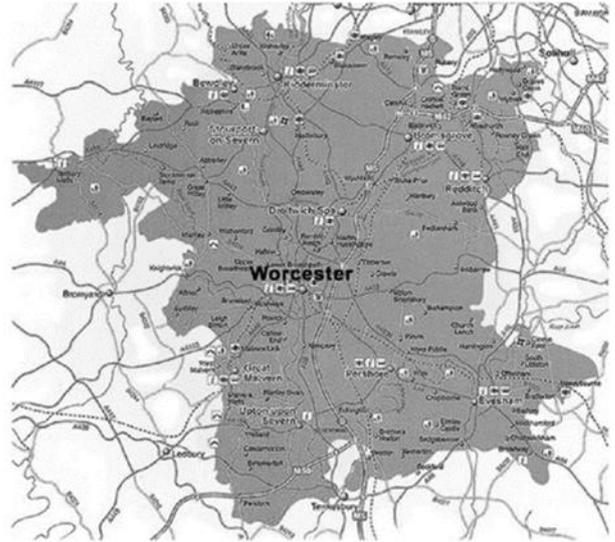
The summer fayre organised by Councillor Udall will be on 21st June. There will be a teddy bear drop.

Continued on page 45



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Continued from page 43

On October 10th there will be a “Hops and Hymns” linked to harvest. There will be a quiz in November. There are plans for a Christmas Tree festival over the weekend of 5th December. A similar event at Claines church raised over £2000.

Charity Committee

The committee has not yet met. Gordon recommended that as a minimum we give £500 to Snoezelen and £500 to Maggs which is available from Henry Smith funds.

Safeguarding

An incident at the end of November was reported to the diocese. This was followed up by their safeguarding officer and no further action needs to be taken.

Health and Safety

It was noted that there were still drawing pins on the boards in the children’s area.

Children and Young People

It was agreed to buy the updated Diddy Disciples books.

Vision – Away Day

A date for this needs to be set. Gilly felt that a good starting point would be for this to include the Joint Council and the ministry team.

The meeting closed with The Grace.

*Minutes by Fiona Templeton (JC Secretary)
Summarised by Graham Evans (JC member)*

Smile lines

A little girl told her mother one day before lunch that her stomach was hurting. Her mother replied: “That's because it’s empty, you have to put something into it!” That afternoon the vicar came to visit. He looked a bit rough and explained that his head was hurting him. The little girl gave him a sweet smile and said encouragingly: “That's because it’s empty, you have to put something into it!”

--- 000 ---

Hymns for

Dentists - Crown Him with many crowns
Builders - The Church’s one foundation
Obstetricians - Come labour on
Golfers - There is a green hill far away
Librarians - Let all mortal flesh keep silent

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- Thursday: 2pm - 5pm
- Friday: 10am - 5pm
- Saturday: 10am - 1pm

Events at St John's Library

Weekly events:

- Creative Tales, weekly every Monday, 3:30pm to 4:15pm.
Join us every Monday at 3.30pm for our Creative Tales story session. Each week we will be reading a story and doing an activity based on the book. Suitable for ages 3+, children must be accompanied by an adult. No booking required. Excluding bank holidays.
- Scrabble Club, weekly every Tuesday, 2:00pm to 4:00pm.
- Chess Club, weekly every Tuesday, 2:00pm to 4:00pm.
- Crochet and Chat, weekly every Wednesday, 10:00am to 12:00pm.
- Storytime and Song, weekly every Friday, 11:00am to 11:30am.
- LEGO Club, weekly every Saturday, 11:00am to 12:00pm. Age 4+. Children must be accompanied by an adult (only shown for 7 February on the website).

Other regular events:

- Classic Film Club, alternate Thursdays, 5 & 19 February, 2:00pm to 3:30pm.
- Crime Readers' Group: First Friday of each month (6 February), 12:00pm to 1:00pm.
- Photography Group: Third Friday of each month (20 February), 2:00pm to 3:00pm.
- Crime Film Group: Fourth Friday of each month (27 February), 12:00pm to 1:30pm.

The information above is from the County Council website on 15th January.

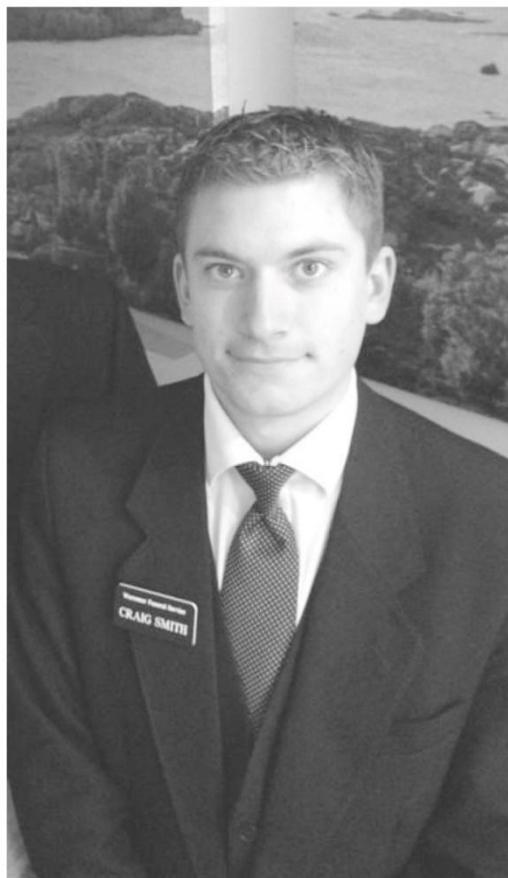
- Councillors' Surgeries: First Saturday of each month (7 February), 10:00am to 12:00pm.
- Meet your local policing team: Tuesday 17 February, 10:30am to 11.30am.



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From the magazine archive, February 1952

The rather unusual layout of this page is to allow us to make the archive item as large as possible.

We apologise that it is still a bit small, but we wanted to get it all in.

The Editors

TAKING LEAVE OF THE REVD. C. H. CARVER

THE members of the Great Family of St. John's Church gathered together in large numbers in the Boys' School on January 18th to pay tribute and present their gifts to the Revd. C. H. Carver, as he left the Home Circle of St. John's, to build up another Church Family at St. Peter's, Hindley.

We were all there, the young and the old, the Mayor of the City, our beloved Vicar, the Churchwardens, Church Councillors, Representatives of every organisation, Day and Sunday School Teachers and dear Mr. Thomas, the Parish Clerk, who has known many Curates and Vicars, but has never been so happy as he is now.

Mr. Robert Smith, our devoted Churchwarden, took the Chair, and after the Vicar had spoken in the most generous terms of the splendid work, loyalty, and co-operation of his colleague, whom he had regarded as a brother, called on the Mayor, who spoke of the excellent training Mr. Carver had received, and then Mr. Higgins, Churchwarden, who referred to him as a "Jolly Good Fellow".

Various other members of the Family were given the opportunity to tell of the value of Mr. Carver's work as they knew it, from their own experience. Mention was made of his eloquence in the pulpit, his friendliness, his kindness to the sick, his consideration for the elderly, his understanding of, and work amongst, the Youth of the Parish, and his love for the children.

Mr. Smith then handed a cheque to Mr. Carver, with the very best wishes of all the contributors, adding a special word of thanks from the sick Parishioners who were unable to be present.

Various organisations presented their own gifts and many others were sent privately, all showing the warm affection felt for him.

When Mr. Carver rose to reply, it was obvious that he was overwhelmed by the unstinted praise of his Vicar, to whom he was so devoted, and the tributes and gifts of so many friends.

It was difficult for him to express in words his deep gratitude to everyone who had been so kind and generous to him. He could not thank each one by name; but he was bound to mention the Vicar who had been so good to him, Sister Caunt who had been such a great help and the Churchwardens who had supported him.

Mrs. Bund had been like a mother. The Vicar's parents and sister had made the Vicarage a real home for him, and there was one other, no longer with us, "Mrs. Smith", whose name he would always remember for her great kindness and generous hospitality.

He reminded us that life without religion was but mere existence, spoke of our great blessing in having the Vicar to lead us, and urged us to give him our whole-hearted support. So we took our leave of him, with sincere regret that he was going, but rejoicing in his Preferment, and with glad and thankful hearts that we still had "Our Vicar".

In his fine sermon on Sunday morning, the last day of Mr. Carver's ministry amongst us, Vicar paid the highest tribute of all to him in the following words:

"He walked with God;
He loved his Master;
He did his duty;
He was a friend to all."

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NOTES

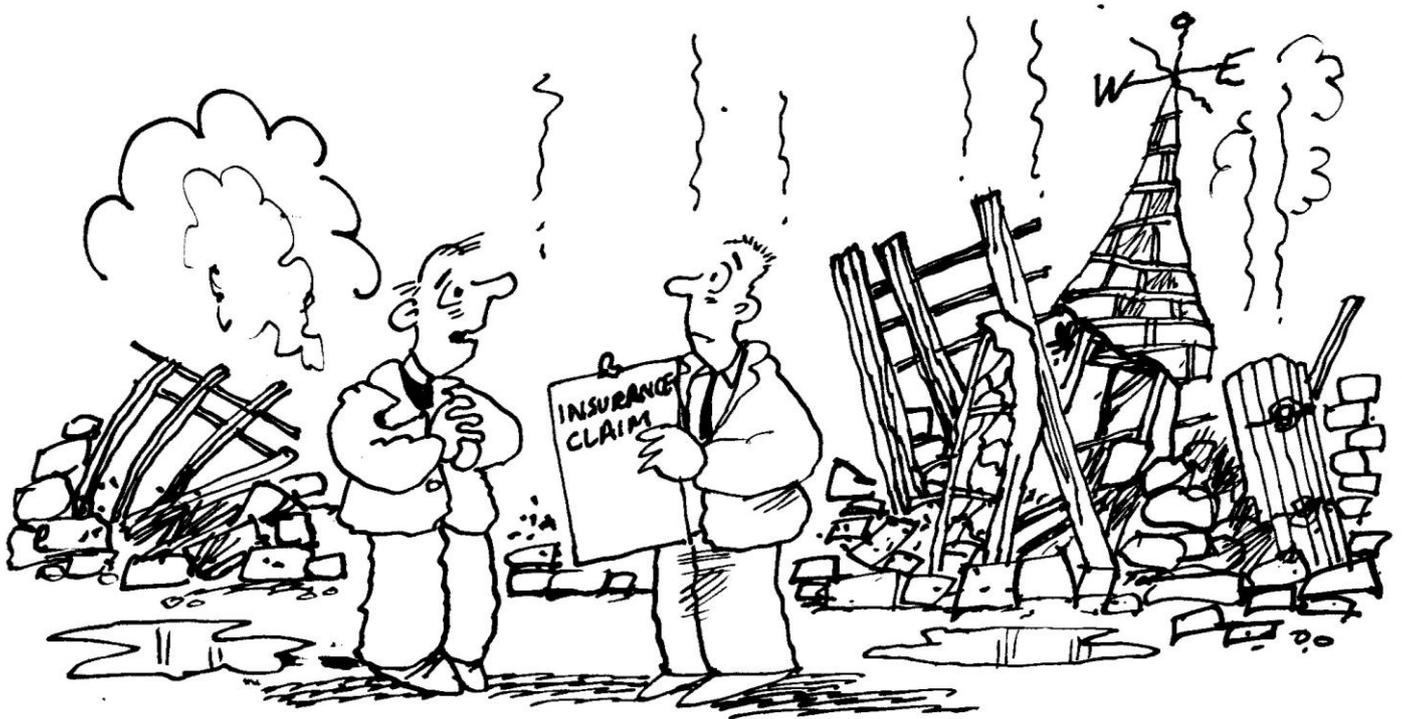
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Puzzle solution

3	5	9	6	4	1	8	7	2
1	2	4	8	7	9	5	6	3
6	7	8	5	3	2	9	1	4
9	3	5	7	1	4	6	2	8
4	1	6	3	2	8	7	9	5
7	8	2	9	6	5	4	3	1
5	9	3	1	8	7	2	4	6
2	6	7	4	5	3	1	8	9
8	4	1	2	9	6	3	5	7

And finally....



...er... apart from this little hiccup... it was an excellent church pancake supper...

Worcester St John-in-Bedwardine and St Michael's Joint Council is a charity with the Registered Charity Number 1205354.

Sunday Services – February 2026

	St John's	St Michael's	St David's
1st February	10.30am Eucharist 5.30pm Evensong	10.30am Eucharist	4pm Eucharist
8th February	10.30am All Age Eucharist 5.30pm Evening Prayer with Bible study	10.30am Morning Prayer	
15th February	10.30am Eucharist	10.30am Eucharist	4pm Eucharist
22nd February	10.30am Eucharist	10.30am Morning Prayer	
1st March	10.30am Eucharist 5.30pm Evensong	10.30am Eucharist	4pm Patronal Eucharist

In case there are any changes to the above, please watch the weekly church newsletters and websites for the latest information.